

though it was highly popular with viewers, it was about an already more-televised group (blacks) and featured a veteran star with already established popularity (Bill Cosby). The degree of popularity of "The Cosby Show" though, especially for a new show—third in the Nielsen ratings for the entire 1984-1985 season—seems to have facilitated the future prime-time selection and scheduling of some additional new ethnic shows about blacks, as reflected in preliminary network announcements about the 1985-1986 season: NBC has the comedy "227," about Chicago black neighbors, ABC has "He's the Mayor," a comedy about a black mayor, and CBS has "Charlie and Company," a comedy about a black middle-class family in Chicago. No ethnic shows about groups other than blacks are on the preliminary 1985-1986 network schedules.

²¹Joyce Sunila. "Cagney and Lacey." *Emmy*. Vol. 7 (March/April, 1985) 23.

Critique

There is no question that the television show *a.k.a. Pablo* was an important media event for the Mexican American community. All such prime time shows which deal with ethnic groups highlight minority problems and give visibility to peoples otherwise not dealt with in the mass media. Whether or not such shows create as many stereotypes as they dispel is another matter altogether.

Even not very good shows such as *The Jeffersons*, *Sanford and Son*, and *Good Times* provided air time for black actors and made more positive portrayals possible in such shows as *Benson*, *Webster*, or even *The Cosby Show*, the highest rated show of the current season. One can argue whether or not the integration of the latter examples signals progress or retrogression. The point is that with sufficient media exposure, blacks are now staple figures on prime time television shows whether those shows are black-oriented or not.

As Friedman points out, such opportunities have been lacking for Chicanos and even those shows which have appeared have been short-lived with the exception of the ill-fated *Chico and the Man*. *a.k.a. Pablo* followed in its predecessor's wake. There is little to quarrel with in

Friedman's article: he outlines the episodes of the show clearly and concisely; he enumerates the various themes the shows illustrated; and he outlines the general reaction to the show from the Hispanic community. However, what he does not do is what he announces is the purpose of his study, namely, to discuss the significance of the series' content or to provide adequate analysis of the individual shows. Too much of what is presented, therefore, is simply unsupported by specific information gleaned from the shows. We do not see the process by which the author arrived at the conclusions he is presenting.

More detailed discussion of the individual episodes and less information about how much Pablo resembled the star of the show, Paul Rodriguez, would be useful in further analysis. More resource information is also needed about Hispanic reaction to the show. Readers need more detailed references upon which to form an opinion. One final point: more should have been done with a comparison of *a.k.a. Pablo* to *Chico and the Man*, tracing any similarities, progress in ethnic images since 1974, and the like.

I would have found helpful a close analysis of at least one episode of the series, complete with a discussion of the relationship between visuals and dialogue, and some in-depth reflections on the show with adequate details to serve as reference points. As is, I find the paper interesting, even provocative. Further research in analysis, in content discussion, and in background information is necessary to evaluate the impact and influence of television on a viewing public which often cannot fairly evaluate the portrayal of ethnic peoples or situations. Friedman's essay provides a model of how to begin this effort.

Charles L. P. Silet
Iowa State University

Critique

Norman Friedman's analysis of the short-lived sitcom, *a.k.a. Pablo*, raises many issues about the role of television in social life and the limited access of minorities to representation on television and to the decision-making processes of television programming. As his content