

OPEN FORUM

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Society of Motion Picture Engineers
Gentlemen:

During the past year or two, the awkwardness of the rather cumbersome term "black-and-white," when frequently and unavoidably used in the current literature pertaining to color motion pictures, has become increasingly obvious, and perhaps the time has now arrived when an abbreviation may logically be proposed, with the chances favoring its general adoption.

In various industries—mentioning only one class of human activity—abbreviations necessitated for reasons of facility, of some very frequently used technical terms, have become familiar to the public, while their originals have either lapsed into disuse, or were never generally known. For instance, the popularly quoted letters "T.N.T." refer to trinitrotoluene; a tongue-twister and memory test. Other familiar abbreviations that come to mind readily are: a-c., d-c., rpm., U.S.P.; and it may be said, incidentally, that while the man in the street is compelled to recognize a-c. and d-c. as specifications when buying electrical appliances, yet, more often than not, he is unable to explain just what they represent. These abbreviations fit very well on name-plates, labels, bills, receipts, advertisements, and in the extensive technology of industry.

As color in motion pictures, and concurrently, still photography, becomes more widespread, its literature (scientific, technical, patent, philosophical, topical, and legal) increases in volume and is definitely handicapped by the necessarily frequent use of the horse-and-buggy term "black-and-white," for which there is no apt substitute in a shorter expression such as monochrome, monotone, black-tone, uncolored, non-color, and the like. These inept terms have all been used haphazardly and indecisively. To explain—monochrome describes photographic images of a single continuous color-tone of any given color, as well as "black-tone." Monotone is also a misnomer; it applies in elocution. A like error would be to suppose that radiograph is included in the terminology of wireless communication, whereas it denotes X-ray negative.

The abbreviation "b.w." ought to be included in a future revision of the SMPE Color Glossary, as a proposed term, to be coupled in use with other names, *e. g.*, camera, laboratory, department, division, lighting, negative, production, picture, photograph, photography, printer, print, positive, image, film, projection, version, *etc.*—whenever color photography forms the topic, partly or wholly, of a technical article, a patent, or other literature. The "b.w. negative" may appear

superfluous, inasmuch as colorfilm negatives (termed in other branches of photography as color-separation negatives), are just as free of apparent coloration. Nevertheless, both types of finished negative must be separately distinguished at one time or another. Additionally, there is such a thing as a multicolored negative, in at least one obscure process, which exhibits coloring completely within the confines of each individual frame of the negative. The "b.w. version" of a colorfilm production obviously means release prints as printed from a selected color component of the colorfilm negative, or from a dupe thereof.

A term complementary to "b.w.," denoting color motion picture, has yet to be proposed, and very likely may well turn out to be the already existing coined word colorfilm, the use of which can be traced twenty years back to the demonstration of "Colorfilms" at Wurlitzer Hall, New York City, the evening of November 16, 1916. The word finds present-day use in the title of a concern promoting a lenticulated colorfilm process.

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