

Op-Ed

Bad comparisons, wrong issues cloud colorization editorial

by Bob Anderson
Staff Member

It is both interesting and depressing that the author of the recent article in *The Pendulum*, "Modern Technology Not Always So Great," would compare with such fanfare, the date of the initial public broadcast of the colorized version of *Casablanca* on November 9, 1988, with dates such as December 7, 1941 and November 22, 1963.

In my opinion, comparisons of this nature demonstrate difficulty in distinguishing between levels of historical significance and tend to trivialize the importance associated with the bombing of Pearl Harbor or the assassination of President Kennedy.

Being able to make distinctions of relative importance is an essential part of offering an objective review and--in my opinion-- such a distinction was not made by Mr. Floyd in his article.

On the matter of colorization, I am neither offended nor elated by the use of this new technology. Some experiments with colorization have been dismal failures. Others, such as with *Casablanca*, have added new and exciting dimensions and perspectives from which to view an already great production.

In most cases, I, unlike Mr. Floyd, would encourage such experimentation with colorization -- not to replace -- but to further enhance our appreciation of the art of classic black and white films.

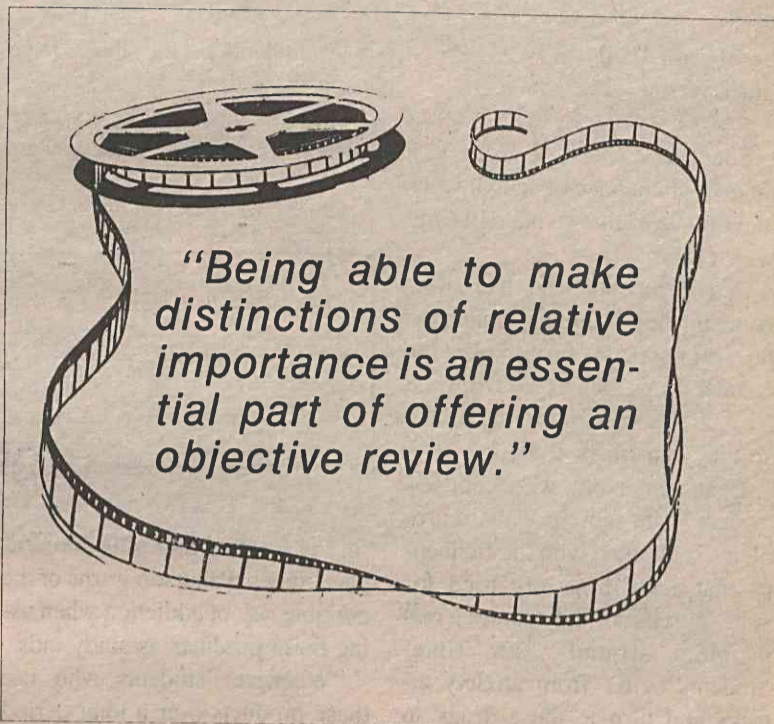
Mr. Floyd never mentioned if he had viewed *Casablanca* in its colorized state -- nor did he mention specifically 'why' colorization was such a heinous offense -- other than that it was "utterly sickening."

I would propose to Mr. Floyd that the issue presented in this case by *Casablanca* is not how to prevent colorization of classic black and white films -- (assuming the

films have been colorized after ensuring that no copyright laws were violated) -- but how to evaluate and appreciate better the different perspectives offered on these classic films by new advances in technology.

Technology will always be changing and, in the process, offering us new ways to evaluate older practices and products. The new colorized *Casablanca* does not diminish the significance of the original black and white *Casablanca*.

It merely offers the viewer another opportunity to enjoy the timeless performances of Bogart and Bergman and learn that truly "great films" can retain their "greatness" even when viewed through "colored glasses."



Reader suggests buying black and white T.V.

by Charles E. Shultz
Special to The Pendulum

I failed to find any valid points in John Floyd's criticism of the colorization of *Casablanca*. He suggested in his opinion that the classic film was not intended to be seen in color. Of course not. In 1942, when the film was made, color film had not yet been perfected and was quite costly.

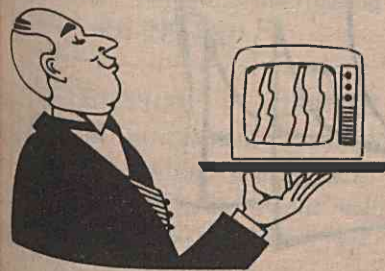
Incidentally, *Casablanca* was intended to be seen in movie houses. Does Mr. Floyd condemn the showing of movies on television? Beethoven's symphonies were intended to be heard played by a live orchestra in a grand concert hall. Should we not produce recordings of his works?

I also fail to see how giving a classic film the colors of real-life can be compared with electronically shaving Rhett Butler's mustache or altering Vivian Leigh's accent.

The colorization process does not deprive the film of the talents of the writers, actors or directors. It merely gives the film the technology that was not available at the time of its production.

I would, however, see reason for Mr. Floyd to be angry had Mr. Turner chosen to colorize the opening and closing scenes of *The Wizard of Oz*. Those scenes were artistically filmed in black and white to intensify the separation of the Technicolor fantasy from the boring Kansas reality.

The way I see it, Mr. Floyd has two choices. He can rent or buy one of the existing black and white copies of *Casablanca* or he could buy a black and white television to watch WTBS broadcasts. If I thought Mr. Floyd knew what he was talking about, I would suggest that he himself take Mr. Turner (who just happens to own the rights to *Casablanca*) to court.



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