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COLOUR TELEVISION— WARDROBE AND MAKE-UP

COLOUR AND WARDROBE

WITH THE ADVENT OF COLOUR TELEVISION, the function of the Wardrobe Department stands in a fresh and more important relationship to Production Services. While it has long been recognized that the majority of television programming is about 'people', the presentation of these people under a monochrome system was approached as a tonal problem which could easily be integrated with the product of the design department. With colour television, a more complex situation has developed, requiring a closer liaison between design, wardrobe, make-up and lighting.

A practical method of approaching the problem of colour for wardrobe is to split the hue range into 20 divisions according to their reflective value, black being 1, and white being 20 (white having a 70% reflectance value, black, 10%). It is useful to assume this basic grading for one type of material, for example, cotton, as a guide which becomes more accurate with experience of other fabrics. The big problem is posed by costumiers' stocks, which, at present, are not always suitable for colour as they use too large a range of textures and hues. This problem is particularly acute in light entertainment, where costumes are orientated towards the use of silks, satins and sequins, with reflectance values considered very carefully to avoid distortion.

A few, positive, general principles soon establish themselves as a guide to wardrobe. High colours used close to the face are reflected in the face, causing disturbing shadows; positive, well-defined patterns

are less liable to blur in long shot than small-patterned materials. Medium-tone suits are safest, as definition is lost with dark suits, causing a black 'hole' as the camera tracks back for a long shot. The reflectance value of light suits, especially mohairs, is too high; whereas fabrics which absorb light, such as velvets, velours and textured wools, are apt to show up much darker than they are, particularly in the lower ranges where they appear black on the screen. Chiffons and other diaphanous materials can be used with great success, as they do appear transparent—unlike their monochrome appearance where they 'dense up'. Jet, sequins and paillettes can also be used to great effect in small areas, though if too great an area is covered, 'blooming' occurs, and a line of dancers ends up as formless blobs!

A great deal of care has to be taken over the representation of white. For example, shirts have to be treated with a 70% neutral grey dye to produce the most satisfactory results, although as the colour factor is so critical for white, it is necessary to maintain a constant standard despite the ravages of laundering.

The problems of 'breaking down' are more acute with colour. Spraying, bleaching and powdering are successful in aging materials in monochrome, while with colour even genuinely old costumes can look artificial. The best results so far have been produced by spraying material while damp, taking great care that the spots are not too big or isolated enough to get individual definition. This is an additional hazard with realistic drama, as a genuinely threadbare

garment can look like something straight from Savile Row. The only safe method is to try the costumes before a camera as frequently as possible with accurate lighting conditions.

Colour situations are enormously affected by lighting. In an artificially lit interior set, a costume might be ideal in all respects, but if the character walks out into daylight, or moves towards a source of light, colour and tonal values can alter radically, giving an inaccurate picture. In this area wardrobe will have to pay more attention to the effect of lighting on materials, just as they must now consider costume colour and tonal values in relation to the background against which the artists are to move.

A more general problem concerns the Brightness Contrast Range. Definition is required on facial features, eyes, mouth, hair, etc., and this requires a very careful appraisal of the overall scheme in terms of colour and tone if the character is to stand out from the background. This can be useful in a mystery series, where an artist is required to melt into the wallpaper, but could be disastrous in a stark social realism scene. While light colours are useful in providing a contrast

to the background, liberal use can turn each actor into a minor deity with a built-in halo, or into a science-fiction image trailing a bloom of white reflectance.

After the comparative security of monochrome television, where professionalism was a question of screwing up the eyes, squinting and murmuring 'Ye-e-es . . . it could be a *bit* darker . . . ' it is now a question of neurotically examining pieces of material under fluorescent light, incandescent light and daylight, matching them against each other, and very occasionally shouting 'Eureka!'

COLOUR AND MAKE-UP

After extensive experiments, it has been decided that, to give technicians a mean to work to, the best method may well be to turn out a competent make-up, consistently agreeable in tone and colour to the eye, without undue regard to the considerable variations in transmission which may occur.

The viewer will be receiving pictures in both colour and monochrome for some time, so it is obviously essential that the tone of make-up used should be



Fig. 1. Checking costumes on camera before transmission.



Fig. 2. Launa Bradish carrying out make-up repair on set.

compatible to both and make-up must enhance and produce a properly balanced picture in both colour and black and white. In colour pictures, details of colour and texture are only truly accurate in close-up, so it is imperative not to be led into trying to maintain a high standard all the time, but to work to the close shots even more than in monochrome. Certainly with women's make-up a foundation with an increased pigmentation percentage is needed to cover the skin surface with the thinnest possible coating of make-up to achieve the required tone and finish; any irregularities of foundation, eye shadow, shading, etc., will be more immediately apparent than before.

Shading colours should combine some of the colours produced in natural or light-created shadows—greys, blues and greens, without the preponderance of reds and browns used in monochrome, although there does appear to be a fairly consistent tendency towards the warmer colours in skin tones. Drastic alterations of the apparent contours of the face are no longer possible as they have been in black and white. Strong shading on the too-heavy jaw line of a woman could look very obviously like shading—or, worse still, like a beard line!—and the blush shaders in current use for day make-up are generally too warm to be of much use.

One difference is that, whereas colour rouge is used

to play down an area in black and white, it is used to highlight it in colour. This may be necessary in colour to avoid a pale monotone, but could be a difficulty for compatibility in monochrome and colour.

Aging make-ups need to be much more subtle, with high lighting and shading nearer in tone to the base and softly blended, as the colour camera is more sensitive to changes in tone than the monochrome camera. Therefore, vast aging changes, either for younger or older, are more difficult than in monochrome. It is now necessary for the make-up artist to consider the overall effect produced with make-up, hair colouring and wardrobe. There is also, an even greater need now to keep abreast of current ideas and contemporary day make-up, particularly in modern drama, as an old-fashioned approach will become apparent sooner than in black and white.

It is essential to powder well, but not heavily, as shine is reproduced, not as a healthy glow or a natural look, but as a greasy appearance. Shine is emphasized enormously, which means that even more care than before is needed when using spirit gum to apply hair. With regard to added hair in the form of wigs or beards, hard edges must be avoided and hair lace only stuck beyond the knotting if the edges are overlaid. Knotting in beards and moustaches should be less dense than for monochrome, and the colour well broken up.

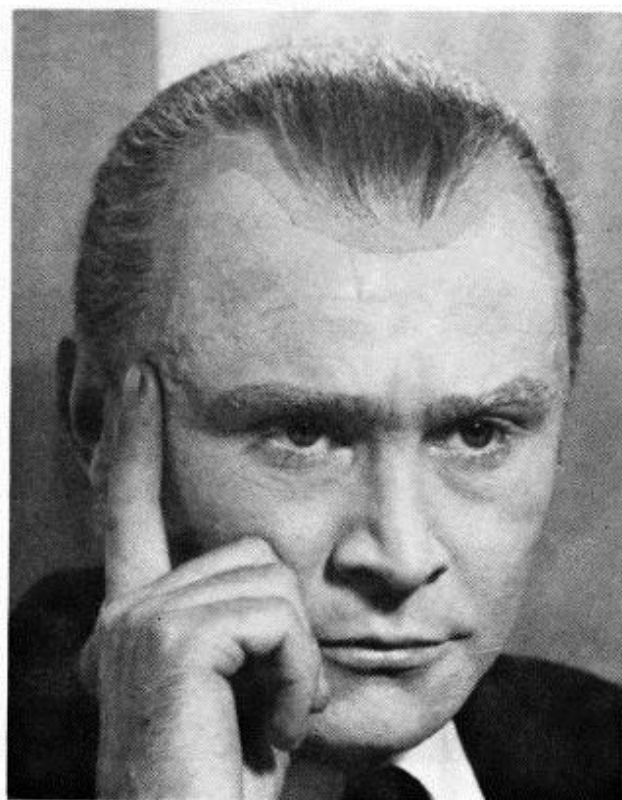
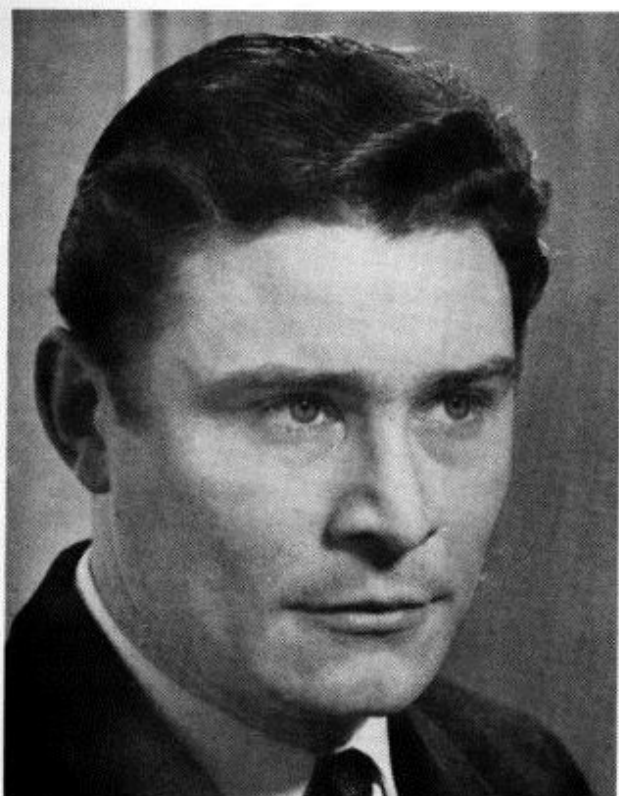


Fig. 3. Ronald Lewis, before and after aging for his part in the Armchair Theatre production *The Fabulous Movie Maker*.

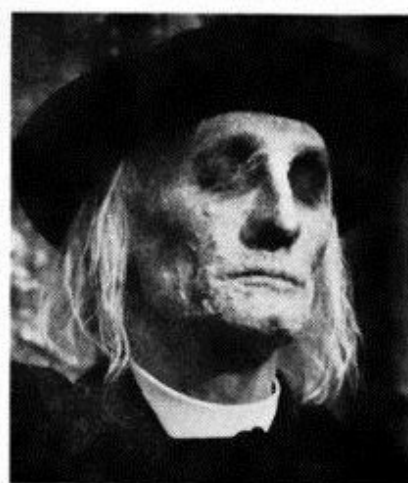
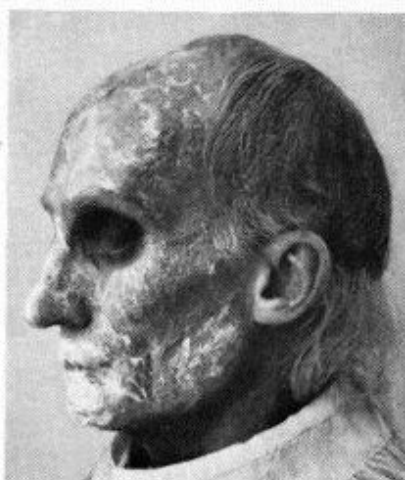
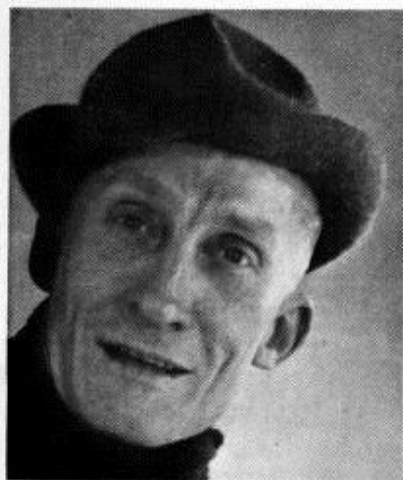


Fig. 4. Edwin Finn, before, during and after transmogrification for his role as the mummified figure of a dead man in *The Tractate Middoth*.

Any prosthetics—latex, wax, or plastic—must be carefully camera tested before transmission, as, although they are apparently the same colour as the rest of the skin, they will, in general, respond quite differently from the natural skin on camera. This has always been a difficulty in black and white, but is increased in colour. This simply emphasizes the need to study all make-ups on camera well ahead of recording time.

Men present a special difficulty in colour make-up, for, unless they are given a 'Hollywood tan', it is very difficult to find a foundation which does not make them look as if they are made up. It is difficult in monochrome to find a foundation to lighten the tone of a man's face without giving a made-up appearance—in colour it seems at present to be virtually impossible. This is made even more trying by the fact that most men tend towards a reddish-toned skin anyway.

It does seem unnecessary for men to wear a complete foundation for colour television as good results can be achieved by just covering specific difficult areas like the beard line and ears, with the rest of the face powdered. This method cannot be used, however, where the natural skin tone is too red, or with broken veins and areas of pigmentation. Tones of cool beige to olive have proved most successful for foundations and lighter shades than would be normal in black and white are more acceptable on women, though some balance must of course be maintained so as not to produce a peak white face on the monochrome receiver.

The quality of the skin obviously has some bearing on the amount or type of make-up used; thicker, heavier skin reproduces most satisfactorily, but with fine skins the colour camera appears to act almost as an X-ray, picking out veins just below the surface.

As most people still do their picture balancing primarily on the flesh tones, it is obviously essential that make-up should sort out these problems as speedily as possible by experimenting constantly with all the new materials and techniques that the vast modern industry in cosmetics has to offer.