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# DERIVING ANALYTICAL VOCAL TECHNIQUES FROM PERFORMANCES OF ROBIN WILLIAMS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Theatre Arts

San José State University

In Partial fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Duncan W. Graham

August 1998

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## ABSTRACT

### DERIVING ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUES FROM PERFORMANCES OF ROBIN WILLIAMS

by Duncan W. Graham

This thesis addresses the lack of a systematic analysis for performance in actor training. Actor training emphasizes the preparation of voice, body, and the characterizations of the actors' roles, the analysis of textual narrative and the historical and stylistic context of the script, but virtually no attention is paid to a systematic analysis of the performance itself.

This thesis develops a model to systematically analyze vocal performance, in order to better understand performance, and as an evaluative tool of performance and actor training. The Vocal Performance Analysis Model is applied to a representative sample of performances of Robin Williams to better understand his performance style and to identify signifying practices of his vocal performances.

This model—used by actors and instructors—will be instrumental in explaining a performer's style, in changing performance techniques based on performance, and in evaluating the actor's training process.

## Acknowledgments

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Valerie and my children Christopher and Alyssa for their patience, support, and for putting up with a "phantom" husband and father during this process.

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# Deriving Analytical Vocal Techniques from Performances of Robin Williams

## CHAPTER 1

## Introduction: Understanding and Evaluating an Actor's Style

A brilliant performance is the goal of every actor. To this end, actors prepare their voices, bodies, and the characterizations of their roles. They analyze the textual narrative and research the historical and stylistic context of the performance, but they pay little attention to a systematic analysis of the performance itself. A systematic performance analysis—discovering what worked for an individual actor in a given situation, determining how those techniques could be used in other applications, and identifying the signifying practices privileged to the performer—is integral to understanding performance techniques, style, and preparation.

The performance is the end product and therefore the only true measure of the preparation process. In the theatre arts, however, an actor's performance is not systematically analyzed when preparing for a role. In other art forms, performance evaluation is used as an interpretative and evaluative model and as a tool for preparing the next project. For instance, musicians and conductors record performances and then analyze those performances by a set of criteria. The same is true for paintings and sculpture. Certainly theatre is reviewed by critics, but that review is subjective. By analyzing a performance, the performance itself can be critiqued, the preparation process can be evaluated based on the outcome of the analysis, and performance-based changes can be implemented.

In context, an actor's performance style is no different from a painter's style. Although they are different art forms, what defines a style is how the artist uses specific elements of the art form. These criteria—or codes—can be privileged to a specific discipline and to a specific artist. In painting, such criteria as line, color, space, texture, mass, and brush stroke are elements by which a painting is analyzed and a painter's style is defined. Of course, the advantage of studying a painting is that a painting is a stationary object. Once finished, the painting remains the same forever without the ephemeral qualities of a live acting performance. Furthermore, analyzing a painting requires only a visual inspection, whereas examining an acting performance requires a visual and aural investigation of an energy moving through time and space, simultaneously communicating both physically and linguistically. Despite these obstacles, there is no reason why criteria cannot be established for analyzing acting performances. Applying the criteria requires either watching an actor perform several times (focusing on a specific aspect of his/her performance each time) or recording an actor's performances and then analyzing the recordings. Although an observational approach has been used by some actors in creating their own style, this approach has not necessarily been used in a systematic way. José Ferrer offered these thoughts about assimilating the style of other actors—as determined by his own observations—into his own:

> There were several actors whom I studied a great deal . . . at one point, I would say, any of my performances was in one way or another an imitation of one of these men. I think that the sources are still there, but now they're snowed over by the development of my own personality and they're less perceptible. . . . My imagination was touched off. I simply thought—well, there are

> personal skyrockets, you know, and eventually you have to come to the conclusion that maybe you have some of your own.[1]

José Ferrer's imagination was "touched off" by informally analyzing the style of other actors' performances. By combining his observations with his own taxonomy, his own style developed. One of the components of this thesis is to transform this informal approach into a systematic methodology for determining an actor's vocal style, and to use this methodology as a training instrument.

The focus of an actor's physical and vocal training supplies us with a rich lexicon of terms and definitions on how to get the most from an actor's voice and body. These terms and definitions are used to give an actor an arsenal of tools to perform a variety of roles. A well trained actor's voice should project well, have good resonance, a full range of pitch, good volume, nuance, and other qualities to express the emotional range of the character, be heard and understood. The objective of physical training is not necessarily to teach an actor to dance but to at least "accomplish two basic, related objectives: (1) proper body alignment, and (2) freedom from excess muscle tension."[2] For vocal training, there are arguably as many approaches as there are acting teachers. Whatever approach and terminology are applied to vocal training, whether the term "intonation" is used instead of "pitch," or "dialect" rather than "accent," basically the same criteria are applied. In the introduction to The Use and Training of the Human Voice, Arthur Lessac expresses the common goal of effective speech training:

> In the broader sense, speech is usually considered to include articulation, and all other aspects of vocal expression, such as

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[1] Lewis Funke and John E. Booth, Actors Talk About Acting (New York: Random House, 1961) 118.

[2] Charles McGaw and Larry D. Clark, Acting Is Believing, 5th ed. (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1987) 62.

> intonation, inflection, accent, emphasis, and nuance—everything used to convey intellectual content as well as emotional impact.[3]

In Introduction to Acting, Stanley Kahan states that:

> Good acting requires the effective use of the vocal mechanism to express the intellectual and emotional content of the dialogue. When the actor has succeeded in doing this we can say that he or she is using the voice properly.[4]

In the subsequent chapter, Kahan provides exercises for articulation, vocal variety, tone, rate, pitch, and "shading." (Lessac prefers the term "nuance."). These criteria for vocal training can also be used to analyze actors' vocal performances and to evaluate the success of their training.

In informal performance analysis, most emphasis is placed on how effective the actor is in making the audience or, more precisely, the individual audience member (or critic) empathize with the character, rather than on what the actor did to create that empathy. This is not to say that codifying performances is new to the acting field, because clearly the cataloguing of gestures and vocal performance has been done for centuries as part of acting training. However, the methodologies do not identify the signifying practices that are privileged to an actor and that provide the actor with a unique and consistent performance style.

In her thesis Incorporating Performance Analysis in the Training of an Actor, Janis Bergmann develops a performance analysis model for studying performance in order to evaluate an actor's communication skills[5]. However, her methodology does not address an actor's use of self-analysis of

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[3] Arthur Lessac, The Use and Training of the Human Voice, 2nd ed. (New York: BS Publications, 1973) xv.
[4] Stanley Kahan, Introduction to Acting (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1985) 168.
[5] Janis Bergmann, "Incorporating Performance Analysis in the Training of an Actor," M.A. Thesis, San José State University, May 1995.

performance as a cognitive tool or as a tool for measuring the effectiveness of an actor's training. Also, her research did not discuss delineating the signifying practices privileged to an individual actor, vis-a-vis the more universally incorporated signifying practices of performance. It also did not include identifying an actor's style through performance analysis.

Steve Vineberg, in Method Actors: Three Generations of an American Acting Style, provides a detailed comparison and critique of two actors (Rod Steiger and Ernest Borgnine) portraying the same role in different film versions of Paddy Chayefsky's Marty.

> Steiger reproduces the natural cadence of conversation as closely as possible and refrains from large-scale emotional displays. He conveys the unhappiness of Chayefsky's Bronx butcher, suggestively: He gives the character a low-frequency whine, he talks a little too quickly, . . . he stutters occasionally. . . . Steiger tamps down Marty's immediate impulses. Instead of exploding, he replies with a touch of irony while his eyes tell us he's reached the end of his patience . . . Ernest Borgnine approaches the same pair of scenes in a more traditional, histrionic manner. When he's rejected by a potential Saturday night date, he falls back on the theatrical platitude of squeezing his eyes shut to indicate the intensity of pain. He stutters, too, though not causally—it's a set-piece stutter . . . Marty's painful confession speech sounds carefully rehearsed rather than unexpectedly arrived at, because Borgnine stresses all the obvious key words.[6]

Vineberg is clearly expressing an opinion, without regard to how either actor may have been directed, using only an informal approach to the analysis. Vineberg obviously prefers Steiger's interpretation of the character to Borgnine's. However, despite what seems like a detailed critique, Vineberg's and other similar analyses are very much subjective in nature; they derive little or no constructive content. Vineberg fails to admit that his analysis is a

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[6] Steve Vineberg, Method Acting: Three Generations of an American Acting Style (New York-Schirmer Books, 1991) 1-2.

subjective opinion. He also does not address the possibility that, since Steiger's film was released three years prior to Borgnine's, Borgnine may have wanted something very different for his own Marty.

What can be learned from these observations? If several of Borgnine's other films or video performances were to be analyzed, would his stutter be inherent in all of his performances? Does Borgnine squeeze his eyes shut as a conditioned reflex to show intense pain in every painful situation? Are these signifying practices choices that Borgnine makes for this particular portrayal, or (for whatever reason) are they part of Borgnine's style that is inherent to all his portrayals? Or was Borgnine directed to stutter, and squeeze his eyes shut?

Whether such practices are part of a personal taxonomy or learned responses, observation and analysis can be used as learning tools to either correct behavior or substantiate it. After all, human beings learn to speak by listening to the daily speech of their parents and then mimicking that speech—that is, by listening and analyzing vocal performance. Evangeline Machlin states in Speech for the Stage:

> When you were an infant, you listened for almost a year before you began to speak. Your first random efforts at speech imitation were sometimes successful, sometimes unsuccessful. The successful ones were rewarded with response and commendation, and your hearing prompted you to repeat them correctly.[7]

Just as children succeed by listening, evaluating, and mimicking what they hear, actors can learn and prepare for performance by analyzing performance. Adult actors, however, can apply more sophisticated and cognitive analysis methodologies to the evaluation process. As a teaching tool, analyzing vocal performance allows for the systematic delineation of the

[7] Evangeline Machlin, Speech for the Stage (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1980) 167.

components of speech and for the application of specific criteria to what has been heard. A systematic analysis provides a framework within which a vocal performance can be evaluated and within which successful and unsuccessful parts of the performance. For actors, determining success is by nature a qualitative interpretation of the outcomes. The value of that interpretation can be determined only by the ability of the interpreter.

> All human speech involves simultaneous hearing and speaking, with the ear as the feedback system for the brain. . . . Your ear must be a good corrector. It must warn you not only of gross faults in your speech but also of less obvious ones like low volume, dull tone, or slurred articulation. Learning this fine kind of discrimination through the ear is a vital part of your speech training. It is accomplished by listening to speech as a musician listens to music, for pleasure, pure and unadulterated, and also for profit. The musician profits through analyzing what he hears, noting the dynamics, of the performance, studying the tone quality, observing the pianissimo and fortissimo passages, and appraising the skill of the performer. The player himself, the musician will presently apply this critical analysis to his own technique with great benefit. Similarly . . . listening closely and often, to live actors and to records of the best speaking voices, . . . you will gain a thorough knowledge of what speech qualities you need most.[8]

This statement is as close to describing a performance-based analytical model for training as exists in texts on actor training, but it does not go so far as to recommend that actors record their own performances for study. Recording one's performance for evaluation and training is not an unusual methodology in other performance media. Recording performances has been used extensively in industrial voice-over training, but it is not used widely for theatrical training of actors. In a random selection of 22 actor training texts (circa 1985-97), other than Machlin's reference, only one training text contains any advocacy for the use of recordings for training purposes. Robert Cohen, in his book Acting One,

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[8] Machlin 178.

states, "Sometimes the use of a tape recorder or video recorder can be most helpful in spotting what the critics saw and correcting it."[9]

An interview with Sidney Poitier validates Machlin's philosophy. When Poitier decided on an acting career, he determined that his West Indies accent was not suitable for stage work.

> I studied the diction of people on the radio because my speech was obviously West Indian and not as clear or as cultivated as one needs to have it for theatre work. . . . So I would listen to the radio and I would repeat what I heard on the radio, mostly news broadcasts. And in time my speech began to lighten in the areas where it was particularly broad.[10]

In this particular case, Poitier studied the performances (radio newscasts) of others to improve his own vocal performance.

Stand-up comedians and impersonators also may study the "performance" of others in preparing their own performances. In fact, in biographies and interviews, some have admitted that they modeled their own "acting style" on another artist's performances. For example, Robin Williams freely admits that his style is greatly influenced by Jonathan Winters. In fact, Williams affirmed that "I am the direct comic descendant of Winters."[11] That is not to say that Williams' and Winters' styles are identical; it is obvious from even a cursory examination of their performances that they are not. Separating those signifying practices that are privileged to an individual actor not only from another actor but also from more universal signifying practices of performance is the differences in their individual styles. The development of a systematic

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[9] Robert Cohen, Acting One (Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 1989) 96.
[10] Funke and Booth 374.
[11] Karin Adir, The Great Clowns of American Television, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1988) 235.

approach to studying performance will facilitate and formalize the process of identifying an actor's style—studying performance to explain performance.

Despite the potential benefit from studying performance in order to explain performance, actors are reluctant to do so. Karen Valentine states: "I don't watch the 'dailies' because it can ruin the spontaneity if you have to reshoot. Also, you might see something you don't like and start putting shackles on yourself."[12]

The "loss of spontaneity" by watching one's own performance, is questionable. Creativity and inspiration come from a variety of sources—for example, from directors and from other actors, both in rehearsal and in performance—so why not from observing one's own performance or rehearsal? Drawing Valentine's line of reasoning to its logical conclusion, one would have to question the validity of any rehearsal.

But Valentine is not alone in her disdain for watching her own work. Olympia Dukakis, when asked if she viewed "dailies," said, "No, I cannot watch myself because I become too . . . I scrutinize myself too strongly."[13] When pushed further for an explanation, Dukakis admitted that watching "dailies" was a matter of exposing vulnerabilities: "I feel like the camera is seeing everything, like my big nose, or . . . the things that I feel are too big, too small, too this, too that, and the camera sees everything."[14]

Arguably, Dukakis articulated the true reason for people's hesitancy to observe themselves is that the camera is unforgiving and all flaws or self-

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[12] Harry Hill and Robert Barton, A Voice for the Theatre (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1985) 248.
[13] Mel Shapiro, An Actor Performs (Forth Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1997) 177.
[14] Shapiro 177.

perceived flaws are exposed. In Voice and the Actor, Cicely Berry substantiates this idea:

> Now the image you have of your own voice is often disturbingly different from the way it actually sounds to other people. It often does not tally with how you think of yourself. . . . You do not hear your own voice as other people hear it, partly because you hear it via the bone conduction and vibrations in your own head, so that you never hear the end product. But, more important, you hear it subjectively—that is, tied up with your own conceptions of sound, of how you would like to sound, and also tied up with what you know you want to convey, for you are on the inside. So the impression you have of your own voice is completely subjective.
>
> Because it is such a personal statement, criticism of your voice is very close to criticism of yourself, and can easily be destructive.[15]

The hesitancy of actors to observe themselves was evident in two beginning acting classes that I taught at San José State University to 24 students during the Fall 1996 semester and to 28 students during the Spring 1997 semester. In each class, all the monologues and scenes were videotaped, with the intent that by studying the tapes and critiquing the performances with the students, the students would better understand the verbal and written notes I had given them about their performances. Of the 52 students involved, only 4 volunteered to view their tapes. The rest of the students were quite adamant about not viewing their tapes. While this is certainly not conclusive evidence of an innate fear of self-examination, it does support the concept. Although this thesis does not delve into this issue, the resistance to self-examination may be one reason why performance analysis is not more widespread as a training technique.

The policies of the actors' union are also a barrier to performance analysis. The Actors' Equity Association expressly prohibits any type of

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[15] Cicely Berry, Voice and the Actor (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1973) 8.

recording of a performance—or even of a rehearsal—except in extremely limited circumstances.

> Except as provided below, there shall be no televising, broadcasting, visual and/or sound recording, motion picture filming, video taping, or other mechanical or electronic reproduction (hereinafter "REPRODUCTION") in whole or in part, of any production, including rehearsals, in which members of Equity are employed under the terms of this agreement without the express permission of Equity and under terms and conditions established by it. This rule shall also apply to any REPRODUCTION made within a period of sixteen (16) weeks following the final performance of the production.[16]

Equity's rules 56.B thorugh 56.K explain precisely under what circumstances a theatre may record any part of a performance or rehearsal, the amount of pay (minimum of one week's salary) each actor must be paid, the length of a recording, and so on. Nowhere do the rules state that actors can record their own or other actors' performances or rehearsals under any circumstances. On the contrary, Rule 56.G. states:

> This rule [56.A.] shall apply in all instances irrespective of the use made of such REPRODUCTION, the method employed in obtaining same, or the length or character of the "part" of said production so reproduced.[17]

Although the recording issue is discussed within the Actors' Equity Association, there is not overwhelming support to change the rules even to allow actors to use rehearsal tapes to work on their craft.

Viewing a videotaped performance is a completely different experience than participating in a live performance. However, for the purposes of determining a performer's style, it is necessary. To analyze their own performances as objectively as possible, actors they need an observational

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[16] Actors' Equity Association Agreement and Rules Governing Employment, Rule 56.A. 66.
[17] Actors' Equity Association Agreement and Rules Governing Employment , Rule 56.G 70.

perspective outside of themselves. Accordingly, recording the performance is essential in providing this objectivity.

An actor's body and voice comprise the instrument of an actor's performance. The actor uses body and voice in infinite combinations with varying degrees of complexity. Because physiology is an integral part of vocal production, an actor's physiology determines many qualities of an actor's voice and, therefore, the sounds that the actor can create. In short, an actor's vocal destiny is determined by his physiology.

This thesis will detail the physiological components of vocal production. Further, it will develop a model to define and analyze the vocal qualities that are privileged to an individual actor.

A systematic model for vocal performance analysis will provide a consistent measure by which performances can be evaluated. This model will be instrumental in explaining a performer's style, in changing performance techniques based on performance, and in evaluating the actor's training process.

This systematic model will be applied to a representative sample of performances of Robin Williams. Williams was chosen because his performances are vocally driven. A performance by Robin Williams is identifiable much more readily by his voice than any other aspect of his acting. The phyiscality of his performances is not especially compelling nor memorable, rather it is his voice that brings recognition to his performances. His voice is the strongest element in all his performances, from stand-up comedy to animation. It is Williams's voice that defines his performer style.

# CHAPTER 2

## Differentiating a Performer's Style from Performance Signifiers

A significant amount of documentation argues for the existence of signification codes to express emotions or a physical condition through gestures, voice, and body movements. The same arguments can be made for the relationship between actors and their acting style. In playing a role, actors use two types of signifying codes—vocal qualities, gestures, or movements—to portray the emotions and physical conditions of characters. Signifiers of the first type are vocal qualities, gestures, or movements consciously chosen by the actor; those of the second type are not consciously chosen by the actor to express a particular emotion or physical condition. The second type of signifiers become a part of the actor's style; they derive from predominant usage based within the actor's personal codification or taxonomy. That is, they comprise an actor's characteristic style—one the actor brings to every role and uses to signify the emotions and physical conditions portrayed. An example of the first type of signifier is the convention of fanning oneself to indicate being hot. When television talk-show host/comedian Johnny Carson touched the knot of his tie when a joke failed during a monologue is an example of the second type.

The first type of signifying codes described above is a performance code—those signifiers used to express the emotions and physical conditions of the character. The second type is a performer code—those signifiers that are privileged to an individual actor in expressing the performance code of the character (that is, that define the actor's own style). The terms "performance

code" and "performer code" were introduced during a lecture by Dr. Karl Toepfer.[18] According to Dr. Toepfer in "Decontextualisation and Performance Analysis":

> The *performance code* is "anonymous," so to speak, insofar as it consists of conventions or rhetorical devices that are not unique to any performance or cultural context, but to the phenomenon of 'performance' as a recurrent cognitive activity.
>
> The *performer code* refers to signifying practices that are unique to a performer because they recur only in performances of the performer, regardless of the narrative contexts in which the performer appears.[19]

The performer code exists independently of the performance code and can include personal or nervous habits, mannerisms, and vocal qualities.

Using a systematic analysis of performances, an individual actor's trademark or style can be identified by the dominant signifiers in that actor's performer code, as seen across different roles and different performance mediums. This thesis will develop such a systematic analysis that focuses on the vocal elements of the performer and performance codes.

For balance, analyzing different and diverse roles of an actor to determine trademark and style signifiers is necessary. Therefore, this study encompasses the performances of Robin Williams in Mrs. Doubtfire and Good Morning, Vietnam; the stand-up comedy audio recording of A Night at the Met; and the vocal performances in the animation films Aladdin and Return of Jafar.

The methodology allows for the establishment of a historic and semiotic context for studying emotional signifiers; research semiotic models to establish a basis for indexing dominant signifiers in the performance and performer

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[18] Karl Toepfer, lecture, TA220-Performance Study Seminar, San Jose State University (San José, CA, Fall Semester 1995).

[19] Karl Toepfer, "Decontextualisation and Performance Analysis," Bij Opendoek, Luk Van den Dries and Frank Peeters, eds. (Antwerp: Pelckmuns, 1995) 152, 154.

codes; and apply those principles to the analysis of performances to determine an actor's trademark or style. As early as 1620 such semiotic models were introduced:

> In all the declarative conceits of gesture whereby the body, instructed by nature, can emphatically vent and communicate a thought, and in the propriety of its utterance express the silent agitations of the mind, the hand, that busy instrument, is most talkative, whose language is as easily perceived and understood as if man had another mouth or fountain of discourse in his hand.[20]

This is the opening line of John Bulwer's Chirologia: Or the Natural Language of the Hand and Chironomia: Or the Art of Manual Rhetoric, and is the "first English treatise devoted exclusively to gesticulation and the first to explain the execution of certain gestures . . . which pictures the positions of the hands and fingers."[21]

We have come to realize that the gestural language, which Bulwer thought to be comprehensive and universal, is based on a taxonomy of white Anglo-Saxon origin. Although Bulwer's treatise is a good representation of his culture, it is not universal. It does, however, establish the study of gestures as a means of portraying thoughts, desires, or physical conditions within a scientific context. Long before Bulwer, and ever since, actors have been analyzing their characters' emotions and attempting to convey emotions or conditions through both gestures and voice. The use of gestures can be manifested overtly, as in mime, commedia, and melodrama; or more subtly as in naturalism and realism. The point is, when an emotion or condition is signified to an audience, the audience must be able to interpret the signifier for communication to succeed.

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[20] John Bulwer, Chirologia: Or the Natural Language of the Hand and Chironomia: Or the Art of Manual Rhetoric, James Cleary, ed. (Carbondale IL: Southern Illinois Press, 1974) 15.
[21] Bulwer xxvii.

The signifier an actor chooses to communicate a character's emotion is an element of the performance code. The performance code is comprised of those signifiers—linguistic and paralinguistic—used to portray a character's emotional response or physical condition. Although many catalogues of gestural meanings exist, the intention is not to develop a dictionary of performance code signifiers, nor to suggest there is a finite number of signifiers from which to choose. Rather, the intention is to establish the theory that an actor does in fact choose performance signifiers to portray an emotion or physical condition based on a character's taxonomy. Contained within the text, the characters' taxonomies are derived from their own personal histories of an ethnic, political, and socio-economic base; gender, education, age, marital status, physical condition, and all other factors comprising their identities. A rudimentary example would be an actor whose character does not have the use of his/her arms, and thus can not use the performance code signifier of rubbing the upper arms with the opposite hands to portray being cold. Another choice—stomping the feet, shivering, or vocalizing a "brrrrrr" sound—would have to be made. In his discussion of "Nonverbal Communication in the Theatre," Fernando Poyatos states:

> This is the basic craft of the stage, to act as real-life people without being so, to develop further that counter-metamorphosis of sensible signs that were reduced to just a visual medium, the text, and later given life in the reader's [actor's] mind, and infuse them with life, thus generating an additional and ultimate process of sign encoding and decoding. . . . Granted that between the author's character and the reader-actor/director's one there exists a *behavioral margin* which makes it possible for both to see Willy Loman, Hedda Gabbler or Hamlet slightly different as to their paralanguage and kinesics, just as people in real life may naturally vary due to certain circumstances. It is precisely this

> narrow personality margin, . . . that betrays the functional nature of the dramatic character.[22]

The success of an actor portraying a fictional character depends upon the actor's ability to execute performance codes that are correctly interpreted by an audience and consistent with the actor's intended expression of the character. An actor's decision to use a performance code signifier is based, in part, on the taxonomy of the character, on the performance medium (film, video, or live stage), and on the venue (large hall or intimate performance space). It is also based on the taxonomic coding of the actor—what Poyatos refers to as the behavioral margin. It is this coding that allows two actors to bring different interpretations to the same role. The taxonomic differences between actors are manifested in the different acting styles of actors.

James Garner starred in The Rockford Files, a popular television series in the 1980s. Because of his acting style, a strong identification developed between the actor and the character. Consider then, how different the character of Jim Rockford would have been if the original actor wanted for the role, Robert Blake, had been cast instead.[23] Two different individuals—two different actors—would have created two different characterizations of Jim Rockford.

An actor's style is determined by all aspects of personal culture—or taxonomy—that manifests in what Toepfer defines as the performer code. The performer code is comprised of signifiers that are recognizable as privileged to an individual actor. That is, whether these signifiers are linguistic elements,

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[22] Fernando Poyatos, New Perspectives in Nonverbal Communication, (New York, Pergamon Press, 1983) 324-25.
[23] Ron Miller, "The City of Angels Bedevils the Casual P.I. that James Garner Plays, but He Keeps Coming Back. Rockford's More Likable than L.A." San Jose Mercury News, Living Section, 26 Nov. 1994, 3D.

personal mannerisms, habits, or idiosyncrasies, they are all signifying elements that an actor brings to performances.

The performer code—an actor's stylistic signature or trademark—is exemplified by Charlie Chaplin's walk (feet in 1st position, knees bent, and body side movement with each step, and cane at his side rotating in a reverse circular motion pivoting at his hand) and by Groucho Marx's raising of his eyebrows twice in quick succession while wiggling a cigar at the side of his mouth during an aside. Certainly the qualities, rhythms, and melody of John Wayne's voice are so much a part of his performer code that an imitation of his voice is easily recognizable as John Wayne's even when badly imitated.

In The Language of Gestures, MacDonald Critchley delineates two types of gestures—pantomime and expressive movement—within a clinical and anatomical study that support the theory of performance and performer codes. He states: "Pantomimic movements are deliberately executed actions of a high prepositional content."[24] The pantomimic movements are easily compared to a performance code in that they are voluntarily used to express a person's (or character's) desires, thoughts, or condition. They are used by choice and selection, and are conscious acts of communication that can be used as a linguistic substitute. The index finger extended upward and placed with the thumb side of the finger against pursed lips to signify to another to be quiet, is a widely used performance code signifier. This communication is enhanced when accompanied with a vocalized "sh" sound. If the "sh" is short, it signifies a certain urgency. If the "sh" is drawn out for several seconds, it signifies a different dynamic depending on the given circumstances.

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[24] Macdonald Critchley, ed. The Language of Gesture (Springfield, IL: Chas. C. Thomas, 1977) 28-29.

Actors are constantly faced with making choices from performance code signifiers to express physical conditions that belie actual performance conditions. During a summer-stock production in an open-air tent, where the temperature is over 80°F, an actress wearing five layers of clothing under thousands of watts of heat-producing lighting fixtures rubs her hands on the upper part of her sleeves, stomps her feet, and vocalizes "brrrrrrrs" in the opening scene to indicate being cold. The pantomimic gestures and vocalization she has chosen are examples of performance code signifiers that communicate her character's condition.

Critchley states that a gesture movement (performer code signifier) differs from the pantomimic movement in that:

> Gesture movements of the face and limbs belong to another physiological level and differ from pantomimic movements in their clinical and neuroanatomical correlates. Movement of gesture must be regarded as less voluntary and more automatic that those of pantomime. . . . Some representatives of this group indeed stand out as being automatic; such as the expressive movements of the face which accompany the act of speaking, or which may be in action independently of speech. Although not devoid of voluntary control, they are outside the category of volitional activities.[25]

Performer code signifiers are automatic in that they are very much ingrained within an actor's personal codification, but they can be voluntarily controlled when desired, although not without difficulty or practice. Some actors will work very hard to drop a "natural accent" or dialect—one that is part of a personal cultural codification—in order to make themselves more marketable. Sidney Poitier's West Indies accent is a good example. Other actors maintain their accents, which become elements of their performer codes. For example, Willie

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[25] Critchley 29-30.

Nelson's and Dolly Parton's southern accents are part of their performer codes due to their personal codification (being from the southern United States). Without seeing Nelson and Parton, it would very difficult to identify them if you heard them speaking with Brooklyn accents; if they were speaking with their natural accents, it would be much easier.

Within a linguistic context, the theory of performance and performer codes is supported by George F. Mahl and Gene Schulze in their introduction to "Psychological Research in the Extralinguistic Area:"

> When an individual speaks he engages in a special class of behavior-linguistic behavior. The essence of it is the production, via the speech apparatus, of institutionalized sounds organized into institutionalized patterns. The immediate purpose of this behavior is to communicate with another individual [the audience] to interact by means of messages. From the strictly linguistic standpoint, speaking behavior is determined by two things: (1) the code itself [the text] and (2) the intention to communicate a particular message in that code [performance code].
>
> These linguistic factors, however, do not fully determine the behavior of the speaker [actor]. One important qualification is that the code does not completely mold or restrict the content of the behavior. There may be variations both within the linguistic behavior itself and in accompanying non-institutionalized behavior. . . . From the linguistic standpoint we may say that the same message [performance code signifier] can be communicated regardless of the alternatives [performer code signifier] used.[26]

In their argument, Mahl and Schulze include linguistic variations such as language (French, English, and so on), sentence complexity, and vocabulary size. For actors, however, these variations are generally not their own but rather are found in the text, and as a result cannot be considered as part of a performer code.

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[26] George F. Mahl and Gene Schulze, "Psychological Research in the Extralinguistic Area," Approaches to Semiotics, Thomas Sebeok et al. ed. (The Hague: Mouton, 1964) 51.

In searching for a model for performance analysis, many of the classification measures found are not applicable to this research for two reasons. First, as previously stated, measures that deal with textual issues such as vocabulary, language, and sentence structure would be more relevant to a writer's performer code than an actor's. Second, some measures, similar to the ones discussed in the Mahl and Schulze material, are psychological in nature. They focus on the reasons for speech patterns, delivery speed, pauses, etc. They are thus privileged to the subject (person) being studied and therefore not pertinent to my analysis. This thesis does not discuss the psychological reasons for performer codes—only their existence.

As a result of not finding an appropriate model for a systematic approach to performer code vocal analysis, such a model for vocal performance in Chapter 4 will be established.

Because this thesis will use a systematic analysis to identify vocal performance signifying practices, it was necessary to use an actor whose performer style is predominantly privileged by the actor's voice. To that end, this discussion will use a systematic analysis model to determine the performer style or trademark of Robin Williams. Williams was chosen because his performances are more vocally driven than physically driven. That is, Robin Williams's performances are defined not by the physical choices he makes as an actor, but by his vocal virtuosity in performances.

In the 1992 animated film Aladdin, Williams did the voice of the character Genie. In fact, a recorded comedy routine of Robin Williams provided the inspiration for Genie's character. Aladdin directors Ron Clements and John Musker wanted a more "cartoony" Genie than the original treatment had

proposed, and had Williams in mind for the part. However, Jeffrey Katzenberg, head of Disney's full-length animation department, wasn't convinced initially.

> Katzenberg, whose opinion could be swayed by only the most persuasive, articulate of arguments, wanted a more realistic Genie. All it took was Eric Goldberg animating a twenty second routine about schizophrenia from a Williams comedy album. A crazy Genie it would be.[27]

From its initial concept, it was the voice of Robin Williams that defined the character. Moreover, it was Williams' performer code that not only defined Genie, but was in fact responsible for changing the text of the character. According to Musker:

> We actually wrote a few of the Genie's lines. . . . We started with a script. When we worked with Shakespeare [Robin Williams] on the first scene he did literally twenty-five takes—of which eight were scripted. In the other . . . seventeen, we would take the structure of the scene and he would kind of wing it. Then we would have to reconstruct the scene. . . .[28]

Genie's first scene was "originally meant to last 30 seconds and suddenly it went on for ten minutes."[29] Further evidence that Williams's performer code defined the character of Genie is offered by Linda Larkin, the voice of Jasmine, more than six months into the project:

> Our [referring to her and Scott Weinger—voice of Aladdin] lines are just written regular, but all his lines are written between brackets, such as, [SAY SOMETHING LIKE THIS. . . ]. And he improvises, and goes on and on, and does such wonderful things.[30]

After the release of Aladdin, Disney breached an agreement with Robin Williams about using Williams's voice for merchandising products. As a result,

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[27] David Koenig, Mouse Under Glass: Secrets of Disney Animation & Theme Parks (Irvine, CA: Bonaventure Press, 1997) 216-17.
[28] John Culhane, Disney's Aladdin: The Making of an Animated Film (New York: Hyperion, 1992) 26-27.
[29] Koenig 216.
[30] Culhane 34.

Williams refused to be cast as Genie in Return of Jafar, Disney's home video sequel to Aladdin. Textually, the role of Genie is as essential to the plot of Return of Jafar as it is to the plot of Aladdin. However, the character of Genie was defined so strongly in Aladdin by Williams's performer code that when Disney made Return of Jafar, Williams's voice was impersonated by Dan Castellaneta. If the text or graphics had defined the character, there would have been no reason to impersonate Williams's vocal performance for Return of Jafar. Comparing the two performances of Genie in Aladdin and Return of Jafar, vis-à-vis the Vocal Performance Analysis Model in Chapter 4, it is obvious that Castellaneta is imitating Williams's performer code in his interpretation of Genie.

The fact that Williams's performance defined Genie is further evidenced by promotions of the Aladdin and the King of Thieves animation, the third in the Aladdin series. Several of the promotions for Aladdin and the King of Thieves emphasized that Robin Williams was back as Genie. No other actor was mentioned in any of the promotions. Even though five actors were returning and four had been the voices in all three films, Williams was the only one mentioned, and was the only one with star billing on the video jacket and in the credits. Clearly, the character of Genie is defined by Williams's performance style—his trademark—defined by his vocal performer code.

Williams's performer code is rooted in his voice. The physicality of his performances are not what define his performer code in the way that Charlie Chaplin's walk became his trademark, or the athleticism of Gene Kelly, or the grace of Fred Astaire. In Good Morning, Vietnam, the signature of Williams's performance is done "on air" as a disk jockey. During these comic sequences,

Williams is seated behind a console and a microphone, in such a way that very little of him is visible. To facilitate visual changes during these sequences, quick cuts are shown from different radios, Vietnamese street life, and various military personnel listening to radios or performing daily duties. Even though Williams's performance is a solo, virtually all the attention is given to his vocal, not his physical, performance.

In Mrs. Doubtfire, Williams has a solo performance in a scene with several plastic toy dinosaurs. During this comedic segment, his play with the dinosaurs is not unlike any child's play, and as such is not intriguing. However, the dinosaurs are also physical respondents to Williams's ad-libbed dialogue. It is this dialogue that is is compelling and interesting in this scene, not the physical performance. That is, what is memorable about the scene is what is spoken—not what the dinosaurs do, or what Williams does with them.

These are but a few examples of why this thesis maintains that Robin Williams's performances are vocally, not physically, driven. Williams's vocal performance is independent of his physical performance, and thus his style is defined through his vocal performance. Williams admits as much himself. In response to questions about the dispute with Disney, Williams said,

> Disney executives agreed not to use my voice to merchandise products inspired by the film. . . . I don't sell stuff, it's the one thing I don't do. In *Mork and Mindy,* they did Mork dolls—I didn't mind the dolls; the image is theirs. But the voice, that's *me;* I gave them my *self.*[31]

For this thesis, it was necessary to analyze an actor whose vocal performance is independent of physicality in order to focus solely on the voice as a performance entity. Because Robin Williams's performances are vocally

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[31] Jessie Kornbluth, "Robin Williams's Change of Life," New York 22 Nov.1993: 40.

driven, in that his vocal performance defines his character, not the physicality of his portrayal, his vocal performance is independent of what he does physically. For that reason Robin Williams seemed an excellent choice. Another important consideration was the independence of the performer style from the performance medium. Williams's performances are not privileged to a specific medium, and the vocal signifying practices of his performer style persist across the mediums of film, animation, documentaries, live performance, stand-up comedy, and video. Additionally, the many qualities and elements in his vocal performances (to be discussed later), provide sufficient substance for analysis.

The vocal signifying practices of Robin Williams that define his performer code are evident in every performance. The strength and omnipresence of these signifying practices are what determine his trademark, or style, and are privileged to his performances. If another actor were to employ the same set of signifying practices, it would generally be understood that the performer was trying to emulate Williams's style or impersonate his acting.

# CHAPTER 3

## Cognitive Approach to Actor Training through Performance Analysis

Actor training emphasizes the preparation of an actor for performance. Actors prepare their voices, bodies, and characterizations of roles. They analyze the textual narrative and research historical and stylistic context. But they pay little attention to an analysis of the performance itself. Reviewers may conduct an informal performance analysis as part of developing a subjective or qualitative overall opinion about a production or individual performance; and directors or stage managers may make qualitative observations. But performance analysis is rarely used in actor training due to the lack of a comprehensive, systematic model for performance analysis. Further, few recognize that performance-based analysis is a valid tool for actor training.

Systematic performance analysis is used in other arts as a cognitive approach to, and an evaluative process of, training; as an essential tool for understanding performance techniques; and as a method for determining the signifying practices that comprise an individual's style. For example, in preparation for rehearsals and ultimately a concert, conductors study a musical score while listening to a recording of the work to be performed.

In an interview, Emily Ray, conductor of the Nova Vista Symphony, outlined five criteria that she uses to analyze a recording when preparing her own interpretation of a musical performance: articulation, phrasing, tempo, dynamics, and violin bowing. She then makes notes in her score as to how she will approach the piece. Her intent is not to imitate the recorded performance,

but to use the recording as a tool for her own interpretation and execution of the music.

On a less formal basis, Ray also analyzes the recording for interpretative choices that another conductor makes. "I listen to how the conductor interprets specific passages to see if it works or not, and that helps determine what I can do differently." She further states that, "analyzing recordings was pretty standard in conducting classes."[32] In terms of recording performances for the purpose of analysis, Ray indicated that sometimes she records a performance or rehearsal to hear whether her orchestra sounds as she perceives it to sound.

> I have a very good sense of balance, so I don't usually record for that, but occasionally, certain halls, especially ones I'm not familiar with, respond to certain frequencies better, and listening to a recording will point that out—and that allows me to adjust the sound the next time we are in there.[33]

David Ramadanoff, conductor of the Master Sinfonia and the Marin Symphony, not only concurs with Ray, but also uses video recordings as an evaluative process for his own conducting. In a personal interview, Ramadanoff said:

> I videotape my conducting of performances to see if my style of conducting and cueing are clear. I use the tapes to improve my conducting—to change how I cue an entrance—if I use just my left hand, or do I include eye contact with it. The camera doesn't lie, and sometimes even though I think I am being clear, the tape shows me the reality—and they aren't always the same."[34]

Clearly, both Ray and Ramadanoff find videotaping valuable in distinguishing the reality and their perception of their own performances. When Ramadanoff finds an element that obscures his cueing, or discovers a habit he has

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[32] Emily Ray, personal interview August 18, 1997.
[33] Ray.
[34] David Ramadanoff, personal interview August 20, 1997.

developed that diminishes his conducting, he makes "a very conscious effort to correct such practices in the future."[35] For him, performance analysis is a cognitive process and an integral part of his continuous training and improvement.

When asked whether the use of videotaping was a common practice, both Ray and Ramadanoff concurred that videotaping was becoming more and more prevalent. During the same interview, Ramadanoff added: "In conducting master class, the teacher videotapes my conducting, and later he critiques my conducting while we view the tape."[36] Prior to this practice, conductors would request a colleague or mentor to view them conducting and ask for feedback—much as a theatrical director does for an actor.

These two conductors use performance analysis as a cognitive process for ongoing training and as an evaluative tool for implementing performance-based changes in future work. They substantiate the argument not only that observational learning is a valuable element of the training process, but also that observation is valuable for obtaining a qualitative measure of training effectiveness based on performance. The same principles can be applied to analyzing acting performance. Because acting has both aural and physical components, it is a more complex entity to analyze. However, this complexity only strengthens the need for a methodology for deconstructing the performance, in order to study the effectiveness of the performance and, ultimately, the training.

During the Fall 1996 and Spring 1997 semesters at San José State University, I taught two classes of beginning acting students. Part of the

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[35] Ramadanoff.
[36] Ramadanoff.

curriculum required students to perform twice both a memorized, rehearsed monologue, and a memorized, rehearsed duo scene. The first performance of each work was a preview performance, and the second was considered a final performance. The final performance followed the preview performance by two weeks. Between the two performances, the students were to make adjustments based on verbal and written notes that I had given them immediately after their preview performances. Four students agreed to watch their own videotaped preview performances with me so we could analyze their performances and so that they could relate the notes I had given them with their performances. Without exception, viewing the tapes not only reinforced and clarified the notes I had provided, but also generated other ideas for improving their performances. The changes were implemented in their final performances, and the number of adjustments made from preview performance to final performance was more for these four students than for other students in the class. Though this data is only anecdotal, it does indicate there is value in performance analysis as a cognitive tool and as a measure for evaluating training. The methodology of a systematic aproach with analytical criteria in evaluating recordings has proven successful in other disciplines.

As is apparent in music and art, analytical criteria—or codes—can be privileged to a specific discipline, and categories for analysis do exist in the theatrical lexicon. For example, vocal training emphasizes variety of pitch, vocal range, rhythm, speed of delivery, articulation, dialect, and volume. However, such criteria are almost always used to train the actor independent of performance. Outside of acting classes and workshops, very little systematic and comprehensive analysis is done. A lot of the effort goes into preparation,

but little is done to analyze the outcomes (performances) based on these criteria. So the evidence for the effective use of performance analysis as a training tool for acting is not substantive. However, in other disciplines, performance analysis is used very effectively.

Impersonators study the "performance" of others when preparing their own performances. They spend hours watching and listening to tapes or recordings, and then mimic what they see and hear until satisfied that they have captured the "essence" of the impersonated. That is to say, the impersonators are able to duplicate the performer codes of whomever they are impersonating. This mimetic approach is a fundamental learning process ignored by mainstream actor training. Yet, as stated previously, some actors admit that they honed their own "acting style" (usually early in their careers) by studying other artist's performances informally. For example, Robin Williams freely admits that his style was greatly influenced by Jonathan Winters. Like Winters, Williams has a very quick-witted improvisational style, utilizing self-created personalities or characters. Williams is not a copy of Winters, however. In his comedy routines and television shows, Winters used fully developed, recurring characters such as Maude Frickert, Chester Hunihugger, Maynard Tetlinger, Winslow G. Flydipper, Lance Loveguard, and General Lamar B. Gumbody. Williams's characters (to be discussed later) are just as iconoclastic as Winters's, but are not as fully developed. They are spontaneous and mercurial, created by the stimuli of the moment.

Although every performer has a performance style that is privileged to that actor, what is lacking is a systematic approach to identify those signifying practices via performance analysis. Volumes have been written on how to use

the voice for acting; how to get the most out of a vocal range; how to exercise the tongue to increase flexibility; how to breathe for speech; how to take care of the vocal instrument; and how to make effective use of pauses, rhythm, speed, and volume. What is missing is a model based on performance analysis to evaluate these elements of vocal training categorically and to determine an actor's vocal performer code.

# CHAPTER 4

## The Vocal Performance Analysis Model

The components of the vocal mechanism determine what the vocal instrument can produce. For that reason, a model for performance analysis must include the elements that affect the creation of sound within an actor's body as well as what the actor does with the sounds created. Understanding the operational parameters of the vocal instrument will aid an actor in determining possible performance-based changes. For instance, after applying the performance analysis to his/her own performances, an actor may want to lower the pitch of his/her natural vocal register[37] . To do so, he/she must understand the principles involved and the extent to which he/she is physically able to accomplish this objective.

The Vocal Performance Analysis Model[38] is comprised of six signifying categories that are related to the vocal instrument itself (including the mechanics of vocal production), elements of vocal production generally stressed in actor training, and signifying practices that fall outside the parameters of language.[39] The six categories are: **Physiology, Vocal Colorization, Nonlanguage Utilities, Vocal Signature, Cultural Bias,** and **Performance Qualities.**

**Physiology** is the set of physical attributes that determine the sounds a body is capable of producing. These are factors over which an actor has no control. For example, an actor cannot control the length of the larynx or vocal

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[37] Vocal register is defined as: the range of pitch used in normal speech.
[38] See Appendix A.
[39] For the purposes of the model, references made to language will be assumed to be the English language unless otherwise stated.

folds, which determine a person's range of pitch; the size of the vocal and nasal cavities, which determine resonance; the structure of the tongue and jaw, which define articulation dexterity; the acuteness of hearing, which allows the imitation and mimicking of sounds heard; or the accuracy and speed with which the neurological system transmits signals among the brain, the auditory system, and the vocal instrument.

Technology exists to determine precisely the effect or limitations of an actor's physiology on his performance. It is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, to perform X-rays or to conduct such comprehensive testing.

Vocal production is a complex system of physical and neurological stimuli and responses. Consider the process as the word "tea" is said. The brain, based on hearing and saying "tea" for years, sends the neurological message to the lungs (for air, volume, and intensity) and to the vocal folds (for sound). The air is subsequently routed through the oral and nasal cavities (for resonance), and to the lips, teeth, jaw, and tongue (for articulation). Simultaneously, as the air is pushed from the lungs through the vocal folds, the appropriate muscles tense or relax, the vocal folds open allowing the right amount of air through, the tongue strikes behind the teeth, the lips pull apart to the sides as the air rushes through the vocal and nasal cavities, and "tea" is vocalized. The time required to produce the word "tea" is approximately 3/100 of a second.[40] But it doesn't stop there, because as soon as the word is spoken, the ears perceive the sound and send that neurological impulse to the brain for confirmation that "tea" in fact came out as "tea" and not "thee," "tree," "three," or some other aberration. Complicating this process is that most sentences

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[40] Osamu Fujimura, ed. Vocal Physiology: Voice Production, Mechanism, and Function (New York, Raven Press, 1988) 193.

contain more than one word. When "tea" is part of the phrase "Madame, tea is served," the process is repeated for each sound, and the brain (via the ears) decides whether the proper emphasis for the interpretation and communication of the sentence was placed on each word.

In the most fundamental way, physiology dictates the body's ability to produce language and sound. The size and shape of the components of the vocal tract determine the type of voice each individual can create. The size, shape, and elasticity of the vocal folds, the length of the vocal tract, and the size and shape of the vocal and nasal cavities, determine both the range of pitch each individual can create and the qualities of the voice.

The purpose of the physiological category is not to suggest that actors measure the diameter and length of their larynx or the size of their vocal and nasal cavities, but rather to understand the function of each element and the effect that the components of vocal production have on the sounds that can be created, in terms of both the potential and the limitations of the vocal instrument.

For example, although lacking quantitative data on the vocal instruments of actors Carole Kane and James Earl Jones, it is presumed impossible (based on visual and aural observations), for Ms. Kane's voice to be as low and resonant as Mr. Jones's. This is not to say that Ms. Kane can't lower her vocal register and give her voice more resonance than it currently has, but that physically she does not possess the vocal instrument capable of producing as low a pitch as Mr. Jones. From the perspective of brass musical instruments, a trumpet (no matter how adept the player) cannot produce tones as low in pitch as a tuba, due to the difference in size and length of the two instruments.

Sound originates as air passes through the vocal folds, which sit at the top of the tracheae, attached front and rear. The vocal folds function as a valve when air from the lungs pushes from below, causing the folds to separate at the point of least resistance. The vocal folds then respond by rebounding into the initial position, essentially shutting off the supply of air. The oscillating action of the vocal folds sends these compressions of air into the vocal tract where sound is created "by the impact of the compressed subglottal air against stationary air in the vocal tract" [41] As the compressions of air from the vocal folds hit the continuous column of tracheal air, it produces acoustic energy. This process is extremely fast, and the "rate of this rhythmic oscillation corresponds to the fundamental frequency of the tone produced."[42] Longer vocal folds can produce lower-pitched sound than shorter vocal folds. The length of the vocal folds determines the range of pitch that can be created; the shape of the vocal folds in part determines the quality of voice. The average length of the vocal folds in men is 17-25 millimeters, and 12.5-17 millimeters in women. Not only are the folds shorter in women than in men, but the

> . . . free medial edge is sharper in the female, whereas in the male this is more rounded, and a greater area comes into opposition with the other fold. These anatomical differences are responsible for the characteristic quality of the voice in the male and female. . . . It is not only the length of the vocal folds which determines the pitch of the voice but also the total mass of the vocal folds. In producing lower tones the folds are broad, their tension is relatively low and the whole length opens and closes.[43]

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[41] Linda E . Spencer. "From Speech to Song: Imagery and Anatomy," The NATS Journal, November/December 1989: 28.
[42] Spencer 28.
[43] A.S. Khambata. "Anatomy and Physiology of Voice Production: The Phenomenal Voice", Music and The Brain ed. Macdonald Critchley and R. A. Henson (Springfield, IL: Chas C. Thomas, 1977) 62.

The greater the length of the vocal folds, and the less tension the vocal folds have when oscillating, the lower the pitch of the sound produced.

In conjunction with the vocal folds, another factor in determining pitch is the length of the vocal tract. In general, men not only have longer vocal folds than women, they have longer vocal tracts as well. According to Dr. Daniloff:

> Women have vocal tracts of intermediate lengths, and men have relatively long vocal tracts. For a given vowel sound, the characteristic frequencies increase as the vocal tract becomes shorter in length. . . . The average speaker usually phonates at the most comfortable frequency. This is called the *modal* frequency. We can phonate above or below that frequency. The modal frequency for males is about 128 Hz, and about an octave higher at 260 Hz for females. The average range for either males or females is about 2 octaves. The modal frequency for speech is located at about the lower one-fourth to one-third of a speaker's vocal range.[44]

The physiology of an actor determines the resonance of his voice. Although the larynx (if activated outside the body) produces an ill-defined buzz-like sound, "within the body the fundamental frequency and its overtones produced in the larynx act upon the resonant chambers above and the result is the sound we know as voice."[45]

It is important to note that the system of vocal production is very closely synchronized in application and is nearly automatic. For example, suppose that an actor, after analyzing his vocal performance, decides he wants to change his speech. Specifically, the only change he wants to make is to lower the pitch of his speaking voice. However, as vocal production is a total and intricate system, it will not be an easy process. In The Physiology of Speech and Hearing, Dr. Lawrence Feth explains:

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[44] Raymond Daniloff et al. Physiology of Speech and Hearing (Englewood Cliffs, NJ:Prentice Hall, 1980) 201.
[45] Daniloff, 197.

> The larynx is a complex mechanism. A change in vocal fold tension will indeed affect vocal frequency, but it may well cause changes in intensity and quality as well. When strong emotion causes the contraction of laryngenial as well as other muscles, all the parameters of voice—pitch, loudness, quality—change simultaneously. That is, the speaker finds it difficult to change one parameter independently of the others.[46]

Although Feth is referring to an untrained singing or speaking voice, his comments give credence to the argument that actors should analyze their own performances to confirm training practices and performance-based results. This is especially true because an actor's perception of his voice does not necessarily match the sound that is produced. As Feth indicates, the process is complex, and as such, requires subsequent performance analysis to qualify success. Furthermore, it is important to stress that performance analysis needs to include performances, and not just training sessions and rehearsals. After all, actors are not judged by their brilliance in training or rehearsal, but by their performances. No matter how thorough the rehearsal process, or how well prepared the actors are, the addition of an audience causes performance conditions to differ from the conditions in rehearsal, creating emotional changes within the actors that can alter the actors' vocal production.

**Vocal Colorization,** the second signifying category of the model, includes the following elements of speech: rate and rhythm, pitch, resonance, articulation, and volume. Since these elements are definable or measurable, they have received the most attention for actor training. Their function in actor training is for actors to use them to emphasize vocal variety for character development, locale definition, and genre identification. While these sub-

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[46] Daniloff, 199.

categories are useful for performance analysis, they are ignored (except on a superficial level) for performance-based evaluation of training effectiveness. In fact, many performer codes are partially based in the category of Vocal Colorization.

Including these sub-categories in a systematic performance analysis will provide empirical evidence that determines the privileged traits of an actor if the regularity of the appearance of one or more of these sub-categories is compelling in each role the actor performs. This is not to say that one or more of these categories will have a privileged presence in every actor, but that they must be included as part of the comprehensive analysis. For example, actors who speak rapidly regardless of the character they are performing would certainly have rapid rate of speech as part of their performer code.

The term "rate" refers to the number of words spoken during a given period of time. The rate of speech is affected both by the actual speed of speech and by the number and length of the pauses inserted.

> Usually the rate of stage speech is about 130-150 words per minute, but there will be occasions when a faster or slower rate is required. The average rate of speech varies considerably from one actor to another, and indeed during any given play it will differ for the same individual from one scene to the next.[47]

Three factors that traditionally control the rate of speech for a performance are characterization, genre, and situational intentions. For example, the rate of speech used in a performance often suggests certain character traits or temperament. A young, excitable, or dynamic character might well use a faster rate than one who is aged, reflective, developmentally disabled, or of a quiet disposition.

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[47] Stanley Kahan. Introduction to Acting, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1985) 121.

The genre of a production is enhanced by the rate of speech as well. The overall tempo of a production is a determining factor in the rate of dialog used by the actors. A comedy of manners or a farce will most likely require a faster rate of dialog from the actors than will a tragedy.

Finally, the acknowledged pace of the genre will sometimes be superseded by the situational intentions of a character, which will determine the rate of speech used. Calling out a warning of a falling object about to land on another character's head would require a faster rate of delivery than a long, protracted explanation important to plot development. Also, material of a trivial nature may acquiesce to a relatively fast rate, as opposed to important or complex exposition, which may require a slower delivery for comprehension.

If an actor's rate of delivery varies within a role, or over several roles, the subcategory of rate is not a determinant of the actor's performer code. If the rates are the same or very similar, it would be concluded that rate influences that particular actor's performer code. This holds true even if the actor portrays one type of character on an ongoing basis. Fundamentally, one must recognize that "type casting" a specific actor is related to the actor's performer code, of which rate is a component. John Wayne's speech is recognizable by its methodical and relatively slow delivery. Because rate of delivery is so much a part of Wayne's performer code, a comic or impersonator mimicking Wayne must use a slower-than-normal rate of delivery. Contrast John Wayne's slow delivery with that of Groucho Marx. Marx's performer code is so identified with a fast rate of delivery that his voice would not be identifiable otherwise.

Pauses within a spoken line also affect the rate of speech. Obviously, the number of pauses in any line affects the rate of speech: the more pauses, the

slower the rate of delivery. When only a few pauses are used, but their duration is long, the rate will also slow. Because pauses may be dictated by grammar, characterization, and stage directions—as well as by an actor's performer code—it is imperative to analyze different genres and styles of performance to determine a vocal performer code. William Shatner is one actor who has incorporated pauses into different roles. As Captain Kirk in Star Trek, Shatner's lines are interspersed with pauses, as are his subsequent performances as the title character on the television program T.J. Hooker. In both performances, Shatner's practice of inserting a pause after addressing another character by name is so pervasive that it has become part of his performer code.

Along with pauses, rate is influenced by how long any given sound or word is verbalized. The rate of delivering vowels and nonplosive consonants (f, h, j, l, m, n, r, s, v, y, z) can be shaped by the length assigned to each one.

The "rhythm" of speech is the pattern produced by the emphasis and duration of long and short syllables in words and by a patterned use of pauses during speech. Rhythm indicates the cadence of speech flow. It is strictly the meter of delivery, and should not be confused with a pattern of inflection or pitch (for example, a rising inflection at the end of every sentence). One example of rhythm is iambic pentameter, which has a specific and obvious rhythm or cadence: the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and finally the tenth syllables are stressed or emphasized. A less obvious but still identifiable rhythm would occur when an actor inserts a pause after the first word of every line.

"Pitch" is defined as the position of the spoken word on the musical scale. Voices are classified as high, low, or mid-ranged, on the basis of gender (men generally have lower-pitched speaking voices than women). Pitch is also

defined as having variety, as when the pitch of words changes throughout the performance; or as monopitched, where the pitch modulation changes little—if at all—during a performance. Both Clint Eastwood and Jack Webb are notorious for monopitched speech. On the television series Dragnet, Webb's monopitched style defined his character Sergeant Joe Friday. When Dan Akroyd recreated the role in the film version parody of Dragnet, he maintained that monopitched delivery. Variety of pitch occurs in two forms: step and inflection. It is important to define the difference to avoid confusion.

> *Step* is a pitch change from word to word in a phrase or sentence. In a *step* pitch change, there is no change within a word but there is a change in pitch as the speaker moves from one word to another.
>
> *Inflection* refers to pitch change or slide *within* one word or sound, in either an upward or downward direction [or any combination of up/down, down/up].[48]

Five basic types of inflections are identified for the Performance Analysis Model, with an accompanying symbol for each. In a rising inflection (/), the pitch rises at the end of the word. In a falling inflection (\), the pitch lowers at the end of a word; in a flat inflection (—), the pitch remains consistent throughout the word; in a scoop inflection (U), a word's initial pitch lowers during the phonation of the word, ending with a rise in pitch; in an arc inflection (^), the word's pitch rises in the middle, with the pitch lowering at the end of the word (as opposed to the scoop). Infinite combinations and permutations are possible. In fact, the scoop and the arc inflections are a combination of the rising and falling inflections; however, as their usage is sufficiently prevalent in speech, they are categorized separately.

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[48] Hill and Barton 55.

An example of a rising inflection occurred on the Tonight Show when Ed McMahon introduced Johnny Carson. McMahon's introduction "Here's Johnny!" consists of the first "e" of "Here's" being very elongated (lasting minimally 3 seconds), during which time the "e" was delivered with a rising inflection. The introduction then ended with a short delivery of the "s" sound of "Here's" and a short delivery of both syllables of "Johnny." The first syllable with a rising inflection is emphasized, while the second syllable with a falling inflection is not stressed. This example also illustrates how the delivery rate is impacted by the manipulation of sounds of words.

Exemplifying a monopitched style of speech with a step pitch is radio news and commentary reporter Paul Harvey. In the signature introduction to his daily news segment on ABC radio, Mr. Harvey states: "Hello Americans, this is Paul Harvey. Standby for news!" The "Hello Americans, this is Paul Harvey" and "standby for" are all delivered in a monopitch, but he raises the pitch significantly on the word "news."

The last component of pitch to be considered is that of a pattern. An actor may use pitch changes during a performance, but if those changes are repetitious and used without regard to the characterization or situational intention of the scene, they are part of the actor's performer code. A few examples of such patterns are a rising inflection at the end of all sentences, a rising inflection at all but the last sentence in a speech, and a falling inflection at the end of every line. Jack Buck, for many years a radio sports play-by-play announcer for Monday Night Football, consistently used a rising inflection with each spoken sentence as he described a play in action. With the conclusion of the play, he dropped the inflection on the last word. His style was privileged not

only to play calling, but also to general discussions about the game and to football anecdotes he shared during the broadcast, where his inflection dropped only with the last word of a story.

In the analysis of an actor's speech, an observed repetition of pronunciation, notable melodic patterns, and/or rhythms, used without regard to character or medium, would, by definition, be a component of the actor's performer code. Recognizing these patterns as a dialect would only facilitate the analysis by negating certain individual analytical identifications of pronunciation, rhythm, and melodic patterns. If such patterns are identifiable as a dialect or accent, they will be analyzed under the signifying category of Cultural Bias, which is discussed later in this chapter.

"Resonance" is the vibration caused by sound waves bouncing throughout the throat and head and gives the voice its tone quality. There are two types of resonance: direct resonance "occurs when a vibrating body is placed in direct physical contact with another substance—a tuning fork on a desk, piano or piece of metal,"[49] and indirect resonance "occurs when sound waves from a vibrating body set up vibrations in another body some distance away."[50]

Both types of resonance occur in the human body, almost exclusively in the oral and nasal cavities. The structures involved with resonance are the teeth, the hard palate, the nose bone and the sinuses located near the cheekbone, and the forehead and the frontal sinuses (above the eyes toward the forehead). Sound waves travel in all directions and in the oral and nasal cavities, reflecting continuously up, down, and side to side.

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[49] Lessac 10.
[50] Lessac 11.

> This action creates tone color and body, which vary with the size and shape of the cavity. A well-formed large cavity darkens the tone and gives it fuller body, while a smaller cavity produces a lighter and thinner tone.[51]

For the Vocal Performance Analysis Model, resonance is classified using six tonal descriptors: breathy (b), a whisper with some phonation—as in Carol Channing's voice; full (f), a rich, full-bodied voice utilizing the oral cavity as the primary resonator and the nasal cavity as the secondary resonator—as in James Earl Jones's voice; nasal (n), a sound produced using the nasal cavity as the primary resonator—as in the voice and especially the signature laugh of Phyllis Diller; tense (te), which utilizes only a portion of the oral cavity as resonator, resulting in a strained tonal quality; throaty (th), which utilizes the throat or only the rear portion of the oral cavity as the primary resonator—as in the voices of radio personality Wolfman Jack and vocalist Tom Waits; and whisper (w), which produces no vocalization or resonance of sound. The analysis will signify resonance for overall speech and for word-specific practices.

"Articulation"—the manipulation and coordination of the soft and hard palates, tongue, lips, jaw, and teeth—shapes sound into recognizable words. Good articulation is essential for projection and clarity of expression regardless of the rate and rhythm of speech, the character's emotions, or situational intentions. Articulation will be categorized as clear, overt, or inarticulate. Clear articulation results from careful attention to producing speech that is easily understood, primarily through the enunciation of consonants. However, clear articulation does not mean an overly precise or exaggerated pronunciation.

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[51] Lessac 11.

> Listening to recordings of actors who were prominent in the early part of this century, such as E. H. Southern, Rose Coghlan, Julia Marlowe, and others, one is struck by the emphasis on elocutionary tricks. . . . Some actors over articulate to the extent that their speech is forced and false.[52]

Exaggerated articulation will be categorized as overt in the model.

Finally, speech that is indistinct, or not clearly understandable, will be classified as inarticulate. Inarticulate speech results from colloquial or dialectical influence, or from what is commonly referred to as lazy, slovenly, or slurred speech. A dialectical influence will be classified as inarticulate only if the dialect is so predominant in the actor's speech that it is detrimental to the understanding of words and to the clarity of expression of the character. For example, though Arnold Schwarzenegger has a Germanic accent, his articulation is classified as as clear. His speech is not difficult to understand, and his accent does not interfere with the clarity of expression of his characters. Identifiable accents or dialects will be analyzed under the model's category of Cultural Bias, which is discussed later in the chapter.

Obviously, actors whose characters are intoxicated or drugged have to effect articulation that is appropriate to their characters' situational intentions. However, the purpose of this model is not to judge an actor's articulation but to identify signifying vocal practices privileged to that actor's performances—that is, to identify articulation that is consistent regardless of role or medium. If articulation is not consistent throughout all performances, then it is not an element of a performer codes. As with resonance, the analysis will signify articulation for overall speech and for word-specific practices.

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[52] Kahan 168-176.

It is important that these criteria be evaluated in an observable and objective context. Accordingly, when analyzing a performance, the individual component cannot be judged separately from other criteria. For example, while a monopitched delivery might generally be considered monotonous and boring, an actor with a monopitched delivery may be very successful when the pitch of the delivery works well in combination with a specific rate, rhythm, and dialect. A good example is Jack Webb's portrayal of Sergeant Joe Friday in the television series Dragnet.

Vocal performances can include both vocabulary (words with meanings) and **Nonlanguage Utilities** (sounds that have no meaning without context). Vocalized and nonvocalized expulsions or inhalations of air, coughing, sneezing, clearing the throat, whistling, hissing, and clicking the tongue, are all examples of nonlanguage utilities. In addition, any anomaly that is consistently used in an actor's speech, such as a lisp, a stutter, and a "whistle" sound when pronouncing an "s" (es), will be categorized as a Nonlanguage Utility.

Likewise, sound effects in general—vocalized and nonvocalized sounds that replace or augment language in describing what is heard, but require the parameters of narrative for definition—are nonlanguage utilities. For example, the "sh" sound asking for silence can arguably be defined as an elongated word interjection meaning "hush."[53] However, the sound can have other meanings depending on the narrative context within which it is used. For example, it can also be very effective in symbolizing a steam locomotive coming to a stop, or steam escaping from a locomotive, a stove-top pressure cooker, or a radiator in

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[53] Oxford American Dictionary, Heald Colleges ed. (AvonBooks, 1986) 834, defines sh as: sh (sh) *interjection* hush.

a room or in an automobile. Additionally, it can represent the sound of wind blowing, of water running from an aerated faucet, or of the interior of a glider sailing through the air, depending on the surrounding narrative.

The category of Nonlanguage Utilities is divided into two sub-categories: speech anomalies and sound effects. Speech anomalies identify specific speech patterns and the words or sounds in which those patterns occur. For example, an actor who stutters only at the beginning of a sentence will be identified as having a general speech anomaly—a patterned stutter at the beginning of sentences. An actor who stutters only with words that start with "t" regardless of where the "t" word appears in a sentence, will be identified as having a sound-specific speech anomaly—"t" stutter. Examining the speech of ABC news commentator Paul Harvey once again, empirical evidence determines that when pronouncing "sp's" in the middle of sentences, the "sp" sound is always accompanied by a slight whistle, which is categorized as a sound-specific speech anomaly—"sp" whistle.

Sound effects will be distinguished by two classifications: general and specific. An actor using different sound effects throughout a performance will be classified as using general sound effects. An actor who uses only one effect, but uses that effect throughout, will be classified as using specific sound effects. This single-effect classification is not limited to only one sound effect if more than one can be identified as being repeated throughout. In such a case, each sound effect will be listed separately. Additionally, the general and specific sound effect classifications are not mutually exclusive. As will become apparent in the next chapter, Robin Williams uses not only a variety of sound effects in all

of the performances studied (general sound effects), but also sound effects that are privileged to all of his performances (specific sound effects).

The category of **Vocal Signature** refers to a specific word, phrase, or sound that is unique to a performer as a signifying code. Walter Cronkite's "And that's the way it is" (said at the end of his broadcasts), Rodney Dangerfield's "I don't get no respect," Jimmy Durante's "Achachacha," and Mae West's "Why don't you come up and see me some time," are all examples of vocal signatures. These words or phrases are privileged so strongly to a single performer that the vocal signature defines the performer. A word or phrase does not have to permeate all of an actor's performances in order to become the actor's vocal signature. However, the vocal signature must be identified with only one performer, and not with a specific character that the performer has portrayed.

Phrases that can be ascribed to a character rather than to an actor will not be considered as vocal signatures. Instead, they will be included as character signatures in the category of Cultural Bias, which is discussed next. For example, the phrase "Surprise, surprise, surprise!" is attributed to the character Gomer Pyle, not to the actor Jim Naybors. "Come here my little pretty" is identified with the Wicked Witch of the North from the Wizard of Oz, but not with Margaret Hamilton, the actress who spoke the line. "Life is like a box of chocolates" is synonymous with the character Forrest Gump, not with the actor Tom Hanks who performed the role in the film Forrest Gump. Contrarily, "Why don't you come up and see me some time" is identified with Mae West and not the character she portrayed.

**Cultural Bias** refers to cultural characteristics, dialects, and character signatures that identify an actor with a specific culture or historic period. This category is divided into the following sub-categories: dialects, cultural characteristics, idioms and icons, and character signatures.

The sub-category of dialects is very complex as there are innumerable recognized dialects or accents.

> A *dialect* is a distinctive form of pronunciation, language structure, and vocabulary which is identified with a geographical area or a social class. In varying degrees it possesses notable melodic and rhythmic patterns. . . . Although such speech is often referred to as a foreign accent, it is one more form of a dialectical expression. . . . A dialect can gain its distinction from a locality, from a class structure, or from the education of its users and/or their economic condition.[54]

In his 1967 book Stage Dialects, Jerry Blunt identifies 11 dialects most used in American theatres since the early 1900s. In his 1987 book More Stage Dialects, Blunt identifies 35 more, and that list is not exhaustive. For the purposes of this thesis, a dialect or accent will be defined as a distinctive form of pronunciation that is identified with a geographical area or social class.

In all their roles, Arnold Schwarzenegger (Germanic) and Dolly Parton (southern United States) do not attempt to alter or disguise their natural dialects when speaking American English, making their dialects a component of their individual performer codes.

Patrick Stewart is a classically trained[55] British actor who brings the cultural characteristic of classical training to his performances. His style of a classically trained British actor remains consistent whether he is portraying a character from Shakespeare, any of several characters in his own adaptation of

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[54] Blunt, Jerry, More Stage Dialects (New York: Harper & Row, 1980) 1.
[55] Patrick Stewart trained with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol,[56] or Jean Luc Picard in the television series Star Trek: The New Generation. His cultural bias as a classically trained British actor is identifiable by very crisp, almost overt, articulation, a British dialect, erect posture, and fuller resonance during performance than in his normal speaking voice.[57]

Within the category of Cultural Bias, the example of Patrick Stewart clearly indicates that the sub-category of dialect is present; however, the cultural characteristic of a classically trained actor is most prevalent in his performance style. Dialects that are part of a performer code will be identified under the category of cultural bias, but dialects may not be the definitive factor if the performance style is dominated by other cultural influences.

The sub-category of cultural idioms and icons includes phrases, expressions, colloquialisms, and slang that link a performance style to a historic period or culture. In establishing a performer code, it is understood that cultural idioms and icons may be used anachronistically or out of context. Cultural idioms can link a performer code to a historic period because the use of language changes over time: words and phrases fall out of use or become archaic; new words are invented or the existing vocabulary mutates; and the accepted use of profanity increases. For example, the statement "I shan't tell a soul" has been replaced with "I won't tell anyone." Actors using the former statement would be signified as "doing some kinda retro thing" or "harkening back to the bygone days of yesteryear." Although the phrases "I shan't . . ." and "harkening back . . ." don't define a specific era, their usage would be indicative

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[56] Performanced on Nov.30-December 01, 1996 at Foothill College, Los Altos Hills,California.
[57] This data is based on personal conversions with Patrick Stewart during rehearsals of A Christmas Carol at Foothill College in November, 1996.

of an earlier historic period. Some cultural idioms and icons delineate a more specific era. Phrases or words like "Make love not war," "bitchin'," "groovy," "far out," "wanna Walneto," and "Book him Dano," are cultural idioms from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s. Actors incorporating these idioms into performance would definitely identify themselves with the American pop culture of that period. An example of a cultural idiom that links a performance style to a culture would be the style of some western Canadian actors to substitute the word "eh" for "isn't it" at the ends of questions, such that "The food's pretty good, isn't it?" becomes "The food's pretty good, eh?" While this substitution is not prevalent in all western Canadian actors' performer codes, it is a cultural idiom of western Canada and would be sub-categorized as such in the model, regardless of any general Canadian dialect.

As defined earlier, a vocal signature is privileged to an actor, not to a character. The vocal signature criteria applied to a character determine the character signature in that a word or expression identifies a single character. In essence, that character has a vocal signature. The maxim "Only you can prevent forest fires" is synonymous with Smokey the Bear. Woody Woodpecker's laugh and Porky Pig's "ThththThat's all, folks!" are character signatures as is the earlier example of Forrest Gump's "Life is like a box of chocolates."

Cultural idioms and icons, as well as vocal and character signatures, can assume an element of improvisation in actors' performances. Due to the qualitative nature of these sub-categories, the inherent challenge is to differentiate between performer code attributes and scripted choices of writers (assuming that the actors are not writing their own scripts). Analyzing different

mediums, genres, and performances is paramount in that determination. Only when a signifying practice involving one or more of these classifications is repeated throughout performance mediums and with different writers, can it be considered a signifying practice of the actor.

The **Performance Qualities** category is comprised of the sub-categories of improvisation and energy. Improvisation is performing outside the parameters of the text. Improvisation is extremely difficult to detect without prior knowledge of the original text. Even reading a published text of a specific work may not be an accurate measure, as scripts sometimes evolve through improvisation during the rehearsal period. An actor's reputation for improvisation may reveal such practices, as may researching the process of a specific performance project. For example, improvisations by Robin Williams in the role of Genie in Aladdin greatly altered the text.[58] Other indications may be present with reference to the Cultural Bias category. Frequent cross-medium usage of anachronistic references, vocal and character signatures, anomalies of profanity, and cultural idioms or icons are possible indications of improvisation.

The sub-category of energy is subdivided into high, normative, and relaxed. Examples of high-energy performers are Alan Alda, Billy Crystal, and Ellen DeGeneres, all of whom bring a sense of urgency to their performances. This does not necessarily mean that they speak rapidly; rather, qualities of exuberance, vigor, and ebullience permeate their performances. On the other hand, an actor with the performer style of relaxed energy offers performances that are not rushed. Such performances are not by implication boring or

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[58]Culhane, 27.

uncompelling. Further, relaxed energy is not mutually exclusive with vocal variety of pitch, nor with a varied rate of speech. Examples of relaxed-energy performers are Bill Cosby, Clint Eastwood, Harry Morgan, and storyteller Bailey White.

Most actors fall into the range of normative energy. To be placed otherwise would require an exceptionally high or relaxed energy quality to be recognized. Again, the difficulty with defining an entity such as high or relaxed energy is confounded by the genre, the text, and the interpretation of the individual doing the analysis. This process can be even more convoluted when the analysis is done as self-analysis, as we all perceive ourselves having certain qualities. As individuals, our judgment of what constitutes high energy may vary widely, especially if that is a quality we find attractive. The analyst needs to be consistent throughout an analysis, such that whatever scale or range of energy an individual analyst reasons as normative, that range or scale is applied equally to all performances analyzed.

In the next chapter, the Vocal Performance Analysis Model (see Appendix A for a visual representation) will be applied to different performances of Robin Williams to determine his performer code.

# CHAPTER 5

## Applying the Model to Performances of Robin Williams

The performances chosen for analysis were Robin Williams A Night at the Met, Good Morning, Vietnam, Mrs. Doubtfire, and Aladdin. The mediums represented are stand-up comedy, film, video, and animation. I believe these performances represent a sufficient sample of Williams's performances across different mediums to determine his performer code.

Since the primary goal was to analyze the vocal performances, each performance was first transferred to audiotape. Each tape was then edited to include only dialogue that involved Williams's voice in order to allow greater focus on his vocal performance. Each performance was then categorically analyzed using the criteria described in Chapter 4. The Model was applied five times for each performance, augmenting the findings each time. The research was concluded with the fifth application; new data was diminishing significantly with each subsequent application, and I felt confident sufficient data on which to base a conclusion had been gathered.

Without a doubt, the most prevalent signifying practice of Robin Williams is improvisation. He brings it into every performance and across every medium. His improvisations are unique in that each one takes on a life of its own. They are often anachronistic and not necessarily relevant to the surrounding dialogue. Although the improvisations are an easily identifiable practice of Williams, it is important not only to deconstruct his improvisations, but also to analyze all aspects of his performances.

Outside the parameters of improvisation, Robin Williams's vocal performances contain signifying practices that are part of his performer code. For that reason, Williams's spoken performances were first separated into two aeas of study: improvisational and nonimprovisational.

The next step was to compare the analyses for each performance and write a narrative conclusion based on the comparison.[59] What emerged when comparing the data from the performances (including the improvisational portions of his performances) was that the same signifying practices were privileged throughout. Therefore, even though the analyses had been separated into improvisational and nonimprovisational portions of Williams's performances, the narrative portion will focus on the shared practices. What follows in the remainder of this chapter is the narrative of comparative results.

The attributes discussed herein are found throughout Williams's performances in all media examined. As each category of the model is discussed, representative examples will be presented.

The term "natural voice" is used in this narrative to refer to what might also be called Williams's "normal" speaking voice. This is differentiated from the voice—the style, dialect, or manner of speech—that Williams uses for impersonations, sound effects, and characterizations.

Robin Williams varies his pitch for overall speech such that there is no limiting or narrow range. His natural voice uses the full range in the octaves directly below and above middle C; in improvisations, his pitch changes depending upon the characters or people he imitates or upon the sound effects he uses. Two extremes are evident when his imitation of Barry White is

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[59] The Vocal Performance Analysis for each performance is found in Appendix B.

juxtaposed against that of his California Valley Girl (both from Robin Williams's A Night at the Met). His imitation of Barry White emanates from the second octave below middle C; his imitation of a Valley Girl from the octave above middle C. Although the contrast is heightened during improvisations, a full vocal range is utilized during scripted scenes using his natural voice.

In the sub-category of "pitch—step/inflection & patterns," the five inflections of pitch are examined. Even though Williams uses all in varying degrees, a pattern is apparent. Speaking in his natural voice during scripted dialogue as well as during characterizations and improvisations, Williams has a tendency to use a flat or rising inflection where commas occur and at the ends of sentences. When he reaches the end of a thought group (such as a paragraph), his inflection falls. Although this pattern is not present with every comma or period, its regularity is sufficient to establish it as a signifying practice. The following lines are spoken by the character Daniel Hillard from Mrs Doubtfire:

> Your Honor, please. I mean, every Saturday that's one day a week. That's not enough. I have to be with my children. It's not a question really, I mean I have to be with them sir. Please. I know it seems like a lot, but for me, it's not enough, really. I haven't been away from them for more than one day since the day they were born.

Even when Williams assumes the character of the housekeeper/nanny Mrs. Doubtfire, using an affected feminine voice and British accent, he maintains the use of a rising inflection at commas and at the end of sentences.

> Hellooo. I'm calling in regards to the ad I read in the paper. Oh certainly dear. For the past fifteen years, I have worked for the Smythe family in Elbourne England. . . . And for them, I did

> housecleaning, cooking, and took care of their four glorious children.

Williams prevents his speech from rising in pitch throughout a monologue by utilizing several step pitch changes that lower his pitch at the beginning and (at times) in the middle of each sentence. In the above example, Williams's step pitch lowers at the beginning of each sentence as well as on "certainly," "family," "four," and "glorious."

This pattern is privileged to all his performances. In Aladdin, during a dialogue between Genie and Aladdin, Genie is telling Aladdin that if granted even one wish, Genie would wish for his own freedom:

> . . . but oh, to be free, to be my own master, such a thing would be greater than all the magic, and all the treasures, in all the world. But what am I talking about? Let's get real here, it's not going to happen.

As in the example from Mrs. Doubtfire, Williams uses step pitch changes to lower his pitch preceding the rising and after the comma on the words "to," "such," "all," "real," and "not."

During scripted segments, Williams's rate of speech falls into the normal spectrum. During improvisations, even though his rate is definitely elevated, it still falls within the normal range of 130-150 words per minute. Within this normal range, Williams does vary his rate depending on his portrayal of an individual or character. For example, he uses a slower rate of delivery in his Good Morning, Vietnam impressions of Walter Cronkite, Lyndon Johnson, and Gomer Pyle, and in his A Night at the Met impressions of Clint Eastwood and John Wayne. During these characterizations, his rate slows considerably but then increases to a normal pace as soon as he changes characterizations or

resumes with scripted dialogue. In his opening improvisation in Good Morning, Vietnam, Williams's rate reaches 153 words per minute. This was surprising, as the pace of his improvisation seems very fast. This sense of speed is derived from the fact that within the first two minutes and thirty seconds, Williams assumes 28 different characters and sound effects. This opening segment is the only one in all the sources used for this thesis that fell outside the normal range. Despite being out of the normal range, it is not far enough beyond the parameters to warrant a categorical change.

In terms of rhythm of speech, no established patterns and no syllables receiving recognizable characteristics warranted any note.

The resonance in Williams's natural voice is full with some colorization of a breathy quality, while no specific word privileged a unique resonant quality. Again, whenever Williams impersonates an individual or character, he changes his resonance accordingly. His impersonation of singer Barry White (A Night at the Met), assumes a very deep, very full resonant quality. The Barry White impression, the very nasal/whisper Carol Channing impression (Aladdin), and the throaty resonance of Ronald Reagan (A Night at the Met) exemplify the range of Williams's resonance.

The resonant quality of Williams's natural voice (full with some breathiness) changes depending upon the volume of his speech and the style of the scene. As his speech gets louder, his breathy quality diminishes, and his voice has fuller resonance. Conversely, as he is quiet or involved in an intimate scene, the breathy quality increases. During a volatile scene toward the beginning of Mrs. Doubtfire between Daniel and Miranda Hillard (Robin Williams and Sally Fields), when Williams is yelling at Fields, his resonance

contains no breathy quality; within seconds Fields asks for a divorce, and Williams's pleading quiet response is predominantly breathy in resonance. In another quiet scene from Good Morning, Vietnam between Adrian Cronauer and Adrian's female love interest, Williams's voice has a predominantly breathy quality. This pattern is consistent.

Robin Williams's articulation is clear overall. In A Night at the Met, regardless of impersonations or depictions of altered mental states (such as being stoned, coked, or drunk), he maintains clear and understandable articulation. He does have an articulation signifying practice associated with the word "yes." When using "yes" in a declarative manner, Williams stresses and elongates the consonants "y" and "s," with the "e" receiving little emphasis. Also, when saying "yes" in a declarative tone, he uses a rising inflection. This signifying practice is recognizable in every performance medium studied, making it a part of Robin Williams's performer code.

The overall volume level is medium, with some times of great volume and others at a whisper. Much as is the case with varied pitch modulation and differing rates of speech, Williams's use of volume is equally mercurial. Depending on the circumstances, his performances run the full range from a whisper to full-volume yelling. Unlike performers Phyllis Diller and Don Rickles (both known for being loud), or Clint Eastwood (known for being quiet and reserved), Williams's performances are full range. Also, this subcategory is difficult to analyze in that it can't determined how the volume was regulated in the audio or microphoning elements of the production and postproduction editing of the recordings. It seems that Williams's natural voice is in the medium range, and that it becomes higher during improvisations. There is very little

empirical data to support this assumption except that his improvisations seem to be at greater volume than his natural voice. Suffice it to say that Williams uses a full range of volume in his performances.

In the category of Nonlanguage Utilities, Williams's signifying practices are prevalent within the classification of sound effects, which he uses in all performances. During scripted speech, he uses them to embellish the text and as a substitute for specific words. During a monologue in Aladdin, Williams uses the sound of an explosion as a replacement for the word "poof." All of his improvisations contain the sound effects of musical instruments, predominantly playing a television theme song or pop/rock recording. Other sound effects employed are whistling, animal sounds (bleating sheep, barking dogs, growling dinosaurs), teletype machine, record player running backward, robotics motor, submarine diving/warning signal, spitting, kissing "smooch," "Bronx cheer," and helicopter. He adds a trademark "game show buzzer" to all performances as well. The "game show buzzer" is used to express the wrong answer; or to express an incorrect response from another character in a dialogue or from himself during a monologue. He may not use the "game show buzzer" more than once in any performance, but it is present in all and is a signifying practice of his performer code.

There is no vocal signature identified with Robin Williams. Although he uses character signatures in his improvisations, he does not employ anyone else's vocal signature in his performances. In his impressions of others, he relies on imitating either their voices or style of speech to identify them. His impression of Bela Lugosi (A Night at the Met) is not particularly accurate, but because Lugosi is so connected with the vampire image, Williams's referential

impression of "We can't do it during the day" is immediately recognizable as something Lugosi would say.

Robin Williams's signifying practices manifest themselves most obviously in the category of Cultural Bias. The signifying practices of his performer code evolve from an improvisational stream of consciousness using American popular cultural icons and idioms circa 1960-90. This improvisational stream of consciousness is often irrelevant and anachronistic to the scene in which it appears. This improvisational stream is predominantly influenced by cultural characteristics, icons, and idioms of television programming such as Leave it to Beaver, Twilight Zone, The Real McCoys, The Ed Sullivan Show, Romper Room, Let's Make a Deal, High Chaparral, Gomer Pyle USMC, and The Lawrence Welk Show.

Any dialect used by Williams is not intended to depict a locale accurately or to replicate a specific tongue, but rather to clarify the characterization or person imitated. His German accent for Henry Kissinger in A Night at the Met would not stand up against scrutiny, but it was enough to establish the essence or suggestion of Kissinger. His French dialect in Aladdin as a mâitre d' was not accurate, but it didn't need to be except to imply a French restaurant. Even when playing the complete role of Mrs. Doubtfire, as opposed to a ten-second improvisation, his British accent was an eclectic variation of several different regions of England.

The television programs that Williams uses during these improvisational streams were popular during the mid-1960s and 1970s. From this array of cultural icons, Williams not only vocalizes theme songs such as "Twilight Zone" in Good Morning, Vietnam and "High Chaparral" in A Night at the Met; he uses

references to them as well. In Good Morning, Vietnam, after he vocalizes part of the Twilight Zone theme, Williams segues immediately into a deep, fully resonant voice (Rod Sterling imitation) with "Picture a man, going on a journey beyond sight and sound. He's left Crete. He's entered the Demilitarized Zone," followed by Williams vocalizing the ever-present suspenseful music leading into a commercial. Obviously for the era of the film, he substituted "Demilitarized Zone" for "Twilight Zone." This type of word substitution and association drives these improvisational streams.

Williams's infusion of 1970s television continues with game show jargon and references. A popular television game show in the 1970s was Let's Make a Deal. One of the premium prizes given away on the show was a new automobile. The announcer for Let's Make a Deal, "Jay", would announce the winner in a very loud, enthusiastic voice: "How would like to drive in this—brand new car!" There was always a short pause before "brand" to build suspense, and the words "brand new car" were emphasized, building to a climax. In Aladdin, Williams imitates Jay exactly in inflection, energy, and delivery, substituting "camel" for "car."

It has already been established that Williams's performer code includes a game show buzzer, but in three of the performances it was followed with the game show jargon of "thank you for playing . . ." (Aladdin, Good Morning, Vietnam, and A Night at the Met). Williams's use of television cultural idioms is not limited to programming; it includes references to commercials such as "limp damaged hair" (Good Morning, Vietnam) and "It's Miller Time" (A Night at the Met).

Outside of television, Williams includes other American cultural characteristics—for example, the California Valley Girl who mistakes her mace for breath spray ". . . and like, just, you know, really messed up my whole entire day" (A Night at the Met). Another example from A Night at the Met is the child (Mr. Herbalife), stoned on marijuana and having difficulty focusing while creating a macramé belt. Popular music is another source of material for Williams. He includes rap music and song parodies as "I eat wood" for "I feel good" (Mrs. Doubtfire), as well as a rendition in Good Morning, Vietnam where he is singing "Follow the Ho-Chi Minh Trail" in a "munchkin-like" voice to the chant of "Follow the Yellow Brick Road" from The Wizard of Oz. Cultural icons such as the Muppets, Mr. Potato Head, a slinky toy, Fisher-Price toys, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Häagen Dazs ice cream, baseball, Disneyland, and the popular Vietnam War–era protest chant of "Hell no, I won't go" are incorporated into his improvisations.

Iconoclastic American entertainers, cartoon, television, and film characters, and politicians are found throughout Williams's material, either as objects of impersonation or as references. For example, Williams has used the Disney characters Mickey Mouse and Goofy, Clint Eastwood, Mr. Rogers, Jack Nicholson, Jimmy Stewart, Ralph Cramden, James Brown (recurring), Walter Brennan (recurring), Groucho Marx, Humphrey Bogart, Jacques Cousteau, Ronald Reagan (recurring), Carol Channing, and Elvis Presley. All of these individuals have distinct characteristics and personalities, representing the culture of the United States from the mid-1960s to 1990.

The character signatures that Williams uses are also part of American culture. A southern United States accented "Surprise, surprise, surprise," can

only be Gomer Pyle, just as a Scottish accented "But Jim, you can't push it any faster or she'll blow" is the signature of Scotty on Star Trek. Quotes from and references to one popular film that recurs in two of the performances analyzed in this thesis, are from The Wizard of Oz. Williams himself admits (without explanation) that "The Wizard of Oz keeps reappearing in my comedies."[60] In Good Morning, Vietnam, several references are made to "The Wizard of Oz" including the Wicked Witch's "I'll get you, my little pretty." In Aladdin, the Good Witch's "You're among the little people now," is one of Genie's lines during a segment in which Aladdin and Princess Jasmine are out of harm's way

Robin Williams's peformance qualities of improvisation and high energy are apparent in all his performances. His improvisational stream is self-propelled—words he uses trigger other thoughts that can completely shift the direction of a scene. As previously mentioned, during the opening improvisation of Good Morning, Vietnam, he changes topics or characters twenty-eight times in the span of two minutes and thirty seconds, shifting from referring to "Twilight Zone" as the "Demilitarized Zone" to stating "...The Dimiltarizied Zone. What's that? It sounds like two New York cops drinking cappuccino coffee and ogling women on the street." This is typical of his improvisations.

Robin Williams's improvisational streams are not what one would consider "politically correct." Williams satirizes just about all segments of society. He refers to lesbians as "women in comfortable shoes," portrays the recurring fashion designer character Mr. Leo as a stereotypically effeminate gay man, and interprets a choreographer as an effeminate gay constantly gawking

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[60] "Actor: Funnyman Robin Williams", Life (Spring 1989) 64.

at the mens' "tight ends." Williams refers to golf as "the only game where a white man can dress like a black pimp and get away with it," and defines ballerinas as "frigid bitches." In general, his use of sexual slang, sexual innuendo, and profanity is vast. Obviously, profanity is not appropriate for the film ratings assigned to Mrs. Doubtfire (PG-13) and Aladdin (G). John Musker, one of the animators of Genie, in discussing Williams's Genie improvisations, mused: ". . . how we can reconstruct it with the new, funny clean stuff. I mean, there were some jokes that couldn't make it into the movie."[61]

From the preceeding examples it is undeniable, that Robin Williams's style of improvisation is the cornerstone of his performer code. And it is his improvisational streams that define his style of improvisation. The tendencies for a rising or flat inflection at commas and periods, along with an identifiable trademark for a declarative "yes" are also signifying practices of his performer code. His improvisational streams are a fast-paced, politically incorrect reflection of United States cultural characteristics from the mid-1960s to the 1990s; they are laced with profanity and sexual content when left uncensored. His streams flow from the connectivity of words in his improvisations and from the story or script from which he is working. They can be irrelevant to the scene—The Wizard of Oz in Hanoi—or anachronistic—playing a television game show in ancient Arabia—but they are undeniably his style. This undeniable style is the substantive significance of Robin Williams's performance.

Williams freely admits that his performance style is influenced by, and modeled after, Jonathan Winters's style. Both intersperse narrative and

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[61] Culhane, 28.

improvisational performances, and both have vocally driven performances. Winters's improvisations use a repertory of stock characters that he developed. Williams, however, has no such repertoire. What really separates the two—and what is significant about Williams's improvisational peformances—is a sense of instability and unpredictability that transcends any narrative.

Outside of his stand-up comedy, Williams's performances have to be controlled on some level to fit the narrative of the film, documentary, or animation. Throughout his opening disc jockey improvisation in Good Morning, Vietnam, the film cuts away from his performance or overlays his peformance with clips and narrative dialogue. Without this type of editing and direction, Williams's vocal performance would dominate the film's narrative. One example of Williams's vocal performance dominating a narrative is witnessed in Aladdin. As Genie in Aladdin, Williams vocal performance exemplified the phrase "letting the genie out of the bottle," with the monologue introducing his character. The scripted text was approximately thirty seconds long. Williams gave the director and animators eight scripted takes and seventeen nonscripted takes resulting in ten minutes of edited material that is in the animation. In this instance—even with editing—Williams extended a thirty-second scene into one lasting nearly ten minutes merely by the power of his vocal performance. Additionally, the mercurial physicality of Genie's image—as created by the animators—was defined and refined in response to Williams's vocal performance. Many times throughout the animation, as Williams's Genie changed characterizations during an improvisation, Genie's image changed accordingly. The metamorphoses of Genie's images were not in response to a mutated physicality adopted by Williams during the recording session, nor

implied in the text or narrative, but in response to the instantaneous fluidity of his vocal performance. The absolute definition of character by vocal performance is one of the unique qualities of Williams's performance.

Another significant aspect of Robin Williams's performer code is his ability to appropriate any character at any time. His improvisations are a complete outpouring of an incredible array of cultural icons and stereotypes. Stimulated by the immediate environment, the juxtaposition of words, and even the narrative of the story with which he is working, Williams appropriates a character regardless of ethnicity, gender, or age. Whether it is his own improvisation that triggers a new direction or another stimulus altogether, this quality of Robin Williams's stream-of-consciousness improvisaton is akin to letting go of a balloon filled with air—it's loud and fast, and you never know which direction it is going or where it will end its flight.

While some performers create a style that privileges certain genres or niche audiences, Williams appeals to different audiences in different performances. For example, some people who enjoy the adult-oriented material of his performances in Good Morning, Vietnam and stand-up comedy routines might not enjoy a "feel good" film such as Mrs. Doubtfire or an animation such as Aladdin. This is not to say that the audiences are mutually exclusive; rather, that the appeal is different for each of his performances. What is consistent is his performer code—his style of performance. This remains consistent not only through different media but through different genres as well.

Williams brings a white American male perspective to his improvisational performances that is not sensitive to any "political correctness." But that does not prevent him from appropriating any type of characterization or from

stereotypically representing any segment of society or the world. Due to this "politically incorrect" shotgun approach during improvisations, he achieves a sort of symmetry of parody, in that his stereotypical references include a multitude of people not excluding white males.

When given the opportunity, Wililams seemingly creates characters and dialogue from thin air through his vocal performance. It is the virtuosity of his vocal performer style that are the strength and compelling nature of his performance.

Through the systematic methodology of The Vocal Performance Analysis Model, the deconstruction of Robin Williams's vocal performance allows a greater understanding of his performances and his vocal performer code. The Model also establishes a lexicon and a methodology which can be applied to any vocal performance, for the purposes of training, evaluation, and analysis under performance conditions.

# CHAPTER SIX

## Conclusion

The motivation behind this model is that its application is a systematic approach to vocal performance analysis, not a scientific methodology. The model is qualitative, not quantitative, in approach. For example, specific parameters have not been delineated for frequency (Hz) for pitch range and modulation, nor decibel limits defining the three levels of volume. Similarly, the classifications of articulation and resonance clearly have room for interpretation.

The categories of Nonlanguage Utilities, Vocal Signature, Cultural Bias, and Performance Qualities will be affected not only by the actors to whom the criteria are applied, but also by the personal taxonomy of the individual applying the analysis. My personal frame of reference is that of a middle-aged, middle-class, white native Californian male. My cognitive cultural history began in the early 1960s, and includes radio, television, films, and live performances as leisure-time activities. As such, cultural idioms as "Plop, plop, fizz, fizz. Oh, what a relief it is" and, "I can't believe I ate the whole thing" are identified not only with the product Alka Seltzer, but with the American historical periods circa mid-1960s and mid-1970s respectively. For an individual born in the late 1970s or early 1980s, these same phrases may have no identifiable qualities because they are outside the cultural taxonomy of the individual. Considering the personal taxonomy of the individual analyst, the phrase "Go ahead, make my day" arguably could be classified as a vocal signature for Clint Eastwood or as a character signature of Dirty Harry, depending on the reference of the individual applying the analysis.

Could I apply this model to an actor's vocal performance and be able to imitate or create his voice? I couldn't. But perhaps someone with a masterful command of voice and hearing could. That is not what I consider to be the value or purpose of this thesis. I believe the value of this model is not simply in the ability to define an actor's performer code. It would have been easy to just declare that Robin Williams's performer code is his improvisational style of performance. Indeed, I believe his style of improvisational performance is the proprietary element of his performer code, arguably the reason for his success and the symbol of his talent. However, as was witnessed in the animation Return to Jafar, attempting to mimic that improvisational style did not replicate the character (Genie) that Williams defined in the previous animated film Aladdin. The actor giving voice to Genie in Return to Jafar was not Robin Williams. The script attempted to portray the same type of anachronistic, contextually irrelevant improvisation, but the performance was unsuccessful in recreating Williams's Genie because other components of Williams's performer code were not realized. By utilizing this model, however, other aspects of Robin Williams's performer code could be realized. The significance of this is that the model can determine signifying practices of vocal performance. This ability is the key to the service of a systematic evaluation of vocal performance for training purposes.

The benefit of this model is as a training mechanism and an evaluative tool for vocal training and performance. By determining the signifying practices of vocal performance, changes can be instituted if the empirical outcomes don't match the desired outcomes in either an original performance or in an imitated one. Once a performance has been analyzed, training methodologies can be

monitored for an individual's successful transformation. Performance conditions are different from class exercises, rehearsals, and workshops. Only through performance analysis can a true measure of successful vocal training can be determined.

The purpose of the Vocal Performance Analysis Model is not only to deconstruct vocal performances to identify the signifying practices of performers, but also to use the analysis in actor training. The ability to identify both desirable and undesirable vocal characteristics from performance analysis will enable actors to modify their voices and develop a privileged vocal style directly—that is, not only through the aural filter of a teacher or coach. The intention is not to eliminate the teacher or coach, but to provide another tool in actor training. An external (albeit subjective) interpretation from a teacher or coach is still necessary, as actors' perceptions of their vocal performances may not accurately reflect what is produced. It is common to be surprised by what we actually sound like the first time we hear our voice recorded—the pitch is not quite as deep and the resonance not as full as we thought.

Indeed, a coach or teacher using this systematic analysis in conjunction with recordings of actors' individual performances would allow for an immediately substantive training methodology. For a coach or teacher, the envisioned process would be to record the performance, analyze the recording (identifying patterns, idiosyncrasies, and tendencies based on the performance analysis model's criteria), and have the actor apply the model to the recording as well. The actor, together with the coach, would listen to the recorded performance to identify areas of concerns and strengths, establish goals,

determine a training regimen to achieve the objectives established, and finally record a subsequent performance and analyze the results.

Student actors using the Performance Analysis Model will gain a better understanding of their own vocal performance, which will aid in their training process to refine and improve their overall performances. Performance analysis as part of actor training is essential as a true evaluation of not only the actor's performance but also in the evaluation of the training process itself.

Actor training is an ongoing process. Even when actors achieve the vocal performance they want, periodic performance analysis is necessary. As stated earlier, the production of speech is a complex system, and alteration of any component of the system affects the overall production. For example, the voice inherently changes with age. Over time, physiological changes take place in the human body. For example, the lessening of the elasticity of vocal folds results in a reduced range of pitch; a slight hearing loss affects the perception of sound. Consequently, training needs to be continuous, and performance analysis should be a component of that training.

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## Appendix A: Vocal Performance Analysis Model

**Actor Name:** _____ **Character Name:** _____

**Production Title:** _____ **Media:** _____

| **Vocal Colorization** | | **Notes:** |
|---|---|---|
| Pitch—overall speech | | |
| high | ☐ | |
| normal | ☐ | |
| low | ☐ | |
| Pitch—modulation | | |
| monopitched | ☐ | |
| varied | ☐ | |
| Pitch—step/inflection & patterns | | |
| rising / | ☐ | |
| falling \ | ☐ | |
| scoop U | ☐ | |
| arch ^ | ☐ | |
| flat - | ☐ | |
| Rate of speech | | |
| slow | ☐ | |
| normal | ☐ | |
| fast | ☐ | |
| Rhythm | | |
| syllables stressed and patterns | | |
| Resonance—overall | | |
| breathy (b) | ☐ | |
| full (f) | ☐ | |
| nasal (n) | ☐ | |
| tense (te) | ☐ | |
| throaty (th) | ☐ | |
| whisper (w) | ☐ | |
| Resonance—word-specific identify and list: | | |
| Articulation—overall | | |
| clear | ☐ | |
| overt | ☐ | |
| inarticulate | ☐ | |
| Articulation—word-specific identify and list | | |
| Volume—overall | | |
| high | ☐ | |
| medium | ☐ | |
| low | ☐ | |
| Volume—patterns identify and list | | |

## Appendix A: Vocal Performance Analysis Model

**Actor Name** _____ **Production Title** _____

**Nonlanguage Utilities** **Notes:**

Speech anomalies
general

Speech anomalies
sound-specific

Sound effects
general usage

Sound effects
specific usage

**Vocal Signature**
Identify and list

**Cultural Bias**
Dialect

Cultural characteristics

Idioms and icons

Character signatures

**Performance Qualities**
Improvisation

Energy
high ☐
normative ☐
relaxed ☐

**General Comments**

## Appendix B: Vocal Performance Analysis of Robin Williams

**Actor Name:** Robin Williams **Character Name:** Daniel Hillard and Mrs. Doubtfire

**Production Title:** Mrs. Doubtfire **Media:** Film

| Vocal Colorization | | Notes: |
|---|---|---|
| Pitch—overall speech | | |
| high | x | |
| normal | xx | Williams varies his pitch throughout his performance |
| low | x | such that there is no overriding pattern. |
| Pitch—modulation | | Natural speech pitch range is normal. |
| monopitched | | |
| varied | x | |
| Pitch—step/inflection & patterns | | |
| rising / | x | During natural speech, Williams often uses a rising or |
| falling \ | x | flat inflection at the ends of sentences and with |
| scoop U | x | commas. |
| arch ^ | x | Example: wish of freedom in Aladdin monologue. |
| flat - | x | |
| Rate of speech | | |
| slow | | Rate of speech varies depending upon situational |
| normal | xx | moment. |
| fast | | Natural speaking rate is normal. |
| Rhythm | | |
| syllables stressed and patterns | | None discernible. |
| Resonance—overall | | |
| breathy (b) | x | In natural speech, generally full resonance with small |
| full (f) | xx | amount of breathy quality. The breathy quality is |
| nasal (n) | | most prevalent during intimate or quiet scenes. |
| tense (te) | | |
| throaty (th) | | |
| whisper (w) | | |
| Resonance—word-specific identify and list: | | None |
| Articulation—overall | | |
| clear | x | Overall clear—no specific patterns noted. |
| overt | | |
| inarticulate | | |
| Articulation—word-specific identify and list | | Elongated "y" and "s" when saying a declarative "YES"-with the vowel "e" receiving little emphasis. |
| Volume—overall | | |
| high | x | Varied depending upon situation. |
| medium | xx | Natural speech uses medium range. |
| low | x | |
| Volume—patterns identify and list | | No patterns to identify. |

## Appendix B: Vocal Performance Analysis of Robin Williams

**Actor Name:** Robin Williams **Production Title:** Mrs. Doubtfire

| | Notes: |
|---|---|
| **Nonlanguage Utilities** | |
| Speech anomalies general | No general pattern |
| Speech anomalies sound-specific | Word: "yes"—see notes under "Articulation—word-specific" |
| Sound effects general usage | Used as embellishment. |
| Sound effects specific usage | Game show buzzer |
| **Vocal Signature** | |
| Identify and list | None |
| **Cultural Bias** | |
| Dialect | None privileged for natural voice. Used British when portraying character of Mrs. Doubtfire. |
| Cultural characteristics | None |
| Idioms and icons | None that were nonscripted |
| Character signatures | None |
| **Performance Qualities** | |
| Improvisation | "Carpe dentum: Seize the teeth"—link to Dead Poets' Society<br>The most privileged aspect of his performance—see specific chart of improv. for "Aladdin" performance. |
| Energy<br>high [x]<br>normative [ ]<br>relaxed [ ] | The high energy style of Williams is derived from the variety of pitch, rate of speech, and volume. |
| **General Comments** | |

## Appendix B: Vocal Performance Analysis of Robin Williams

**Actor Name:** Robin Williams- Improvisation Performance

**Character Name:** Daniel Hillard and Mrs. Doubtfire

**Production Title:** Mrs. Doubtfire

**Media:** Film

| Vocal Colorization | | Notes: |
|---|---|---|
| Pitch—overall speech | | During improvs, pitch changes depending upon |
| high | x | Character assumed. Example: lower for James Brown |
| normal | xx | than Julia Childs. Natural voice didn't change during |
| low | x | improvisations. |
| Pitch—modulation | | |
| monopitched | | modulation changes immediately with character |
| varied | x | change—spontaneous. |
| Pitch—step/inflection & patterns | | |
| rising / | x | During improvs, the same tendency towards rising or |
| falling \ | x | flat inflection at commas or periods exists— |
| scoop U | x | especially during sudden changes from one character |
| arch ^ | x | or subject to the next. |
| flat - | x | |
| Rate of speech | | |
| slow | | Natural rate of speech is somewhat increased during |
| normal | xx | improvisation sections. |
| fast | | |
| Rhythm | | |
| syllables stressed and patterns | | None |
| Resonance—overall | | |
| breathy (b) | x | Using natural voice resonance doesn't change. |
| full (f) | xx | However, resonance changes during improvs with |
| nasal (n) | x | character changes. |
| tense (te) | x | |
| throaty (th) | x | |
| whisper (w) | x | |
| Resonance—word-specific identify and list: | | None |
| Articulation—overall | | |
| clear | x | |
| overt | | |
| inarticulate | | |
| Articulation—word-specific identify and list | | Elongated "y" and "s" when saying a declarative "YES"—with the vowel "e" receiving little emphasis. |
| Volume—overall | | |
| high | x | During natural speech, volume remains medium- may |
| medium | xx | change depending upon situation of scene. |
| low | x | |
| Volume—patterns identify and list | | none |

## Appendix B: Vocal Performance Analysis of Robin Williams

**Actor Name:** Robin Williams–Improv. **Production Title:** Mrs. Doubtfire

| | Notes: |
|---|---|
| **Nonlanguage Utilities** | |
| Speech anomalies general | None |
| Speech anomalies sound-specific | Words "yes"-see note under "Articulation—word-specific." |
| Sound effects general usage | Throughout improvisational monologues |
| Sound effects specific usage | Imitating musical instruments—guitar, brass<br>Instrumental game show theme<br>Dinosaur growl |
| **Vocal Signature** | |
| Identify and list | |
| **Cultural Bias** | |
| Dialect | Used: Southern U.S. and African-American |
| Cultural characteristics | James Brown, Elvis Prestey, Groucho Marx, James Bond, Julia Child, Walter Brennan, Ronald Reagan, Humphrey Bogart imitations |
| Idioms and icons | Parody of "I Feel Good" (I eat wood)<br>Rap music<br>Amish "Home Study Course"<br>TV game show "theme song" music |
| Character signatures | "Hello, Boys and girls"—boring science TV program format. "Sparky" |
| **Performance Qualities** | |
| Improvisation | Fewer improvisations in this film than earlier projects |
| Energy<br>high [x]<br>normative [ ]<br>relaxed [ ] | Improvs are fast-paced, rapid -fire, feed off themselves |
| **General Comments** | |

## Appendix B: Vocal Performance Analysis of Robin Williams

**Actor Name:** Robin Williams
**Character Name:** Genie
**Production Title:** Aladdin
**Media:** Animation

| Vocal Colorization | | Notes: |
|---|---|---|
| **Pitch—overall speech** | | |
| high | x | |
| normal | x | Williams varies his pitch throughout his |
| low | x | performance;there is no overriding pattern. |
| **Pitch—modulation** | | |
| monopitched | | |
| varied | x | |
| **Pitch—step/inflection & patterns** | | |
| rising / | x | During natural speech, Williams often uses a rising |
| falling \ | x | or flat inflection at the ends of sentences and at |
| scoop U | x | commas. Example: wish for freedom in Aladdin |
| arch ^ | x | monologue. |
| flat - | x | |
| **Rate of speech** | | |
| slow | | Rate of speech varies depending upon situational |
| normal | xx | moment. |
| fast | | |
| **Rhythm** | | |
| syllables stressed and patterns | | None discernible |
| **Resonance—overall** | | |
| breathy (b) | x | In natural speech, generally full resonance with small |
| full (f) | xx | amount of breathy quality. The breathy quality is most |
| nasal (n) | | prevalent during intimate or quiet scenes. |
| tense (te) | | |
| throaty (th) | | |
| whisper (w) | | |
| **Resonance—word-specific** | | |
| identify and list: | | None |
| **Articulation—overall** | | |
| clear | x | Overall clear—no specific patterns noted. |
| overt | | |
| inarticulate | | |
| **Articulation—word-specific** | | |
| identify and list | | Elongated "y" and "s" when saying a declarative |
| | | "YES"—with the vowel "e" receiving little emphasis. |
| **Volume—overall** | | |
| high | x | Varied depending upon situation. |
| medium | xx | Natural voice is in medium range. |
| low | x | |
| **Volume—patterns** | | |
| identify and list | | No patterns to identify. |

## Appendix B: Vocal Performance Analysis of Robin Williams

**Actor Name:** Robin Williams **Production Title:** Aladdin

| | Notes: |
|---|---|
| **Nonlanguage Utilities** | |
| Speech anomalies general | No general pattern |
| Speech anomalies sound-specific | Word: "yes"-see notes under "Articulation—word-specific." |
| Sound effects general usage | Sound effects are used throughout, mostly during comedic scenes. Occasionally, an effect will substitute for a scripted word. Example: wish for freedom speech, substituting an explosion sound effect for the word "poof." |
| Sound effects specific usage | Game show buzzer, submarine warning signal, Bronx cheer. |
| **Vocal Signature** | |
| Identify and list | None |
| **Cultural Bias** | |
| Dialect | None privileged in natural speech. Used southern U.S., British, Scottish. |
| Cultural characteristics | None |
| Idioms and icons | None |
| Character signatures | None |
| **Performance Qualities** | |
| Improvisation | The most privileged aspect of Williams's performance—see specific chart of improvisation for "Aladdin" performance. |
| Energy | |
| high [x] | The high energy style of Williams is derived from the variety of pitch, rate of speech, and volume. |
| normative [ ] | |
| relaxed [ ] | |
| **General Comments** | |

## Appendix B: Vocal Performance Analysis of Robin Williams

**Actor Name:** Robin Williams- Improvisation Performance

**Character Name:** Genie

**Media:** Animation

**Production Title:** Aladdin

| Vocal Colorization | | Notes: |
|---|---|---|
| **Pitch—overall speech** | | |
| high | x | Natural speech is normal range, but will change |
| normal | xx | depending upon situation or character imitation. |
| low | x | Prize fight announcer vs. Carole Channing. |
| **Pitch—modulation** | | |
| monopitched | | Pitch variety prevalent during improvs. |
| varied | x | |
| **Pitch—step/inflection & patterns** | | |
| rising / | x | Same tendencies occur druing improvs-rising or flat |
| falling \ | x | inflection at commas and periods. |
| scoop U | x | |
| arch ^ | x | |
| flat - | x | |
| **Rate of speech** | | |
| slow | | Natural speech is elevated during improvs, but it |
| normal | x | varies according to situation of scene. |
| fast | | |
| **Rhythm** | | |
| syllables stressed and patterns | | None |
| **Resonance—overall** | | |
| breathy (b) | x | Natural speech during improvs remains full with some |
| full (f) | xx | some breathiness. Resonance varies from character |
| nasal (n) | x | to character in improvs. Prize fight announcer vs. |
| tense (te) | x | Carole Channing. |
| throaty (th) | x | |
| whisper (w) | x | |
| **Resonance—word-specific** | | |
| identify and list: | | None |
| **Articulation—overall** | | |
| clear | x | |
| overt | | |
| inarticulate | | |
| **Articulation—word-specific** | | |
| identify and list | | Elongated "y" and "s" when saying a declarative "YES"—with the vowel "e" receiving little emphasis. |
| **Volume—overall** | | |
| high | | |
| medium | x | |
| low | | |
| **Volume—patterns** | | |
| identify and list | | |

## Appendix B: Vocal Performance Analysis of Robin Williams

**Actor Name:** Robin Williams—Improv. **Production Title:** Aladdin

| | Notes: |
|---|---|
| **Nonlanguage Utilities** | |
| Speech anomalies general | None |
| Speech anomalies sound-specific | Words "yes"-see notes under "Articulation—word-speicfic." |
| Sound effects general usage | Throughout improvisational monologues |
| Sound effects specific usage | Whistle, sheep "baaa," explosions, game show buzzer, spitting, kissing "smooch," |
| **Vocal Signature** | |
| Identify and list | None |
| **Cultural Bias** | |
| Dialect | Used: Scottish, African-American, Southern U.S., French, Spanish, Middle-Eastern |
| Cultural characteristics | Prize fight announcer, French maitré d', street jive, California surfer "dude," effeminate fashion designer, rap, high school cheerleader. Usage of 1960s and 70s television: game show jargon, television shows—"Leave It to Beaver," "The Real McCoys," "Romper Room." Used impressions of Jack Nicholson, Peter Lorrie, Walter Brennan, Groucho Marx, Ed Sullivan |
| Idioms and icons | Amusement park attendant—"please keep your hands and feet inside at all times." Carole Channing as a flight attendant—"Thank you for choosing . . . for all your travel needs. Please don't stand until the carpet comes to a complete stop." Game show announcer—"How would like to drive home in this BRAND NEW ..." The phrase: "wake up and smell the..., "Game show phrase to the loser—"thank you for playing ..." Stereo-typical speech of a gay fashion designer. "Sparky" |
| Character signatures | |
| **Performance Qualities** | |
| Improvisation | The improvisational technique of Williams's performance is the foundation of his performer code. |
| Energy | |
| high [x] | Improvs are fast-paced, rapid-fire, feed off themselves. |
| normative [ ] | |
| relaxed [ ] | |
| **General Comments** | Words spoken during improv trigger add'l phrases: Example: "Caesar salad" led to mock Shakeskpearian quote in referring to Julius Ceasar "I do protest." |

## Appendix B: Vocal Performance Analysis of Robin Williams

**Actor Name:** Robin Williams

**Character Name:** Robin Williams

**Media:** Stand up Comedy

**Production Title:** Robin Wiliams
A Night at the Met

| Vocal Colorization | | Notes: |
|---|---|---|
| Pitch—overall speech | | |
| high | x | For usual speaking voice—normal. However, his |
| normal | xx | pitch is all-encompassing during performance. |
| low | x | |
| Pitch—modulation | | Pitch changes immediately depending on |
| monopitched | | characterization or level of excitement in delivery. |
| varied | x | |
| Pitch—step/inflection & patterns | | |
| rising / | x | Rich variety of inflections. There is a tendency to use |
| falling \ | x | a rising inflection at the ends of sentences and |
| scoop U | x | at commas. |
| arch ^ | x | |
| flat - | x | |
| Rate of speech | | |
| slow | | Natural voice rate of speech is normal, but increases |
| normal | xx | considerably during improvised moments and during |
| fast | | "stream of consciousness." |
| Rhythm | | |
| syllables stressed and patterns | | None |
| Resonance—overall | | |
| breathy (b) | x | Resonance changes simlutaneously with a change in |
| full (f) | xx | character within the same monologue and throughout |
| nasal (n) | x | throughout performance. |
| tense (te) | x | Natural resonance is full with overtone of breathiness. |
| throaty (th) | x | |
| whisper (w) | x | |
| Resonance—word-specific identify and list: | | None |
| Articulation—overall | | |
| clear | x | |
| overt | | |
| inarticulate | | |
| Articulation—word-specific identify and list | | Elongated "y" and "s" when saying a declarative "YES"—with the vowel "e" receiving little emphasis. |
| Volume—overall | | |
| high | x | Volume was above normal range, especially when |
| medium | | compared to other performances. |
| low | | |
| Volume—patterns identify and list | | None |

## Appendix B: Vocal Performance Analysis of Robin Williams

**Actor Name:** Robin Williams **Production Title:** A Night at the Met

| | Notes: |
|---|---|
| **Non-language Utilities** | |
| Speech anomalies general | |
| Speech anomalies sound-specific | Word: "yes"-see notes under "Articulation—word-specific." |
| Sound effects general usage | Sound effects used to embellish. |
| Sound effects specific usage | Organ playing chromatic scale to 5th. at baseball game. Whistle—theme from "High Chaparral." Robot motor—from Disneyland's Presidential robot. |
| **Vocal Signature** | |
| Identify and list | None |
| **Cultural Bias** | |
| Dialect | African-American, Middle Eastern, German, Southern U.S., Calif. Valley Girl, British, Scottish, French |
| Cultural characteristics | Refers to lesbians as "women in comfortable shoes," chinese drivers, "High Chaparral" theme. Mr. Potato Head. Disneyland—Mickey and Goofy, Fischer-Price toys, Mr. Rogers, Jack Nicholson, Clint Eastwood, John Wayne, Muppets, Movie: Halloween pt. 5—Jason's back and he's po'd, Black baseball player, Ronald Reagan impression, Bela Lugosi—"We can't do it during the day,marijuana user= "Mr. Herbalife," Jacques Cousteau, Teamster, gay choreographer/ballet dancer, Jimmy Stewart—"Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," Henry Kissenger, Barry White, Ralph Cramdon, Cybil, Valley girl—mixes up Mace w/ breath freshner, Organ playing at baseball game, Häagen Dazs ice cream. Referring to testicles as "slinky" toy, Sparky—recurring name, Wizard of Oz-"your little tu-tu too,"Colonel Sanders—Kentucky Fried Chicken=Col. Kahdafy Fried Chicken-bucket, Golf-white man dresses like a black pimp and it's OK, "Fashion police"—LA. police, Texas police. |
| Idioms and icons | Male genitals/penis=snail wearing a helmet, calling out "Hell no, I won't go"—70s war protest. "It's Miller time"—TV beer commercial. |
| Character signatures | "Hey Mo!"—Curly from the Three Stooges—referring to Momar Khadify. "Jim, you can't push it any faster"—Scotty from "StarTrek" |
| **Performance Qualities** | |
| Improvisation | Responding to heckler—not at the OPERA. Improvs feed from specific words-word association. Culturally and politically based. Manson-Dixon line/Kahdafy |
| Energy | |
| high [x] | Extremely high—the rhythm never slowed down. |
| normative [ ] | |
| relaxed [ ] | |
| **General Comments** | Prolific use of profanity, slang, sexual content: fuck, shit, mother fucker, intercourse, bitch, testicles, dick asshole, prick, cunt, goddamn it, pussy, oral sex. |

## Appendix B: Vocal Performance Analysis of Robin Williams

**Actor Name:** Robin Williams

**Character Name:** Adrian Cronaur

**Media:** Film

**Production Title:** Good Morning Vietnam

| Vocal Colorization | | Notes: |
|---|---|---|
| Pitch—overall speech | | Natural speaking voice uses normal pitch range, with variations depending upon situation. |
| high | | |
| normal | x | |
| low | | |
| Pitch—modulation | | |
| monopitched | | |
| varied | x | |
| Pitch—step/inflection & patterns | | |
| rising / | x | Pitch varies, but tendency at commas and ends of sentences to use rising or flat inflection. Example: Catskills, Beachboys segment. |
| falling \ | x | |
| scoop U | x | |
| arch ^ | x | |
| flat - | x | |
| Rate of speech | | |
| slow | | Natural speech is at a normal pace, but does change with specific situation. |
| normal | x | |
| fast | | |
| Rhythm | | |
| syllables stressed and patterns | | None |
| Resonance—overall | | |
| breathy (b) | x | Natural speaking voice has full resonance with some breathy quality—the breathiness becomes more dominant during intimate or quiet dialogue. Resonance changes with change of character or imitation of another person or character. |
| full (f) | xx | |
| nasal (n) | | |
| tense (te) | | |
| throaty (th) | | |
| whisper (w) | | |
| Resonance—word-specific identify and list: | | None |
| Articulation—overall | | |
| clear | x | |
| overt | | |
| inarticulate | | |
| Articulation—word-specific identify and list | | Long "y" and "s" with declarative "YES!"—little emphasis on "e" sound. |
| Volume—overall | | |
| high | | Natural speech—normal, although it varies according to specific situations. |
| medium | x | |
| low | | |
| Volume—patterns identify and list | | None |

## Appendix B: Vocal Performance Analysis of Robin Williams

**Actor Name:** Robin Williams **Production Title:** Good Morning Vietnam

| | Notes: |
|---|---|
| **Nonlanguage Utilities** | |
| Speech anomalies general | No patterns |
| Speech anomalies sound-specific | "yes"—see notes under "Articulation—word-specific." |
| Sound effects general usage | Not very often during scripted segments |
| Sound effects specific usage | Game show buzzer |
| **Vocal Signature** | |
| Identify and list | None |
| **Cultural Bias** | |
| Dialect | Natural voice—none. During scripted segments, he uses dialects associated with individuals. Example: Southern U.S. for Lyndon Johnson. |
| Cultural characteristics | None |
| Idioms and icons | None |
| Character signatures | None |
| **Performance Qualities** | |
| Improvisation | Relatively long segments of improvisations used in this performance—see separate analysis. |
| Energy | |
| high [x] | Sense of urgency plus variety of speech rate, pitch, volume. |
| normative [ ] | |
| relaxed [ ] | |
| **General Comments** | |

## Appendix B: Vocal Performance Analysis of Robin Williams

**Actor Name:** Robin Williams — **Character Name:** Adrian Cronaur

improv. performance — **Media:** Film

**Production Title:** Good Morning Vietnam

| Vocal Colorization | | Notes: |
|---|---|---|
| **Pitch—overall speech** | | |
| high | x | During improvs, pitch varies depending on |
| normal | xx | characterization. Example: Roosevelt T. Roosevelt— |
| low | x | lower than Wicked witch of the North. |
| **Pitch—modulation** | | |
| monopitched | | Varied throughout improvs—especially with |
| varied | x | character change. |
| **Pitch—step/inflection & patterns** | | |
| rising / | x | Frequently uses elongated vowels at end of sentences, |
| falling \ | x | also rising or flat inflections at ends of sentences and |
| scoop U | x | commas. No discernible pattern; all types of |
| arch ^ | x | inflections used. |
| flat - | x | |
| **Rate of speech** | | |
| slow | | Rate speed is elevated during imrovs—generally. |
| normal | xx | Exceptions: during slow motion recording—wrong |
| fast | | speed. |
| **Rhythm** | | |
| syllables stressed and patterns | | No patterns established. |
| **Resonance—overall** | | |
| breathy (b) | x | Resonance changes with characterizations. Natural |
| full (f) | xx | speech during improvs is full with slight breathy |
| nasal (n) | x | quality. |
| tense (te) | x | |
| throaty (th) | x | |
| whisper (w) | x | |
| **Resonance—word-specific** | | |
| identify and list: | | None |
| **Articulation—overall** | | |
| clear | x | Articulation remains clear regardless of |
| overt | | characterization or natural voice. |
| inarticulate | | |
| **Articulation—word-specific** | | |
| identify and list | | Elongated "y" and "s" with declarative "yes"—vowel |
| | | "e" receiving least emphasis. |
| **Volume—overall** | | |
| high | x | Volume heightens generally during improvs, but is |
| medium | xx | somewhat regulated by character portrayal. |
| low | x | |
| **Volume—patterns** | | |
| identify and list | | |

## Appendix B: Vocal Performance Analysis of Robin Williams

**Actor Name:** Robin Williams **Production Title:** Good Morning Vietnam

| | Notes: |
|---|---|
| **Nonlanguage Utilities** | |
| Speech anomalies | none |
| Speech anomalies sound-specific | See note under "Articulation—word-specific"—"yes." |
| Sound effects general usage | Used throughout improvs to enrich the moment. |
| Sound effects specific usage | Helicopter, dog barking, musical instrument playing, "Twilight Zone," game show buzzer, recording played backwards, teletype machine |
| **Vocal Signature** | |
| Identify and list | |
| **Cultural Bias** | |
| Dialect | Southern U.S., African-american, British |
| Cultural characteristics | Game show motif—buzzer, "Thank you for playing!" "Twilight Zone" theme, Wizard of Oz: Good Queen, Wicked Witch of the North (as Hanoi Hannah), Walter Cronkite, munchkins singing "Follow the Ho Chi Minh Trail." Imitations: Elvis Presley, Gomer Pyle, Lawrence Welk, Walter Brennan, Richard Nixon, Elmer Fudd, Bozo, Col. Sanders=Ho Chi Minh. "Mr. Leo"—gay fashion designer, Crock pot cooking, Mouseketeer Show |
| Idioms and icons | TV commercials: "limp damaged hair" Radio/TV talk show jargon: "Our lines are open." "Twilight Zone" opening statement—Rod Sterling imitation: "Picture a man, . . ." |
| Character signatures general | "Surprise, surprise, surprise"—Gomer Pyle. Wizard of Oz: "I'll get you, my little pretty"—Wicked Witch "You're among the little people now."—Good Witch. |
| **Performance Qualities** | |
| Improvisation | Used several times throughout film. |
| Energy high [x] normative [ ] relaxed [ ] | Elevated during improvs displayed by increased rate of speech and volume. Also, very rapid change from character to character, and subject to subject. Words trigger subject change. |
| **General Comments** | Uses profanity and profane slang: fuck, shit, oral sex, puntang, pussy, penis, "crotch" pot cooking, asshole |

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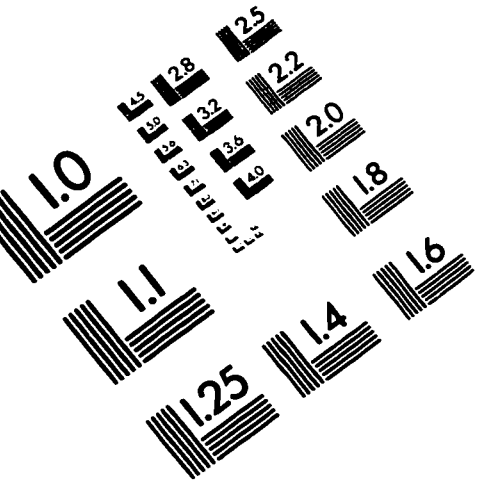

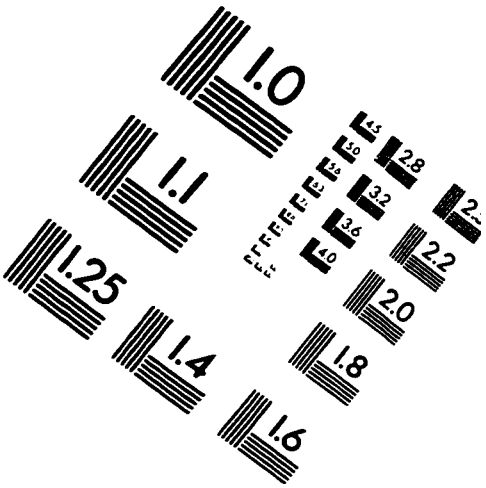

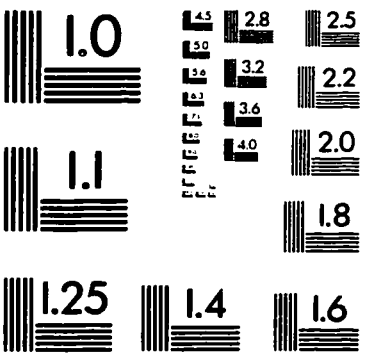

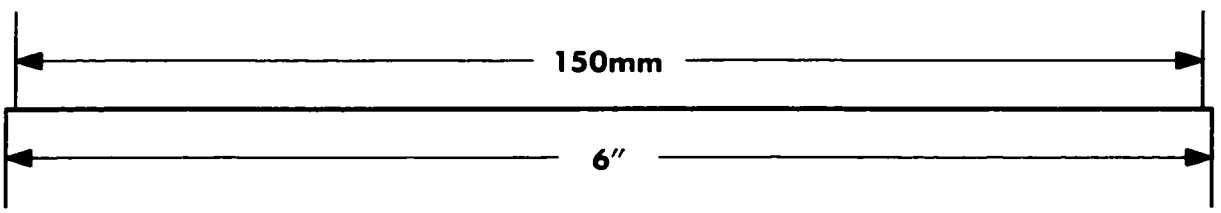


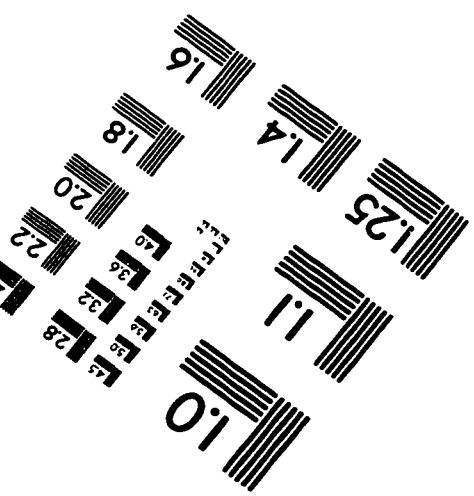

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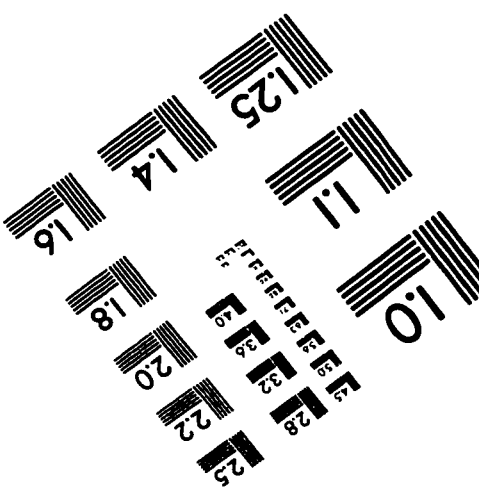
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