fitzmaurice v o i c e w o r k ®
www.ftzmauricevoice.com

A non-structural approach to text analysis: imaging – synaesthesia

a.   in your text, identify all concrete nouns. if there are adjectives attached to them include them. image them make a particular not generic picture, of, e.g., a tree you know from your backyard, not just a tree or genus of tree. of course if you have never seen a tree you may use your imagination. allow each word and image to produce its own echoes and associations, sun for instance echoes son. daydream for as long as you like on each and all of these pictures.

b.   returning to the text, identify all the relatings, prepositions and verbs, yes, verbs. i.e. the relationship between me and you is that I give you these exercises. allow adverbs to inform the way the verbs relate the concretes to each other. let these connections and movements between connect and move your pictures. daydream some more, allowing associations to alter or negate the linear meaning of your text.

c.   from the text, or, if you know it, saying words in random order aloud, see to what extent the sounds and rhythms (if you wish, see chapter on consonants an vowels for a discussion of the rhythm inherent in particular sounds, or follow your own insights and infeelings) of those sounds in each word are onomatopoeic, informing meaning or creating new meaning and/or associations. allow the sounds to extend, repeat, shorten, play in many ways. do the same with phrases.

d.   see if there are any words which seem to spring from or generate emotion of any kind. if there is a whole phrase which does that try to specify the one word within the phrase which does that most. what emotion is it? where in your body do you feel it? do you have a particular event that it reminds you of that has help[ed to give you personally this emotional charge around this word? who other than yourself was involved in this event? can you identify what the charge is when it is related to this person? where in your body do you feel it?

e.   if there are personal nouns, people, mentioned in the text, give yourself a personalization for each one of them, based on what you have just experienced around your emotions when connected to people (these people who came up for you just now may perhaps not reappear in the text), and further based on what you know about your character's relationship to them in the play. e.g. are they a loved one, an authority figure, an enemy etc. draw their picture in your mind's eye and name them by the name in the text.

f.   if there are abstract nouns, identify events which, and then people who, embody the particular abstraction or quality, e.g. of beauty, wisdom, foolishness, knowledge, justice etc. see the people, and see them expressing this quality.

g.   put all of this in your body. you become the text. remember drawing the spine? (see exercise under restructuring) in the same way you bring each image into your body wherever it may seem to want to lie, and press it into your body until you feel it. you may feel your reaction as in drawing the focus line in your spine, as tingle, pressure, tickle, warmth, etc. or you may actually twitch, blush, blink, perspire, feel your heartbeat or breathing rhythm change etc. you may feel the back of your neck extend as you think or say king because of the effort a king's neck must make to wear a crown, and you may feel this tiny action as an indicator of power. you may smell or taste something. images may take on a life of their own. let them.

h.   live with all these images and sensations for days. returning to a reading of the text only to give yourself new words to play with in all these ways. start to allow them to play themselves through the video in your brain and the repository of feeling in your body in the order in which they appear in the text without necessarily going into linear meaning. soon linear meaning will emerge and take over. all the pictures and associations which you have imaged and felt will remain as echoes and pictures and feelings which you can conjure at will. you will begin to have a clear "graph" of your text. if you have done all these exercises with every single word, even those that don't look like they carry much meaning, you will never need to "learn your lines." they will be there when you rethink and refeel your images and sensations. you can then return to the following series of explorations, which were the different kinds of texts that you identified before.

then identify the "styles" – info, objective, lyrical, etc.

© Catherine Fitzmaurice, 1998