

Afterwords... Afterwards...

Year: 2006
Level: First Year, Spring Semester 2
Unit: 100397 Creative Strategies 2
Duration: 3 days
Dates: October 25, November 1, 15

Origin

'Afterwards' was prepared as the final step of the final project of Creative Strategies 2. With the closure of the Fine Arts degree this was to be the last project offering of its kind and conceived fully cognizant of the poignant moment of 'creative strategies' passing into history. Hence the 'what happens next?' of the 'afterwards...afterwards...' title. The verbosity of many of the creative strategies projects over the years, their often tortuous and convoluted use of language: dense with words, the title was suggestive of what might happen next once the 'word supply' was switched off. This then was a deliberately 'wordy' project but forced through the mincer of incoherence through the vagary of a chance system.

Premise

I had recently come across an impressive short story written by David Brooks entitled 'Gauguin's Dream' (from the collection "Black Sea"). I decided to 'unscramble' the word sequence into an alphabetical order and in doing so render the story incomprehensible. This alphabet of "Gauguin's Dream" was issued to all students as AfterwordZ. At the introductory briefing I recited AfterwordZ (a rapid reading that took around 10 minutes). Whilst the reading was taking place I showed a screening of a classic documentary on Trobriand Cricket (as a silent movie without the audio) to further confuse people.

The directive was quite straightforward. Each student was to script a 50 word proposal, from a limited prescribed word pool taken from AfterwordZ based on the letters that comprised their surname. Hence if their name was SMITH they could use any of the S, M, I, T or H words listed in AfterwordZ to select from in compiling their proposal. The proposal itself also required to be written alphabetically, enforcing further its incoherence. They were then free to engage with this 'proposal' in what ever way they wanted to. At the presentations the outcomes were viewed and the 50 word 'proposals' read out.

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AfterwordZ is an alphabetical reordering of a short story by David Brooks entitled "Gauguin's Dream", taken from his collection of short stories "Black Sea" (1997). The story was chosen randomly and the story itself is inconsequential.

AfterwordZ comprises all of the 1517 words of the original story re-sequenced from A-Z.

You are required to work with prescribed selections from this text.

The letters of your surname determines the selection.

