

Parallax:  
the novel 'After and Before Now'  
and an accompanying exegesis  
'Experiencing the Ekphrastic Imaginary'

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## Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	vii
<b>Declaration</b>	ix
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	xi
<b>After and Before Now: a novel</b>	
<i>Prologue: Names</i>	1
<i>Part One: Optogram</i>	7
<i>Part Two: Gift</i>	161
<i>Part Three: Wunderkammer</i>	241
<i>Epilogue: M is for ...</i>	279
<b>Experiencing the Ekphrastic Imaginary: an exegesis</b>	
<b>accompanying the novel ‘After and Before Now’</b>	
<i>Lacunae Revisited: introducing the ekphrastic imaginary</i>	
<i>of ‘After and Before Now’</i>	1
<i>Part I – Creation</i>	
<b>The Art(ist) Object(ive)</b>	9
<b>Words and Images: coming to ekphrasis</b>	17
Ekphrasis – development of a working definition	17
The Time/Space Divide	18
Paragone and ekphrastic anxiety	20

Postmodernism/Poststructuralism, stasis and the spatialisation of literature	22
Kaleidoscope/dynamic collage	23
Elevating the object	25
Demarcation – reproducing non-fiction art writing	25
Demarcation – reproducing the gallery context	27
Postmodern/Poststructuralist influences	29
Parallel perspectives/narratives	30
Naturalising description	31
Notionality and temporal mobility	32
<b>Images and Words: towards the verbal object</b>	35
‘Optogram’	35
‘Gift’	42
‘ <i>Wunderkammer</i> ’	44
A Portrait of Lola	46
<i>Part II – Curation</i>	
<b>The Double Helix</b>	49
The ekphrastic novel	49
Creating a world	54
Novel as exhibition	55
Quantum Physics and Literature	57
Time and chapter structure	60
Portals and wormholes	62
Intersubjectivity and the object	65
Quantum entanglement and shifting focaliser	67
Quantum entanglement and fugueing ekphrasis	70

Fragmentation of narrative consciousness	72
Fragmentation and suicide bereavement	74
Fragmentation and self-creating transformative acts	75
Future-memory and the possibility of wholeness	76
<b>WORKS CITED</b>	81



## Abstract

‘Parallax’ is a hybrid creative writing PhD thesis comprised of two interrelated parts – the novel ‘After and Before Now’, and its accompanying exegesis ‘Experiencing the Ekphrastic Imaginary’. Both novel and exegesis are concerned with notions of multiplicity and simultaneity as they relate to acts of creation, transformation and to ideas of the self.

‘After and Before Now’ is an ekphrastic novel exploring connections between creativity and selfhood through the experiences of its central protagonist, young visual artist Lola Hayward. The three-part narrative centres on the opening night of an exhibition to which Lola has contributed three main works. The novel’s formal structure is circu-linear, with a kaleidoscopic approach to narrative point-of-view that utilises first, second and third person perspectives to examine and represent the idea of the multifaceted self. The imagined art objects function as temporal touchstones, entry points through which narrative burrows into the present moment, into the memories and projections of events and ideas formative and transformative, gateways to those shadow-selves that continue to underlie and inform Lola’s attempts to understand her own being and becoming.

‘Experiencing the Ekphrastic Imaginary’ is a fictocritical essay investigating the processes of writing the novel, with a particular focus on its imagined art objects, and on the representation of creative praxis. Contemporary ekphrastic fiction and theory are surveyed within the context of the search for an appropriate framework and language for the exegetical discussion. Exploration of and experimentation with the temporal/spatial possibilities and constraints of the ekphrastic mode are described in the

context of the novel's treatment of the interconnected narrative spheres of structure, tense and perspective. The creation of the novel's structure is also explicated through a discussion of the relationship between literary theory and quantum theory. The notion of slippage – between author and narrator, truth and fiction, art and self – is linked to the concept of the transformative act of selfhood.

Both texts engage with and explore techniques of discontinuity, destabilisation, intertextuality and self-reflexivity in order to seek out strategies for and methods of representing the interdependent, indissoluble nature of the relationship between the creative process and the transformative self.

## Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. In the case of 'After and Before Now' there will be a one year embargo.

I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Australian Digital Theses Program (ADTP) and also through web search engine, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

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