# Faces inside and outside the clinic:

## A perspective on surface truth's (in)visible depths

**by**

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# Abstract

*Faces inside and outside the clinic: A perspective on surface truth's (in)visible depths* addresses the notion of 'truth' in what are considered to be 'right' and 'wrong' faces—in clinical diagnosis and cosmetic treatment procedures, and in specific sociocultural contexts outside the clinic. Drawing upon my own studies of surface topography, image editing, and diagnostic and surgical experience in the orofacial region, I discuss the ways the human face—and often the individual herself or himself as a consequence—is physically defined, conceptually judged, numerically measured, and clinically analysed according to allegedly evidential and objective 'truths' which, on closer inspection, are found to be subjective and prescriptive. Further, I argue that when determining 'right' and 'wrong' faces, what happens *inside* the clinic has a lot to do with what happens *outside* the clinic—and vice versa. Through an analysis of Foucault's theoretical *oeuvre* I show how 'normalising technologies'—in which systematised '*technologies*' (machinic and non-machinic) are made up of a variety of independent and non-systematic '*techniques*'—ultimately preserve and expand upon an increasing array of 'abnormal' facial configurations. However, I also argue that individual '*techniques*' (for clinicians *and* patients) have their own admixture of commonalities and particularities, their own conditions of possibility, and their own notion of uniqueness which are both discursively 'fashioned' through the Foucauldian concept of the *dispositif*, but also 'fashioning' through Merleau-Ponty's and Bourdieu's notions of 'the body-in-situation', embodied experience and intentionality, and the everyday dispositions of 'lived' faces in specific sociocultural contexts. I conclude with an analysis of the shared (but asymmetrical) nature of the face-to-face (faces *in situ*) clinical encounter, in which I contend that it is the clinician who must accept the major responsibility for any procedural action taken, or not taken.

# DECLARATION

## STATEMENT OF CANDIDATURE

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled *Faces inside and outside the clinic: A perspective on surface truth's (in)visible depths* has not previously been submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree, to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research, and it has been written by me. Any assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Anthony Thomas McHugh                    Date

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For my wife Jill and my son Robert


With Love

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In conclusion, I thank my students, my patients, my fellow researchers, and all the people with whom, over the years, I have enjoyed a stimulating exchange of ideas. They are the ones that have sparked my desire to be a good clinician, teacher, and—most importantly—a good listener, always willing to learn.

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Australian English spelling generally follows the conventions of British spelling. For example, the 'u' is retained in words such as *honour* and *favour*, and the –ise ending is used in words such as *medicalise* and *organise*, rather than the –ize ending.

I have used the *Macquarie Dictionary* (Fourth Edition, 2005)[i] as my standard for Australian English spelling in the typescript through the body of this dissertation, except in quotations from other sources, where the spelling and punctuation of the original has been retained. Single inverted commas, except for quotations within quotations (which have double inverted commas) are used consistently throughout the text.

In quotations that use the masculine to designate the universal I have made use of [*sic*] to mark the first use of the male 'universal' in each quote, while retaining the author's original words.

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[i]  Yallop, Colin (2005), *Macquarie dictionary* (4th edn.; North Ryde, N.S.W.: Macquarie Library) xx, 1676 p.