Editorial

A Lesson From Mr. Dickens

A wonderful cartoon based on the famous opening line of Charles Dickens’ novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, once appeared in *The New Yorker*. It showed two Victorian gentlemen seated in a coffeehouse, with one saying to the other, “Come now, Mr. Dickens, it was either the best of times or the worst of times, it can’t be both.”

Mr. Dickens, in fact, had it right. The world can present many different and seemingly contradictory faces to us, depending on how we choose to look at it. Consider our own world of aesthetic surgery. From one point of view, the scope of aesthetic surgery is expanding to become truly global in character. This trend is demonstrated by the multinational character of professional meetings and symposia, the development of a common armamentarium of tools and techniques to which surgeons from all areas contribute, and even by increasingly internationalized standards of beauty in which a “Western” and specifically “American” aesthetic promulgated through Hollywood, television, and other media has an acknowledged worldwide impact while at the same time being increasingly influenced in turn by Latin and other cultures. Yet we could say with equal justification that our world is shrinking, as advances in transportation and above all in communications technology bring us closer together, creating unparalleled opportunities for the cooperative exchange of ideas, information, and techniques.

As a plastic surgeon and a member of The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, I have noted with pleasure the expanding role of our society in fostering a global perspective for aesthetic surgery. As an editor, I am particularly aware of the role that improved communications can play in carrying out this perspective.

We have tried to fulfill this role for *Aesthetic Surgery Journal* by various means, such as encouraging international submissions and by providing multilingual translation of abstracts in our online journal. Above all, we have sought to reach out directly to our international colleagues to become partners in our efforts. In recent years, I have had the privilege of announcing that that the Brazilian Society of Plastic Surgery and the Mexican Association of Plastic, Aesthetic and Reconstructive Surgery have adapted *ASJ* as their official English-language journal. I can now inform you that a third society has entered into partnership with us: the Japan Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. Our relationship with this society, which includes over 600 members, marks a major advance in our relationships with our colleagues in Japan and throughout Asia.

Our world of plastic surgery thus continues to branch out, or to come together. It all depends on one’s point of view. What we can say with confidence is that with respect to our international ties, it is the best of times, no matter how you look at it.

Copyright © 2003 by The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, Inc.
1090-820X/2003/$30.00 + 0