

AWAKENINGS

Guest Editors, Greg Gilman, O.D., and Beth Gilman, O.D.

Awakenings, an insightful movie starring Robert de Niro and Robin Williams, depicted the blossoming of awareness. Observing the process of awareness unfold is an exhilarating experience.

An awakening is transpiring in optometry outside America. Behind this change are the principles of behavioral optometry. Many behavioral optometrists from North America have been sharing behavioral concepts around the world and these concepts have begun to flourish. The philosophy is inspiring original thinking.

Independently, in both Norway and Switzerland, several optometrists are investigating the effect of anisometric prescriptions on dominance and existing visual patterns. This has been done specifically in dyslexics with interesting results. In Denmark, some optometrists are not only aware of the relationships between chiropractic and vision, but have been working with chiropractors for many years. Belgium and Denmark have sophisticated clinics doing vision therapy for low vision patients.

A European optometrist has developed the technique of using the Bernelle Aperture Rule^a while moving on a walking rail. Another European optometrist is studying the differences that occur in retinoscopy when a patient is standing and sitting, particularly with respect to

astigmatism. A recent article by a South African optometrist in the *Journal of Behavioral Optometry*¹ discusses a novel diagrammatic method to analyze the individual and his environment. Several Italian optometrists presented an innovative and impressive video on vision at the 1990 International Congress of Behavioral Optometry in Monte Carlo. Theoretical constructs have been formed by Australian optometrists that identify automaticity as a key to successful vision therapy.

At a recent seminar on behavioral optometry, a European from one country was invited to lecture in another European country far removed from his own. In the past, an American probably would have been invited.

At the 1990 International Congress in Monte Carlo, optometrists from nine countries presented their ideas. Colleagues in Australia are now planning with representatives of OEP for the next International Congress during 1994 in Sydney. This type of interchange was not occurring five years ago. New ideas and exchanges of information promote new discussions and this is how a philosophy thrives.

Skeffington created a laudable model. For any philosophy to endure, it must grow. The more adherents the philosophy gains the more likely it will attract the needed diverse thinkers. This

diversity of thinking is continuing to occur at an increased rate in behavioral optometry. It is breathing new life into the already rich heritage given to us by Skeffington and "the second generation,"² many of whom we have recently lost. This will ensure the philosophy's long and healthy life.

There is rapid growth in the interest in behavioral optometry from colleagues outside America. In fact, it is outpacing the growth in the United States. Eventually, the number of Clinical Associates outside America may equal or surpass the numbers in America. The philosophy is winning new adherents and this is providing us with new insights.

This awakening is promoting a dynamic future. Those who have been the teachers may become the students as new ideas emerge from around the world. Skeffington would be proud of the universal appeal of his ideas and pleased with the ability of so many to build and elaborate on it.

References

1. Rubin A. Environmental sensitivity. *J Behav Opt*, 1991;2:127-130.
2. Williams RA. OEP a network for 1991 and beyond. *J Behav Opt*, 1991;2:114.

Source

- a. Bernelle Corporation, 750 Lincolnway E., South Bend, IN 46634