

THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

pro bono humani generis

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Dear Dr Sharp

Thank you for the reprints. I have been following the transplant issues for a long time; but you still brought home to me a note of poignancy with your description of the paradoxes.

I found one item in my own archives that has some bearing on the topic, beyond the op-ed columns I've already sent you.

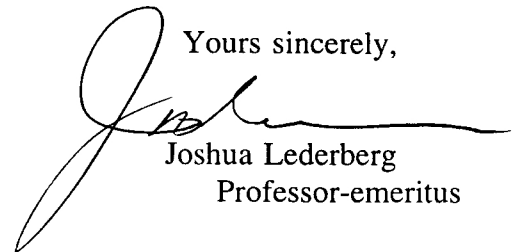
Underplayed in of your accounts is the role of the surgical establishment in sustaining the market for organs. It is just built in that, while for very good reason we refrain from reimbursing the donors, there are other institutions whose economic viability (and for some a very good living) depends on the flow of organs. One more paradox: the healers who do good also do well. We can hardly ask of them that they make free gifts of their time and skill. I obviously share some ambivalence about life-extension through an organ donation, and a frame where one person's mortality is the benefice to others. I've long urged research that could let us break out of that mold: a wonderful example is the repopulation of a liver from small biopsy specimen transplants.

Have you seen Titmuss "The Gift Relationship" -- touches on related matters icw blood.

One reprint you sent was from the March 1998 NYAS conference. I guess you do say something about the "complex, medical industry" in that article. I actually appeared for about 30 minutes for the introductory "Welcoming Remarks" at that meeting; but I had to run off.

Finally, I have located one of Lauriston Sharp's erstwhile colleagues and he has made my questions his own, and is following up on a critical assessment of the steel axe story. (Robert J. Smith, Cornell.)

Yours sincerely,



Joshua Lederberg
Professor-emeritus

Taverdi 1967

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