

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS SCHOOL OF
MANAGEMENT &
THE SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF HEALTH INSTITUTE,
AT THE UNIVERSITIES OF ST ANDREWS AND DUNDEE

**What should we do about transplant organs?
An interdisciplinary workshop on the ethics
and economics of a medical crisis.**

*30 June 2010, Parliament Hall, St Andrews,
10am-4.30pm*

**Programme, abstracts and
participants**

Timetable

Time	Event
9.30 – 9.50	Coffee and registration
9.50 – 10.00	Open and welcome Huw Davies, School of Management and SDHI
10.00 – 11.30	Commercializing organ markets Chair: Huw Davies Philip Roscoe: <i>On the possibility of organ markets and the performativity of economics</i> Adrian Walsh: <i>The sale of human organs as a distinctive moral hazard</i>
11.30 – 11.45	Coffee
11.45 – 12.30	Organ markets and medical practice: a surgeon's perspective Chair: Alan MacKinlay Speaker: Mr John Forsythe
12.30 – 1.30	Lunch
1.30 – 3.00	Heart narratives Chair: Shiona Chillas <i>Matt Sothern and Jennifer Dickinson: Constructing healthy selves: organ transplants, the 'gift of life' and the project of care/ Heart transplants and communities of self-care</i> <i>Ai-Ling Lai: A heart-to-heart talk: Exploring Existential Narratives Surrounding the Heart among Potential Organ Donors</i>
3.00 – 3.15	Tea
3.15 – 4.00	Discussion Stephen Wilkinson
4.00 – 4.10	Close

9. Abstracts

i) On the possibility of organ markets and the performativity of economics

Philip Roscoe, University of St Andrews, School of Management

The global shortage of organ problems has led to a debate over the best way of increasing supply in which economics has featured prominently. This paper argues that the moral and technical authority claimed by economics is an example of the “performativity thesis”. The paper reviews the economic contribution to the debate. It investigates the way that economics legitimizes its presence in a moral debate and posits new ways of social and ultimately moral organization. The paper concludes with suggestions for future research directions in the area.

ii) The sale of human organs as a distinctive moral hazard

Adrian Walsh, University of New England, School of Humanities

In a great many Western countries the sale of human organs is prohibited. One prominent justificatory ground for blocking such exchanges is what we might call the “Commodification Objection”. The key idea here is that commercialising human organ leads us to regard those who sell their organs as mere commodities. This is typically explicated in Kantian terms via the price-dignity dictum according to which price and dignity are mutually exclusive.

Recently a number of philosophers have rejected this objection on the grounds (i) that there is no entailment or necessary connection between commercialising something and regarding it instrumentally; (ii) that such instrumental attitudes arise on contexts other than the commercial realm and (iii) that human organs themselves are not morally considerable and thus concerns about how we should or should not regard them cannot be derived from our putative obligations to persons.

In this paper I defend a modified version of the Commodification Objection. I argue that: i) moral significance does not require that an undesirable outcome be a necessary consequence of the practice under examination: ii) the relative likelihood of an undesirable mode of regard arising provides a morally-relevant distinguishing marker for assessing the comparative moral status of various social institutions and arrangements; iii) sales in human organs are sufficiently distinct from sales of everyday artefacts and sufficiently close to personhood to provide genuine grounds for concern. In pursuing this line of argument I will also explore in some detail the idea of a moral hazard as an ethically-useful category.

iii) Organ markets and medical practice: a surgeon’s perspective

John Forsythe, Director of the Transplant Unit at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh

The discussion about the commercialisation of transplantation is always emotive. At present the legal situation in the UK is very clear; such commercialisation is outlawed. In addition the international transplant community is firmly opposed to commercialisation as well noted in the Istanbul Declaration. There is no doubt that the many thousands of patients on the waiting list for a life-saving transplant require an

increase in organ donor numbers. It is highly questionable whether commercialisation of the process will produce all round benefit in the long-term.

iv) Constructing healthy selves: organ transplants, the 'gift of life' and the project of care

Matt Sothern, University of St Andrews, School of Geography and Geosciences, and Jennifer Dickinson, University of Leicester, Department of Geography

This paper analyzes a range of self-help and popular autobiographical texts written by and for organ transplant recipients. We argue that these literatures reveal two contradictory spatialities of the post-transplant body: the first is a territorialisation of the new organ as a foreign Other whereas the second is an attempt at constructing a cohesive post-transplant self that assimilates the new organ into the 'natural' body. In this way self-help literatures provide a lens through which the post-transplant body can contribute to fundamental health geography questions about embodiment, performativity, identity, technology and health.

Intimate Territories: Heart transplants and communities of self-care

Jennifer Dickinson and Matt Sothern

Studies in organ donation and transplantation have emerged as a significant way of understanding the ethical, moral and identity dilemmas of organ procurement. Less attention has been paid to the ways in which organ recipients negotiate the disquiet occasioned by the inseparable interconnectedness between a new life and the death which necessitates it. In this session, we outline the beginnings of a research project to analyse how these moral territories impact on patient's physical and symbolic responses to their new organs.

v) A heart-to-heart talk: Exploring Existential Narratives Surrounding the Heart among Potential Organ Donors

Ai-Ling Lai, University of Leicester, School of Management

This paper explores the existential narratives of the heart among potential organ donors as they consider the 'gift-of-life' discourse that underpins the marketing of organ donation. The paper demonstrates that the heart is saturated with metaphorical and cultural significance as a sacred symbol, which is being reworked into the 'gift-of-life' promotional discourse to appeal to potential donors. The paper considers how such appropriation of meanings is met with ambivalence among potential donors, who continue to embrace the heart as an existential ground for transcendence. Accordingly, the participants in this study raise ethical concerns over the progressive industrialization of the body as they question the extent to which the heart can be commodified while still preserves its cultural and existential significance.

vi) Discussion

Stephen Wilkinson, University of Keele, Centre for Professional Ethics

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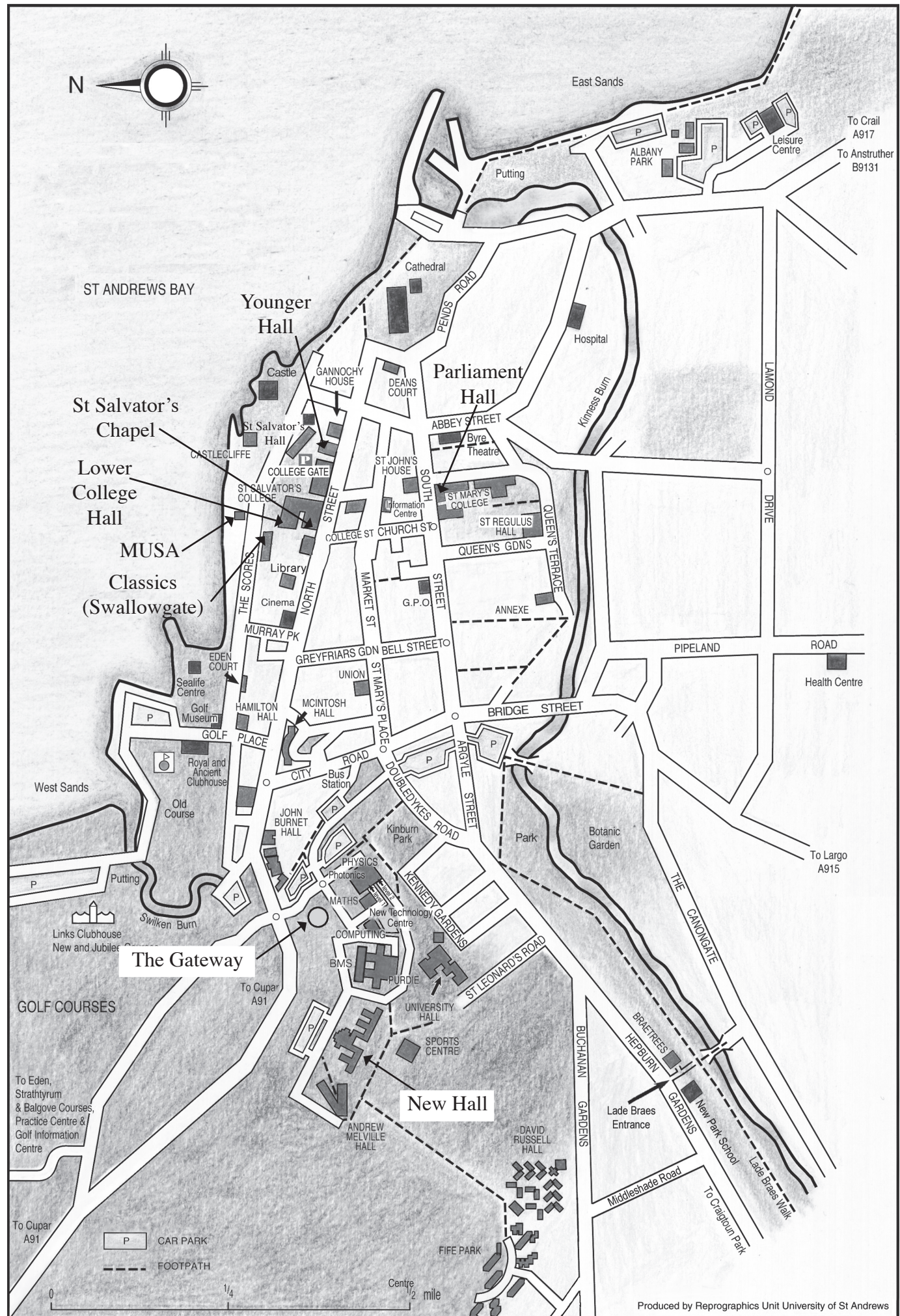
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