



Editorial

About the Book 'The Puzzle People' by Thomas Earl Starzl

Sezai Yilmaz,¹ Sami Akbulut,¹ Brian I Carr²

¹Department of Surgery and Liver Transplant Institute, Inonu University Faculty of Medicine, Malatya, Türkiye

²Department of Translational Hepatocellular Carcinoma Research of Liver Transplantation Institute, Inonu University Faculty of Medicine, Malatya, Türkiye

Keywords: Thomas Earl Starzl, Father of Liver Transplantation, The Puzzle People, Memoriam of Starzl

Please cite this article as "Yilmaz S, Akbulut S, Carr BI. About the Book 'The Puzzle People' by Thomas Earl Starzl. J Inonu Liver Transpl Inst 2023;1(2):29–30".

"Journal of Inonu Liver Transplantation Institute (J Inonu Liver Transpl Inst)" will mainly include articles in the field of liver transplantation (LT). Based on this idea, It was planned to tell the story of LT in the period up to the pre-2000s, mainly by quoting from the book "Puzzle People", which describes the life of Starzl, a major pioneer of LT, and documents the historical origins of LT and making use of articles from that period.^[1] Starzl stated that this book was about organ transplantation, or rather some people (scientists) whose work led to advances in the field of transplantation. In fact, the tendency to write his memoirs about the events that shaped the transplantation, which he tried to express in the book, was very weak, and recently the feeling of not writing predominated. However, the fact that he had two heart operations in the summer of 1990 motivated Starzl to write this book. Starzl states at the beginning of the book: "Now I think what I've been through might help someone who fears that their best efforts are going nowhere".

Readers who want documentation of some of the important events in the development of LT can also read the articles collected by Paul Terasaki, which reviews scientific

progress of early work in this field.^[2] Starzl's contribution to Terasaki's book has been to broadly describe the advances in transplantation over the past 35 years in which Starzl et al contributed so much. In fact, these were within the formal history, but the events described in the book made up the rest of the historical story in detail. These will be remembered with either a small smile or frown by those involved. It will even be remembered with tears by those who were involved in these events.

At a meeting in Capri, an Italian journalist asked Starzl the following question: Do you think a Puzzle People could be made with a heart, liver and pancreas taken from other people in the next 10 years? Starzl answered this question as follows: "There are now many examples of puzzle men or women who have received heart-kidney, pancreas-kidney, heart-lung, and heart-liver. More complicated combinations are possible in the near future". Starzl later thought how inadequate his answer was, that every patient who receives one or more of someone else's organs is a puzzle. It wasn't just the acquisition of new parts, the rest of the body also had to change in many ways for the gift to be ac-

Address for correspondence: Sezai Yilmaz, MD. Department of Surgery and Liver Transplant Institute, Inonu University Faculty of Medicine, Malatya, Türkiye

Phone: +90 532 325 12 12 **E-mail:** sezai.yilmaz@inonu.edu.tr

Submitted Date: 12.08.2023 **Revised Date:** 12.08.2023 **Accepted Date:** 13.08.2023 **Available Online Date:** 25.09.2023

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cepted. And this was just the beginning. It was unpredictable how much the physical and mental parts would be put together in Puzzle people. Most patients died. Some have achieved a better world. Others also encountered a grim swamp, their vulnerabilities turned against them in ways they could not even imagine.

Over the years, transplantation has been such a great miracle that perhaps the least anticipated and potentially most important miracle in the history of medicine was not so easy to understand how it happened. Because we were led to stories written by doctors where someone's life could be summed up in a single sentence or a number in a table. In 1958, when Starzl started working on transplantation, this field was quite simple. There were no organ recipients in Boston, except for a few who had kidneys transplanted from identical twins as donors.^[3] When John F Kennedy inaugurated his presidency three years later in 1961, transplantation was still a specialized field of study known to a few dreamers in surgical research laboratories. There was little that seemed realistic other than hopes that a successful transplant of a kidney or other life-supporting organ could be performed in humans. Until November 1963, when Kennedy was killed, kidney transplants were starting to be performed effectively, and the first cases were starting to be done for liver livers.^[4,5] A new field in medicine was emerging. Many more years were needed to fulfill the inflated expectations of the early days. During these years, patients weren't just puzzle people who were remade. Surgeons and physicians in other specialties also changed, though not quickly. Their own lives were not in danger, but the lives of others were in their hands. Some were worn down as they gained experience, devastated, and some subjugated, but none remained the same. Many of the professional figures in the early days of transplantation are still

in practical medicine. They are being pushed to the edge of the stage right now. One way to get there is at a conference where their past contributions and efforts are celebrated by that person's friends and former adversaries. These have happened frequently lately. These are like the city-by-city tours of old baseball stars. Some are modest, some are not, but they were all in the final season of the game. Meetings were not designed for what they were exploring or doing. The secrets were inside them. Starzl started writing this book, thinking that it would be best to retell his own story.

Disclosures

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Conflict of Interest: None declared.

Authorship Contributions: Concept – S.Y.; Design – S.Y.; Supervision – S.A., B.I.C.; Materials – S.Y.; Data collection &/or processing – S.Y.; Analysis and/or interpretation – S.Y., S.A., B.I.C.; Literature search – S.Y.; Writing – S.Y., S.A., B.I.C.; Critical review – S.Y., S.A., B.I.C.

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