

November 2002

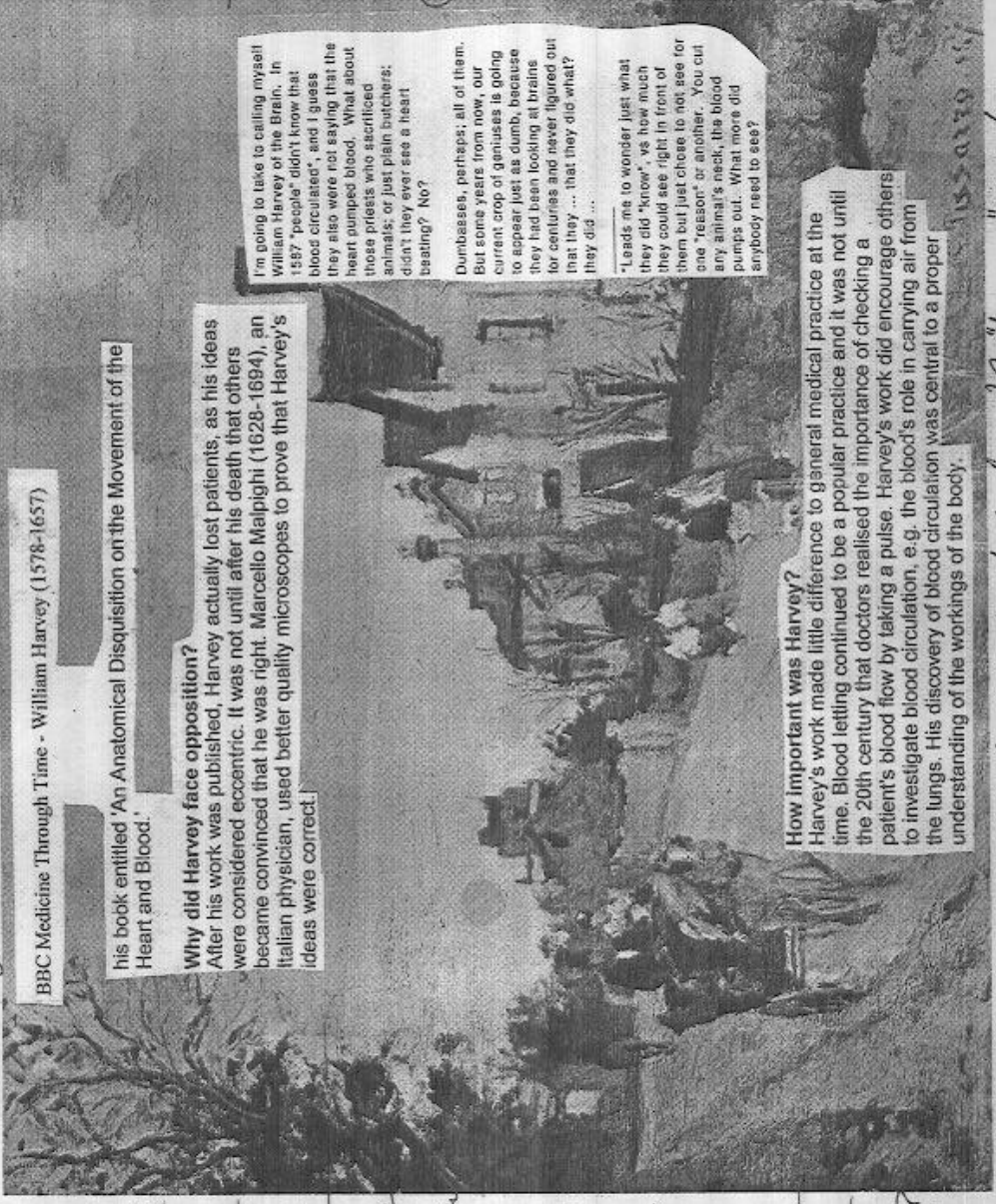
Who is going to take  
William Harvey of the Brain?

(page 1)

# William Harvey of the Brain?

A Palimpsest © 2002 RLL

I'm going to take to calling myself William Harvey of the Brain. In 1587 "people" didn't "know" that blood circulated, and I guess they also were not saying that the heart pumped blood. What about those priests who sacrificed animals; or just plain butchers; didn't they ever see a heart-beating? No?



BBC Medicine Through Time - William Harvey (1578-1657)

his book entitled 'An Anatomical Disquisition on the Movement of the Heart and Blood.'

**Why did Harvey face opposition?**  
After his work was published, Harvey actually lost patients, as his ideas were considered eccentric. It was not until after his death that others became convinced that he was right. Marcello Malpighi (1628-1694), an Italian physician, used better quality microscopes to prove that Harvey's ideas were correct.

I'm going to take to calling myself William Harvey of the Brain. In 1587 "people" didn't know that blood circulated, and I guess they also were not saying that the heart pumped blood. What about those priests who sacrificed animals; or just plain butchers; didn't they ever see a heart beating? No?

Dumbasses, perhaps; all of them. But some years from now, our current crop of geniuses is going to appear just as dumb, because they had been looking at brains for centuries and never figured out that they ... that they did what they did ...

"Leads me to wonder just what they did "know", vs how much they could see right in front of them but just chose to not see for one "reason" or another. You cut any animal's neck, the blood pumps out. What more did anybody need to see?

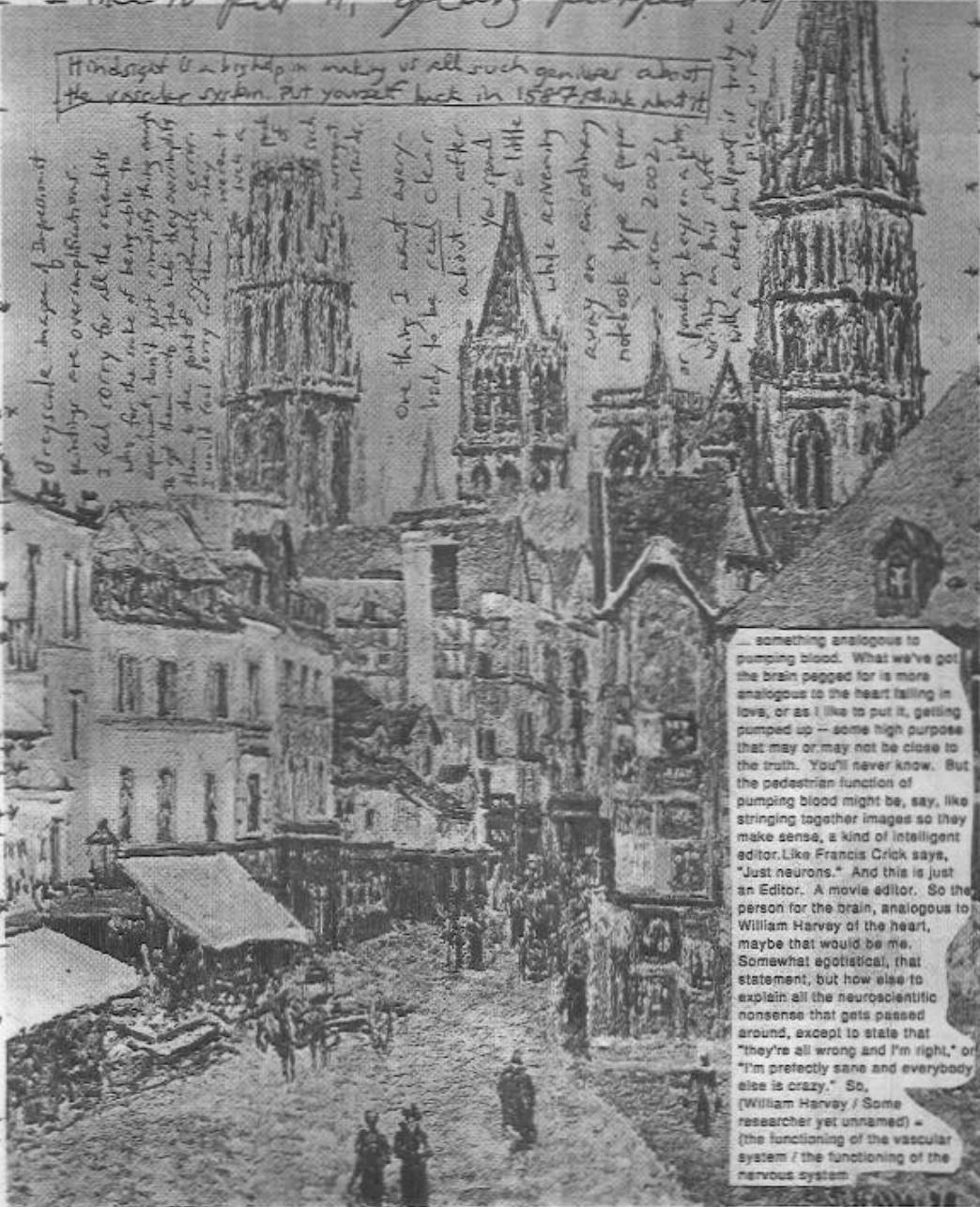
**How important was Harvey?**  
Harvey's work made little difference to general medical practice at the time. Blood letting continued to be a popular practice and it was not until the 20th century that doctors realised the importance of checking a patient's blood flow by taking a pulse. Harvey's work did encourage others to investigate blood circulation, e.g. the blood's role in carrying air from the lungs. His discovery of blood circulation was central to a proper understanding of the workings of the body.

Leads me to wonder just what they did "know"; vs how much they could see right in front of them but just chose to not see for one "reason" or another. You cut any animal's neck, the blood pumps out. What more did anybody need to see.

Dumbasses, perhaps; all of them. But some years from now, our current crop of geniuses is going to appear just as dumb because they had been looking at brains for centuries and never figured out that they ... that they did what they did ...

Something analogous to pumping blood. What we've got the brain<sup>12</sup> pegged for is more analogous to the heart falling in love, or as I like to put it, getting pumped up. Some high purpose may or not be to the truth.

that  
may  
doe  
You'll  
But the  
function  
blood  
say, like  
together  
so they  
a kind  
editor.  
Crick  
neurons  
just a  
A movie  
So, the  
for the  
analogous  
Harvey  
maybe  
be one.



hindsight is a bright idea in making us all such geniuses about the vascular system. Put yourself back in 1582, think about it

On a scale of 1-10, how often do you find yourself over-optimistic?

I feel sorry for all the scientists who, for the sake of being able to experiment, don't just simply thing up things to the test they over-optimistically think to the point of... I would feel sorry for them if they were not... I would feel sorry for them if they were not... I would feel sorry for them if they were not...

One thing I want away  
bad, to be real clear  
about — after  
you read  
a little  
while reviewing

away an exciting  
notebook type of paper  
era 2002  
or finding keys on a table  
with a deep ballpoint pen  
please, only

... something analogous to pumping blood. What we've got the brain pegged for is more analogous to the heart falling in love, or as I like to put it, getting pumped up — some high purpose that may or may not be close to the truth. You'll never know. But the pedestrian function of pumping blood might be, say, like stringing together images so they make sense, a kind of intelligent editor. Like Francis Crick says, "Just neurons." And this is just an Editor. A movie editor. So the person for the brain, analogous to William Harvey of the heart, maybe that would be me. Somewhat apologetic, that statement, but how else to explain all the neuroscientific nonsense that gets passed around, except to state that "they're all wrong and I'm right," or "I'm perfectly sane and everybody else is crazy." So, (William Harvey / Some researcher yet unnamed) = (the functioning of the vascular system / the functioning of the nervous system)

may or  
not be  
to the truth.  
never know.  
pedestrian  
of pumping  
might be,  
stringing  
images  
make sense  
of intelligent  
Like Francis  
says, "Just  
neurons."  
And this is  
just an Editor.  
A movie editor.  
So the  
person  
for the brain,  
analogous to  
William Harvey  
of the heart,  
maybe that  
would be me.  
Somewhat  
apologetic

ego - total, that statement; but how else to explain all the neuroscientific nonsense that gets passed around, except to state that "they're all wrong + I'm right," or "I'm perfectly sane + everybody else is crazy."  
William Harvey / some researcher yet unnamed = the functioning of the vascular system / the functioning of the nervous system

Richard 1/15/2002