

Supereste ut Pugnatis (Pugnatis) ut Supereste ~ a narrative.

My French raincoat (a membrane of sorts) bears the legend *Impermeable*, I can assure you it is not, like most membranes worth their salt it is semipermeable!

We are defined, structured and bounded by membranes, selective barriers that function at a molecular level within our bodies and operate at the macro scale as socio-political boundaries.

Membranes are selectively permeable structures, controlling the exchange of ions in our synapses, transforming photons into carbohydrates in plants, the meniscus of the world ocean, trading gasses with the atmosphere and regulating our climate.

Manifest as an architecture of power the membrane is the portcullis and drawbridge regulating access to a Norman Castle. A filter of economic privilege to the VIP lounge and the algorithm that structures the flow of surveillance information at airport security.



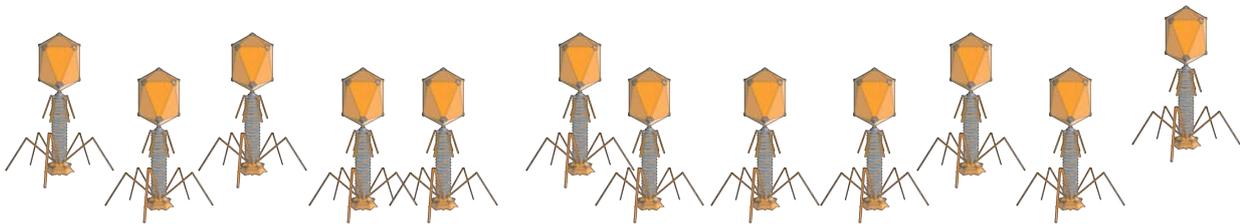
Supereste ut Pugnatis (Pugnatis) ut Supereste, photo Ian Hobbs.

It is the tissue of language describing the legal pressure valve that transported the poor and disaffected to Australia in a risible attempt to rid England of its criminal class, and the tongue twisters that policed the White Australia policy.

It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of the needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.¹

*Supereste ut Pugnatis (Pugnatis) ut Supereste*² drifts in these interstitial spaces between biology, politics, culture and history constantly recalling the functional significance of the membrane as border, as a cultural and linguistic filter, as a generator of difference.

SPPS is offered as an omnisexual bacterium ingesting histories and narratives that associate through a labyrinth of metaphorical bonds, some feint and tenuous, others powerful and robust. A sonic sculpture illuminated by canary yellow,³ the yellow of egg yolk, the pallor of yellow fever, the threatening tide of the yellow races, the warning yellow flag of quarantine and contagion and more prosaically the globalised yellow of international art crates. Take a journey down any of these wormholes to discover a centripetal force that pulls back to the centre of this metaphorical nexus.



Here we encounter morphological references to antique Chinese gunpowder rocketry⁴ carrying payloads of poisonous and infected material, hybridised with the physical structure of the Bacteriophage⁵ a semi-living viral entity that pierces the membrane of a host Bacteria, injecting its DNA and commandeering the genetic machinery of the Bacteria to replicate itself ~ all this done without an entry permit!

My hand has found like a nest the wealth of the peoples; and as one gathers eggs that have been forsaken, so I have gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved a wing or opened the mouth or chirped.”

Isaiah 10:14

The payload of these mutant rocket forms, glass cylinders containing infected eggs pay an ironic homage that reprises the origins of modern bio-warfare research, where chicken eggs were the bio-reactor of choice at the Chemical Defense Establishment at

¹ The New Testament, Matthew 19:24, *The Eye of the Needle* was a small gate in the walls of Jerusalem.

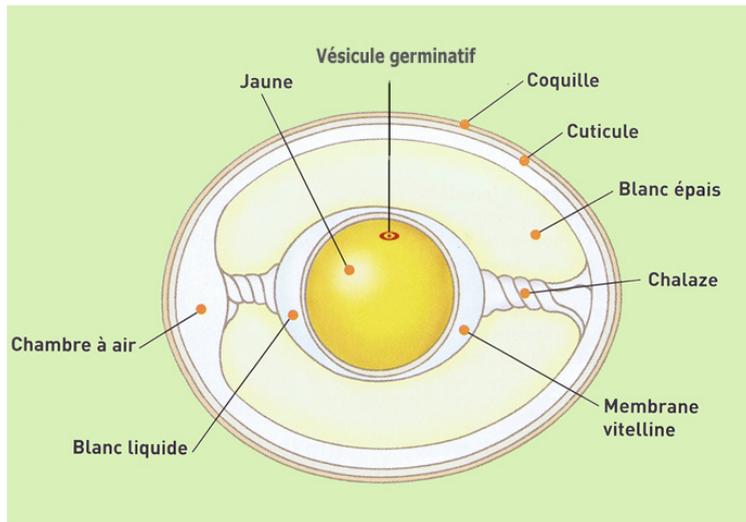
² *Supereste ut Pugnatis (Fight to Live)* the motto of the Chemical Defense Establishment.

³ In Ancient Chinese yellow was considered the colour of joy, glory and wisdom. However from the 3rd millennium B.C. yellow was associated with power and domination. In contemporary China it is associated with pornography as it is with prostitution in Russia.

⁴ The Fire Drake Manual 14th Century Chinese military treatise edited by Jiao Yu and Lui Ji details the evolution of rocketry circa C10th.

⁵ A Virus that infects and then replicates within a Bacterium.

Porton Down⁶ near Salisbury UK (the motto of which, *Supereste ut Pugnatis*, this work is named after) as well as the Russian weaponised Smallpox facility at Zagorsk.⁷



*Humpty Dumpty sat on
a wall
Humpty Dumpty had a
great fall
All the Kings horses
And all the Kings men
Couldn't put Humpty
Dumpty Together again.*

“When I use a word” Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less.”

“The question is,” said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things.”

“the question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master - that’s all.”

And so to the slippery membrane of language, a tissue of words that wrap us in culture and identity and one that attempted to render Australia as white as egg albumen, protecting these shores from the influx of Chinese migration, a migration according to the xenophobes, as yellow as egg yolk.

⁶ In 1940 biological warfare work began at Porton Down, UK in a highly secret autonomous group called Biology Department Porton now known as the Chemical and Biological Defense Establishment.

⁷ The first smallpox weapons factory in the Soviet Union was established in 1947 in the city of Zagorsk, close to Moscow. It was produced by injecting small amounts of the virus into chicken eggs. An especially virulent strain (codenamed India-1967 or India-1) was brought from India in 1967 by a special Soviet medical team that was sent to India to help to eradicate the virus. The pathogen was manufactured and stockpiled in large quantities throughout the 1970s and 1980s. An outbreak of weaponized smallpox occurred during its testing in the 1970s. General Prof. Peter Burgasov, former Chief Sanitary Physician of the Soviet Army, and a senior researcher within the program of biological weapons described this incident: “On Vozrozhdeniya Island in the Aral Sea, the strongest recipes of smallpox were tested. Suddenly I was informed that there were mysterious cases of mortalities in Aralsk. A research ship of the Aral fleet came 15 km away from the island (it was forbidden to come any closer than 40 km). The lab technician of this ship took samples of plankton twice a day from the top deck. The smallpox formulation— 400 gr. of which was exploded on the island—”got her” and she became infected. After returning home to Aralsk, she infected several people including children. All of them died. I suspected the reason for this and called the Chief of General Staff of Ministry of Defense and requested to forbid the stop of the Alma-Ata to Moscow train in Aralsk. As a result, the epidemic around the country was prevented. I called Andropov, who at that time was Chief of KGB, and informed him of the exclusive recipe of smallpox obtained on Vozrozhdeniya Island.” A production line to manufacture smallpox on an industrial scale was launched in the Vector Institute in 1990.

Book No. 252
Form No. 21. COME

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NOTE.
This Certificate will only be valid
after the *24/4/20* day of
April 1920. If the holder
desires to prolong his absence from
the Commonwealth, application
addressed to the Collector of Customs
Revenue may be made before that date
to have the period extended. If
granted, a fee of £1 will be charged.

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Date: *24/4/20*
Sub Collector of Customs

DESCRIPTION.
Nationality *Chinese (Cantonese)* Birthplace *Shanghai*
Age *16* Complexion *Yellow*
Height *5'5 1/2"* Hair *Black*
Build *Slim* Eyes *Brown*
Particular marks *Right ear below left ear*
(For impression of hand, see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS


Date of departure *24/4/20* Port of Embarkation *Canton*
Ship *Kaiyuan* Destination *China*
Date of return *11. 5* Ship *Wah King*
Port *Thursday Island* or *Ad. Vauclain*
4214/21-2264
Customs Officers.

心灵的控制首先在于物理的掌握。这是常人难以置信的简易。真正的掌握来自于宁静，从意图的思考到最终的言行。宁静是最高尚的美德。一位男士或女士的静坐是多么少见。

That mental control depends, first of all, on physical mastery, is so obvious that few believe it. Real control begins from stillness, from deliberation of manner, and eventually speech and action. Stillness remains the rarest of virtues. How seldom does one see a man or a woman sitting still?

These words are an example from hundreds of pages of *Dictation Tests* that operated in all Australian ports of entry from 1901 until 1958 with the primary function of excluding undesirables (specifically Asians) from migrating. This policy was coupled with the general and popular understanding that the indigenous population would be 'bred-out', lightened and whitened until their genetic traces disappeared. With an ominously contemporary resonance ~



"A message was sent out to the world that coloured people could not settle in Australia."⁸

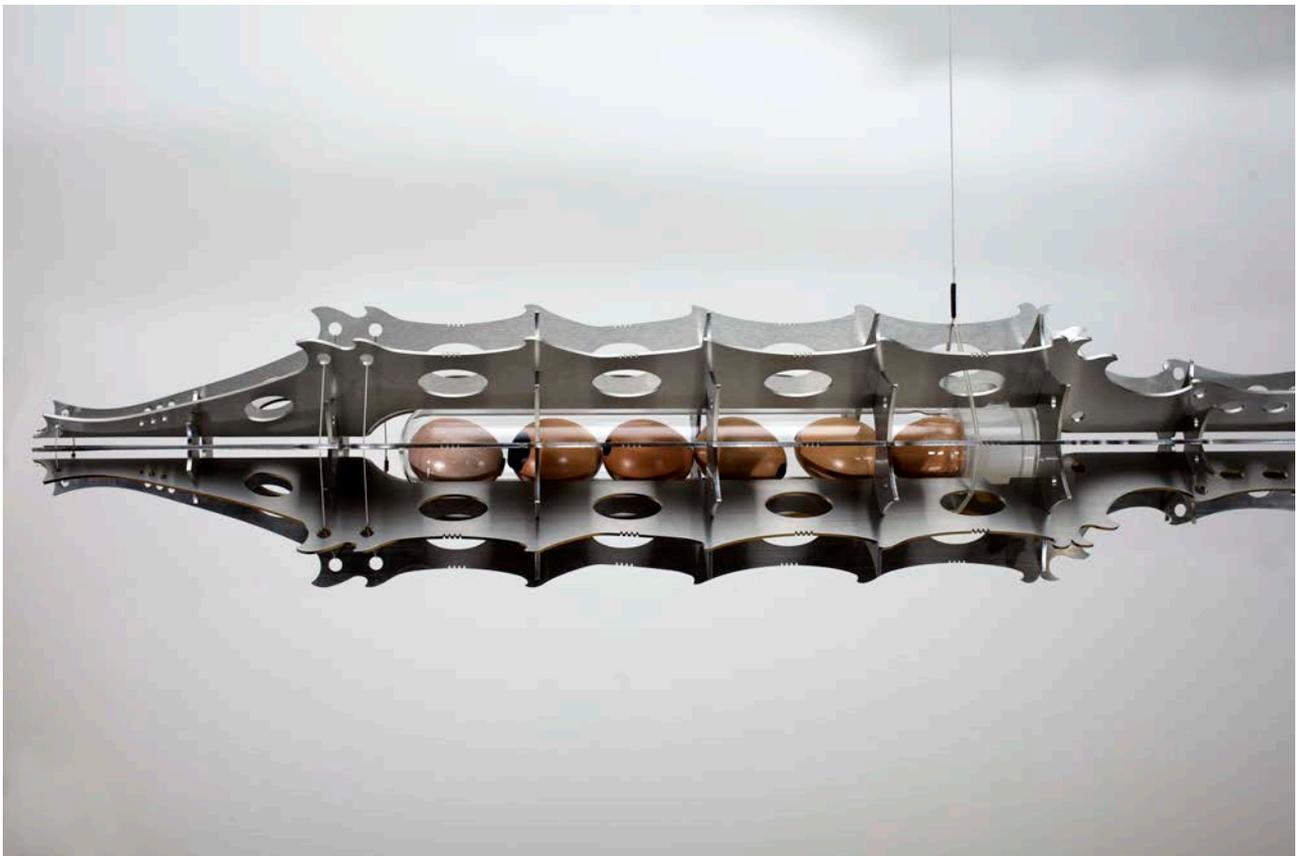
⁸ Jupp, J. (2002) *From White Australia to Woomera*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The membrane is after all a skin; a skin of colour; a skin of language and culture, a flexible container designed to keep what is of value within and what is perceived as a contaminant without ~ its permeability determines the nature, rate of change and adaptation, the type and efficiency of cultural metabolism.

To conclude another Dictation Test passage for good measure, its jingoism recalling John Howard's obsession with Cricket trivia as a criterion for citizenship. Perhaps you might like to take the test?

The swagman wrapped his gnarled and desiccated digits round his minuscule ukulele and with prodigious and egregious deficiency of musicology essayed a resounding, cacophonous rendition of 'Waltzing Matilda' that caused a phobic frog to hurl itself suicidally into a brackish billabong.

Maybe that is Impermeable!



Supereste ut Pugnatis (Pugnatis) ut Supereste (detail) photo Ian Hobbs.

