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– ARTICLE –

LIGHT, HOPE AND COVID-19 IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

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ABSTRACT

Photoessays bridge the borders between text and image, much as light and shadow combined transform a flat picture into a three-dimensional object. In this hybrid three-part photo essay, I trace the invisible borders crossed in daily sanctioned walks during a global pandemic. The images show traces of a nation on pause outside the boundaries of home, while the companion text provides local, time-specific context. Belonging, home, care, and nation in Aotearoa New Zealand are compressed in both time and space: less than a year; less than two square kilometres, a single suburb, one neighbourhood straddling three 'zones.' Structurally, the piece works to visually illustrate borderlands on four levels: academia practiced at the borderlands of ethnographic practice and what this means for knowledge production; in-between states of culture in flux that occur during states of emergency; the friction between invisible daily borders, from those that constitute a neighbourhood to what defines nature; and the borderlands found between the frame of an image and its contextual meanings, which change over time, place, and viewpoint. The environment becomes an artistic landscape; a canvas to express wishes, hopes, and dreams of who we are and hope to be during times when borders and borderlands, both bodily and institutional, are unmade and remade.

Keywords: COVID-19, visual ethnography, medical anthropology, photographs, New Zealand, Gloria Anzaldúa

INTRODUCTION

'In reading the report prepared by these experts, I paused for a long moment over a passage proposing that a fund be established to provide for the child care needs of WHO [World Health Organization] workers who could expect to be called away *in the event of a pandemic*. This passage was just an aside, a minor logistical note, but what caused me to pause was the evocation, for a

moment of *the lived lives behind the effort to control disease*. It is easy to forget that an organisation known as 'the WHO' is composed of *actual individuals, with children and child care concerns like my own*.' (Biss 2014, 19; emphasis added)

I picked up *On Immunity* prior to COVID-19 reaching the shores of Aotearoa New Zealand. As an anthropologist and mother, the above quote intrigued me for two reasons: first, the reference to domestic life, so often masked and veiled in the image of the researcher/fieldworker/health worker; and second, that pandemics, disasters, and field sites are described as 'over *there*,' a place people are sent *to*, but a global pandemic is everywhere, and so it lands *here:* home. What would home look like in the space between there and here? The book was still on my desk when the academic, the personal, and the politico-medical collided. Home in the pandemic borderland became an unfamiliar, strange world where teddy bears hung off fences and peered out of windows in place of people, and signs and scrawled slogans became their mouthpiece.

The first case of COVID-19 was reported in Aotearoa New Zealand on 28 February 2020. International borders were closed on 19 March 2020, with a Level-4 lockdown implemented on 26 March 2020 (Long *et al.* 2020). Mobile phones across the country blared with a National Emergency Management Agency Alert: 'This message is for all of New Zealand. We are depending on you. Follow the rules and STAY HOME. Act as if you have Covid-19. This will save lives. Remember: Where you stay tonight is where YOU MUST stay from now on. You must only be in physical contact with those you are living with. It is likely level 4 measures will stay in place for a number of weeks' (personal communication, emphasis in original, 25 March 2020).

The *event* in the opening quote, the hypothetical pandemic referred to by Biss and others, had arrived. New Zealand residents were referred to by the Prime Minister as the 'team of five million' (Ardern 2020), who were cumulatively responsible for the effort to control disease by staying at home. Lockdown felt like a dream, sticky, congealing into reality. Overnight, borders were redrawn, rippling out from home, to suburban exercise boundary, to larger suburb, to city, to region, to island, to country. Like most borders, these were invisible and constantly renegotiated. Communities set up informal checkpoints to prevent travel from megacities to rural holiday homes (Ngātokowhā Peters 2020). Headlines called out prominent figures mountain biking (Manche and Cook 2020). What constituted an 'acceptable' low risk activity and circumference for personal exercise? Shades of grey were negotiated daily as the world worked out how to deal with a pandemic long imagined and much visualised

by essayists (Biss 2014), by academics and health professionals (Lynteris 2016), and fiction (Mandel 2014).

This hybrid three-part photo essay charts my own ethnographic journey through the early days of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) appearing in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is inspired in part by Chicana feminist, theorist, and poet Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), who showed the limitations of viewing the world through one perspective by braiding academic theory, poetry, and multiple languages; challenging the reader to hold the most appropriate words in their mouth until they could taste their meaning. I invite the reader to sit between worlds and experience a particularly localised experience of lockdown from a suburb of Tāmaki Makaurau, the city of Auckland.

As provocation, I draw on Anzaldúa's description of borders and borderlands:

> Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. (Anzaldúa 1987, 3; emphasis in original)

This paper's introductory text offers one way of 'reading' the following photo essay and companion text, and enters into dialogue with this notion of borderlands in four areas: (1) What does academia practiced at the borderlands of ethnographic practice look like, and what knowledge is generated in interdisciplinary boundaries between medical and environmental anthropology, between photography and art, and others still to manifest?; (2) How is the pandemic imaginary shaped through images and mimicry slipping from reality to social and mainstream media and back again?; (3) How is an understanding of 'environment' as neighbourhood and old dichotomies like nature/culture being reshaped and redefined through the friction between invisible daily borders?; and (4) what borderlands are found and made between the frame of an image and its contextual meanings, which change over time, place, and viewpoint?

Belonging, home, care, and nation in Aotearoa New Zealand are compressed in both time and space: less than a year; less than two square kilometres, a single suburb, one neighbourhood straddling three 'zones.' A single suburb that becomes, more or less through invisible boundaries, and one neighbourhood of global neighbours, caught between worlds.

ACADEMIA AT THE BORDERLANDS

As we walked, I made photographs. This image-making started as a personal project and pedagogical exercise. I was teaching a paper on environmental ethnography. The class kept individual ethnographic journals for the semester, as did I. Two weeks in, lockdown began and the field site shrank. The simple practice of image-making was complexified by theoretical and methodological insights from my ongoing research at the intersection of medical and environmental anthropology – mainly that the former cannot be considered without the latter; and my own research into how multimodal forms of ethnography, particularly visual and creative, change knowledge production (Herbst 2019; Hertz 2016; McGranahan 2020; Narayan 2012; Pink 2007).

This daily visual practise became an ethnography of the borderlands created and revealed during this particular pandemic (Adams and Nading 2020) as borders flex, dissolve, and are remade. It also confirmed the ongoing utility of 'patchwork ethnography' (Gökçe *et al.* 2020). Patchwork ethnography includes 'ethnographic processes and protocols designed around short-term field visits, using fragmentary yet rigorous data,' integrating the everyday life of the researcher with the everyday of the field, and foregrounding how living and working conditions have, and continue to change knowledge production (Gökçe *et al.* 2020). The insights gained from constant switching between identities and theoretical lenses (parent/ethnographer/photojournalist) could not have been gained in a traditional long-term field site.

The images selected for the photo essay were therefore chosen for their multilayered qualities: the teddy is one of many stuffed toys, and there are layers of meaning behind the teddies that were only revealed and unpacked over many walks, which the companion text reveals. On first viewing, the teddy is a toy; a child's delight. After multiple manifestations of the teddy, and viewing the same stuffed creatures looped daily, thoughts pile on thoughts, deeper contextual meanings are revealed, as outlined in the companion text that accompanies each image. These meanings are informed by the personal, the political, and the academic. The practice that informs this can be enhanced and obscured by the rigours of academic style (Hertz 2016). I offer, much like Wolf's (1992) work, first, an academic introduction, and second, a visual ethnography and its companion text – a fairytale precursor. It is a slow, layered unfolding that seems particularly suited to a borderlands experience, open to interpretation, feeling the heaviness of each day, with no citations in the companion text to theoretically explain away multi-sensory experience. The afterword and postscript are deliberately jarring as a means to show the rapid pace of unfolding

change, and a way for readers to reflect on the ways in which information is traditionally folded into an academic text, tidily packaged.

THE BORDERLANDS COMMUNITY: A NEW COUNTRY

The images are arranged in three groups: the walk from home to the pocket forest (Image 1–3), the experience inside the forest (Image 4–8), and the walk from forest to home (Image 9–10).

Figure 1 shows a circular journey that starts and ends with 'Home,' an experiential, internal environment that changes daily while in the pandemic borderlands, themselves a state of uncertainty and the unknown. Opposite home is 'Forest,' an external, multispecies environment that has become a locus for community. The numbered boxes represent the images selected for the photo essay. Each image selected for inclusion could be interpreted as existing within a spatial and temporal borderland. They mark a physical border, a dividing line like a fence, or a road, or a bridge. They are also invisible and temporal, marking a particular politics of a particular time in that these borders are constructs in an Anzaldúan (2003) sense of private and public, *safe* and *not safe*; other. As such, they bear the weight of multiple meanings gathered from both sides of this border, a 'third country,' and these meanings will change as time solidifies this period into packaged history.

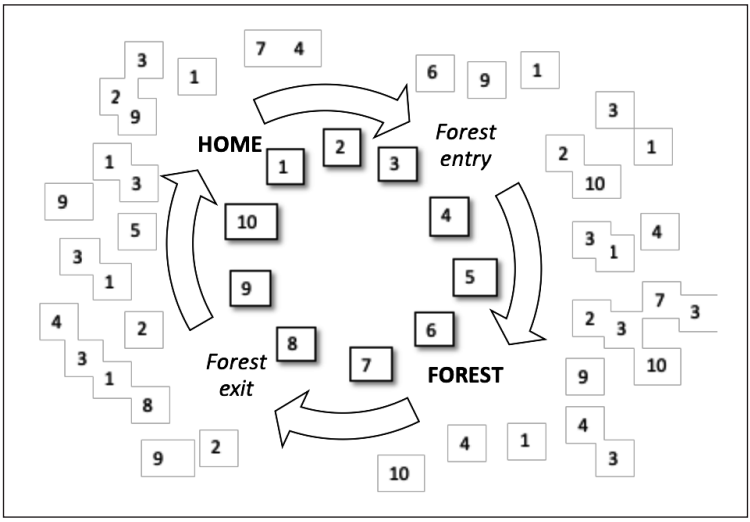

Figure 1. Conceptual Map of Photographed Objects

The objects photographed are emblematic of an exponential amount of objects replicated throughout the country that share similar meaning. For example, the number three within the circled arrows, shows the location of the teddy photographed and included in the photo essay. There were numerous teddies and stuffed toys that appeared along the route, on the edge of residents' personal boundaries, that could have been included. The smaller numeral threes dotted outside the arrows show the multiplicity of these stuffed toys and the potential existence of others throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

The essay takes aim at the boundaries between life and care; between those who are called away and those who are left behind. Through the viewfinder, it became clear the shifting boundaries and borders of who was deemed essential and who was not (Mullard 2021). It also showed how signs and symbols strategically placed at household and public boundaries reached out and through to a broader imagined world of reciprocity and communication with others (Moreno 2020).

The images are, first, an approximation of strange objects and signs not seen before; a result of the in-between. They are an approximation, as these were replicated seemingly everywhere along the route in different forms, different colours, different sizes; sometimes stuffed toys instead of a teddy. The objects and signs represent movement stilled, frozen, potent with intent. They drew the eye and engaged the mind, while the body walked, tracing the same routes automatically.

This photo essay is thus not about the walking but the seeing. Its structure is chronological and geographical. It leads the viewer on a daily, systematic route while providing commentary on changing minutiae over the time lockdown restrictions were in place. It also leads the viewer outwards, from home (Image 1) to larger webs of connections with community, nation and history (Image 6, 7, 10). Photography is not objective. These objects, these images, are not passive. They are a pressure cooker – movement contained – of the physical making of signs and gifts, of leaving these where they will be viewed, of people walking past, exclaiming and reacting to the signs and gifts, photographing them, sharing them, making and distributing hashtags. The images subjectively position me and others in space and time.

BRIDGING INVISIBLE BORDERS

> Bridges are thresholds to other realities, archetypal, primal symbols of shifting consciousness. They are passageways, conduits, and con-

> nectors that connote transitioning, crossing borders, and changing perspectives. Bridges span liminal spaces between worlds, spaces I call *nepantla*, a Nahuatl word meaning *tierra entre medio*. (Anzaldúa & Keating 2002, 1; emphasis in original)

The images were made on a variety of devices – three mobile phone cameras and a small Canon IXUS – replicating a process made by thousands of people documenting their pandemic lives around the world (Moreno 2020). The portability, speed, and volume of images created using these devices added further to the emotional residue of a world in flux; these were images that may never be captured again, giving the mundane a sense of heightened importance.

The process of editing the photos added a further layer of ethnographic and metaphorical insights, such as the stripping of colour for the black and white requirements of an academic journal. In Image 5, the boy, my son, looks as if he is about to step off the log and out of the borders of the frame. As Cartwright and Crowder (2021) outline, photo essays are composed of a selection of images, written text and the layout, all embedded in ethics, theory, and practice. These three elements work together to do more than merely illustrate a point or describe an image: they complicate and provide provocation for deeper levels of meaning, taking us 'deeper into the sensory knowledge of a subject through a visual portal' (3).

These images represent friction and stillness in the borderlands created by a global pandemic. They deliberately focus on objects seen on a journey, but not on the journey itself: an anti-heroic portrayal. They highlight the multiplicity of meaning an image can hold, even for a single viewer, depending on which role they identify with in a particular moment. As Pink (2007) succinctly states: 'the ethnographicness of photography is determined by discourse and content' (66–67). In other words, a single photograph can serve multiple and sometimes contradictory purposes – anthropological, personal, or journalistic – and these purposes shift according to time, space, and cultural context(s).

This photo essay takes you on a journey through domestic borderlands, from the first step outside the household boundary, to the corner, along the road, to the small walkway, and into the reserve – a sharp green surprise. It takes you through the forest, to the gifts left for walkers, and back again; past Anzac poppies and mental health affirmations. There are no people – other than my own family — but the signs of their passing are everywhere.

PHOTO ESSAY: LIGHT, HOPE AND COVID-19

Image 1 and 2. Home

The sign looms above us, breaching the boundary of our property; a shared driveway in a suburban neighbourhood: 'Thank you to all essential workers for keeping us safe.' An ordinary fence, nondescript, creating a border between the home across the road and the busy road intersecting us; between public and private. Inside is raucous, rowdy: everyone trying to maintain the pretence that their ordinary world is not breaking, like puzzle pieces lying on the floor. Outside is quiet; no traffic. You can walk on the white dotted line in the middle of the road, flaunting a danger more visible than the one you worry about. At least you can see a car coming.

This particular fence is directly across the mouth of our driveway, hidden in plain sight. Usually unnoticed, it is obscured by traffic, or people walking past. It is a backdrop to busy lives, a supporting actor. The scrawled chalk lasts longer than I anticipate, a few weeks, and is the first visible sign of people actively (re) negotiating their concept of belonging, of home, care, and nation. The iconic kiwi and silver fern, symbols of a particular Aotearoa New Zealand identity, speak to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's messages of 'our team of five million.'

What does it mean to be 'home' when the boundaries surrounding home have shrunk and solidified? How much of our sense of home is predicated on our knowledge that we can come and go at will? What of those who have no homes or whose homes are the antithesis of 'safe'?

Image 3. Belonging

A teddy hugs the wooden fence of a neighbouring house. It is one of many that peer out of windows in suburban homes across Aotearoa New Zealand. The bright flowers point to the origin stories of those neighbours who, like us, are tauiwi, having immigrated from South Africa, China, India, Egypt, Iran, Thailand, Japan, Poland, and Brazil. With international borders closed, our friends' elderly grandparents cannot return home to Wuhan. There are widespread media reports about residents who are unable to return to Aotearoa New Zealand, and families in limbo, half in Aotearoa New Zealand and half elsewhere.

Most homes display stuffed bears or toys. Some have created extravagant, carnivalesque displays in and on cars. It is part of the 'NZ Bear Hunt' (#nzbearhunt), a nationwide campaign for children to hunt for stuffed bears, based on the children's book by Michael Rosen. UK-based Rosen is currently hospitalised with COVID-19 and the world has taken note. The book's refrain 'we're going on a bear hunt…we're not scared' is being used to reinforce messages of mental health and resilience. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern endorses the campaign with her own teddy.

I observe children responding to the bears, reciprocating to the effort of the household that staged the bear with their own responses. My students write about the sense of hope it gives them to see this. I hear the squeals of my children, aged 9 and 7, and see #nzbearhunt posts on social media from friends at the local school we are not permitted to attend under current restrictions. International media pick up on the story: it is clear that the teddies both mark and traverse boundaries. These bears are not for cuddling, but do create a virtual link to community in online heat maps and social media.

We live in a borderland, on the edge of a road that intersects and includes multiple suburbs. On any day, our home can be situated in one of three suburbs, zoned for multiple schools: the domestic and professional intertwine. For five years, the roads we run, walk, and cycle revolve around the school the children attend. On this walk, we head the opposite way. There, off a small road, down a path that at first glance looks like a private driveway, lies the forest. It is a mystical reserve of fern and pine trees made wild by restriction; an open local secret.

The green space feels like a gift in lockdown and reminds me that many do not have space, at or out of home. The reserve's name is unknown until I return home and investigate. I discover the 750 metres of walking track we tread was funded two years ago by a local board I did not know I fell under, to improve accessibility and access for communities, such as a walking school bus. The

Image 4. Bridges

initiative was spearheaded by a descendant of the settler family who for a time owned much of the land that incorporates two suburbs.

Who lived on the land prior? What layers of history have been hidden in the names of reserves and streets and suburbs? The pandemic has highlighted faultlines of inequity and revealed invisible borders and borderlands made porous by constant traffic that defies the socioeconomic boundaries set up by zoning. It reminds us that maps are constructs, with space and place socially mediated despite, or in some cases because of, restrictions.

The children run across the troll bridge, identified as such from the Norwegian fairy tale, *Three Billy Goats' Gruff*. They are not scared. I warn them not to get too close to people.

Image 5. Rewilding

My son leaps off felled trees and chases his sister in a new game they have developed. It is called the Covid game: they cannot come within two metres of each other; a distanced form of tag. What legacy from children's rhymes will be left behind for future folklorists to debate?

Inside the forest, tuis trill and a pair of doves neck. A fat domestic tabby eyes them. He rolls on his back for pats, out for a stroll from one of the bordering houses. I say 'don't touch,' not because he may bite or scratch, but because we do not know who may have petted him prior, unknowingly leaving traces of what we are staying home to avoid.

The SARS-COV-2 is a disease that has spilled over the species boundary from 'wild' animal to human, presumed to be through an intermediate creature in a wet market. The resulting pandemic has highlighted the vulnerabilities of all species: that there is movement across and between the borders of wild and urban constructs. It has exposed false dichotomies and shown how the 'wild' is politicised and romanticised.

This pocket forest is maintained and nurtured by invisible hands. As a community, as committees, they remove non-indigenous plants, trap predators, and plant saplings – over 200 in one working bee. In this lockdown, we are the beneficiaries. As people leave their homes and walk the streets for daily exercise, they are reframing ideas of their environment, taking to social media to discuss climate change. Variations of a popular meme read 'Mother Earth has sent us to our room to think about what we have done.' There are worrying eco-fascist overtones to many of the messages: which groups of people will be targeted as 'too many'? As boundaries are drawn anew and we face the sixth extinction, I wonder what world we are leaving for future generations. What will make us human in decades to come?

My children want to pick up painted kindness rocks, placed in the logs like glittered Easter eggs; irresistible gifts. At this point it is not conclusive how long this virus stays on surfaces. I say 'don't touch.'

Image 6. Gift hunt

The rocks are not the only forest gifts left by strangers: extravagant fairy houses mushroom overnight on logs; transplanted seashells form as mandalas and hearts; pendants dangle; carved owl figures appear next to the message 'spread kindness'; hewn wooden fairy doors grow from the base of trunks. The hands that created them are nowhere to be seen, and so I capture the numerous gifts, these physical avatars, with the camera on my mobile.

The experience is disorienting, like a dystopian dream centred on European folktale. Where is Aotearoa? I wonder where the myths and fairy-tales from the city's diverse inhabitants may lie. All messages I document are written in English. Yet the experience also offers hope: that something new and exciting may lie around the next corner of the trail, a small pleasure to look forward to while we are in the borderlands between what; was and what will be.

Reality is disjointed, the boundaries between what constitutes truth and what constitutes fiction slipping. During these walks, my phone pings with notifications: much news centres around then-US president Donald Trump, his mishandling of the pandemic and 'fake news' propaganda creating imaginary boundaries between a preconceived 'us' and 'other.'

What part do narratives play as a pandemic unfolds? Whose stories are being woven at a local, nationwide, and global level? Politics, art, and literature are linked in a tiny forest reserve in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This is one walk, one journey through lockdown, but it is also many. We retrace our steps daily: a moving meditation, a walking ethnography, a prayer, an escape. The weeks pass. Repetition opens our eyes. Most days there are new gifts: the kindness rocks are the most frequent and numerous. Until this moment, I have missed the Kindness Rock Project, which has spilled over its American boundaries and reached Aotearoa New Zealand. Its aim is to 'spread kindness in the world' with messages painted on rocks and left outdoors for others to find, photograph, and tag online with #TheKindnessRocksProject. The rocks are then either kept or hidden in a new location for the next person.

I am struck, first, by how these rocks mark the borderlands of physicality and affect, making manifest and visible a pandemic imaginary that supplants pre-pandemic imaginaries of human extinction. Clearly, people are still here, leaving painted rocks with supportive words; a different kind of pandemic imaginary for future generations to consider than works of fiction and projection have led us to believe. Second, the link between citizens and the state in maintaining or contesting states of emergency are reflected in the content of the messages.

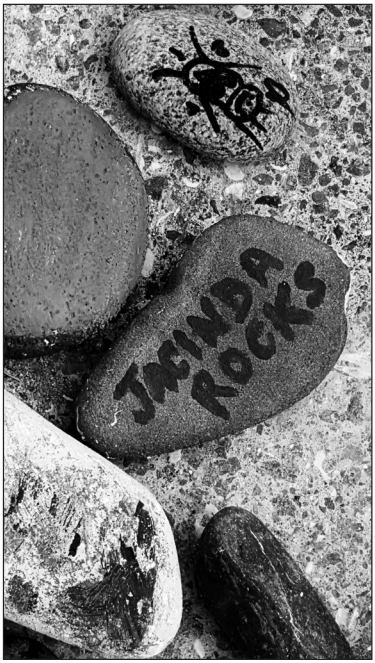

Image 7. Community

These rocks track the general mood and tone of lockdown in flux: 'Stay strong' and 'Be kind' become 'Lest we forget,' 'Remember them,' and 'Be yourself.' There are hearts of all colours, 'Lead with courage,' and 'Jacinda rocks.' Then, as weeks progress, increasingly urgent: 'There is always someone who loves you,'; 'You are special.'

Photography allows us to see shadow, the borderlands of light and dark, where our eye may gloss over it. It allows us to see that a forest is both; that there are no people touching something like a kindness rock, but that there are plenty of positive painters making them. As we walk further through lockdown, the cheerful rocks urge us to 'call a friend' and 'stay positive.' The maintenance of social boundaries is taking a mental toll.

We return home by a different route, one that takes us from one of the many walkways exiting the forest and along the main road spanning 20 kilometres end to end. Neatly laminated signs hanging from trees at one house read, 'Stay home, save lives,' 'Stay positive.' A handwritten sign to 'be the change you wish to see in the world' is tacked to the bark of another.

Image 8 & 9. Care

Advice about how to avoid, manage, and treat COVID-19 is ongoing. The effects of inequalities are clear in infection and death rates. Despite COVID-19 being lauded incorrectly by some as non-discriminatory, historical discrimination is visible. As Aotearoa New Zealand residents experience what they have already watched the world go through, anxiety and depression rise. Historic Cartesian dualism between body and mind is fragmenting, and mental health is included as part of official health advice.

These signs echo state messages of a united team, but could also indicate elements of care for a greater community, and the cultivation of a new pandemic imaginary: one of care and solidarity.

The lockdown coincides with Anzac Day commemorations, and Ramadan and Easter celebrations – all occasions for gathering with family and community. Announcements from the Prime Minister include 'the Easter bunny and tooth fairy are essential workers,' and that 'Anzac 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.' With commemorative dawn parades cancelled, people stand at the top of their driveways with candles to join #StandAtDawn. Houses display cut-out red paper poppies that are staked into verges and stuck on post-boxes. Red petals and messages 'Lest We Forget' are seemingly chalked on every second fence. We spot one 'Hoppy Easter' and a chalk rabbit down a walkway. There is no 'Eid Mubarak.' Forty-nine days after implementation, the lockdown ends on 13 May 2020.

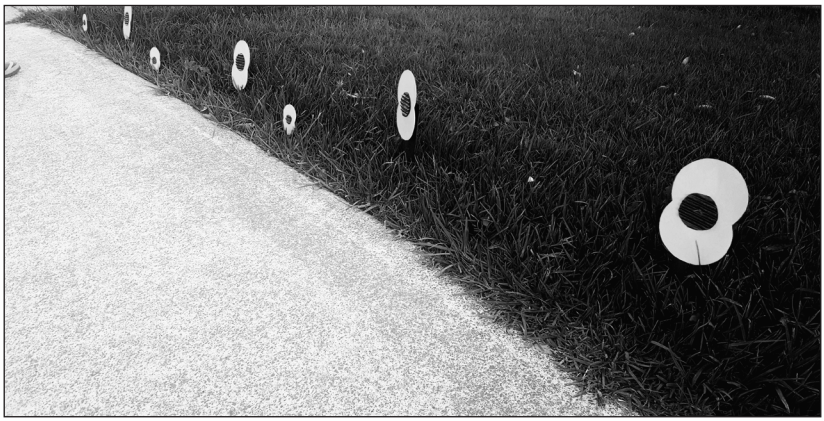

Image 10. Nation

AFTERWORD

Eighteen months after this lockdown, I re-photograph the fence pictured in Image 1. It is austere, freshly painted black, message-free. Aotearoa New Zealand returned to a Level 4 snap lockdown on the 17 August 2021 when the Delta variant reached the country. There were no blaring text messages in the middle of the night. This one came by stealth, suddenly, and keeps us all confined to our bubbles indefinitely as the virus mutates quickly into more contagious forms.

We resume daily walks to the forest, crossing newly truncated borders. The gifts are weather-worn, parts scattered by birds. There are no new rocks; no-one touches anything or leaves gifts or messages. International borders have been closed for a year, with the exception of a brief travel corridor to Australia, which shut swiftly. New online headlines highlight people trying to cross what is being referred to as the Auckland border. Boundaries are shifting. And then… the scattered shell mandala reforms. An ironic 'HELP' punctuated with a smile symbol. One new rock: 'Hope.'

As I update to this afterword, in November 2021, the majority of the country is in Level 2. Auckland is in Level 3, Step 2, as of midnight 9 November. Residents cannot cross the Auckland border without an exemption. However, retail stores may open, and up to 25 people can gather outdoors at a safe distance. Primary schools open on a part-time basis from the 17 November. People may not visit each other indoors. The key to more freedom is a 90% double vaccination rate (Pfizer) amongst the eligible population, which currently includes residents aged 12 and upwards. At the time of writing, vaccinations for children under 12 have not been approved. Lockdown has lasted over 100 days.

POSTSCRIPT: New Zealand entered the COVID-19 Protection Framework (traffic light system) on the 2 December with Auckland in the 'Red Zone' (New Zealand Government 2021), a first step to living with COVID-19. A new variant, Omicron, is on the horizon.

We return then to how I started, with a search for immunity, in childhood vaccinations against disease. I no longer need to wonder about the lives lived behind the effort to control disease, or how we will do the work we do while still continuing caregiving duties. We are all behind the effort to control the spread of COVID-19 and its effects. We have not been called *away*, as we are *here*, at home: fieldworkers, anthropologists, mothers, fathers, and others who have care duties not only for children but for loved ones in relational webs, simultaneously juggling varying forms of labour.

What is exposed in pictures of our pandemic lives are the multiple layers of knowledge production (in academia, in science, and in medicine); a culture 'in between' states of pre- and post-pandemic flux, stripped of its informal systems of community and familial care; and a vision of how nature-culture is implicated in disease. These fit the scope of Anzaldúan borderlands: vague, undetermined, shifting, and driven by sensory and emotional residue (Anzaldúa 1987, 3). The visual bleeds through the porous boundaries of its box-like frame, leaving interpretation subject to the lens of its interrogators. This is but one interpretation. I invite you to offer another, from the borderlands that include us both.

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NOTE

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