



Ko Ahau ano tetahi i reira

Bernard Makoare: Abstract for IILF 2019

Abstract

In 1996-7 I took a new role at the Auckland City Libraries to establish a Māori research collection and team following an extensive research programme and review of the provision of services for Māori at Auckland City libraries. One thing led to another and IILF came into being, culminating at that time in the inaugural IILF Conference at Waipapa Marae in 1999.

1999 was 159 years since 1840 and the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi; 59 years since the 100 years commemorations at Waitangi in 1940 and the early stages of WW2; and 10 years since the sesquicentennial at Waitangi in 1990.

In the intervening 179 years since 1840 many catch cries have rung out about the place of indigenoussness and Māori-ness in this country but perhaps none more direct and poignant as a humble little phrase tucked away on a wall plaque decorating the inside wall in the elaborately carved Whare Runanga in the treaty grounds in Waitangi. It simply says “Ko ahau ano tetahi i reira” or “I too, was one who was also there.”

It was a masterfully creative idea from the Māori community to use architecture and creative expressions, distinctly originating from the heart of Māori culture to present a Māori presence alongside the Busby Treaty house at the site of the signing of the treaty in Waitangi. A permanent structural statement of the intent and potential of partnership. This was in 1940, 100 years on from 1840, another reminder that the aspiration for shared and mutual flourishing envisaged by our ancestors was yet to be honoured. Twenty years on since the launching of this IILF waka and 179 years on from the treaty of Waitangi and I reflect what has developed and what has shaped my life in the intervening period.

(2+ words)

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