Have We Been Thinking Upside Down? The Emergence of Pacific Theoretical Thought

In the realms of volumes published on the Pacific by both foreigners and Pacific Islanders, only a few have examined Pacific concepts. The existing material has been written mainly by theologians and more recently by ‘native’ anthropologists, sociologists and educationalists. While theological works have remained essentially hidden in unpublished theses housed in library stacks (although one on Fiji is currently being published by IPS), articles written by ‘native’ anthropologists and sociologists have been published in recent editions of *The Contemporary Pacific*. The voice of educationalists has emerged mainly in Hawai‘i, Aotearoa and at the University of the South Pacific’s School of Education, but it is still marginal in terms of its impact on mainstream education. Why is it that so little attention has traditionally been paid to Pacific thought outside of theology, and why has it taken so long to become a legitimate (fast becoming fashionable) field of study? More importantly, what have the consequences of this lacuna been for the social, political and economic well-being of the peoples of the Pacific? Finally, will this field of study provide some regional/local answers to the forces of globalisation?

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