



THIRD WORKSHOP Strasbourg/Taipei

Strasbourg – 23rd to 25th November 2017

Sciences and Beliefs

Salomé Deboos, University of Strasbourg, SAGE (UMR 7363), France

deboos@unistra.fr

Shuenn-Der Yu, Academia Sinica, Taiwan

yusd5644@gmail.com

Mei-Ling Chien, National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan

mmmchien@mail2000.com.tw

Call for paper:

Anthropologists must always deal with the tension between a science-oriented perspective and other kinds of beliefs in the field and beyond. When faced with a statement such as “We believe in fate,” the tension between gaining an in-depth understanding of our informants’ perceptions and presenting a relatively objective (at least to the outsiders) interpretation of how they believe in what they say they believe becomes immediately evident. To outsiders, some of these beliefs appear exotic and incomprehensible, while others are more familiar and acceptable. As anthropologists attempt to translate others’ beliefs into something more broadly comprehensible, we need to be conscious of these key contrasting perspectives. Various opposing and complementary standpoints have been proposed, for example emic/etic, native/researcher, cultural/scientific, experience-near/experience-far, to approach these beliefs, especially if they appear illogical or irrational outside their cultural context.

We also adopt the postmodern concept of “construction” to point out that both “their” and “our” perceptions of how the world works may fall outside so-called scientific validity or truth because both are socio-cultural and historical constructions that result from our divergent perspectives and practices. But in this sense, “science” itself is also a belief set and should be subject to deconstruction. Hence we can also talk about different versions of science. The issue of sciences and beliefs, i.e., how different societies derive their objective views in understanding the worlds they live in and in evaluating and judging divergent beliefs

co-existing and interacting with these scientific views, thus involves great complexities deserving our scrutiny.

Abstract are due for the 10th June 2017.

The scientific commission will send the answer to participants by the 10th July 2017.