

Session introduction

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Session introduction

Laurent Dousset

- 1 Well good afternoon and thank you very much. I am very honored to be chairing this first session, in particular with the prestigious floor and speakers that will present and discuss one of the most important issues I think, at the moment, in Australian anthropology. Well, my role is limited to that of BBC's Doctor Who, as the time lord kind of thing. But I will nevertheless say one or two words. Just two sentences, about a minute, not more, about what I think is the most important issue in this session and Sylvie Poirier will have the very difficult task to discuss the various papers at the end of the session. A few words because as most of you would know, or would have followed, there have been heavy discussions on the AAS Net, the Australian Anthropological Society discussion list in the last few months and years about the issues we are tackling this afternoon. Some of these discussions haven't always followed the academic politeness one would expect from some of our colleagues, but they nonetheless tackle very important questions, very important issues which are relevant for and in the framework of the involvement of anthropology in public policies and public opinions. Of course, anthropology has always been involved in public policy directly or indirectly, but I think these questions have crystallised further and to a culminating point in the last couple of years. Also, I think with the abandonment of meta-discourses and meta-theories, I think this move to a culturalist and more local approach of ethnographic issues has further culminated into the anthropologists' responsibilities in his own field. The question is maybe not that much whether we should or should not get involved in applied anthropology, but the question is probably, what is it to do "implied anthropology" with opposition to "applied anthropology", and I think implications and indigenisations of our scientific questions have become an important issue. How much can we or should we take into account when we define so-called scientific questions and problems? How much is it a salvation to take into account this embodied interconnection and interrelation we have with our hosts?
- 2 So, after what is in my opinion of this general framework, I would immediately invite the first speaker, Nick Peterson from the Australian National University who will

obviously tackle one of the important questions that is behind what I just said, which is that of the ethnographic present.

AUTHOR

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