

# Introduction

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In this issue of *Australian Humanities Review*, the Ecological Humanities takes up the key theme of the main section of the journal, which has been dedicated to a special issue on food: 'On the Table: Food in Our Culture'. As might be expected, the material collected in the Ecological Humanities section explores this topic through a distinctly multispecies lens. In particular, the focus is on eating animals; primarily nonhuman animals, but human cannibalism does surface briefly in Elizabeth Leane and Helen Tiffin's detailed and engaging account of Douglas Mawson's Antarctic Expedition. In 'Dogs, Meat and Douglas Mawson', Leane and Tiffin offer a new account of this infamous expedition, one that focuses primarily on the killing and eating of sledge dogs by desperate explorers. In short, their account explores 'who ate whom on the journey', and with what consequences.

The rest of the Ecological Humanities section is a stage for a conversation on the ethics of meat eating. Primarily comprised of three short excerpts, all from forthcoming books, the views expressed represent a broad spectrum of philosophical perspectives on some of the many ethical questions that arise around this complex topic. We begin with a short argument in support of veganism from Gary Steiner's *Animals and the Limits of Postmodernism* (forthcoming from Columbia University Press). Following on from this, Dominique Lestel offers a very different approach in an excerpt from his defence of carnivory, *Apologie du carnivore* (Fayard, 2011; translation by Hollis Taylor and Dominique Lestel). Finally, we turn to Val Plumwood, in an excerpt from a paper that was originally published in the journal *Animal Issues* in 1997, but is now forthcoming in a posthumously published collection titled *The Eye of the Crocodile* (manuscript submitted for publication).

To complete this short tour of forthcoming books on eating (and being eaten by) animals, Hollis Taylor reviews Lestel's 2010 *L'animal est l'avenir de l'homme* (at this stage only available in French).