

Commendation of the Special Edition of *Relations Dedicated to The Emotional Lives of Animals*

Foreword

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In 1996, I attended a conference in Melbourne, Australia, dedicated to environmental justice. It struck me how little of the content of the conference was dedicated to a consideration of nonhuman animals. Such champions of nonhuman animals as Peter Singer, Tom Regan and Val Plumwood were there, but much of the content was directed more to how humans interact with the environment in a more general sense.

As an environmentalist, I decided there and then that once my own postgraduate studies were completed, I should dedicate more of my academic career to exploring how humans should also bring animals into the equation, and to eventually organise a conference on that very issue.

How things have progressed. Animal studies has since developed as a discipline in its own right and the question of the animal has been given its turn in environmental ethics and many other academic areas of pursuit. This development did not dissuade me from running a conference and when the opportunity arose for my colleague, Jill Bough, and I to run the third Australian Animal Studies Group conference in Newcastle, we snapped up the chance. Minding Animals as a concept, let alone a conference, has since developed into an international organisation supported by national groups, partner events and a recurring international conference.

Minding Animals Italy developed as a national group after the first international conference in Newcastle, Australia, and before the second held in Utrecht in The Netherlands. It is gratifying to see such young academics steering MAnITa such as Alma Massaro, Matteo Andreozzi, and Paola Sobbrío, amongst others. And now we see others taking an active interest like Roberto Marchesini and Luigi Lombardi-Vallauri.

This new and vibrant journal, *Relations*, has also entered the equation, already making its mark on bringing the animal back into the consideration of all matters environmental. Matteo Andreozzi is especially to be congratulated for doing such a fantastic job whilst also undertaking his postgraduate studies.

MAnITa decided to take on a conference of its own early after its formation, joining forces with the Facoltà di SdF, the Natural History Civic Museum G. Doria of Genoa, the Istituto Italiano di Bioetica, and the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR) to co-host an event. We saw Alma Massaro garner funding and logistical support and guide what was to become *The Emotional Lives of Animals* that took place in Genova in May, 2012. The conference was dedicated to a consideration of the bond between human and nonhuman animals, both in a practical as well as spiritual sense, and how humans need to take more care in our interrelationships with nonhuman animals.

And now we have *Relations* dedicating this special edition to that event.

Minding Animals Patron, Professor Emeritus, Marc Bekoff, headlined *The Emotional Lives of Animals*, and I hear that, as usual, provided both a thought-provoking and controversial set of arguments as to why humans must consider other animals when they think about the greater environment. Also present and providing why we should consider animals in any broader context were, among others Paolo De Benedetti, Annamaria Manzoni, Luigi Lombardi Vallauri, and Roberto Marchesini. I would also like to thank my Minding Animals Deputy CEO, Kim Stallwood, for taking part and providing an overview of how social activism plays its part.

I thank MAnITa once again for organising the Genova conference and commend this special edition of *Relations* to all readers. I welcome all to take part in future Minding Animals events, and especially the third international conference in India in 2015.