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Kete, Kathleen. *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth Century Paris*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994. Pp. x, 200. 9 black and white plates, bibliography, index

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Taylor, John; Langellé, Jean G; and Andrew, Caroline, eds. *Capital Cities/ Les Capitales: Perspectives Internationales/International Perspectives*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993. Pp. xvi, 418. Tables, figures. \$24.95

This volume is the result of both a unique conference and an intriguing collaboration. In December 1990, a conference on "Capital Cities: How to Ensure Their Effective and Harmonious Development" was held in Canada's National Capital, Ottawa. The event was organized by "Canada's Capital Tri-University Study Group," representing the three universities in the capital region: The Université du Québec à Hull, the University of Ottawa, and Carleton University. The Tri-University Group also had a co-sponsor, Canada's National Commission, a federal agency responsible for "national" concerns in Ottawa (an organization that is itself unique and intriguing).

Indeed, the NCC, which has been subject to dramatic changes in its own mandate and modes of operation, provided a context for the conference by asking the organizers to deal not only with the tangible, built capital but also with the intangible, imagined capital. The result is a fascinating collection of views, opinions, and insights.

The conference, and hence this volume, was organized around five themes: I. What Is a Capital City? II. The Roles and Activities of Capital Cities. III. Capitals: Symbolism and the Built Environment. IV. Capitals for the Future. V. Avenues for Research. Twenty-five presentations under these headings were made by scholars in both French (x 8) and English (x 16) from some 10 countries and twelve academic disciplines ranging from law and administration to planning and geography. In addition to obvious discussions of North American and European experiences, there are interesting articles on Latin America, and West and North Africa.

One of the central threads that runs through the volume is that it is difficult to even talk about "common" patterns or characteristics of capital cities. The fact is, "capitals undergo change in different ways and by different means, even though they are often faced with similar and perennial roles and functions. They can have much in common, but at the same time they are idiosyncratic" (p. x). Put another way, all capitals are profoundly influenced by their histories and cultures, with some acting as formal centres of power and influence, while others exercise power and influence informally, or at least more subtly—a distinction summed up as "head" vs. "heart". Equally critical, of course, is how capitals have changed over time and how they will change in the future; changes that had—and will have profound meaning for and influence on capitals. The point was made by more than one presenter that capital cities may be among the most important institutions of any culture. Beyond this broad statement, no clear definition of what capitals really are is given, but readers are told what they are not. "They are certainly not mere pork barrels to be filled or emptied at the whim of their masters, or even simple reflectors of, or the embodiment of, an existing condition" (p. xi). At the very least, then, capitals are critical elements in nations: "the beginning and not the end of stasis and innovation alike" (p. xi).

This volume is not a primer for students of capital cities; it is too philosophical and disjointed to serve that function. It makes no effort to replace Eldredge's 1975 study, *World Capitals: Toward Guided Urbanization*. But for anyone who must plan, develop or manage capitals, and for anyone who seeks deeper meaning for what it is all about, this is a refreshing and challenging examination of a complex and under-studied urban and cultural forum.

Alan F.J. Artibise  
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Kete, Kathleen. *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth Century Paris*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994. Pp. x, 200. 9 black and white plates, bibliography, index.

This is a slender, attractive, enjoyable and teasing volume. Its 135 pages of text are illuminated by many interesting details on Parisian petkeeping and by a number of engaging illustrations. And they tease us with a tray of interpretive ideas on this particular petkeeping culture.

The descriptive side of the book is the strongest, however, partly because it is the most straightforward, partly because it quotes liberally from contemporary accounts—especially those of press and memoir. It is here, for example, that we find some rich detail on the mid-century passion for the domestic aquarium, on the registered breeding of dogs and cats, and on the recommended training, nourishment and grooming of such animals. More poignant and provocative is the recollection of the debate over science-inspired vivisection, in which abolitionists on both sides fought tooth and nail over the meaning of the word "humanity". Here too we find the still familiar, anthropomorphic characterization of canine and feline—the former, protective, loyal, even self-sacrificing, the latter, wilful, manipulative and self-serving.

But problems arise along the front of ideas, essentially because the ideas—of which there are plenty—are not fully enough developed. Not in the chapters themselves, and not in the three page Introduction or the two page Epilogue. To be sure, the central idea is clear enough, namely that petkeeping offers a window into the world of the French middle class. Having secured entry into this bourgeois

"interior", we discover items previously unseen from the street. The insistence on prettifying and perfuming domestic animals reflected a desire to contain a bestial Nature, red in tooth and claw. The custom of "infantilizing" those same pets, dressing them up like dolls, spoke not only to an anthropomorphic urge, but also to one of feminizing them according to male expectations of female behaviour. The bourgeois fear of rabies was even more suggestive. This disease was said to be spread either by the unkempt and infected dogs of the working class quarters, or induced spontaneously by an animal's sexual frustration. Thus it had connotations about class, and the primitive well-spring of sexual behaviour, as well as about a middle class horror of losing control—especially to a malady known to produce a gnashing of teeth and foaming at the mouth.

That said, these ideas and arguments are more often affirmed than developed. Part of the problem lies in the use of language. While most of the descriptive text is perfectly straightforward, the same cannot be said of the sections addressed to ideas and significance. Too often the latter turn opaque, clouded by such droplets as "dialectics at a standstill", or "metaphoric space outside of conventional time", or "omnipresent arrangement of the imaginary in ordinary life." (p.75) Part of it lies in the author's self-assigned brevity, a condition which makes it difficult for readers to connect feminist leadership against vivisection with the feminization of family pets, and these in turn with the growing popularity of cats—a species long associated with female sexuality—and the allegedly related transformation of bourgeois culture at the turn of the twentieth century. (p.135)

Finally, part of the problem lies with the failure to situate these petkeeping bourgeois within the setting of their class cul-

ture. The fact is that readers are expected to deduce the degree to which Paris had been "embourgeois,e" by the mid-nineteenth century. But if we are to understand middle class concern about social order, scientific progress and the alienation of individuals in modern society, if we are to grasp their sense of what was crude and what refined, their appreciation of appropriate gender roles, we need to be told something directly—rather than inferentially—about the nature of that culture: their numbers, their sources and levels of affluence, their lifestyle, above all their values and the perceived differences between those values and those of other classes. In the absence of such a class portrait, and without prior knowledge, readers may have some difficulty relating the rich and explicit details of Parisian petkeeping to the sparse and implicit treatment of French middle class culture.

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**Burley, David G. *A Particular Condition in Life: Self-Employment in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994. Pp.309. Tables. \$39.95 cloth.**

For some time now social historians have focused on the formation of a Canadian working class during the industrialisation era of the mid and late nineteenth century. In this clever and well-researched study historian David Burley changes this focus to explore the "making of the middle class"—surprisingly, a rather under-studied topic in Canadian history—in the urban setting of Brantford, Ontario. Concentrating his inquiry on one segment of the middle class, Burley explores how the economic restructuring brought about by industrialisation affected

Brantford's self-employed in both structural and subjective terms. The result is a successful book, rich both in evidence and analysis about the process of middle class formation during Canada's industrialisation era.

The author makes excellent use of census data from the 1830-81 period to chart the rise and fall of a golden era of self-employment in Brantford. Until the late 1850s self-employment was common; it was also deeply cherished by many immigrants who were accustomed to the artisanal shop cultures of their native countries. Newcomers found in the relatively isolated town a "frontier" of self-employment opportunities no longer available in Britain or the northeastern United States. In Brantford, young men—and a few women—could realistically aspire to working for themselves in a modest enterprise at some stage in their life, a circumstance that permitted strong community cohesion both politically and socially. This consensus began to break down in the 1850s and 1860s as industrialisation took hold. As better transportation links drew the community into the industrialising national economy, small single person businesses and partnerships that served the local area gave way to larger, better capitalised industrial enterprises financed by the most successful local businessmen and outside capital. This trend was facilitated further by a tightening of credit that followed a major economic collapse in 1857. Successful local businessmen, who used to loan money to self-employed individuals on the basis of good character alone, increasingly invested in large, secure industrial enterprises that promised a return. Although modest self-employment opportunities continued to exist (particularly in the commercial sector), industrialisation significantly altered the structure of wealth in Brantford, putting more of it in the hands of those at the top at the expense of