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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.

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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