

throne Edo as the representative early modern Japanese city. But there are several instances in which a comparison to Edo would have been helpful. For example, why did popular riots fail to break out in Osaka, as they did in Edo in the 1730s? Similarly, why was gang violence more prevalent in Edo? Can these phenomena be explained by the weaker presence of the samurai class in Osaka? Another question might address the comparative spatial dynamics of the two cities: how did their differences in physical geography influence urban geographies of power?

Osaka fills a significant gap in the historical literature, and readers and scholars should be grateful for the wealth of information and interpretation this volume provides. At the same time one detects a tendency to fill the historiographical gap with "pure" Osaka--that is, to downplay the many and important connections that tied Osaka to its environs, and to other major and minor cities in Japan via trade, travel, and information networks. It could be argued that one distinctive feature of early modern Japan was its connectedness; the emergence of shared political, economic, and cultural practices is surely one of its defining characteristics, and Osaka was, as Tetsuo Najita points out, an international city. Osaka was also an early modern city, marked by the interconnection and cross-pollination that defined the era, in Japan as elsewhere. In contrast to this image, with a few exceptions, *Osaka's* Osaka seems to float in a void. Osaka was certainly a center of merchant power, but merchants all over Japan became increasingly powerful, organized, and autonomous during the early modern period. To what degree, then, is merchant power an "Osaka" trend versus an "early modern" trend? More explicitly comparative analysis would allow the reader to judge for him/herself, and would make this useful and informative volume more provocative and open-ended.

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Gerald A. Figal, *Civilization and Monsters : Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 1999.

This is a fascinating and remarkably readable book, effectively describing how the various figures and narratives of the supernatural were dealt with during Japan's rapid modernization.

Have you seen a ghost today? Never encountered *tengu* in your life? Seemingly our enlightened modernity has succeeded in expelling the supernatural monsters and ghosts out of the real, and thus, out of the historical. Then, why should a modern historian be concerned with mythical monsters and superstitious spirits? Isn't it the very task of a historian to de-mythologize our understanding of mysterious events? Shouldn't the modern historian tell us that the *kamikaze* wasn't a divine intervention at all, but merely an incidental meteorological phenomenon? Doesn't modernity dictate to us to convince my Japanese granny that there is no divine spirit living in that weather-beaten stone statue of a fox?

Figal, as a historian, is of course concerned about this fundamental desire of modern history to expel ghosts from its territory. Yet, he finds the tenacious presence and vicissitudes of the supernatural within various Japanese modern discourses a key to understanding better, historically to wit, the formation of Japanese modernity itself. Figal points out three major discursive operations with regard to the mysterious (*fushigi*) in Meiji. One is the rationalization of the mysterious, driven by the scientific will to demystify all supernatural phenomena. The second is the incipient development of folk studies spearheaded by Yanagita Kunio as well as the extraordinary, intellectual jack-of-all-trades Minakata Kumagusu. The third is the political reorganization of regional "spirits" into a centralized, nationalized "Japanese Spirit."

If this book were overtly focused on the political aspect implicit in the last issue stated above, it would have been a rather predictable, ideologically driven study. I admire this work for not being pontifical or accusatory in tone even when it discusses some clearly political issues. In fact, it seems to me that Figal is at pains to be fair to all the main figures in his narrative. Instead of narrating another one-dimensional political tragedy of Japan's empire, Figal delineates a complex web of diverse discourses surrounding the super-

natural, including science, medicine, psychology, folklores, and literature. As the author of a book transformed from a dissertation, I see Figal eager to distinguish this book from others' on a similar topic. He declares that his is the first study on Japan's modernity that takes monsters seriously. Moreover, while other historians of Japanese modernity have ignored or marginalized the mysterious, Figal wants to claim that "a discourse on the supernatural, the mysterious, and the fantastic . . . was *constitutive* of Japan's modern transformation" (7). He also finds it necessary to differentiate his work from Marilyn Ivy's seminal work, *Discourse of the Vanishing*. But the differences he proposes seem too paltry for me to take note of here. The only impression I received from his effort to respond to Ivy's use of the term "uncanny" is that Figal is less inclined to pursue the now fashionable Freudian / Lacanian path to analyze his topic. So be it.

Also, his main "theoretical" thesis that the supernatural was *constitutive* of Japan's modernity may seem somewhat trifling and too pedantic. Doesn't any identity require its "other" to constitute itself as such? It is perfectly understandable that *tengu* have disappeared from our sight, that modern rationality continuously attempts to expel various elements of the irrational from the official center of Japan's modern culture. Thus, it is refreshing to hear that the monsters were doing well and playing havoc within the modernizing process of a nation. But, perhaps that is to misread Figal's true intention. What he brilliantly shows us is, again, the complex, political and institutional network of discourses on the supernatural appearing quite conspicuously and abundantly in Japan's modernizing era. He categorizes a certain discourse on the supernatural, such as Izumi Kyoka's literature, as having a potential subversive force against the central enlightenment program of Japan's modernization. Having the same resistant impulse as Kyoka early on, however, Yanagita Kunio's effort to establish a new academic discipline of "national" folk studies is seen as being co-opted by the government's will to shape a homogenized nation under one "Japanese Spirit," whose incarnation was of course the Emperor. A fascinating paradox then becomes visible: modernity's basic impulse to censor the past, along with its outdated spirits

and superstition, is somehow forcefully and perversely thwarted by the state's will to resurrect or preserve at least a portion of folks' beliefs in the supernatural. You are an enlightened citizen now, so you shouldn't be worried about fox deities bewitching you. As for spirituality, just trust the central divinity of our nation, the Emperor!

This is an ambitious work in that it attempts to encompass different disciplines, yet what Figal presents after all is their modern histories: the history of folk studies, of medicine, of science, of literature. Being a literature specialist, I may want to complain about Figal's facilely generalized presentation of Japanese Naturalism or about his competent yet not very exciting reading of Kyoka's texts. (It is too bad that he did not have a chance to read the important, recent works on Kyoka by Charles Inouye and Nina Cornyetz.) But I have no desire to force these complaints on this "history" book.

There is one thing that leaves me somewhat puzzled after reading this excellent book. And I know that this question is not really fair to Figal, the historian. It is about the divisions of discourses (genres, disciplines, academic fields). This work is in a way about how the irrational, or the mysterious, gets incorporated into various "institutionalized" discourses. The two main characters in the book, Yanagita and Minakata, were both well aware of the distance between their interests in the irrational and the institutionalized academic discourses of the rational. What I want to know is how we should understand the institutionalized aspect of this book — the book that makes us aware of the risks of institutionalized knowledge / language. Should we just go on feeling secure in the academically sanctioned historiography, even when it is talking about monsters? Figal writes with exemplary clarity and academic rigor. But shouldn't we be nervous about such an exemplary, enlightened academic style? After all isn't that what this book is asking me to question? Where are the monsters in your text?

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Keywords: Meiji Japan / Civilization and Monsters / Spirits of Modernity / Modernity in Meiji. Scifeed alert for new publications. Never miss any articles matching your research from any publisher. Get alerts for new papers matching your research. Find out the new papers from selected authors. Updated daily for 49'000+ journals and 6000+ publishers. Define your Scifeed now. In Civilization and Monsters Gerald Figal asserts that discourse on the fantastic was at the heart of the historical configuration of Japanese modernity—that the representation of the magical and mysterious played an integral part in the production of modernity beginning in Meiji Japan (1868–1912). After discussing the role of the fantastic in everyday Japan at the eve of the Meiji period, Figal draws new connections between folklorists, writers, educators, state ideologues, and policymakers, all of whom crossed paths in a contest over supernatural terrain. You can write a book review and share your experiences. Other readers will always be interested in your opinion of the books you've read. Book Description: Monsters, ghosts, the supernatural, the fantastic, the mysterious. These are not usually considered the "stuff" of modernism. In Civilization and Monsters Gerald Figal asserts that discourse on the fantastic was at the heart of the historical configuration of Japanese modernity—that the representation of the magical and mysterious played an integral part in the production of modernity beginning in Meiji Japan (1868-1912). Throughout the history of modern Japan, control of spirits has meant the control of Spirit. Japanese spirituality was reorganized into the Japanese Spirit, where spirits were relegated to the realm of folklore and superstition in what I call supernatural ideology.