

CHAPTER SEVEN

Orientomology:

The Insect Literature of Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904)

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His work is so superior in both quality and quantity that
when speaking of our country's insect literature [*konchiu
bungaku*] one cannot avoid Yakumo.

—Konishi Masayasu¹

Nowhere is the complex interaction between the categories of alien and familiar more apparent than in the writings of Lafcadio Hearn, a nearly stateless journalist and novelist who, in a decade and a half spanning the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, found a home in Japan and became its premier interpreter to readers in the North Atlantic states.² Through extensive translation into Japanese, moreover, this cultural traveler made a curious roundtrip, coming to play much the same role of interpreting "Japan" to Japanese audiences. Although the power and verve of Hearn's best writing remains untarnished, the quaint Orientalism of much of his work would seem to doom him to the status of a quirky minor figure, a footnote to the literary histories of the United States and Japan. And yet, to dismiss him thusly—or rather, to leave him to the ministrations of a coterie of dedicated aficionados—would be a mistake. Despite its limitations, Hearn's work contains suggestive meditations on the relation between other and self, the nature of Eurocentric modernity and the fate within it of the non-European "native," and the inseparability of a remembered past from the remembering present.

Hearn's numerous essays on insects provide one of the most productive entry points into the central themes of his work. This chapter investigates the nature and structure of his portrayals of bugs, who form an



From *Wakan sansai zue*. Courtesy of the C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University.

important part of, as Brett Walker terms it, Japan's "nonhuman majority." For many, including Hearn, insects may be said to constitute the nonhuman other par excellence. In the mysterious, multitudinous, and bizarre world of insect form and behavior, Hearn found the perfect symbolic vehicle for communicating the ambivalent mixture of horror and delight, of fear and desire, that marked his own tumultuous experience in Japan and elsewhere.

LAFCADIO HEARN/KOIZUMI YAKUMO

As one of this chapter's claims for Hearn's insect writings is that they implicitly link natural history with autobiography, it may be useful to begin with a review of his strikingly peripatetic life.³ He was born Patricio Lafcadio Tessima Carlos Hearn on the Aegean island of Levkas in 1850, the second son of Charles Bush Hearn (1818–1866), a surgeon in the British army, and a Greek woman named Rosa Antonia Cassinatti (1823–1882). The couple had married in 1849 over the objections of both their families. Charles, a neglectful, absentee parent, had the marriage annulled in 1856; Rosa returned to Greece and remarried, but eventually became mentally ill and was confined to an asylum from 1872 until her death ten years later. Hearn, then known as Patrick, an anglicized version of his given name, was brought up in Dublin by a stern great-aunt. His only education was at a brutal French Catholic boarding school near Rouen and an equally strict academy in the north of England, where he lost the sight in his left eye due to a schoolyard injury.

In 1869, at the age of nineteen, Hearn emigrated to the United States, where, between spells of abject poverty and homelessness, he gradually built a reputation as a newspaper reporter and book reviewer in Cincinnati and, from 1877, in New Orleans. He first made a name for himself with a series of lurid stories about a sensational murder case, and much of his reporting was concerned with the sordid underside of urban life. Hearn frequently wrote about African-American culture and folklore, and in Cincinnati in 1874 he went through a marriage ceremony with Althea Foley, a former slave who had served as a cook in his boarding house. Because of antimiscegenation laws, their marriage had no legal standing, and their relationship had ended by the time of his move to New Orleans three years later.

In 1882, Hearn published his first book, a translation of some French short stories by Théophile Gautier (1811–1872), titled *One of Cleopatra's Nights*. Over the following half-decade he penned a collection of folktales

from various cultures (*Stray Leaves from Strange Literature*, 1884) and an adaptation of six East Asian stories called *Some Chinese Ghosts* (1887). Also during the 1880s, Hearn compiled a collection of Creole proverbs and a Creole cookbook, evidence of his considerable interest in the hybrid culture of New Orleans. A trip to an island in the Gulf of Mexico inspired his first novel, *Chita: A Memory of Last Island* (1889), which was a tremendous popular success.

In 1887, Hearn left New Orleans for New York, a place he despised and shortly fled for the Caribbean island of Martinique. Several trips there, one an extended stay of nineteen months, resulted in a series of essays in *Harper's Monthly*. He eventually collected these in *Two Years in the French West Indies*, and wrote a second novel, *Younna: The Story of a West-Indian Slave*, both were published in 1890. In the spring of the same year, at thirty-nine years of age, Hearn traveled by train to Vancouver and then boarded a ship to Japan on an assignment to write for *Harper's*. At this stage in his life, he was already a widely published, well-known, and highly successful writer. One imagines that had the *Abyssinia* sunk en route, Hearn would still be known as a minor figure in late nineteenth-century American letters and reportage.⁴

Such was not the case, however, and in April 1890, Hearn arrived in Yokohama. Less than two months later, he acted on long-standing resentments and severed his ties with *Harper's*, a characteristically dramatic move that left him with little means of supporting himself until he befriended Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850–1935), a pioneering scholar of Japanese language and culture, then at the end of his tenure as the first Professor of Japanese and Philology at the Imperial University in Tokyo. Chamberlain arranged employment for Hearn as an English teacher at the Middle and Normal schools in Matsue, a small city near the celebrated Izumo shrine on the Japan Sea coast about 230 kilometers west of Kyoto. Much of Hearn's first book on his new country of residence, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894), is devoted to his experiences in this provincial outpost.

In January 1891, Hearn married Koizumi Setsu (1868–1932), a recently divorced woman from an impoverished family of former samurai retainers to the Matsue domain. In the following years he taught in Kumamoto, a city on the southern island of Kyushu (1891–1894), briefly held a position as editorial writer at the English-language *Kobe Chronicle* (1894–1895), and eventually became Professor of English Language and Literature at Tokyo Imperial University (1896–1903). In 1896, just before leaving Kobe, Hearn

became a naturalized Japanese citizen, taking the name Koizumi Yakumo. Throughout these years, he was a regular contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly*, and by the time of his death in 1904, his American publishers had brought out eleven books on Japan under his name.⁵

Undoubtedly, the central theme of Hearn's life consists in the series of dramatic transformations that he underwent. His national identity was never clear. He was stigmatized for his Greek origins as a child, and spent most of his life in the United States, but held British citizenship until his Japanese naturalization. Perhaps even more remarkable than the list of places where he lived was the lack of continuity in his relations with other people. With a few notable exceptions, Hearn's friendships tended to be short-lived. There were many instances in which he abruptly terminated relationships, the best known of which was his break, around 1896, with Basil Hall Chamberlain, the reasons for which remain unclear.⁶

However, the most striking transformation of Hearn's life, at least for our purposes, was the one that made him Koizumi Yakumo. He had in fact changed his name once before, after arriving in the United States, when he began to use Lafcadio instead of his given name, Patrick. But the complication of his identity that accompanied this second shift in nomenclature was far more dramatic. Readers and critics ever since have been fascinated by his late-in-life naturalization, not least because it allows Hearn to stand as a representative figure of the Westerner becoming infatuated with Japanese culture—or, indeed, with any culture other than his or her own—and “going native.”

And yet, a glance at Hearn's writings published after naturalization reveals that in them he maintains the rhetorical perspective of an outsider, the quasi-scholarly Orientalist pose of the Western expert on Japanese culture. The following sentences from the essay on “Dragon-flies” in *A Japanese Miscellany* (1901) are typical of any number of similar passages:

The people who could find delight, century after century, in watching the ways of insects, and in making such verses about them, must have comprehended, better than we, the simple pleasure of existence. They could not, indeed, describe the magic of nature as our great Western poets have done; but they could feel the beauty of the world without its sorrow, and rejoice in that beauty, much after the manner of inquisitive and happy children.⁷

Viewed from the vantage point of the early twenty-first century,

this kind of Orientalist posture is irritatingly familiar. But, although Hearn was undeniably of his time in his conceptualization of the non-Western other, his self-positioning in his published writings is not as simple as this passage makes it seem. As will be discussed below, Hearn repeatedly toyed with the possibility of a non-Western self—of a shift in authorial identity that would parallel the shift in national identity marked by his becoming Koizumi Yakumo in 1896. Indeed, this chapter argues that the insect, as literary subject and natural object, provided a crucial medium for the metamorphoses in identity that make the writing “I” of Hearn (or Yakumo) more complex than is initially apparent.

The linguistic circumstances of Hearn's Japan writings are also complex. Despite his habit of littering his writings with untranslated Japanese terms and referring to recently acquired Japanese books or overheard Japanese conversations, Hearn never learned the language thoroughly.⁸ He managed to pick up a smattering of spoken Japanese, but he could read and write only the simple *kana* syllabaries. He and his wife communicated in a pidgin-style mixture of English and Japanese that friends referred to as “Hearn talk” (*Hern-san kotoba*). Whether deliberately or inadvertently, Hearn's texts themselves sometimes approximate a similarly interlingual quality, with their frequent inclusion of Japanese words (sometimes undefined), their occasional complaints about the untranslatability of words or utterances, or their thankfully rare attempts at literal translation.⁹ Another aspect of this peculiarly Hearnian interlingualism is that his works were translated into Japanese very quickly, and that many authors and readers in Japan have tended to treat them as Japanese texts written by Koizumi Yakumo, rather than as translations of English texts written by Lafcadio Hearn.

Despite their interlingual tendencies, all of Hearn's works on Japan were in fact written in English. When Hearn retold folktales and ghost stories, he was recasting material that he had accessed through an interpreter or through what his wife was able to communicate to him. Many of his essays, especially those on insects, contain translations of poems relating to the topic under discussion, most frequently in the short seventeen-syllable *hokku* (haiku) form. These poems, and much of the information that these texts provide, were culled by his students and associates from Japanese literary collections and traditional encyclopedias. Specifically, in order to assemble information and literary material for his insect writings, Hearn de-

pended heavily on Ōtani Masanobu (1875–1933), a former Matsue student who was a disciple of the renowned poet Masaoka Shiki (1867–1902), and Minari Shigenobu (1874–1962), a relative of Hearn's wife Setsu who was a researcher at the Historiographical Institute of Tokyo Imperial University.¹⁰

Taking into account the largely uncredited contributions of these and other assistants results in a vision of Hearn/Yakumo as a corporate author, directing a team of researchers and "informants" and recasting their work in his distinctive prose style. As is the case with ethnographic writing, the voices of these informants have a complex relationship to that of the person claiming responsibility for the text. In the many instances of translations incorporated into essays, or traditional stories recast in accounts of folklore, the voice of Hearn, the scholar and translator (for that is what he often poses as), derives its authority from the knowledge about Japan and the Japanese that it claims, but also from the voice of the other that it represents.

This inclusion of so much translated and reported material in a framework that obscures the conditions under which the actual author obtained it can be interpreted as dishonest and deceptive, but this chapter refrains from making such judgments. The nature of the research underlying Hearn's Japan writings is of interest here primarily as it relates to the frequent ambiguity in his location of himself in the texts. As will be clear below, there are moments when Hearn's authorial self seems on the verge of becoming, not a European observer, but a non-European other—not entirely unlike the canines of the previous chapter, who were able to roam, according to context, between categories of cultural insider and outsider. Hearn's writings approach, but never fully or consistently claim, a writing voice with status equivalent to the citizenship of Koizumi Yakumo, one that endows them with a very different kind of authority than that of a Western scholar-translator. In this connection, and especially considering Hearn's obsession with reincarnation and the influence of previous lives on the self, the insect plays a privileged role as a mediating figure, a metaphorical and literal means of moving the self from one world to the next, or from one nationality to another.

INSECTS IN A JAPANESE GARDEN

The twelve books that Hearn wrote on Japan contain eleven shorter works devoted entirely to insects.¹¹ After the appearance of *Glimpses of Unfamiliar*

Japan in 1894, he published one book a year until his death in 1904. Each of the four collections published between 1898 and 1901 features one piece of insect literature.¹² The earliest and best known of these is Hearn's much-anthologized discussion of "Insect-Musicians," which appeared in 1898. In it, he provides a fascinating history of the popularity of singing insects, dwelling in considerable detail on the thriving eighteenth- and nineteenth-century business of catching and raising them, a form of animal commerce that thrived alongside the bird trade already examined in chapter 4. The piece incorporates an illustrated catalogue of different species, with translations of poems about them (unlike Hearn's other insect studies, most of these poems are in the thirty-one-syllable *tanika* form rather than the seven-teen-syllable *hokku*). The subsequent 1899 essay on "Silkworms" examines the appearance of said creatures and the techniques used for raising them, then shifts into a discussion of the author's ideas about comfort, suffering, and spiritual evolution. Hearn deployed his characteristic combination of historical and cultural survey, together with a collection of short poems, again in 1900 and 1901, training his gaze in turn on "Semi," or cicadas, and on "Dragon-flies."¹³

The last two collections published during Hearn's lifetime register a dramatic increase in the amount of attention paid to insects. *Koto* (1902) contains three works explicitly devoted to these creatures: "Story of a Fly," a narrative of a maid reincarnated in insect form; "Fireflies," another detailed insect study; and "Kusa-Hibari," a short but touching meditation on Hearn's relationship with a tiny singing cricket called the "grass-lark."¹⁴ Hearn's last collection, the 1904 *Konidan*, features another insect tale, "The Dream of Akinosuké," about a man who spends years living in an ant colony in the space of a few minutes' dream. Furthermore, it devotes an entire section to three "Insect Studies." They include a long essay in which "Butterflies" receive the same treatment previously given to cicadas, dragonflies, and fireflies; a brief but strange meditation on "Mosquitoes"; and a Spenserian discussion of the society of "Ants" and the future evolution of human ethics.¹⁵

Although these insect works are concentrated in Hearn's later books, there are ample signs of his obsession with bugs in his earlier writings. Indeed, as will be discussed below, one of the keys to Hearn's insect literature is the well-known 1892 essay "In A Japanese Garden," one of his first publications on Japan. Elements of his complex affinity for insects, Japan,

and, especially, Japan's insects are also hinted at in the conclusion to that tour de force of his early Japanese reportage, "My First Day in the Orient," where Hearn writes:

I lie down to sleep, and I dream. I see Chinese texts—multitudinous, weird, mysterious—fleeing by me, all in one direction; ideographs white and dark, upon sign-boards, upon paper screens, upon backs of sandaled men. They seem to live, these ideographs, with conscious life; they are moving their parts, moving with a movement as of insects, monstrously, like *phasmidae*.⁷¹⁶

Drawn, as Roland Barthes was in his *Empire of Signs*, to alien texts at once meaningful and opaque, Hearn dwelt extensively on the appeal of a writing system he never mastered.¹⁷ But more importantly for the present inquiry, the above passage reveals an ambivalent mixture of attraction and repulsion towards insects: "multitudinous, weird, mysterious," moving "monstrously," with "conscious life." As will become clear in the discussion of spirit and reincarnation below, this notion of "conscious life" is central to what might be called Hearn's spiritual entomology.

Much of Lafcadio Hearn's work is closely allied with horror writing—in terms of style and subject matter he shares many similarities with such American masters as Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) and H. P. Lovecraft (1890–1937)—and his insect literature certainly includes elements of fear and loathing. These sinister aspects are not incidental, and we will return to their significance later on. But one of the striking traits of Hearn's interest in insects is the fondness and admiration with which he describes them. These characteristics are evident in the two primary concepts that animate his depiction of insects: microcosm and metamorphosis. An examination of microcosm will provide a starting point for this discussion. Later, we will turn to the even more complex and evocative topic of metamorphosis.

To treat insects as microcosmic is to take them as enacting on a smaller scale the workings of larger creatures and their realms of being—Japan's other nonhuman animals, human societies, natural systems more broadly, and so on. In the case of Hearn's writings on insects, such a microcosm may be found in one of his earliest essays on Japan, "In a Japanese Garden," which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1892 and was included in the first collection published after his arrival, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894). While describing the various parts of his garden, Hearn proceeds through three principal narrative modes: personal reflection, Japanological

study, and the retelling of traditional folklore.¹⁸ Indeed, as the preceding overview suggests, the eleven later works that are explicitly about insects may be loosely divided into these three modes as well.

Hearn begins "In a Japanese Garden" by describing the structure and environs of his third residence in Matsue, then devotes several pages to gardens in general, including a fascinating discourse on stones.¹⁹ At this point he pauses to inform the reader that the "soul of the [Japanese] race comprehends Nature infinitely better than we do, *at least in her visible forms*" (emphasis added).²⁰ By suggesting that Western science has an advantage in its knowledge of the invisible—a reference to chemistry as well as to microcopy—this concluding qualification hints obliquely at a faith in the achievements of science that is not evident in many later insect essays.

Both the power and the limitations of scientific knowledge are central themes for Hearn, who was torn between Spencercian visions of a universal science of evolution and romantic notions of spiritual transcendence. Indeed, a key aspect of the appeal of insects for him is that they seem to present a means of dispelling this ambivalence. In his 1901 essay on dragonflies, Hearn similarly distinguishes between visible and invisible aspects of the natural world, but with very different intentions. He muses:

If they [Japanese poets] could have seen the dragon-fly as we can see it—if they could have looked at that elfish head with its jewelled ocelli, its marvellous compound eyes, its astonishing mouth, under the microscope,—how much more extraordinary would the creature have seemed to them! ... And yet, though wise enough to have lost that fresh naive pleasure in natural observation which colors the work of these quaint poets, we are not so very much wiser than they in regard to the real wonder of the insect. We are able only to estimate more accurately the immensity of our ignorance concerning it. Can we ever hope for a Natural History with colored plates that will show us how the world appears to the faceted eyes of a dragon-fly?²¹

In this passage, Hearn overturns his earlier dichotomy between the visible and the invisible, and moves from suggesting that Western science affords a deeper insight into the forms of nature to insisting on an ultimate "unknowability" of nature that transcends all cultural oppositions. It is no accident that the shift turns on the possibility of seeing things from the insect's point of view. As shall be discussed below, Hearn is obsessed with precisely such movements from the human to the insectoid.

To return to "In a Japanese Garden," Hearn's general discussion of gardens ends with the claim that the Japanese variety does not attempt to create an "ideal landscape," but rather to "copy faithfully the attractions of a veritable landscape, and to convey the real impression that a real landscape communicates." The importance of the garden lies in a mimetic relationship to nature, but in a mimesis that is peculiarly literary. "It is therefore at once a picture and a poem; perhaps even more a poem than a picture," he explains. But this is not the only characteristic of garden representation. Another aspect that makes Japanese gardens so appealing to Hearn is their miniature, microcosmic quality. Among the features of Hearn's ideal garden are "miniature hills," while his "favorite" section is one where the "centre is occupied by a pondlet—a miniature lake ... containing a tiny island, with tiny mountains and dwarf peach-trees and pines and azaleas."²² These diminutive items have specific associations in Hearn's work, as indicated by the following passage from "My First Day in the Orient," which is representative of any number of similar effusions:

Elfish everything seems; for everything as well as everybody is small, and queer, and mysterious: the little houses under their blue roofs, the little shop-fronts hung with blue, and the smiling little people in their blue costumes.²³

For Hearn, the microcosmic appeal of the garden is inseparable from the miniature nature of the entire nation of Japan.

Having concluded its discussion of gardens in general, "In a Japanese Garden" moves through a series of descriptions of the living things that occupy the specific garden of Hearn's home in Matsue. In an exhaustive catalogue that ranges from shrubs, trees, and flowers to frogs, fish, insects, birds, and other nonhuman animals, Hearn provides an overture for much of his future writing on Japan. Almost all of his insect writings, and many of his other assorted studies and folk tale retellings, appear in miniature in this discourse on his garden.

Moreover, with its elegiac insistence on the later disappearance of that which he has described, this passage from the conclusion of the essay could easily serve as a preface to Hearn's collected works on Japan:

Yet all this—the old *katchiu-yashiki* and its gardens—will doubtless have vanished forever before many years. Already a multitude of gardens, more spacious and more beautiful than mine,

have been converted into rice-fields or bamboo-groves; and the quaint Izumo city, touched at last by some long-projected railway line—perhaps even within the present decade—will swell, and change, and grow common-place, and demand these grounds for the building of factories and mills. Not from here alone, but from all the land the ancient peace and the ancient charm seem doomed to pass away.²⁴

There are two points in Hearn's conclusion to the garden essay that call for special attention. The first is the positioning of the speaker, who is deictically present only in the "mine" of the second sentence: "a multitude of gardens, more spacious and more beautiful than mine." That "mine" recalls the "I" that is subsumed in the "we" of the passage on "the soul of the race" quoted before, an "I" that is implied by the language and style of the entire essay. It is the European self that Hearn returned to throughout his published writings, even after becoming Koizumi Yakumo.

And yet the situation of this implied European self is not so simple. In the essay, Hearn is, after all, situating himself as the proprietor of the endangered space of Japanese premodernity that is "his" garden. There is a touch of exaggeration here, as the garden in question, rented to him for a few months by the Negishi family, is not really his property. More to the point, though, Hearn's claim of ownership may be seen as situating him implicitly on the *Japanese* side of the split between European self (represented by the encroaching railway and other icons of modernity) and Asian other (represented by the preservation of nature in the traditional garden). Such a move is also apparent in the following passage, which verges on an explicit acknowledgment of the tensions inherent in Hearn's self-depiction:

Each day, after returning from my college duties, and exchanging my teacher's uniform for the infinitely more comfortable Japanese robe, I find more than compensation for the weariness of five class-hours in the simple pleasure of squatting on the shaded veranda overlooking the gardens.²⁵

Both the change in clothing and the posture ("squatting") of the narrator suggest a shift from the European identity of normal-school English instructor to the Japanese identity of garden proprietor and aficionado. As has been already mentioned, it is not unusual for a Hearn essay to toy with situating the authorial self as an Orientalized other. Perhaps these poses serve a purpose similar to Orientalist pronouncements about the "soul of the race," as

they resolve, if only temporarily, the divided self of Hearn/Yakumo into one or the other.

To return to the conclusion of "In a Japanese Garden," there may be a shade of bad faith in Hearn's refusal to acknowledge his complicity in the changes he decries, for without the modernizing imperatives of late nineteenth-century Japan, there would have been no place for a teacher of English in Matsue. The very disappearance that Hearn mourns is the prerequisite for his own appearance on the scene. Indeed, one could even argue that it is this disappearance that enables him to discover, retroactively, the existence of premodern Japan itself. However, it would be unfair to criticize this hypocrisy too harshly. It is true that Hearn owed his presence to precisely that which he denounced most vocally, and his descriptions of Japan and the Japanese people often maintain the essentialized otherness of which the aforementioned pronouns are symptomatic. Nevertheless, there are also moments in which Hearn attempts to use that otherness critically. The Orientalism of passages like the following should not blind us to their complexity and ambivalence:

Surely we have something to learn from the people in whose mind the simple chant of a cricket can awaken whole fairy-swarms of tender and delicate fancies. We may boast of being their masters in the mechanical, their teachers of the artificial in all its varieties of ugliness; but in the knowledge of the natural, in the feeling of the joy and beauty of the earth, they exceed us like the Greeks of old. Yet perhaps it will be only when our blind aggressive industrialism has wasted and sterilized their paradise—substituting everywhere for beauty the utilitarian, the conventional, the vulgar, the utterly hideous,—that we shall begin with remorseful amazement to comprehend the charm of that which we destroyed.²⁶

Although the essay from which the preceding quote is taken, "Insect-Musicians," appeared in the 1898 collection *Exotic and Retrospectives*, it has clear rhetorical parallels with Hearn's previously quoted conclusion to the earlier "In a Japanese Garden," including the use of the term "charm," a key word for the author. "Not from here alone," Hearn wrote, "but from all the land the ancient peace and the ancient charm seem doomed to pass away."²⁷

The preceding discussion has underlined the importance of the garden essay as an overture for Hearn's insect writings, but the mournfully prophetic tone of its concluding passage brings us to a second key point: the

garden essay stands as emblematic of Hearn's writings on Japan in that it constitutes a discourse of the vanishing, to use Marilyn Ivy's evocative terminology. Ivy writes of "recurrent yet elusive forms of absence that haunt the historical present of that place called Japan." This haunting, ghostly alternation between presence and absence animates Hearn's work as much as it does the texts and subjects that Ivy examines. In Hearn's ghost stories, as in those of *Tôno monogatari* (Tales of Tôno, 1910), by the folklorist Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962; see chapter 2), the supplementary logic of nostalgia produces what Ivy calls "narratives of revenant knowledge."²⁸ A similar spectral discourse is at work in the contradictory account of Hearn's discovered and disappearing garden inhabitants, producing meaning at the same time that meaning is lost.

For Hearn, the issue is not just an alternation between the presence and absence of the premodern. There is also a different presence, a phantom of the modern, one that frequently reveals itself as an apparition within his paeans to premodern charm, much as the European self emerges within his sentences. Perhaps the best example of this lurking modern lies in Hearn's technological figuration of the natural, purely premodern realm of the insects. A cicada is said to sound like the "noise of a sewing-machine in full operation," the chirping of a cricket is compared to the "finest electric bells," and a mosquito's bite is likened to an "electric burn." A firefly's light is a "tiny dynamo" that could be used "as a phototelegraph." One essay gives a long catalogue of insect appendages that includes "tongues that are drills," "living scissors and saws and boring-pumps and brace-bits," and "exquisite elfish weapons which no human skill can copy, even in the finest watch-spring steel."²⁹ Given the passion with which Hearn denounced the developed Western nations as "masters in the mechanical," the ambivalence and equivocation of his discourse on the premodern can clearly be seen in these returns of the technological repressed.

The last aspect of "In a Japanese Garden" that invites exploration is the way in which these complex interrelations between self and other, European and Japanese, modern and premodern, are lodged within a web of insect references, both explicitly and implicitly. In this respect as well, the essay is an overture of impressive scope. Many of the insects appearing in it—butterflies, singing insects, dragonflies—subsequently became the subjects of full-length studies. But perhaps the most significant insects in the essay may be found in two folkloric narratives that introduce the concept of

reincarnation in insect form, an idea that became one of Hearn's central intellectual preoccupations. The first is the story of a maid who kills herself after coming under suspicion for theft, and is reincarnated as a fly: "her spirit passed into the body of a strange little insect, whose head faintly resembled that of a ghost with long disheveled hair." The second is the tale of a twelfth-century warrior named Sanemori who was killed in a ricefield and "became a rice-devouring insect, which is still respectfully called ... Sanemori-San."³⁰ For Hearn, the ghostly and the insectoid have a tendency to switch places, to metamorphose into each other, and connections between the two appear repeatedly throughout his writings.³¹

For the purposes of this chapter, the most significant aspect of Hearn's early foray "In A Japanese Garden" is that, by including these two narratives of reincarnated insect ghosts amid ruminations on the loveliness of the vanishing non-European past, it combines the most important themes of Hearn's subsequent writing on Japan. The insect, it turns out, is not merely a symbolic repository of the aesthetic or natural values of the Orient. It is also a destination, a state into which humans can, and do, transform. As examination of his later insect works will reveal, through their association with reincarnation, insects link Hearn's concern with the disappearing world of premodern Japan and his obsession with personal, cultural, natural—and even physical—forms of memory.

REINCARNATION, GHOSTS, AND METAMORPHOSES

The insect literature that Hearn began to publish several years after "In a Japanese Garden" teems with references to insect reincarnation. Indeed, one account is devoted entirely to just such a tale: "The Story of a Fly," from the 1902 collection *Kotitō*. In it, the ghost of a maid returns in the form of a large fly who pesters her master and mistress until they decide to pay for a memorial service for her. Thereupon it dies, and is buried in a cemetery with a grave marker. Other insect-reincarnation narratives include stories of fireflies who are ghosts of twelfth-century warriors, members of the Genji and Heike clans, and of two sisters, one reborn as a grasshopper and the other as a cricket.³² Numerous other texts make similar connections between insects, souls, and the dead. Hearn discusses the "Ghost dragon-fly" and a grasshopper called the "horse of the dead" (*hotoke uma*) in his essay on "Dragon-flies," as well as in a short piece called "Buddhist Names of Plants

and Animals."³³ In addition to constantly treating insects as creatures *with* souls, Hearn cites cases of souls themselves manifested in the form of insects: where masses of fireflies appear before a battle in which souls are separated from the bodies of the fallen, where butterflies are ghostly manifestations of dead souls, and where the soul of a sleeping man appears in the form of an enormous butterfly.³⁴

But Hearn also devoted more essayistic writing to a sustained consideration of the specific issue of insect reincarnation, especially while discussing cicadas, beliefs in goblins, and mosquitoes. The link between insect metamorphosis and human reincarnation is made explicit in the following passage from "Sémi," the essay on cicadas that appeared in the 1900 *Shadowings*.

As the metamorphosis of the butterfly supplied to old Greek thought an emblem of the soul's ascension, so the natural history of the cicada has furnished Buddhism with similitudes and parallels for the teaching of doctrine.

Man sheds his body only as the sémi sheds its skin. But each reincarnation obscures the memory of the previous one: we remember our former existence no more than the sémi remembers the shell from which it has emerged.³⁵

This paraphrase of Buddhist doctrine is contradicted elsewhere in Hearn's work, for he seems to have been reluctant to believe that past existences are completely inaccessible. In "Kusa-Hibari," a 1902 elegy to a pet cricket, Hearn writes: "Of course he did not learn the song. It is a song of organic memory—deep, dim memory of other quintillions of lives, when the ghost of him shrilled at night from the dewy grasses of the hills." In the essay on fireflies, Hearn even goes so far as to propose that matter itself has access to its previous lives: "I cannot rid myself of the notion that Matter, in some blind infallible way, *remembers*" (emphasis in original).³⁶

These notions of organic or even physical memory stem from Hearn's attempts to synthesize his understanding of the Buddhist doctrines of reincarnation and the nature of the self with the psychological theories of his idol, Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), to whom he awarded such accolades as, "the greatest philosopher that has yet appeared in this world."³⁷ References to the eminent Victorian thinker abound in Hearn's writings, as do opaque discussions of the "scientific" foundations for ideas about reincarnation. Perhaps the following passage from an essay heavily reliant on

Spencer's *Principles of Psychology* (1855) will serve to clarify the notion of organic memory deployed in connection with the pet cricket's song:

Instinct, in the language of modern psychology, means "organized memory," and memory itself is "incipient instinct,"—the sum of impressions to be inherited by the next succeeding individual in the chain of life. Thus science recognizes inherited memory: not in the ghostly signification of a remembering of the details of former lives, but as a minute addition to psychological life accompanied by minute changes in the structure of the inherited nervous system.³⁸

Hearn's preoccupation with reincarnation and insistence that past lives must be accessible in some form contributed to his interest in these elements of Spencer's psychology, but his desperate love for a vanishing premodernity also made it imperative that he award memory a privileged position in his thought.

This line of thinking on organic memory, which, Hearn implies, is a species of reincarnation, is particularly tied up with insects, and with the phenomenon of humans becoming insects through rebirth or otherwise. In the bathetic conclusion to "Kusa-Hibari," Hearn suggests a parallel between himself and the singing cricket whose death, through starvation with grisly consequence, that essay mourns. "Yet, after all," he writes, "to devour one's own legs for hunger is not the worst that can happen to a being cursed with the gift of song. There are human crickets who must eat their own hearts in order to sing."³⁹ Here the notion of a "human cricket" is advanced more as rhetorical flourish than as actual transformation, but the figure of human becoming insect is treated as real in another work from *Kotto*, the same collection in which "Kusa-Hibari" appears.

Indeed, though it is ostensibly not even about insects at all, that short piece, entitled "Gaki," is the central Hearn essay for any consideration of these relations between insect and self. Hearn begins by describing an epiphany he experienced while sitting on a beach in Suruga, on the Pacific coast near Mount Fuji. Contemplating dragonflies, crickets, cicadas, and crabs, he is convinced anew of the truth of reincarnation, and these thoughts lead him to musings on the potential for rebirth as a *gaki*, or "goblin":

So it depends on ourselves whether we are to become insects or goblins hereafter; and in the Buddhist system the difference between insects and goblins is not so well defined as might be supposed. The belief in a mysterious relation between ghosts and insects, or rather between spirits and insects, is a very ancient belief

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in the East, where it assumes innumerable forms,—some unspeakably horrible, others full of weird beauty.⁴⁰

Hearn proceeds to run through some examples of insect beliefs, and then devotes a great deal of space to cataloguing different types of *gaki* and suggesting correspondences between them and various types of insect. He cites, for example, *gaki* who eat "wigs," "street filth," and the "refuse of funeral-pyres and the clay of graves," and states that "moths, flies, beetles, ... and other unpleasant creatures seem thus to be indicated."

But the similarities between insects and the supernatural *gaki* go beyond such behavioral parallels. Metamorphosis itself, Hearn argues, is the peculiar aspect of insects that makes them available for folk-beliefs and speculative correspondences:

In our visible world there are no other creatures so wonderful and so mysterious; and the true history of certain insects actually realizes the dreams of mythology. To the minds of primitive men, the mere facts of insect-metamorphosis must have seemed uncanny.⁴¹

The important point here lies in the way this passage makes clear what was only suggested in the cicada essay's discussion of metamorphosis and reincarnation: it is the "true history" of insect life that makes bugs so symbolically powerful. The parallels Hearn dwells upon here form a metaphoric hinge between natural and cultural history; it is not a coincidence that "primitive men" are mentioned in the passage, for the essay has become an exercise in speculative anthropology.

The "Gaki" essay concludes with a series of fantasies about the type of insect body into which Hearn would prefer to be reincarnated. He eventually decides:

In fact I have not been able to convince myself that it is really an inestimable privilege to be reborn a human being. And if the thinking of this thought, and the act of writing it down, must inevitably affect my next rebirth, then let me hope that the state to which I am destined will not be worse than that of a cicada or a dragon-fly—climbing the cryptomerias to clash my tiny cymbals in the sun—or haunting, with soundless flicker of amethyst and gold, some holy silence of lotus pools.⁴²

This lovely conclusion to an essay that has also dwelt upon the frightening or repulsive aspects of insect life—recall Hearn's earlier references to

"unspeakably horrible" forms and "unpleasant creatures"—consciously subverts the notion of rebirth in *gaki* form as punishment for misdeeds in a previous life. It is worth noting that both of the insects mentioned as appealing destinations of reincarnation were subjects of full-length studies in previous Hearn works (cicadas in the 1900 *Shadows* and dragonflies in the 1901 *A Japanese Miscellany*). Even more importantly, the settings of the imagined activities of Hearn-become-insect are classic loci of his pure Japanese premodernity: a stand of cryptomeria, or Japanese cedars, and silent "lotus pools."

The links between Hearn's imagining himself as an insect and his fondness for this kind of "Oriental" setting become even clearer in one of the last works published in his lifetime: the essay on mosquitoes that forms one of the three "Insect Studies" appended to the ghost stories of *Kuwaidan* (1904). Hearn begins by lamenting the infestation of mosquitoes in his Tokyo neighborhood. It turns out that they come from the standing water in containers at the graves of a nearby cemetery:

Well, it is in these tanks and flower-vessels that nine enemies are born: they rise by millions from the water of the dead,—and, according to Buddhist doctrine, some of them may be reincarnations of those very dead, condemned by the error of former lives to the condition of *jiki-ketsu-gaki*, or blood-drinking pretas.... Anyhow the malevolence of the *Culex fasciatus* would justify the suspicion that some wicked human soul had been compressed into that wailing speck of a body....⁴³

Citing the Western extermination technique of pouring a kerosene film onto the surface of the stagnant water in which the mosquito larvae live, the essay lingers humorously on the difficulties presented by the large number of receptacles in cemeteries, and then deftly equates mosquitoes with the "charm" of premodernity:

To free the city of mosquitoes it would be necessary to demolish the ancient graveyards,—and that would signify the ruin of the Buddhist temples attached to them,—and that would mean the disparition of so many charming gardens, with their lotus-ponds and Sanscrit-lettered monuments and humpy bridges and holy groves and weirdly-smiling Buddhas! So the extermination of *Culex fasciatus* would involve the destruction of the poetry of the ancestral cult—surely too great a price to pay!⁴⁴

Using language reminiscent of that employed in earlier essays like "My First Day in the Orient" and "In a Japanese Garden," the passage lauds the beauty of graveyards and gardens and, significantly, raises the possibility of their being "demolished," of their "disparition"—that is, of their vanishing. Once again, the garden filled with insects appears as a microcosmic figuration of the appeal of a purely non-Western Japan whose appearance and disappearance are inextricably linked.

Having reaffirmed the connection between insects and the poetic Japanese past, Hearn fits himself into the picture. First, he suggests that he may be linked to Japan through a previous life, claiming that whenever he hears a temple bell, he "become[s] aware of a striving and a fluttering in the abyssal part of my ghost,—a sensation as of memories struggling to reach the light beyond the obscurations of a million million deaths and births."⁴⁵ As discussed above, this emphasis on memory is symptomatic of Hearn's insect imaginary, as is this obsolete usage of "ghost" as "spirit" or "soul." "Ghost" is a crucial term for Hearn, who seems to have been bewitched by the tension between its early, general sense of "spirit/soul" and the more limited modern meaning of a dead soul's manifestation in the world of the living. In the following passage from a brief sketch titled "Hōrai," also from *Kuwaidan*, the link that this word provides between the living and the dead, the present self and the past other, is apparent.

This atmosphere ... is enormously old.... It is not made of air at all, but of ghost,—the substance of quintillions and quintillions of generations of souls blended into one immense translucency,—souls of people who thought in ways never resembling our ways. Whatever mortal man inhales that atmosphere, he takes into his blood the thrilling of these spirits, and they change the senses within him.⁴⁶

The "Hōrai" of this sketch is a legendary Chinese wonderland, characteristically associated with the vanishing paradise of Japan, a place with an "atmosphere" of "ghost" that is very much the same place as the "charming" cemetery landscape detailed in the preceding quote and the site of the singing and flitting cicada and dragonfly of the "Gaki" essay.⁴⁷

The aspect of the "Mosquitoes" essay that deserves emphasis, however, is Hearn's focus on himself and his own reincarnation, which becomes more explicit in a concluding, facetious turn to the future:

And, considering the possibility of being doomed to the state of a *jiki-keisu-gaki*, I want to have my chance of being reborn in some bamboo flower-cup, or *mizutamé*, whence I might issue softly, singing my thin and pungent song, to bite some people that I know.⁴⁸

What is most interesting in this transformative conclusion is what has been going on beneath the surface: by implicitly suggesting that he is the reincarnation of some past Japanese and explicitly imagining himself as a future mosquito, Hearn has doubly located himself within the Orientalized pure premodernity of the cemetery. Two transformations lurk beneath the metamorphosis of the mosquitoes before they "rise" or "issue" from the water: the dramatic changes undergone by a modernizing and Westernizing Japan, and the actual transformation that Hearn himself experienced a decade before this essay was published, namely, his metamorphosis into Koizumi Yakumo.

Although Hearn never explicitly completes this autobiographical circle in his published works on insects, it is difficult not to see the complex relocation of the narrator's self in this essay as an intensified version of the play with a potentially Japanese self that is evident elsewhere in his writings. In his work, the insect serves as a medium for shifting the self, for allowing movement from a Western to a Japanese identity. That which is most radically inhuman Hearn uses to connect what he saw as radically different forms of humanity. In the same way, the insect mediates between the absolute modern of nineteenth-century technology, of "blind aggressive industrialism," and the pure natural beauty of an idyllic, vanishing past. It is of course the mosquito's bite, accompanied though it may be by song, that is "sharp as an electric burn."⁴⁹

EPILOGUE: HEARN'S GHOST

Hearn/Yakumo lurks in odd corners of modern Japanese culture. His life and work influenced intellectuals as divergent in their interests as the folklorist Yanagita Kunio and the philosopher Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945).⁵⁰ Symptomatic of this enduring significance is his appearance in the nationalistic 1938 essay "Nihon e no kaiki" (Return to Japan) by the poet Hagiwara Sakutarō (1886–1942). Early in the essay, Hagiwara writes of the Japanese that

... if in the future they were to make Western civilization their own, and become capable of competing with the various power-

ful countries of the white men in all manner of military capability and industrial production, they would immediately awaken from the deluded worship of the West, and return to their own race-consciousness [*minzokuteki jikaku*]—this was the prediction, thirty years ago, of Hearn, that is, Koizumi Yakumo [*Hān no Koizumi Yakumo*]. And it is the case that this poet's prediction has gradually been realized in the Japan of Shōwa.⁵¹

In both the equivocal use of his two names and the citation of him as a "poet" (*shijin*)—a reference to heightened aesthetic sensibilities rather than to specific generic production—this passage locates Hearn in an awakening that takes place *between* Japan and the West, a returning that is at once spatial, temporal, and spiritual. As he becomes first Koizumi Yakumo and then simply a poet, he is, in a sense, successfully reincarnated as a Japanese nationalist, some twenty years after his death.

One of the most meaningful of Hearn's returns takes place in "Den'en no yūutsu" (Gloom in the country), a 1919 novella by Satō Haruo (1892–1964) that itself stands as one of the finest pieces of modern insect literature. This work, which documents the mental deterioration of a Tokyo writer in a countryside teeming with bugs, is punctuated with hallucinatory reveries about insects. In one of the most extensive of these reveries, the protagonist pauses to recall sympathetically Hearn's desire to be reborn as a bug: "Merely to be born human is not necessarily good fortune," said a certain poet of the grass-lark. 'It might be good to become such an insect when next I am reborn.'⁵² Located a few lines after a quotation from the renowned early-modern poet Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694), this elliptical reference reincarnates Hearn as a potentially Japanese author even more effectively than the line from Hagiwara's essay. Moreover, as in Hearn's own writings, that relocation is effected through the medium of insect rebirth. It is no accident that Satō's novella itself is concerned with the spectral disappearances and transformations of modernity and their fragmenting effect on the self of the narrator. Appearing as it does at a climactic moment of that story, as in so many other places, the ghost of Hearn continues to haunt Japan.

NOTES

1. Konishi Masayasu, *Mushi no bunkashi* (1977; paperback reprint with revisions, Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1992), 229.

2. For their comments on previous incarnations of this essay, I thank Paul Anderer, Zachary Lesser, Yukio Lipitt, and Sophie Volpp. I am grateful also to Karen

Olsson for suggesting the neologism that became the title.

3. Luckily for students of Hearn's life and writing, there are two useful new reference works devoted to him: Robert L. Gale, *A Lafcadio Hearn Companion* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2002), a collection of summaries and capsule biographies, and Hirakawa Sukehiro, ed., *Koizumi Yakumo jiten* (Tokyo: Kôbunsha, 2000), which is a superb resource despite its inexplicable lack of an index of English names and titles. The inherent interest of Hearn's life story, no less than that of his writings, has inspired a remarkably large number of biographies. In addition to the Gale and Hirakawa references, I have consulted in particular Jonathan Cott, *Wandering Ghost: The Odyssey of Lafcadio Hearn* (New York: Knopf, 1991), and Paul Murray, *A Fantastic Journey: The Life and Literature of Lafcadio Hearn* (Folkestone, U.K.: Japan Library, 1993).

4. Several of Hearn's pre-Japan books are still available in paperback reprints, and information about his work appears in general discussions of late nineteenth-century American letters. Hearn is often identified as a local colorist especially in connection with his work on New Orleans. With its extensive quotations from his writings, Jonathan Cott's *Wandering Ghost* provides a helpful introductory cross-section of this early work, which may be surveyed in more detail through Edward Larocque Tinker's early biography, *Lafcadio Hearn's American Days* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1924) and the first four volumes of *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn* (16 vols. [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1922]). Robert Gale's *Companion* provides more detailed references to other sources for Hearn's Cincinnati and New Orleans journalism.

5. The year after Hearn's death saw the posthumous publication of a twelfth book, a collection of essays and stories titled *The Romance of the Milky Way* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1905). With the exception of the last book to emerge in his lifetime, the 1904 *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, in which Hearn tried his hand at a comprehensive analysis of Japanese history and culture that was heavily influenced by Herbert Spencer, all of his books on Japan were collections of personal essays, sketches, retellings of folklore, and quasi-academic studies, some previously published and some appearing for the first time in book form. The titles of these ten collections provide an excellent sense of the quaint Orientalism of much of their content: *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894), *Out of the East: Reveries and Studies in New Japan* (1895), *Kokoro: Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life* (1896), *Gleanings in Buddha-Fields: Studies of Hand and Soul in the Far East* (1897), *Exotics and Retrospectives* (1898), *In Ghostly Japan* (1899), *Shadows in the Far East* (1897), *Exotics and Retrospectives* (1898), *Being Japanese Curios, with Sundry Cobwebs* (1902), *Kuaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things* (1904). It stands as testimony to their enduring appeal that most of these works are still available in paperback reprint editions; they are also collected in volumes 5 through 12 of *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn*. Hearn's works on Japan can be sampled in several anthologies, including *Writings from Japan*, ed. Francis King (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1984), *Lafcadio Hearn: Japan's Great Interpreter*, ed. Louis Allen and Jean Wilson (Folkestone, U.K.: Japan Library, 1992), and *Lafcadio Hearn's Japan: An Anthology of His Writings on the Country and Its People*, ed. Donald Riche (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1997).

6. On the relationship between Hearn and Chamberlain, see Yuzo Ota, *Basil Hall Chamberlain: Portrait of a Japanologist* (Richmond, U.K.: Japan Library, 1998), 127–201. Its consideration of their friendship and its dissolution, which includes a great

deal of material on debates about Hearn's character and intellectual ability, reveals the intensity with which readers and critics still respond to his personality a century after his death.

7. "Dragon-flies," in *A Japanese Miscellany: Strange Stories, Folklore Gleanings, Studies Here and There* (1901, paperback reprint, New York: ICG Muse, 2001), 97.

8. Given that Hearn was already forty when he arrived in Japan, and that he spent the remaining decade and a half of his life working intensely to support himself and his family as a writer and a teacher of English, his failure to become fluent or literate in Japanese is perhaps not as surprising as it first might seem.

9. One such literal translation is, "I-you-servant mochi-for this-world-in no-use-have. Saké-alone this-life-in if-ther-be, nothing-beside-desirable-is." See "From Hôki to Okî," in *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, 2 vols. (1894, paperback reprint, 2 vols. in 1, Tokyo: Tuttle, 1976), 560. Although Hearn continued to include Japanese linguistic elements freely in his writings, this quote, which appeared in his first Japan book, is particularly egregious.

10. Konishi, *Mushi no bunkashû*, 231. Short biographies of the two men may be found in Hirakawa, *Koizumi Yakumo jiten*, 92–93, 614–16.

11. The present chapter is concerned primarily with these eleven works, and with other substantial discussions of insects in Hearn's published writings on Japan. I do not pretend to have exhausted Hearn's oeuvre, which in addition to its size is fraught with bibliographic problems stemming from his immense pre-Japan journalistic output (much of which remains unanthologized), his voluminous correspondence, and the many posthumous publications of written versions of his Tokyo Imperial University lectures. It is clear that Hearn's interest in insects predated his sojourn in Japan. There are newspaper editorials that anticipate one of his last insect works, the essay on "Ants" in the 1904 collection *Kuaidan: "Insect Politics"* (1878), "Insect Civilization" (1881, in *The New Raimance and Other Scientific Sketches*, ed. Ichiro Nishizaki [Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1939], 56–58), and "News About Ants" (1882; in *Occidental Gleanings*, 2 vols., ed. Albert Mordell [New York: Dodd, Mead, 1925], 2: 48–52). There is also an 1876 essay on "Butterfly Fantasies" in *An American Miscellany*, ed. Albert Morrell (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1924), 190–93. As for material contemporary with the published Japan writings treated in this chapter, there are Tokyo Imperial University lectures on "Some Poems about Insects" (in *Interpretations of Literature*, 2 vols., ed. John Erskine [New York: Dodd, Mead, 1917], 2: 238–71) and "Some French Poems on Insects" (in *Life and Literature*, ed. John Erskine [New York: Dodd, Mead, 1917], 266–83), as well as a separately published volume containing another lecture on *Insects and Greek Poetry* (New York: Rudge, 1926). Hearn's love of insects has not gone unnoticed by anthologists. The posthumous *Japanese Lyrics* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1915) contains a section on "Insect Poems" (1–9); one of Hearn's researcher/informants, Ôtani Masanobu, brought out a bilingual collection of insect works, *Koizumi Yakumo: Mushi no bungaku/Insect Literature* (Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1921), and an expanded collection of new Japanese translations of Hearn's insect writings has been published more recently (Nagazawa Sumio, trans., *Chô no gensô* [Tokyo: Chikuchi Shokan, 1988]). The present chapter's epigraph is taken from entomologist Konishi Masayasu's marvelous discussion of the cultural history of insects, which contains a brief, informative section devoted to Hearn's insect writings (*Mushi no bunkashû*, 229–32), drawing in turn on an earlier essay, "Koizumi Yakumo to mushi," *Rekishi to*

jinbutsu 5, no. 2 (February 1975): 24–26. Another helpful discussion of Hearn's interest in insects ("Mushi") may be found in Hirakawa, Koizumi Yakumo jiten, 630. The author of that entry also has a more extensive essay devoted mainly to *Kuaidan*'s "Insect Studies": Ushimura Kei, "Mushi mezuru Hân," *Hikaku bungaku kenkyû* 47 (1985): 156–64.

12. Nothing was published in 1903, but in the following year, the last of his life, Hearn's publishers brought out two works: his final collection, *Kuaidan*, and his long analysis, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*.

13. "Insect-Musicians," in *Exotics and Retrospectives* (1898; paperback reprint, Tokyo: Tuttle, 1971), 39–80; "Silkworms," in *In Ghostly Japan* (1899; paperback reprint, Tokyo: Tuttle, 1971), 59–70; "Semi," in *Shadowings* (1900; paperback reprint, Tokyo: Tuttle, 1971), 69–102; "Dragon-flies," in *A Japanese Miscellany*, 63–102.

14. "Story of a Fly," in *Kotô: Being Japanese Curious, with Sundry Cobwebs* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), 55–62; "Fireflies," in *Kotô*, 135–70; "Kusa-Hibari," in *Kotô*, 235–42.

15. "The Dream of Akinosuke," in *Kuaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things* (1904; paperback reprint, Tokyo: Tuttle, 1971), 143–56; "Butterflies," in *Kuaidan*, 179–204; "Mosquitoes," in *Kuaidan*, 205–12; "Ants," in *Kuaidan*, 213–40.

16. "My First Day in the Orient," in *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, 28. *Plumitidae* are walkingsticks: large, primarily tropical insects camouflaged by their resemblance to twigs.

17. Hearn wrote that "these ideographs have a speaking symmetry which no design without a meaning could possess" (ibid., 3–4). This and other meditations on the graphic elements of the newly experienced Japanese cityscape fill "My First Day in the Orient," which is, among other things, an account of the impact of writing on the illiterate foreign visitor. The chapter immediately following it in *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* is "The Writing of Kôbôdaishi," a breathless retelling of fantastic feats of inscription by Kûkai (774–835), founder of the esoteric Shingon school of Japanese Buddhism as well as a renowned calligrapher (ibid., 29–33).

18. This useful tripartite division reflects internal differences in Hearn's work on Japan, but there are of course many cases of overlap and intersection among the three categories. Indeed, the curious way in which Hearn's and other Victorian writing on Japan is alternately charming and repugnant is due in large part to the ease with which these three modes combine and recombine with one another. Such shifts in mode are intimately connected to the complexities of Hearn's authorial identity.

19. The house, now the site of a museum commemorating Hearn's life and work, overlooks the moat of Matsue castle. It was the residence of the Negishi family, former retainers to the lords of Matsue domain. Young Negishi Iwai (1874–1933) was a student of Hearn, and his father rented the house to Hearn and his wife Setsu from June to November 1891.

20. "In a Japanese Garden," in *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, 346.

21. "Dragon-flies," 97–98 (ellipses in original).

22. "In a Japanese Garden," 349, 361.

23. "My First Day in the Orient," 2.

24. "In a Japanese Garden," 384. "Katchiû [*kachiû*] yashiki" refers to the residential compound of a retainer to a domain lord, such as Hearn's landlords, the

Negishi family, had once been.

25. Ibid., 382.

26. "Insect-Musicians," in *Exotics and Retrospectives*, 80.

27. "In a Japanese Garden," 384.

28. Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Plinthism, Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 21, 242.

29. "Semi," in *Shadowings*, 52; "Kusa-Hibari," 236; "Mosquitoes," 207; "Fireflies," 138; "Gaki," in *Kotô*, 195.

30. "In a Japanese Garden," in *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, 363–64, 372–73. A note appended to the Sanemori account mentions a third story involving a doctor whose ghost becomes a cucumber-eating insect (ibid., 373).

31. In her highly sentimental account of life with her husband, Koizumi Setsu provides the following list of "Hearn's favorite things": "the west, evening glow, summer, the sea, swimming, plantains, cedars, deserted cemeteries, insects, ghost stories, the story of Tarô Urashima, and that of Hôrai." See her "Reminiscences," trans. Yôji Hasegawa, in *A Walk in Kumamoto: The Life and Times of Setsu Koizumi, Lafcadio Hearn's Japanese Wife*, written and edited by Yôji Hasegawa (Folkstone, U.K.: Global Oriental, 1997), 39. It is not a coincidence that in this list insects are lodged between graveyards and spectral narratives; in Hearn's own work as well, they constantly appear in stories of the dead and their hauntings.

32. "Fireflies," 140; "Insect-Musicians," 65–66.

33. "Dragon-flies," 70, 74; "Buddhist Names of Plants and Animals," in *A Japanese Miscellany*, 109–10.

34. "Fireflies," 154; "Butterflies," 184–85; "The Dream of Akinosuke," 154.

35. "Semi," 98.

36. "Kusa-Hibari," 237; "Fireflies," 169.

37. "Ants," 237.

38. "The Idea of Preexistence," in *Kokoro: Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life* (1896; paperback reprint, Tokyo: Tuttle, 1972), 230.

39. "Kusa-Hibari." As noted above, *kusa-hibari* literally means "grass-lark." Elizabeth Stevenson implicitly recognizes the autobiographical implications of the conclusion of this essay when she uses that evocative name as the title of a reissue of her Hearn biography: "When reading a major part of Hearn's literary production, it is not uncalled for to think of him as a 'Grass Lark'" (introduction to *The Grass Lark: A Study of Lafcadio Hearn* [New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1999; republication of work originally titled *Lafcadio Hearn* (New York: Macmillan, 1961)], xv).

40. "Gaki," 184. *Gaki* is the Japanese term for the Buddhist *preta* or hungry ghost; Hearn pretends to render the word as "goblin."

41. Ibid., 193.

42. Ibid., 198–99.

43. "Mosquitoes," 209 (ellipses in original).

44. Ibid., 210–11.

45. Ibid., 212.

46. "Hôrai," in *Kuaidan*, 176.

47. The link between "Hôrai" and Japan is clarified in the conclusion of the sketch, which laments that "Evil winds from the West are blowing over Hôrai; and the magical atmosphere, alas! is shrinking away before them" (ibid., 178).

48. "Mosquitoes," 212.

49. "Insect-Musicians," 80; "Mosquitoes," 207. It is worth recalling that in the concluding passage of "Insect-Musicians" referred to here, and quoted earlier at length, Hearn remarks of the Japanese that "in the knowledge of the natural ... they exceed us like the Greeks of old" ("Insect-Musicians," 80). Such positive references to the ancient Greeks abound in his work. They function as another implicit autobiographical link based on memory and, perhaps, reincarnation, for Hearn was intensely aware of his Greek heritage on his mother's side. In this connection as well, insects play a mediating role: "it should be interesting to the Japanese student to know that his own people accord with the old Greeks in their appreciation of insect music as one of the great charms of country life" (*Insects and Greek Poetry* [unpaginated]).

50. See Koizumi Bon, "Yanagita Kunio," in Hirakawa, *Koizumi Yakumo jiten*, 653–55; Michiko Yusa, "Nishida and Hearn," *Monumenta Nipponica* 51 (1996): 309–16.

51. Hagiwara Sakutarō, "Nihon e no kaiki," in *Hagiwara Sakutarō zenshū*, 5 vols., ed. Muro Saisei et al. (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1960), 4: 477. The Shōwa period lasted from 1926 to 1988.

52. Sato Harno, "Den'en no yūtsu," in *Teihon Sato Harno zenshū*, 38 vols. (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1998–2001), 3: 221. For an alternate English rendering of this passage in the context of a complete translation of the novella, see Francis B. Tenney, trans., *The Sick Rose: A Pastoral Elegy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), 40. The narrator's paraphrase of Hearn's pronouncement appears to have conflated the famous essay on the grass-lark ("Kusa-Hibari") with the passage on reincarnation from the end of the "Gaki" essay (quoted earlier); both essays appear in *Kotō*. Sato Harno was a passionate devotee of Hearn's work, and even translated a selection of his American writings (*Koizumi Yakumo shoki bunshū: Sentō tōhanki hoka shihen* [Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1934]).

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JAPANIimals:

History and Culture in Japan's Animal Life

Edited by
Gregory M. Pflugfelder
and
Brett L. Walker

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For Conrad Totman

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PREFACE

Confessions of a Flesh Eater: Looking below the Human Horizon

Gregory M. Pflugfelder

I am not, by practically anyone's definition of the term, an animal lover. I keep no pets, eat meat with gusto, and feel no particular urge to commune with fauna in the wild. Nevertheless, in recent years a number of developments have prompted me and many others to think more deeply about the place of nonhuman animals in the world, and more specifically about their role in the history of the Japanese archipelago, which is my academic specialty. Leaving the latter question for the individual chapters that follow, the task of this preface is to recount the origins of the *JAPANimals* project from which the present book derives, and so to allow a more accurate assessment of the volume's contributions.

A few words about the book's title are necessary at the beginning. It is possible that some people may find it contrived, or mistake it for an attempt to profit from the popularity of so-called Japanimation (more commonly known now as anime). There are compelling reasons, however, that led the editors of this volume to choose *JAPANimals* for the name of our undertaking, and they have little to do with cuteness or pop culture. Rather, they center on a common dissatisfaction among the contributors to this book is, as a human community that interacts only with other human communities—for example, with “the West,” which is all too often similarly imagined in purely human terms. In recent decades, such new disciplines as environmental studies and such philosophical formations as ecofeminism and various calls for “animal rights” have led scholars to reconsider—or perhaps to consider for the first time—the substantial yet complex ties that link human beings with other living creatures on this planet. Although the writers