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Hansen, Arthur A.

"The Danger with Inu"

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THE DANGER WITHIN:
Deviance and Social Solidarity in the Japanese American Evacuation¹

Arthur A. Hansen

In a prefatory note to his provocative and penetrating 1966 work Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance, Kai T. Erikson allows that "the data presented here have not been gathered in order to throw new light on the Puritan community in New England but to add something to our understanding of deviant behavior in general. . . . [and that] the study was written by a sociologist in the interests of pursuing a sociological idea."² The present essay, while pivoting upon the same sociological idea, proceeds from a more frankly convergent-disciplinary basis. Although written by a historian, its intention is not simply to use a sociological argument as a means of clarifying congealed historical information. Rather, its goal is that which the culturologist Jay Mechling deems appropriate for all interdisciplinary studies: to recapture "the integrated, holistic vision of human affairs that has been lost with the fracturing of disciplines in the modern university" by bringing together "on a single problem the concepts, methods, techniques, and data of whatever disciplines 'converge' upon or intersect at that problem."³

The "problem" at hand concerns a particular phenomenon occurring within the ten relocation centers/concentration camps established by the United States government during World War II for the evacuated West Coast Japanese American population. In the parlance

of the interned Japanese Americans themselves, this pervasive phenomenon was styled "inu activity," a term embracing the fervid suspicion that a major cause of their original social dislocation and continued misfortune was attributable to the sinister machinations of "dogs" or "informers" within their midst. For the distressed evacuees the "devil" took many shapes, but perhaps the perponderant one was that of the inu. This is not mere conjecture, but demonstrable fact. The mass incarceration of more than 112,000 people of Japanese ancestry (two-thirds of whom were American citizens) provided social scientists with one of the most ideal living laboratories in modern times for observing and documenting human behavior. And running through the resulting welter of behavioral documentation like an unbroken thread is the evacuees' spectral dread of inu.⁴

What requires emphasis here, however, is less the irrefragability of this fact than its density. In a recent essay Gene Wise has posited a series of working "axioms" which he believes fundamental to the development of a genuinely interdisciplinary American culture study. The first of these, which is phrased in dogmatic form but offered in an experimental spirit, is that "Inquirers in American Studies should look not for 'facts' in experience, but for 'dense' facts--facts which both reveal deeper meanings inside themselves, and point outward to other facts, other ideas, other meanings." Rejecting the still regnant "lean-facts" model of historical scholarship (as configured within George Burton Adams' 1908 American Historical Association presi-

dential address--"The field of the historian is, and must long remain, the discovery and recording of what actually happened"--and apotheosized in the dicta "facts form the basic building blocks for historical inquiry" and "facts speak for themselves") as inappropriate to an age of "information-overload," Wise intimates that historians should follow the lead of those sociologists of a "reflexive" temper who have riveted their attention more upon critical analysis of basic ideas than on further accumulation of "information-bits." Should historians adopt this "dense-facts" model of scholarship, declares Wise, they would be "committed not so much to the 'production' of new information, then, as to more effective 'consumption'--that is, to the intellectual digestion of whatever information is at hand."⁵

Since this inquiry seeks to promote reflexive historiography, it jettisons traditional "contributions to knowledge" strategies of research. There is, for example, no attempt to compile an exhaustive camp-by-camp compendium of episodes entailing alleged inu activity. Nor, correlatively, is there any sleuthing of suspected internee informers. Finally, no effort is made to catalogue systematically the characteriological varieties of inu activity. Indeed, insofar as information of the above sort figures in the study, it is either coincidental with or incidental to its larger concerns.

Of these larger concerns--all of which overlap and inter-

penetrate one another--the first is "historical": to unpack an especially expressive cultural fact (inu allegations) of its potential density and thereby deepen understanding about the behavior of a specific subculture (Japanese Americans) during a particular, somewhat protracted, crisis (wartime evacuation and incarceration). The second is "sociological": to advance a late development in sociological theory (the interactionist theory of deviance) by applying it in an atypical context (ideographic and non-Western) to a traditional anthropological topic (demonology). The third, and last, major concern is "anthropological": to demonstrate the axiom of social anthropology which posits that every institutionalized activity encodes the major value propositions of the society in one form or another by treating deviant imputation (inu charges) as a collective social action involving the entire society (Japanese American subculture) and all its members.

The paper's organizational format is prefigured by and flows from its "perspectivist" methodology. "When we consider inquiry into a cultural subject," observes Wise, "we should not think just of going to 'find out' about it. How we study something should be at least as important as what we study. Thus we should conceive our subjects as focal points of reference in a 'cultural journey' of inquiry. In approaching our subject of choice, we should not only look straight at it, but travel around and beyond it, watching how it connects into concentric fields raying from

its center outwards."⁶ What this means in perspectivist terms for this particular cultural journey of inquiry is that the phenomenon of inu activity will be observed "from a variety of different points of view, on a variety of different levels, employing a variety of different methods."⁷ There are two focal points of reference, each of which revolves around the interactionist, or labelling, theory of deviance. The first centers chronologically upon the roundup and evacuation of the Japanese Americans during the immediate post-Pearl Harbor months, and draws conceptually upon disaster research studies and work in rumor theory; the second is concerned with the actual internment experience of Japanese Americans in assembly and relocation centers, and funds its conceptualization out of findings in the fields of rumor theory, identity theory and themal analysis.

Rumor, Deviant Definition and Disaster Relief

In recent years, the older journalistic accounts of disasters have given way to more sophisticated methods of data collection and theorization. A special, and rather esoteric, branch of collective behavior, "disaster research" includes a body of findings about the psychosocial impact of disasters. To date, most research has been focused upon physical disasters--hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, fires, and floods--but increasing attention has been paid of late to the impact of man-

made disasters such as bombing attacks. And one British sociologist, Stanley Cohen, has gone so far as to apply disaster research models to explain the reaction of the British public in the 1960s to the Mods and Rockers (rebellious youth) phenomenon. Since Cohen's study, Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of Mods and Rockers,⁸ employs both disaster response and rumor theory within an interactional (he prefers the term "transactional") analysis of deviance, it serves as a useful frame of reference and point of departure for this portion of the essay.

Cohen, heeding the example of American sociologist Robert K. Merton, argues that because the study of disasters can "extend sociological theory beyond the confines of the immediate subject-matter," disaster situations can be viewed as "strategic research sites for theory-building." What imparts value to such studies, according to Cohen, is that "by compressing social processes into a brief time span, a disaster makes usually private behaviour, public and immediate and therefore more amenable to study."⁹ Accordingly, in his own study Cohen adopts the sequential model used by disaster researchers to describe the phases of a typical disaster: (1) warning; (2) threat; (3) impact; (4) inventory; (5) rescue; (6) remedy; and (7) recovery. Though mindful that the "moral panics" under investigation by him--the decade-long series of deviant juvenile happenings at Brighton, Clacton, Margate and other British seaside resorts--cannot be considered disasters in the same

sense as earthquakes or floods, Cohen nonetheless feels both that there are sufficient resemblances between the two categories of events and that definitions of "disaster" are broad and inconsistent enough to warrant his extrapolation from existing theory.¹⁰

The contention here is that the category of events comprising the evacuation experience lend themselves to similar extrapolation. So before exploring how Cohen fuses his findings from disaster research and rumor theory with his formulations about deviant sociology and assessing implications for this study, perhaps a word of explanation is in order on behalf of this contention. Specifically, what needs explaining is whether the term "disaster" is distended out of recognition when applied to the wartime situation of the Japanese Americans. As Cohen observes, although definitions of disaster are characterized by imprecision, an inventory of them reveals agreement on the following salient elements: "whole or part of a community must be affected, a large segment of the community must be confronted with actual or potential danger, there must be loss of cherished values and material objects resulting in death or injury or destruction to property."¹¹ Granted these criteria, then, is it an exaggeration or a distortion to style what the Japanese American population underwent a "disaster"?

Hardly. In fact, it's difficult to fathom how a prudent person could draw a contrary conclusion from the available evidence. First, the evacuation policy of the United States gov-

ernment directly affected almost the entire Japanese American mainland community. Out of a total prewar community population of 126,000, more than ninety percent resided in the western states--Washington, Oregon, California, and Arizona--subject to the evacuation order. This order applied to all individuals of Japanese ancestry; not only healthy adults, but pregnant mothers, hospitalized cases, the extremely aged, and even infants were evacuated to makeshift and isolated detention centers. Secondly, from the time of Pearl Harbor to the ultimate closing of the centers, this affected majority of the community dwelt in a daily atmosphere colored and confounded by actual and potential danger. Prior to the evacuation in the spring of 1942, actual danger manifested itself in the roundup by federal intelligence agencies of "potentially dangerous enemy aliens," the freezing of funds, the closure of vernacular newspapers, curfews and travel restrictions; potential danger came in the form of hobgoblonizing newspaper accounts coupling alleged fifth-column activities with demands for wholesale deportation or domestic incarceration, physical threats by vigilante groups, economic boycotts of Japanese American commerce, and a rapidly mounting series of inconsistent, unreliable and irrational government policies. If before the evacuation proper it was difficult to distinguish between potential and actual danger, thereafter it became virtually impossible. Who is to say whether living in a horse stall or being surrounded by barbed wire and sentry-manned watchtowers

posed a real or prospective danger to the interned Japanese Americans? Comparing what the internees confronted with "famine, flood, drought, disease, or other calamities," Toshio Yatsushiro, who served as a member of the Sociological Research Bureau at the Poston War Relocation Center in Arizona, has aptly remarked that "the situation . . . in the center had all the characteristics of a disaster."¹² Lastly, there is no gainsaying that the third criterion applying to disasters--a loss of cherished values and material objects resulting in death or injury or destruction to property--fits the facts of the evacuation experience. Not only were entire West Coast Japanese American communities uprooted and scuttled by Executive Order 1966,¹³ but also the evacuation entailed a cataclysmic change in every facet of their cultural composition. The fabric of family was stretched and torn, the pattern of leadership disturbed, the economic structure dismantled, and the underlying sense of personal and community identity endangered. Infusing and imparting focus to the assorted socio-economic losses was the psychic conviction of being a threatened people. However humane and solicitous the evacuation seemed from the perspective of the government and the dominant society, to the interned Japanese Americans what was at stake was nothing less than their very survival (both in the literal and cultural sense of the word).

Having cleared the line of march for viewing the evacuation

experience as a "disaster," we can now briefly return to Cohen's suggestive conjunction of disaster research, rumor theory and deviant sociology in Folk Devils and Moral Panics. Couching his analysis within a theatrical analogy, Cohen shows how audience (resort population) and actors (Mods and Rockers) were sensitized during the "warning/threat" phase of this seriated mid-sixties social disaster to stage a "modern morality play." Prior to each holiday "invasion" of a targeted seaside community, the mass media enacted a markedly similar, though progressively escalated and amplified, stage-setting ceremony. By strategically manipulating a combination of highly visual scenarios (youths chasing across the beach, brandishing deckchairs over their heads, running along the pavements, riding on scooters or bikes down the streets, sleeping on the beaches and so on), processed or coded images (phrases such as "riot," "orgy of destruction," "battle," "siege," "beat up the town," and "screaming mob"), and emotionally toned symbols of an unambiguously unfavorable character (misleading and inappropriate headlines, dramatized and ritualistic interviews with "representative" Mods and Rockers, and exaggerated and distorted photographs and television reports) to depict past happenings, the mass media set in motion a self-fulfilling prophecy of moral panic. The effect, for example, of highly-seasoned headlines adumbrating that "riot-raising Mods/Rockers have it in mind to do a Clacton on Brighton" coupled with reportage spelling out precise security measures being taken and

editorials urging public support of the police was to transform an ambiguous situation into an absolutely potent generalized threat: Brighton was under imminent siege by latter-day barbarians! The stage set for melodrama, action unfolded during the disaster's "reaction" phase along predictably stylized lines. Cast as "folk devils" through spurious attribution and putative deviation, Mods and Rockers rapidly acquired self-images and behavioral traits reifying their status as warring vandals. Similarly, Brighton's control culture agents (editors, bishops, politicians and other "right-thinking people") reflected their role sensitization by manning moral barricades and forging psychological homogeneity appropriate to a consensual model of society. Abetted by "moral entrepreneurs" (i.e., individuals or groups who exploit deviance, or who maintain it in order to justify their own actions), the dramatization of deviance, replete with counter conceptions of devils and saints, deepened and widened at Brighton and the other resort towns until a denouement--either the erection of a more exclusive control culture or the accommodation of new cultural contours for society's normative map--was reached.¹⁴

As the above synopsis of Cohen's study suggests, and as its subtitle explicitly states, deviance for him is not "a property inherent in certain forms of behavior; it is a property conferred upon these forms by the audience which directly or

indirectly witness them."¹⁵ Although this definition derives from Kai Erikson, it applies with equal force to the outlook of Cohen and other exponents of the new sociological perspective on deviance. To them, deviance is not a pathological condition amenable to psychobiological explanation, but a collective transaction explicable in psychosocial terms. Drawing heavily on two intellectual traditions, pragmatism and psychoanalysis, they are predisposed to perceive deviance as a process, not a product, and to understand it as a functional tool of social adaptation and transformation.¹⁵ Accordingly, in his treatment of "crime waves" in seventeenth-century Massachusetts, Erikson reveals how successively Antinomians, Quakers, and witches were first labelled as deviants, then forced to undergo status degradation ceremonies confirming their deviancy, and ultimately placed outside the empathetic pale of the Puritan community. Instead of dismissing this process as proof of the pudding for Puritan perversity, Erikson locates an explanation within the social system: subsequent to its formation in 1630 as a monolithic theocracy, the Massachusetts Bay Colony experienced a series of internal and external shocks subverting its self-image and sense of mission; by way of counteracting this "declension" and restoring cultural integrity, the ruling oligarchy symbolically exorcised the community of its "wayward" elements. In a parallel manner, Cohen illustrates how the Mods and Rockers functioned as affective symbols in the changing cul-

tural situation of postwar Britain by advertising to the society at large the permissible boundaries of behavior. Since many of the changes were connected with youth and affluence, a cultural crusade against these "folk devils" represented a mode of asserting and revitalizing threatened traditional patterns of social deportment. With cultural ambiguity abated by exorcising these folk devils, the new Britain could, at least temporarily, resume its "I'm all right, Jack" posture.

But what of rumors? How do they relate both to Cohen's study and to deviant sociology as a whole? As a practitioner of the skeptical revolution in sociology (as opposed to an upholder of the discipline's canonical tradition), Cohen regards rumor, like deviancy, as a social transaction subject to functional analysis. For him, rumors serve the function of reducing ambiguity. Following the theoretical lead of rumor theorist Tamotsu Shibutani (whose special relevance for this essay will be considered shortly), Cohen avers that "rumors should be viewed not as forms of distorted or pathological communication: they make sociological sense as co-operative improvisations, attempts to reach a meaningful collective interpretation of what happened by pooling available resources."¹⁷ In the case of the Mods and Rockers' social disaster, rumors played a pivotal role in both its threat/warning and reaction phases. During the former phase most of the rumors were generated by the mass media. For the media, by providing images and stereotypes, re-

structured a public mood of ambiguous apprehension--"Britain is going to the dogs!"--to one of focused indignation--"The Mods and Rockers are taking over where the Teddy Boys left off, and unless their hooliganism is halted, they will reduce British civilization to shambles!" Thus were the ominous forces bedeviling mid-sixties Britain transformed into identifiable shapes which could be combatted. And while many of the media-inspired rumors represented an especially pernicious form of ideological exploitation (i.e., where the deviants are used for societally-defined ends without any regard to the consequences of this on the deviants themselves),¹⁸ to a large extent their contours and content can be construed simply as spontaneous attempts to offer plausible extrapolations from inchoate social stirrings. The same can be said for the rumors which circulated during the reaction phase. Without discounting those rumors inspired by the seaside communities' moral entrepreneurs, it should be noted that the panoply of rumors during this phase developed largely from a palpable desire of actors and audience to make sense out of the situation surrounding them and to justify and sanction a chosen course of action. How the situation was interpreted and dealt with, of course, owed much to conditioning by media rumors. As Cohen points out, "a stone-throwing incident might not have progressed beyond the milling stage if there were no readily available collective images to give meaning to the activity." These images, he explains, provided "the basis for rumors about 'random' events; so, an

incident in which a girl was carried on a stretcher to an ambulance was variously explained by the crowd gathering round as 'this bloke with her must have knifed her', 'too many pills if you ask me', 'these Rockers' birds just drink all the time'.¹⁹ The truth of these rumors is not at issue here; what is important is that they gained currency because like other rumors circulating during this phase they provided relief--lessened ambiguity and attendant anxiety--from the disaster at hand.

A strikingly similar circumstance whereby devil-defining rumors functioned as relief from a social disaster can be drawn from the Japanese American evacuation experience. Following Pearl Harbor, the mass media (of the dominant society) abounded with threatening tales of treachery being committed or planned by alleged fifth columnists in America's resident West Coast Japanese population. Hearstian yellow journalism, capitalizing upon century-old Yellow Peril stereotypes and pejorative images, presented the American public with a plausible explanation both for the "sneak attack" on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent string of Japanese military successes in the Pacific. For a couple of months, these media rumors were neutralized by official disclaimers, but by February of 1942 such horrific accounts as "Japs Poison Los Angeles Water Supply," Arsenal Uncovered in San Francisco Jap Basement," and "Jap Espionage Agents Exposed in Fresno" were being endorsed by governmental authorities, intelligence agencies, and respected syndicated

columnists.²⁰ In sociological terms, then, these rumors can be regarded as relief-seeking devices in a disaster situation. And relief, in the form of wholesale evacuation and incarceration of Japanese Americans, is precisely what these rumors achieved for a panic-bred public.

What is under examination here, however, is a somewhat less obvious and tidy parallel deriving from the evacuation experience. It has already been noted that what Japanese Americans underwent after Pearl Harbor was tantamount to a natural disaster. Now if, as Shibutani has theorized, rumors flourish in a disaster situation,²¹ then it follows that "the day of infamy" and its aftermath precipitated a rumor mill ambience in the Japanese American community analagous to that provoked in the larger society. In point of fact, as all the pertinent evidence supports, this is exactly what transpired. Fortunately, owing to two sociological studies by Shibutani which bear on this situation, it is possible not only to grasp the functional role of rumors during the particular period under examination but also to correlate the findings with theoretical formulations about rumors in general. The first of these is Rumors in a Crisis Situation;²² the second Improvised News: A Sociological Study of Rumor. The former, published in 1944 as a master's thesis at the University of Chicago, stems directly from his systematic collection of rumors extant in the Japanese American community during the interval between Pearl Harbor and

evacuation. While this study reflects his perspective as a young Nisei (second-generation Japanese American) involved in the very crisis he was analyzing, Improvised News appeared in 1965 at a time when Shibutani enjoyed an international reputation as a University of California at Santa Barbara sociologist and when his theorization ran more to global categories. Still, there is a tighter linkage between the two inquiries than might be expected. As Shibutani allows in the later book's preface, although it is a comparative analysis of rumor based upon sixty case studies, it relies heavily on his wartime field work and "a disproportionate share of the cases still deals with the fate of various categories of Japanese during World War II."²³

In Improvised News, the design of which is inductive and exploratory rather than deductive and experimental, Shibutani formulates a number of working hypotheses or low-level generalizations about rumor and places them within a larger theoretical framework. In contradistinction to traditional theorists who (as implied earlier) stress the distorted nature and person-to-person serial transmission of rumor, he perceives it as a problem in social ideation--how people make up their minds in ambiguous situations. For him a rumor is "a collective transaction whose component parts consist of cognitive and communicative activity." What sets it apart from discourse in similar contexts is that the "component acts are characterized by a low

degree of formalization." In fact, generally speaking "the degree of formalization is inversely related to intensity of collective excitement."²⁴

The above can be expressed and amplified upon in more everyday terms. According to Shibutani, rumor construction occurs when "demand for news in a public [a collection of people bound together by a problematical situation] exceeds the supply made available through institutional channels [a community's network of communication sources generally accepted as reliable]." As for the content of rumors, this depends on the degree to which demand for news is unsatisfied. If unsatisfied demand is moderate, then collective excitement is mild enough to permit the public to arrive at plausible content through critical deliberation in auxiliary communication channels (i.e., the "grapevine"). If demand is excessive, then excitement is intensified, "rumor construction takes places in spontaneously formed channels through suggestibility" and content becomes more subject to uncritical verification and wish-fulfillment.²⁵

In the months between Pearl Harbor and evacuation, the situation in the Japanese American community became progressively problematical, and therefore correspondingly ripe for rumor construction of a suggestible sort. Put simply, the reason for this state of affairs was that, paradoxically, at the very time when the exigencies of disaster were escalating

the community's demand for news, both its institutional and auxiliary channels of communication were being closed and/or discredited. As previously noted, one of the immediate actions taken by the government after Pearl Harbor was to close down the vernacular newspapers. This meant that the Japanese American community was stripped of its principal institutional source of information both for foreign and domestic news. Reliance upon the alternative sources available--either the vernaculars' English language sections or the dominant community's press--was largely out of the question for the Issei (first-generation Japanese Americans) and increasingly deemed unreliable by their Nisei children. Whereas the English language sections bore the stigma of censorship, the dominant press suffered under a historical curse. "From the time of the Manchurian incident of 1931," explains Shibutani in one of his case studies, "most Japanese immigrants had come to distrust all American newspapers as sources of propaganda. Although they consulted them for other news, reports on international affairs were treated with skepticism. For war news in particular they relied upon dispatches of the Domei News Agency, disseminated in the Japanese language press." Thus, "when the Domei reports were cut off by the outbreak of war, many were left without a single source that they regarded as trustworthy."²⁶ Mistrust extended to domestic affairs after Pearl Harbor. As long as American newspapers were restrained from utter immoderation toward the resi-

dent Japanese community, they served, particularly for Nisei, as a still credible information source. But when, after February of 1942, they indulged in an unofficially sanctioned and supported preoccupation with sensational stories about Japanese American spies and saboteurs, these sources were discounted and the way paved for the production of rumors. "Although published accounts of spy rings, huge stores of ammunition, and disguised Japanese admirals were frightening to those outside the Japanese communities," relates Shibutani in another case study, "to the people within the charges were so preposterous that questions arose as to what constituted the real reasons for the [FBI] arrests [of enemy alien suspects]. The reasons given in the newspapers were patently absurd; then, why were people being arrested? Answers were provided by a flood of rumors."²⁷

An explanatory nexus connects the arrests and the rumors. Under the blanket authority granted the Attorney General on December 7, 1941 by Presidential Proclamation No. 2525, over five thousand Issei (and a few Nisei)²⁸ were arrested by the FBI. Although most of these were subsequently released after interrogation or examination before Alien Enemy hearing boards, more than two thousand Issei suspects were ultimately interned for indefinite stays at Department of Justice detention camps scattered throughout the United States.²⁹ Far from representing a random sample of the Japanese American community, this group constituted its effective leadership. As one informed observer

has recounted, the FBI, with the help of local law enforcement officers, "picked up anybody that was the head of anything. . . . Anybody that was a cho--that means 'head'--he was picked up. Heads of prefectural organizations were picked up. . . . Because of public opinion and pressure, others were picked up later for all sorts of things. Buddhist priests and Japanese language schoolteachers were all picked up."³⁰ To this list one could add many others, such as Japanese Association officers, publishers, editors, and staffers of vernacular newspapers, and officials of Japanese cultural organizations. This action, aside from accomplishing societal decapitation, seriously disturbed the subculture's informational ecology. Put another, more specific way, the leadership sweep removed not simply people but prime custodians of the community's communication channels. This is significant because once news via the grapevine lacked the authority invested it by respected spokespeople, a vacuum was created that invited improvised news of a highly volatile variety to prevail.

The "flood of rumors" referred to by Shibutani revolved, in February, around the FBI raids and their rationale, and, in March, around the possibility of mass evacuation.³¹ Emerging to give unity to these rumors was the underlying suspicion that the Japanese American community was being sold out by dastardly self-seeking "subversives" within its midst. Some of the suspicion fell on Issei unaffected by the roundup. Since "no one

knew why certain men were picked and others left," the latter "were regarded suspiciously by the communities as informers."³² But most of the suspicion centered elsewhere--namely, on the leaders of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL).

Formed in 1930 at least in part as "a reaction against the Japanese orientation of the Issei leadership"³³ in the community, the JACL tended to attract those Nisei who most fully accepted the attitudes, values, practices, and goals of the American culture. Matthew Richard Speier has observed that while the Issei "retained ethnic perspectives and took account of the dominant society only in the form of a valuation group (i.e., a reference group whose standpoint is not adopted as one's own). . . . Nisei took on Caucasian American society as their reference group . . . and adopted its perspective as their own in the form of an identification group."³⁴ While this distinction is partly valid for Nisei as a whole, it is more valid with respect to the JACLers (a term embracing not only official members of the JACL but also those of a similar persuasion and perspective). They, to a larger degree, penetrated into the dominant society through social, political, and economic activities. Emotionally, they moved increasingly away from their parents and community. Still, at no time prior to the war did they pose a serious threat to group solidarity. Like other Nisei, the JACLers were young, uninfluential, and almost wholly dependent upon the Issei-dominated Japanese com-

munity for their economic livelihood.³⁵

After Pearl Harbor, however, events conspired to make them a serious threat. With the community losing its old and respected Issei leaders--the offices of the Japanese Association closed down, and the office of the Japanese Consul was, of course, empty--those remaining had no one to go to for advice and information. Consequently, they turned to the JACL, which the American authorities were coming to regard as their liaison with the Japanese American community.

And they soon turned on the JACL! In spite of using their limited political influence to alleviate personal hardship and to exonerate the Japanese American community from irresponsible charges of subversion levelled against it, the JACL leadership soon found themselves the object of widespread scorn. Issei resented the manner in which JACLers, whom they regarded as young and irresponsible, seemed to arrogate the role of community spokesmen. They were angered further by the JACL's apparent complicity with the FBI in Issei arrests. The JACL also came under fire from the Kibei (Nisei educated in Japan), who were disturbed that the JACL apparently had forgotten that they too were citizens. They also believed that JACLers were informing on them as well as on Issei.³⁶ There even existed considerable dissatisfaction with the JACL among certain Nisei elements. Leftist groups, for example, "looked upon the J.A.C.L. as a large organization controlled by a small minority of 'reactionary'

businessmen who used the body as a means of getting business connections and personal prestige."³⁷ Other Nisei were disgruntled that the JACL should presume to "represent" the community when they constituted such a small minority of the total ethnic group. Whatever their grievances against the JACL, Issei, Kibei, and Nisei generally believed that it was sacrificing the community's welfare for its own aggrandizement.

During the period from President Roosevelt's issuance on February 19, 1942 of Executive Order 9066 until March 21, when the first contingent of Japanese American voluntary evacuees arrived from Los Angeles at the Manzanar Reception Center, the Japanese American community was rife with rumors about the complicity and duplicity of the JACL. "It was rumored," recounts one source, "that they were advocating evacuation of the Issei in order to buy out Issei holdings and entrench themselves economically. They were accused of charging exorbitant prices for legal services which an alien could have performed for nothing at the post offices."³⁷ And Shibutani, in Rumors in a Crisis Situation, compiles an array of rumors reflective of the community animus toward the JACL in this interval.

The J.A.C.L. was instructed by Naval Intelligence to send questionnaires to all members to report on their parents.

The J.A.C.L. started their survey on the Kibei in

order to turn in information to the F.B.I. They are taking this as a protective move to whitewash themselves by blaming others.

The J.A.C.L. is trying to be patriotic and they are supporting the evacuation program. They do not have the welfare of the Japanese people at heart.

The J.A.C.L. is supporting the idea of cooperating with the government and evacuating voluntarily because then they could go in and buy up all the goods in Japanese stores at robbery prices and make a substantial profit.

The J.A.C.L. big shots have their fingers in the graft. They are getting something out of the evacuation.

The J.A.C.L. is planning the evacuation with the officials. They are mixing with high government officials.

All J.A.C.L. leaders are inu.³⁹

Again, as mentioned in connection with the rumors circulated about the Mods and Rockers at the time of their resort "invasions," the issue is not whether the above allegations about the JACL describe reality exactly or not. The content qua content of these rumors is less important (many had little basis in fact; others were clearly apocryphal) than the rela-

tionship of their content to their function. As Shibutani observes in his earlier study, rumors function as mechanisms of social control (i.e., they keep errant individuals in line) and social definition (i.e., they disseminate a common mood).⁴⁰ At a time when governmental policies were fraught with ambiguity and inconsistency, the shared belief in rumors about the JACL buttressed group solidarity and provided some certitude within the confusion. Therefore, the community's branding of the JACLers as "deviants" must not be construed as a simple act of censure, but rather as a cultural rite by which the community attempted to define its "social boundaries"-- what Erikson has denoted as the symbolic parentheses a community draws around its permissible behavior--vis-a-vis a hostile world, thereby ensuring its cultural integrity.⁴¹

Having glimpsed the connection between rumor construction and deviant identification in the incipient stage of the Japanese American wartime "disaster," we can now move on to the second focal point of reference in this cultural journey of inquiry. What now requires explanation is the post-evacuation persistence and reformulation of rumors about the JACL's "subversive" role--specifically, how in the assembly and relocation centers they evolved from relatively restricted, denotative indictments of countercommunity behavior into comprehensive, connotative ones. To illuminate this situation, we will need to draw further on the insights of rumor theory, while at

the same time enriching our understanding of deviant designation by approaching it through the sociological perspective of identity theory and placing the assorted findings within the anthropological framework of themal analysis.

Crisis, Consensus and Cultural Retrenchment

In a recent study by the Japanese American Oral History Project at California State University, Fullerton, the relationship between rumor construction and cultural crisis is dealt with in a way which has useful implications for present purposes. As its title conveys, Camp and Community: Manzanar and the Owens Valley is concerned with the wartime reaction to the Manzanar War Relocation Center of residents in the surrounding Eastern California communities. In their introduction to this compilation of retrospective interviews with selected residents, editors Ronald C. Larson and Jessie A. Garrett reveal how an initial response of acrimony and apprehension toward the camp and those confined there ultimately changed into a generalized feeling of acceptance bordering on indifference. They further suggest that owing to the operation of what Shibutani calls "reality testing" (i.e., negative evidence), early rumors such as those to the effect that "the Japanese are going to break out of Manzanar and we'll all be slaughtered in our beds" gradually, if not entirely, subsided. Finally, Larson and Garrett

intimate that, however implausible crisis-bred rumors of this sort may appear in hindsight, they were readily believed at the time precisely because they conformed closely with the cultural predispositions both of the immediate Owens Valley community and the larger American society.⁴²

Our concern here, of course, is with the situation on the other side of the barbed wire. In one sense, the two situations are hardly comparable. As regards the Owens Valley rumors about "Japs" and "Jap Camp," they largely abated once the tension generated by the ambiguous situation in which they developed dissipated. Whereas with pre-evacuation rumors about the JACL's "deviltry," they found amplified expression in Manzanar and the other camps because there the original ambiguity and resulting tension were greatly exacerbated. In another sense, though, the situations are quite analagous. For the persisting allegations of JACL inu activity retained credibility for the same reasons they first acquired it: they were consonant with the cultural assumptions of the Japanese American community.

"Unless something happens to discredit a rumor," remarks Shibutani, "its currency tends to enhance credibility."⁴³ One can comprehend the full force of this observation by considering the camp career of inu rumors involving JACLers. For not only did nothing happen to discredit these rumors, but almost everything that transpired, especially during the early stages of camp life, worked to confirm them. If the announcement of the

evacuation encouraged those in the Japanese American community to trace this action back to the JACL's policy of "constructive cooperation" and to identify JACL leaders with the outside threat as betrayers to the in-group,⁴⁴ the selection of JACLers by camp authorities--for assembly centers, the Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA); for relocation centers, the War Relocation Authority (WRA)--to fill the white-collar, supervisory, and generally-favored jobs available for internees was interpreted by the community as a fitting reward for "subversive" services rendered.⁴⁵ Moreover, these appointments of JACLers to key positions, in combination with the authorities' continuing practice of consulting said "leaders" about policies affecting the entire community, had the added consequence of inducing role behavior consistent with rumor content about their inu activity. Aside from hobnobbing with hakujin (Caucasian) administrators, JACLers openly avowed their complete collaboration with them, adopted an air of aggressive Americanism, and assumed a watchdog role relative to alleged pro-Japan sentiment and action (a role which entailed some JACLers volunteering their services as informants for Federal intelligence agencies).⁴⁶ In short, just as in the earlier mentioned study by Cohen where Mods and Rockers came to act out their assigned social role as "folk devils," so too did JACL leaders come to act out theirs. And, of course, this behavior in turn tended to reinforce community conviction that

they were indeed inu as charged and to galvanize demands for retribution.

One evacuee analyst, James Minoru Sakoda, has illustrated the above cycle of JACL deviancy as it occurred at the Puyallup Assembly Center in Washington. There Mayeda,⁴⁷ the JACL head, "organized the evacuee personnel necessary for center control." Following the Army pattern of strict control from the top, he divided the center into four areas run by supervisors responsible to orders emanating from his headquarters. As Chief Supervisor, Mayeda "assigned top positions, especially those in headquarters, to his closest supporters. Those more likely to be critical of his movements were relegated to less important positions." This situation caused mounting tension, especially when charges began circulating about the distribution of special favors for and the high-handedness of Mayeda and his followers. Commonly heard, too, was the criticism that these people in key positions were "more concerned with keeping good relations with the Army rather than in protecting the welfare of the residents." This criticism resuscitated pre-evacuation rumors that "the JACL had approved of evacuation and had aided in turning in Issei to the FBI." Amidst inu charges, "a mock grave was dug for Mayeda and several others, and there were vague hints of threats to beat him up."⁴⁸ The atmosphere became more charged after the WCCA leadership at Puyallup ordered the confiscation of all

material in camp written in Japanese. Ignoring the advice of some Nisei leaders that he protest this decision as an unnecessary inconvenience to the internees, Mayeda instead "took the view that the only thing to do under the circumstances was to submit to orders from above and took no action against the WCCA administration." When shortly thereafter half a dozen Nisei leaders, not high in Mayeda's favor, were issued two-hour notices to depart Puyallup for other centers, it was generally assumed that the connection between these two events was more than circumstantial and that "Mayeda was responsible for the latter deed." Whereas great sympathy was extended by internees for those Nisei who had sacrificed themselves for the best interest of the nihonjin (Japanese), for Mayeda and his ilk there were only redoubled accusations of inu activity and promised acts of revenge.⁴⁹

Another interesting point emerging from Sakoda's inquiry is that, while in the early period of camp life rumors about inu deeds riveted on JACL leaders, in time they extended to any internees exhibiting behavior deemed contrary to the nihonjin. When the Puyallup center was closed and the population transferred to the Minidoka War Relocation Center in Idaho, a successful campaign was undertaken by some internees to prevent Mayeda and his JACL crowd from dominating the important positions there. But even though the leadership now rested in the hands of Issei, charges of inu activity remained

unabated. This was because the new leadership now adopted a style of accommodation with the administration accompanied by decreased identification with evacuee residents. Moreover, by emphasizing their authority rather than their obligation to the evacuees, they increased resentment toward them and precipitated inu accusations against them. Reflective of this state of affairs is the account given Sakota, shortly after his arrival in Minidoka in September of 1943, by one Issei resident:

The trouble with the leaders here is that they want to show off. I don't think that they are so bad that they want to make the Japanese suffer. But some of them take pride in increasing the number of Japanese they can report to the administration. The trouble with them is that they don't think about the welfare of the Japanese, but only try to save their own skins. They are afraid of saying anything because they think that if they do they might be put on the black list. They try to please the Hakujin by helping them carry out their plans without regard to the welfare of the Japanese people. I understand some of the leaders suggested that conditions inside of the center be made bad in order to encourage the resettlement program. People like that are the limit. They ought to

be ashamed of what they are doing to the Japanese people, and after the war they're going to get their due reward.⁵⁰

A final insight about inu accusations can be gleaned from Sakoda's study. In this unpublished dissertation entitled Minidoka: An Analysis of Changing Patterns of Social Interaction, Sakoda reveals that Minidoka underwent an evolution from an essentially harmonious camp where good relations prevailed between authorities and internees to one in which constant crisis and polarized allegiances obtained. Whereas during the relatively cooperative period inu charges were narrowly focused on a small leadership cadre whose actions lent credence to the charges, as tensions mounted the accusations became increasingly diffuse and irresponsible. Once the precarious unity of the camp fissioned into hakujin/nihonjin factions, any behavior on the part of an internee even remotely identifiable with the interests of the authorities was branded as inu activity. Accordingly, all evacuees in official leadership positions faced resentment, criticism, and social ostracism unless they were willing to do the bidding of the internee population. If they were not, they ran the risk of being stigmatized as inu and faced the possibility of being physically beaten. Naturally, they were correspondingly reluctant to continue their duties or to take on any other re-

sponsibilities subjecting them to community censure. Usually, open or sub-rosa inu charges were sufficient corrective measures for individuals deemed accomodationist, but sometimes symbolic reinforcement was required. For example, when one evacuee leader refused to support a walkout of discontented boilermen and janitors, a bag of bones (for inu, dogs) was left on the doorstep of his block's mess hall instead of the usual supply of meat. Another time, an evacuee placement officer, who was a block delegate in good standing with the internees, received an inu warning in Japanese, which read, "'Dog (inu), you go away as far as possible. Otherwise your life is in danger.'" This threat resulted not from evidence of willful and malicious treachery, but merely because the recipient acceded to administrative pressure and advertised a maintenance job vacated by a recalcitrant internee.⁵¹

The reason behind this spiralling pattern of deviant designation found in the camps inheres within Shibutani's sociological theory of rumor. Crises, according to him, are resolved through rumor construction in two different ways: deliberate and spontaneous. The first way is applicable to crises characterized by mild collective excitement. "Much of any crisis situation is already defined," explains Shibutani. "A certain number of particulars are available, and these constitute the known facts of the event. Only the missing gap is supplied by rumor." When tension is low, this gap is filled

through deliberation and the rumors involved "are often nothing more than 'reasoned expectation.'"⁵² If tension is high and collective excitement acute, however, then rumor construction is spontaneous and "involves the uncritical acceptance of information without serious attempts at verification" and consists of rumors "whose component communicative acts are subject to a form of social control based upon the reciprocal reinforcement of emotional reactions."⁵³

Speaking in necessarily very general terms, the sort of crisis endured by Japanese Americans in the network of camps rarely subsided to a level accurately describable as "mild collective excitement." Living in strange surroundings bearing all the telltale signs of concentration camps, confronted with physical privations of extreme temperatures, cramped and poorly constructed housing, and inadequate bathing/toilet facilities, plagued by an interminable series of confusing and contradictory governmental regulations and policies, and made daily aware in countless painful ways of their reviled status--all this was mightily conducive to maintaining a crisis environment at most times perilously close to flash point. This meant that rumor content customarily crystallized within spontaneous rather than deliberate channels of communication.

When collective excitement is extremely intense, explains Shibutani, rumor coalescence and circulation is explainable as

"behavioral contagion." Just as in medicine a contagious disease is one communicable by contact, so too in sociology "the term behavioral contagion may be used to designate the relatively rapid dissemination of a mood or form of conduct, generally through direct interpersonal contact. Affective communication generates in each situation a pervasive mood, a Stimmung, which colors the thought and behavior of the participants by facilitating some acts and inhibiting others."⁵⁴ The spread of this corporate outlook is particularly rapid in encapsulated communities like concentration camps or among individuals sharing a common cultural background. When both factors are present, as in the Japanese American centers, then the milling of people and the meshing of behavioral assumptions leads progressively to a loss of individuality and the imposition of collective control. In this atmosphere transactions such as rumors cease having a tentative, problematical character and cohere as unassailable descriptions of reality. "Once a common mood is established," says Shibutani, "even reports from institutional channels tend to be rejected if they are inconsistent."⁵⁵ With perspectives constricted and excitement exacerbated, rumors gain currency through mere reiteration. Nor is it a matter of words alone, for in such contexts "the flash of the eyes, the whisper of a syllable, or the glance over a shoulder may be far more revealing than verbal content."⁵⁶ Thus, Rosalie Hankey Wax, a field researcher for the University

of California's Evacuation and Resettlement Study stationed at the Tule Lake camp in California, relates that there "a suspected inu, seating himself at a table in the mess hall was greeted with an uncomfortable silence and meaningful glances. If he went to the latrine or boiler room, common gathering places for gossip or discussion, he found that friendly talk or spirited argument ceased with his appearance."⁵⁷

So far, then, we have established that the customary mode of crisis resolution in the Japanese American centers was contagious rumor construction, and that inu rumors operated as social control mechanisms through forging a consensual community outlook. But we still need to account for the aforementioned amplification of inu identification--that is, why deviant designation fanned out from JACLers to embrace "demons" of a more tenuous stripe.

A clue is found in Shibutani's observation that "some crises are never successfully resolved."⁵⁸ In contrast to those crises in which the precipitating event can be met with remedial action (e.g., a fire is extinguished), crises of social unrest like the evacuation experience trigger relief measures (e.g., rumors about inu activity) which may or may not touch the root of the difficulty. In such situations, explains Shibutani, "the striking event merely focusses attention upon certain objects; meeting the immediate situation may dissipate tension but may not eliminate the deeper roots of discontent.

If so, other crises are likely to erupt periodically."⁵⁹ When considered in concert with Kenneth Burke's notion that "a perspective once formed, interferes with its own revision,"⁶⁰ the foregoing clarifies why inu rumors in the camps widened in compass without appreciably changing in contour.

Directly put, the root cause of internee discontent was American racism and its attendant disavowal of self-determination and ethnic identity for the Japanese American community. Although the nihonjin had been sensitized to this situation by a half century of discriminatory laws and practices--Japanese immigrants were not only ineligible for naturalization and property ownership but also, along with their citizen children, barred from miscegenation and denied access to most professions and residential areas--the climactic action of mass evacuation and incarceration placed the cause of their discontent into sharper focus. At the same time, however, they lacked sufficient power and influence to retaliate against their actual oppressors. And so, to relieve tension resulting from their undischarged discontentment, they struck out against the visible agents of American racism--the Caucasian camp authorities. Even this they were powerless to effect directly, so they accomplished it indirectly by subjecting suspected accommodationists in their own ranks to inu accusations and social ostracism. Initially, as has been shown, this meant that strident cooperationists like JACL leaders had to be exposed as community "traitors," stripped

of power, and silenced through verbal abuse and physical assaults. But these purges and punishments drained off community tension without drying up its wellspring. Moreover, by this point the conviction that inu were responsible for the nihonjin's plight had become so conventionalized as to practically assure that subsequent accumulations of internee tension would set in motion a search for more "subversives" (i.e., inu) to censure and castigate. A situation was therefore created whereby crisis followed upon crisis until community deviance--i.e., inu identification--came ultimately to encompass any activity even remotely discernible as endangering the social integrity of the subculture.

The above process is better grasped when considered in the context of Albert K. Cohen's recent exploration into the relevance of identity theory for the sociology of deviance. As his essay's title, "The Elasticity of Evil: Changes in the Social Definition of Deviance,"⁶¹ makes manifestly evident, he (along with Kai Erikson and Stanley Cohen) views the phenomenon of deviance as a dynamic social interaction. Although stopping short of categorical claims for identity as a determinant of deviancy, Cohen calls attention to a pertinent conjunction between them. The crux of his case is that (1) everyone has an interest in avoiding anonymity and achieving admiration, respect or affection by being recognizably different from others--that is, in gaining an identity;

(2) claims to a distinctive identity are not restricted to readily demonstrable attributes like wealth, beauty, intelligence and the like, but invariably include a moral dimension as well; (3) since the value of moral qualities like loyalty, bravery, or altruism declines in proportion to their abundance and ubiquity, a claimant to moral identity is customarily impelled to demonstrate that s/he is more moral than others by "enlisting as a soldier in the war against evil--by exposing and punishing other people's wickedness"⁶²; (4) what holds true of individuals in this respect also extends to collectivities, for members of a collective--an ethnic group, say--"have a stake in the collective identity, or corporate self, because it is one of the components of their own identities"⁶³; (5) collective identities, like individual ones, are subject to devaluation through blurring and loss of credibility, and action may be required to restore their original value; and (6) any given social group is assured of a constant supply of evil, for a likely consequence of increased morality is that the group "will come to attribute to behavioural differences, measurable only in terms of inches, moral significance hitherto attributed to differences measurable in terms of yards."⁶⁴

In the context of the Japanese American internee communities the crucial identity at stake was corporate, not individual, in character. If, as one sociologist points out, an "inu psychology" periodically flourished in these communities,

this came about because "it focused attention upon ethnic identity and during moments when most threatened it served to strengthen the solidarity of that identity."⁶⁵ Insofar as a moral label can be assigned to this identity, it would have to be "loyalty." Whereas camp authorities narrowly construed this loyalty as political allegiance to the Japanese government and its military objectives, its overriding nature was clearly connected with cultural nationalism. Indeed, even the deployment of the dog symbol, inu, can be seen within a general camp pattern of ethnic revival or revitalization. As Alexander Leighton, who headed the Bureau of Sociological Research at the Poston Center in Arizona, explains in The Governing of Men, this symbol "went far back in Japanese tradition and had been used for ages in reference to the informers who lurked in the villages and reported persons guilty of acts and ideas contrary to the wishes of the overlords."⁶⁶ To participate in this cultural revival, then, served as a means of advertising to the group at large one's "loyal" status. From the perspective of the internees, an individual's loyalty was measurable in terms of his or her Japanization. Hence, those seeking to gain the certification and avoid the censure of the group were obliged to demonstrate a preference not only for speaking Japanese but also for following traditional ethnic forms of government, family life, diet, recreation and artistic expression.⁶⁷ Still another, perhaps more certifiable,

way for internees to display their Japanization was to man the moral barricades and expose as inu any and all deviationists from a strict adherence to yamato damashii (the Japanese spirit). During the early stages of the evacuation experience, when conditions permitted peaceful, if always severely strained, coexistence of the Japanized and Americanized elements,⁶⁸ it was relatively easy for the internee population as a whole (but particularly the Nisei) to disregard the growing ethnic mandate for cultural conformity and leave the matter of branding inu to small and surreptitious bands of moral entrepreneurs. But once the moral crusade initiated by these cadres gathered momentum and peaceful coexistence gave way to pointed threats, sporadic beatings, and the formulation of black and death lists, it became increasingly untenable--and hazardous!--for those in the general camp community not to show their colors. Lest they themselves be thought inu and punished accordingly, it was practically imperative that they join their voices to the swelling chorus demanding action against inu. After the most blatant deviants from the group's identity (like the JACLers) were removed from the camp scene, however, affirming one's moral purity required more resourcefulness for those who remained. It was at this point that the "inu psychology" became truly pervasive and pernicious, for now internees were obliged, in Cohen's words, "to attribute to behavioural differences, measurable only in

terms of inches, moral significance hitherto attributed to differences measurable in terms of yards." Hereupon inu accusations became not so much as before a response to a widespread belief in deviance; rather, the widespread belief in deviance became a response "to the need for minions of the devil to provide work for the soldiers of the Lord."⁶⁹ Under these conditions the dynamics of deviance succeeded in restoring definition and clarity to the moral meaning of membership in the Japanese American community, but the door was opened and the way paved for a most vicious variety of deviant exploitation.

↓ and this is where
the Tule Lake situation
enters the picture, thus
making it clear why
your field notes are
so essential to
completing this essay.

INU

prepondrent - p. 2.

INU.

p. 2. dread and hostility toward -

p. 3. but what is imp. is variety of factors that contributed to the ~~image~~ obsession with inu.

p. 7 - I agree acc. to this def..it was a disaster -

Much of Tule Lake very like Puritans of Ericson - p. 13 but even more complicated -- I'm all right for them - but did not have un-won war - and adminis raticn --

It would take weeks of work - to find every reference to inu or to ~~diffamantam~~ the various rumors --

p. 21 - very significant point -- leaders picked up -- anxiety - confusion - etc. custodian of communicationchannels ---

Same thing happened in more extreme way at Tule Lake -- no one to go to for advice -- no father or grandfather figures-

pickups always attributed toinforers -- and usually they were right -

25- did not know that NAACL also accused of graft -- as Co-op -

Shibutani - RUMORS FUNCTION AS MECHANISMS OF SOCIAL CONTROL -- virtually all the people sometimes - or more or less successfully by interested persons as devices - sometimes do not work --

almost

26 - There was/never a time that one could speak of T. Lake as a "community" -

pp. 38 - really has it
4) me get etc on for techniques = crit.
by Dr. Shomo -
2 comment on my. Recovery on ~~the~~ out: - ines
fomatic -