

Davidson's prose, like Bamberger's photography, is forthright and lucid. The book insistently directs our attention to the human costs of the new economy, yet it never conceals the problems of the old ways. The gentle natural light of the factory interior captures workers, products, and machinery in an elegiac yet unsentimental memorial. This is documentary work of a high order, a corrective to triumphalist cybercratic boosterism, and above all a reminder of the ambiguities and ironies of family values.

—Edward Tenner

**CARTELS OF THE MIND:
*Japan's Intellectual Closed Shop.***

By Ivan Hall. Norton. 208 pp. \$25

During the mid-1600s, Japan's Tokugawa shogunate took the fateful step of expelling almost all Westerners from the nation and confining the rest to a small artificial island in Nagasaki harbor. In the era of *sakoku* (seclusion) that followed, the shoguns banned overseas travel, monitored foreigners' movements, and used a handful of mostly Dutch traders as their conduit to Western teaching and technology. Today, despite recurrent tensions between Japan and its trading partners, a visitor to Tokyo, with its Hermes boutiques and McDonald's restaurants, could be forgiven for thinking that those exclusionary days are over. Yet as Japan scholar Hall shows in this disturbing and important work, the xenophobic mindset of the Tokugawa era still holds powerful sway.

Unlike critics of Japanese economic policies who have focused on cars, computer chips, and the *keiretsu* (corporate networks) that produce them, Hall sets his sights on what the political scientist Chalmers Johnson has called Japan's "cartels of the mind": the formal and informal networks and rules that make it difficult, if not impossible, for foreign professionals to find work.

The restrictions that Hall painstakingly details would seem merely absurd if they did not apply to the world's second-largest economy. So stringent are the rules governing the activities of foreign lawyers that a Japanese attorney who goes to the United States and joins a U.S. firm can no longer argue cases in his home country. Foreign journalists must work extra hard: although their lot has improved since 1964, when American reporters were kept out of a police press conference on the stabbing of U.S. ambassador

Edwin Reischauer, they remain effectively barred from the cozy *kisha* (reporters) clubs that monopolize news from most government ministries, industrial associations, and private companies. Those foreign professors lucky enough to be hired in Japan are denied chances at tenure and generally endure a second-class status that Hall calls "academic apartheid." In one of his book's more powerful chapters, the author draws on his years as a professor in Japan to show how and why foreign scholars are generally treated like "temporary transmitters of knowledge, to be celebrated, sucked dry, and sacked."

Hall is by no means the first scholar to scrutinize Japan's highly resistant strain of cultural isolationism. As the Japanese social critic Takeo Kuwabara observed more than a decade ago, "Japanese respect the principle of cultural interchange . . . but in reality they tolerate one-way traffic only." As more than a few Japanologists have learned, Japanese often react to a foreigner who speaks their language and knows their ways much as one might respond to a talking dog: initially charmed but increasingly suspicious—especially if the dog begins to criticize.

Perhaps understandably, Hall's account is colored a shade too purple by the slights and injuries he has witnessed or experienced in nearly three decades as a journalist, diplomat, and academic in Japan. His prediction that Japan's closed system will spread to its neighbors seems misguided, especially given the push for democratization and greater openness in many Asian countries suffering from a regional financial crisis.

But the flaws in some of Hall's conclusions do not detract from his valuable mapping of Japan's barriers to intellectual exchange. Cutting through the disingenuous blather of Japan's intellectual establishment about its commitment to *kokusaika* (internationalization), Hall shows that as technology and trade turn much of the world into the equivalent of a global village, Japan will increasingly stand out as one of its more provincial neighborhoods.

—James Gibney

ONE NATION AFTER ALL.

By Alan Wolfe. Viking.

384 pp. \$24.95

Elites commonly declare that the American public has become extremely contentious, even angry, about religious and

political doctrines and behavior. Wolfe, by refreshing contrast, sees a nation “dominated by the ideas of the *reasonable* majority: people who believe themselves to be modest in their appetites, quiet in their beliefs, and restrained in their inclinations.” The Boston University sociologist bases his conclusions on 200 in-depth interviews with “middle-class” Americans in eight suburban sites, and buttresses that research with national polls conducted by others.

Wolfe finds that most Americans reject an absolutist sense of religious or political truth. They basically are centrists, holding religious and political values but accepting the views of those who disagree. By 167 to 19, for example, Wolfe’s respondents believe that “there are many religious truths and we ought to be tolerant of all of them.”

Although the respondents have little faith in government, Wolfe reports that they reject “the case for social and political decline that preoccupies social critics and social scientists.” The great majority believe that American society is basically fair. They dispute the notion that “the country as a whole has lost its bearings.” Indeed, almost everyone interviewed (184 to 5) feels that “the United States is still the best place in the world to live.”

Much evidence documents that most nonelite Americans share these Panglossian views. Yet the data themselves reveal anxieties lurking beneath the optimism. A substantial majority (133 to 49) agree that “compared to 20 years ago, Americans have become more selfish.” By a modest margin (110 to 92), most say that “the prospects facing my own children are worse than they were for me when I was a child.” A large majority (177 to 16) feels that “it has become much harder to raise children in our society.” And the in-depth interviews find many parents worrying that affluence is corrupting the moral fiber of their children. All is not right with middle-class America.

All is not entirely right with *One Nation’s* approach, either. Most serious to a student of stratification is the way Wolfe deals with social class. He reports that only 10 percent “classify themselves as *either* lower class or upper class,” with the rest saying middle class. But this does not demonstrate that the United States is a middle-class country. People from Japan to Eastern Europe do the same. To identify oneself with the upper class is boastful; to identify oneself with the

lower class is invidious. So when presented with this three-class question, nearly everyone reports middle-class status.

Back in 1948, however, the social psychologist Richard Centers asked respondents if they were upper class, middle class, *working class*, or lower class. Given the fourth choice, a plurality of respondents—between 35 and 45 percent in the United States and elsewhere—placed themselves in the working class, a noninvidious response. Published as *The Psychology of Social Class* (1949), Centers’s findings have been replicated in recent surveys. *Middle class*, as used by Wolfe and others who identify the United States as a middle-class nation, seems to include everyone not living in dire poverty or great wealth. If so, it is not a useful analytic concept.

Despite this flaw, *One Nation* is a thoughtful, provocative, and data-rich book. It needs a sequel. Fortunately, Wolfe is in the middle of research to provide it. One hopes the next volume will explain why the conservative and liberal literati so exaggerate the failings of their nation.

—*Seymour Martin Lipset*

SPIN CYCLE:

Inside the Clinton Propaganda Machine.

By Howard Kurtz. Free Press.

324 pp. \$25

Hoping to discover the secret of President Clinton’s high approval ratings in the face of scandal, Kurtz ventures backstage at the White House press office. A *Washington Post* reporter, the author finds press secretary Michael McCurry and his staff doing, quite competently, what their recent predecessors have done: leaking stories, awarding exclusives, staging symbolically rich announcements, peddling human interest tales, and, by shying away from learning certain information, maintaining credible deniability. No dazzling innovations here.

Though it’s not the author’s intended message, *Spin Cycle* ends up teaching us that the White House media manipulators are not all that influential. The news, commentary, and chatter chronicled in this aptly titled book go around and around without having much impact outside the circle of officials and correspondents. The bulk of the explanation for Clinton’s enduring popularity must lie elsewhere—most likely in his