

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

EDWIN O. REISCHAUER

Room 503  
1737 CAMBRIDGE STREET  
CAMBRIDGE,  
MASSACHUSETTS 02138

December 5, 1972

Dr. Carl Kaysen  
The Director  
The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Dear Carl:

I am writing, as you requested, about the proposed appointment of Robert Bellah to the faculty of the Institute for Advanced Study. I can be quite brief because my oral testimony at the ad hoc committee meeting at the Institute on December 3 made the same points in more detail.

The Social Science Program proposed by Clifford Geertz seems to me an extremely significant research undertaking which is very well designed. To be truly meaningful, it must be a comparative study including a strong element of non-Western as well as Western cultures. For the program as I understand it, I know of no one who would be more valuable than Bellah. Work of this sort requires both breadth in conceptual analysis and depth in specific historical and cultural knowledge. I doubt if anyone surpasses Bellah in this sort of "breadth times depth" capacity. The professional sociologists at the ad hoc meeting clearly rated him among the very best in their field in what I call here analytic breadth. While he is more than a narrow "Japanologist," in the field of Japanese studies he is rated as thoroughly competent in a technical sense and as one of the most stimulating and innovative in bringing new perceptions to the whole field. His knowledge of Chinese, Islamic, and American Indian cultures, while not to be compared with his Japanese knowledge, adds further breadth-depth capacities that enhance both his Japanese work and his conceptual analyses.

I might add that my personal interest might be better served if Bellah does not go to the Institute, because this might enhance Harvard's chances of luring him back to Cambridge. However, I must admit that I would find it very surprising if the Institute does not choose to invite him.

Sincerely,



Edwin O. Reischauer

EOR:ng

Columbia University in the City of New York | *New York, N.Y. 10027*

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Fayerweather Hall

9 December 1972

Dr Carl Kaysen  
Office of the Director  
The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Dear Carl,

This letter you have asked me to write about Robert Bellah will be mercifully short for I have little to add to the exceedingly prolonged opinions I expressed at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee with members of the Institute.

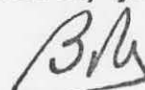
To begin with, we are all agreed, I take it, that Bellah is no latter-day Durkheim or Max Weber. But then, who is? He is, rather, one of the two ablest sociologists of his generation -- Shmuel Eisenstadt is the other -- now engaged in the comparative study of social change. Bellah has played a pivotal role in this field of inquiry, with special reference to the interaction of religion and other social institutions, from the time of his book on Tokugawa religion. His work has done much to reinstate a greatly needed comparative perspective in contemporary American sociology. I was interested to learn from Professors Reischauer and Kitagawa at the meeting that Bellah's influence has also been considerable in the field of Japanology.

I shall not comment upon the essays gathered up in Bellah's book, Beyond Belief, for what is at once the best and worst of reasons: I have not read most of them. But I have read with some care Bellah's most recent work: the extended introduction to his forthcoming edition of Durkheim's writings on morality and society. This is a first-class investigation of the theoretical texture of Durkheim's sociological corpus. It brings out implications of that body of thought that have escaped the notice of generations of Durkheimian scholars, including so exacting a one as Talcott Parsons. As I noted at our meeting, there are two or three lapses in this deeply informed essay; for one example, the questionable assumption that Durkheim's interest in psychic phenomena (of self, person, mind and psyche) necessarily meant his accepting the psychological mode of analyzing those phenomena as appropriate. But these are minor (i.e. easily remediable) flaws. Bellah's essay is much more than deeply informed commentary. It points to new directions of inquiry into normative structures in society and systems of social control.

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I know nothing at first hand about Bellah's book now in press or about his work in progress. But I have great respect for Clifford Geertz and his powers of judgment. It therefore weighs heavily with me, as I trust it does with you and your colleagues, that Robert Bellah is, to Cliff's mind, the social scientist who would do most at this time to advance the development of a school of social science at the Institute.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'R. Merton', written in a cursive style.

Robert K. Merton

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO • ILLINOIS 60637

THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

*Office of the Dean*

7 December 1972

Dr. Carl Keysen, Director  
The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, N.J. 08540

Dear Dr. Keysen:

Before going into my report, I wish to say how happy I was to meet you and your colleagues at your Institute last Sunday. Your setting is marvelous and your hospitality exquisite.

I trust I was correct in understanding that the duty of the Ad Hoc Committee was "to assist the faculty in making a judgment" as to the quality of the candidate. I make this obvious point because I sensed, rightly or wrongly, last Sunday that some of the Institute Faculty might have expected the Ad Hoc Committee members to "defend" the candidate, as it were. On my part, I endeavored to clarify some of the questions raised in the areas in which I claim some competence for the benefit of the overall discussion regarding the candidate.

I also take it for granted that the Institute has decided to establish a new program in the study of social change and that "the common element in the program is the application of the analytical methods of the social sciences to the study of historical material," as mentioned in your letter of Nov. 3. It is in this context I evaluate the competence and achievement of the candidate.

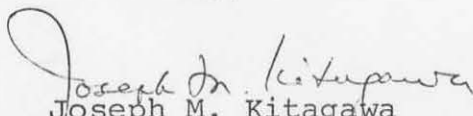
As to the scholarly competence of Mr. Ballah, I have very little question in spite of the fact that I do not share his scholarly style. While I do not claim competence in all aspects of sociology, I am persuaded that he has excellent training in the discipline. Also, I think he has a genuine scholarly concern with "religion" and "social change" on a cross-cultural basis. I already went on record last Sunday that he has adequate command of the Japanese language to carry on research on Japanese society and culture, using primary Japanese sources. In short, I am very favorably impressed by his training and professional equipment.



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Much of the discussion last Sunday centered on the question of whether or not his published record gives sufficient assurance that his potentialities will be actualized once he became a member of the team in the study of social change. I have a feeling that no one can give such assurance. In the end, the Institute Faculty members have to decide, one way or the other, even though it might involve some risks. I can only offer three comments on this score. (1) Mr. Bellah has a persistent interest in "religion"--as evidenced in his Tokugawa Religion (1957), "Religious Aspects of Modernization in Turkey and Japan" (1958), "Religious Tradition and Historical Change" (1961), "Religious Evolution" (1964), "Civil Religion in America" (1967), etc. (2) He has also kept up a lively interest in Japanese society and culture, although his recent writings seem to be focused on intellectual history in modern Japan with less reference to social and institutional aspects of that nation and culture. (3) He maintains scholarly interest with theoretical concerns of sociology, as evidenced in his Introduction to Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society. How these three thrusts will be homologized within him in the years to come depends partly on the situation in which he will find himself. Certainly, proper stimulation and encouragement by congenial colleagues would help him to find scholarly focus in the area of social change. Beyond that there is little one can say regarding the future course of another scholar. I am personally inclined to take seriously what Mr. Geertz believes that he can do with Mr. Bellah.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph M. Kitagawa  
Professor, History of Religions;  
Dean, the Divinity School.

JMK:rs

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
EMERSON HALL

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138  
(617) 495- 2166

December 6, 1972

Mr. Carl Kaysen, Director  
The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Dear Carl,

Here are my summary responses, so far as I can now articulate them, to last Sunday's interesting and confusing discussion. My initial response, during the hours following our meeting, was one of distress at the group's inability to arrive at a consensus of judgment, or rather to budge an apparently frozen division of judgment. After a night's sleep, however, and putting together a more balanced view of the formal and informal exchanges held in the course of those hours, my view is that the Ad Hoc Committee did not fail to do all it was expected, or could have sensibly been expected, under the circumstances, to do. It was not asked what other academic Ad Hoc Committees, in my experience, are asked by the institution that has convened them, namely whether an appointment, desired by the weight of interested opinion and conviction within that institution, is the best appointment that it can now make. The burden of proof, in this case, was almost reversed. This Ad Hoc Committee, as I read the course of our day there, was met not by a clear weight of desire, on the part of the institution, to go forward with the appointment in question, but by a division of its desire, of such a kind that those negatively inclined were almost asking the Committee to convince them of its propriety. I understand the situation as one in which the Ad Hoc Committee was brought into the sequence of deliberations about an appointment at an earlier stage than is usual, that is to say, a stage at which the question is still whether to recommend an appointment to the monitoring of a usual Ad Hoc Committee. This was perhaps unavoidable in this case if outsiders were to be convened at all, because it is in the nature of this appointment at this moment in the life of the Institute for Advanced Study, as was emphasized in your remarks and the remarks of some of your colleagues, that there is no established sub-group within its Faculty empowered to submit a recommendation in this field for final monitoring. In such a case, of course, the Ad Hoc Committee does not represent, as it otherwise would, a penultimate stage of official decision whose recommendation would normally (i.e. without over-riding considerations to the contrary, and without careful explanation) be followed, but rather represents a group of in-

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dividuals offering what informal judgment and advice they feel moved to offer, which can then be used or ignored as the Faculty sees fit. I rehearse my understanding of these more or less obvious preliminaries because it seems to me that, given this situation, our discussion did not focus as directly as it might have on the wider issues essentially implicated in this appointment. In this sense the Ad Hoc Committee was not as helpful as it might have been in arriving at a difficult decision. The Committee did, however, to my mind, help to clarify, even to dramatize, the nature of the difficulty of this decision. That is the sense in which it was all the help it could have been expected to be. What follows is intended to specify what I mean by this. (I will not, let me say, be very careful to hedge my remarks with recurrent "perhaps" and "in my opinion's". Because I speak as an outsider, both to the Institute and to the profession in question, it should go without saying that my remarks are nothing but the most honest expression I can give to my best judgment of the issue.)

I begin with my remark that the Committee dramatized the nature of the difficulty of this decision. It is a decision in which, so far as an outsider could tell, those present who spoke for the field represented by the candidate without exception firmly supported his appointment, while those present who spoke from within different fields without exception equally firmly opposed it, or at least strongly doubted its value. The drama of the difficulty -- even, one may say, its potential tragedy -- is that neither side of the dispute can be dismissed out of hand. The nature of the decision is defined by that circumstance. The particular people who spoke from within the field of social science cannot be dismissed, because their names are Geertz, Merton, and Shils, and those names are all but unassailably eminent within that field. Outsiders to the field who refuse their judgment of it are put in the position of seeming to deny the intellectual respectability of the field as such. So the question arises: Why is it that the assessment of those outside the field cannot be dismissed out of hand?

Obviously the answer has to do with the nature, or the current state, of sociology itself, something registered in the fact that the criterion of "general intellectual distinction" was recognized by both sides of the dispute to be relevant to its settlement. But this is not a complete answer because a decision within any field apart from mathematics and the natural sciences is apt to involve itself with the appeal to such a criterion, and it is not in principle impossible to arrive at a satisfactory decision based in part

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on such an appeal. (The presence of Geertz at the Institute and the recognized standing of the sociologists on the Ad Hoc Committee are sufficient proof of that.) So the answer must also have to do not merely with something particularly problematic about the candidate in question, but also with something extraordinary about the division between the parties to the dispute about him.

The latter circumstance is less obvious than the former and may be overlooked altogether. Honest division of opinion is to be expected where the criterion of general intellectual distinction is recognized to be relevant, but it is not to be expected that (as happened in our case) this line of division will coincide with the line of division marking off the professionals from the non-professionals, because in that case one is not convinced that the concept of general intellectual distinction is being accurately applied. It is a concept (vague enough no doubt, but not impossibly vague) which by its very meaning is applicable independently of the criteria of professional competence. This explains at once why the judgment of non-professionals cannot be dismissed and also why in this particular case those non-professionals can refuse the advice of the professionals without feeling that they necessarily thereby deny the intellectual respectability of the field of sociology as such; what they may be denying, or doubting, is only whether the concept of general intellectual distinction is being accurately isolated and applied -- something which may easily fail to happen. A further feature of the division we found among ourselves is equally striking. It is not hard to imagine that in a case formally similar to the case at hand -- in particular, one in which the professionals unanimously oppose a unanimity among the non-professionals, and in which older professionals are judging a member of a younger generation within their field -- one would find the older professionals on the negative side of the question. This would be a special case, the most likely case, in which a profession can fail to appreciate the general intellectual consequence of one of its own prophets. I do not know how to interpret the distribution of opinion within last Sunday's group.

This is the state of affairs which produced what I described at the end of our afternoon discussion as the dilemma I found myself in: Bellah's writing does not seem to me to show a magnitude of general intellectual distinction sufficient to convince me that this appointment should be made. (His distinction as an undergraduate teacher cannot overcome this deficiency, if it is there.) On the other hand, on the basis of what I have read of Geertz, Merton, and Shils, each of them does seem to me to show that magnitude and each of them is convinced that this appointment should



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be made. This need not be everyone's dilemma -- which is only to say that it is not a logical dilemma: someone can possess a quality and simply be mistaken in attributing that quality to others. I said at the beginning of this letter that the discussion of the Ad Hoc Committee had helped not only to dramatize the nature of this decision but also to clarify it. I will try to specify what I mean by "clarify" here by trying to clarify the terms in which I could accept a resolution of my dilemma.

It cannot be resolved, I feel sure, by persuading me that Bellah's general intellectual distinction is greater than I find it to be. I am stuck with my conviction that it is wanting. Given my conviction, the question I face, from myself and from others, is why there is a dilemma for me at all. Why doesn't my conviction simply settle the question for me? What considerations could outweigh that lack, in this case? That I think there are such considerations only says that I think there is such a dilemma. And that I think there is such a dilemma is a function not merely of the very high weight I attach to the convictions of Geertz, Merton, and Shils, but also of the direction from which my dissatisfaction with Bellah's writing originates.

I know that some philosophers would criticize the very nature and spirit of Bellah's enterprise as one which in principle must lack intellectual rigor. I do not think this sort of criticism is to be taken seriously. It is precisely because I share the wish to see religious (and artistic) experience and expression taken with the intellectual seriousness they warrant that I am dissatisfied with Bellah's writing. It was said in our discussion, in defense of that writing, that the sorts of subjects Bellah deals with do not lend themselves to very accurate conceptualization. That seems to me a grave error, or to invite grave error. Humanistic studies, or the cultural sciences generally, do not differ from the natural sciences on the ground the latter possess standards of intellectual rigor and the former do not. They do differ, however, in the ways in which the meeting of their standards is manifested. This difference can be brought out by noticing that the history of a natural science is not of professional concern in the work of the practicing scientist. That history can be, so to speak, summarized and, so far as it is relevant, translated into his own terms, with an accuracy that other professionals must be relied upon to assess, more or less swiftly and more or less finally.

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This is part of what constitutes, or makes possible, "progress" in his subject. I do not say that progress is not possible in the cultural sciences, but only that it is not achievable, or measurable, in these terms. Their past remains, oddly and at any moment, of relevance to their present achievements. If the past is invoked, then it must be confronted in its own terms (though not of course necessarily left in its own terms). If, for example, such a scholar, or cultural scientist, finds an idea of Rousseau's to define a topic of his research (as Bellah has found in his paper on "Civil Religion...") then he has ~~an~~ intellectual obligation to employ the idea with the meaning Rousseau has provided for it, or else to show and explain his deviation from it. If such a scholar has organized his research in support of Weber's "thesis" about the relations between the Protestant Ethic and the rise of Capitalism, then he has an obligation, at this date in the discussion of Weber's work, to explain his understanding of that thesis and of the major criticisms that have been levelled against it. If, as Bellah more than once implies, he thinks that a major significance of Weber's thesis lies in its denial of Marx's insistence on the relation between the economic base and the ideological superstructure of society, then he should know that other followers of Weber do not think Weber intended such a denial -- at least no flat denial -- of Marx's insistence, and that serious Marxists are in doubt about how stringent or unidirectional Marx took that relation to be. (In our discussion, I also mentioned Bellah's use, in his paper entitled "Father and Son...", of Freud's claim about the idea of God as the product of the mechanism of projection. I need not repeat what I said. Nor will I repeat what I said about Bellah's citing of poetry.)

Beyond such a scholar's obligation to the integrity of the texts from which he seeks support, he has the further obligation to justify the very choice he makes among texts. (This is a further difference from the mathematical and natural sciences, within which there are, I take it, no general, chronic, and endemic disagreements about which work must be taken into account and which work must be ignored.) This further obligation occurs most nakedly in choosing contemporary texts. Intellectuals with any sympathy at all for the kind of research Bellah is engaging in will be likely to admit the significance of the work of Rousseau, Marx, Freud, and Weber. The same cannot be said for the philosophical work of, say, Ernst Cassirer, Susan Langer, and Paul Ricoeur. I am not interested here in denying value to the work of these philosophers; but I claim that its value cannot, or ought not to be, simply cited as authoritative. The work has to be confronted, and its value won, on the ground of philosophy



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itself. I do not say that those outside the profession of philosophy should not touch philosophical material; I fervently hope for the contrary. But if such material is touched then it should be worked at with a sense of its own motivation. This opens the non-professional to the risk of making a special kind of fool of himself; but that should be regarded as an intellectually respectable risk. (I am, by the way, not encouraged to ascribe to Bellah the knack of handling, or epitomizing, philosophical texts when I find in his writing sentences like the following: "As Wittgenstein said, 'Uttering a word is like striking a note on the keyboard of the imagination'" ("Between Religion and Social Science", p. 242). The quotation from the Philosophical Investigations is something Wittgenstein "said" by way of drawing out and exemplifying a false view of language, or an extremely specialized use of it. It is not something he said in support of, or to exemplify, his own view.) My assumption is, you see, that in such work as Bellah is moved to do, committing himself to the relatively non-quantitative, relatively historical, relatively humanistic, dimensions of social science, the intellectual resources at his disposal are not so much theories as texts. (Or one could say: Such theories are not obviously or safely detachable from the specific texts in which they are most convincingly broached.) Therefore the ability to confront a text dialectically, or argue with it philosophically, constitutes a significant measure of the power of "conceptualization" in this domain. The comparative lack of such confrontation or argumentation in Bellah's work is the reason, I think, that various participants in our discussion found in it a quality of term paperishness.

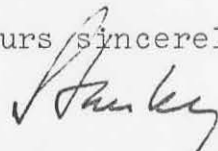
Nevertheless, nevertheless. So important do I take to be the kind of work Bellah does, that I persist in my dilemma and remain open to some favorable resolution of it. The terms of such a resolution, so far as I can see, would have to be along something like the following lines. If it is granted that the Institute is committed to establishing a School of Social Science on a par with its present three Schools, and that it is committed in particular to bringing to the Institute scholars that Geertz can work with profitably, then the fact that Bellah is Geertz's candidate for the next position in itself establishes Bellah as a plausible candidate for the Institute. (Otherwise, Geertz would be justified in concluding that the Institute's commitment to his School is not a serious one.) The other members of the Ad Hoc Committee, as I read their reactions, do not put Bellah in Geertz's league, but they regard him as good enough. For the rest of us, the question is how

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good good enough is. I have said that I am willing to credit the testimony of Geertz and Merton and Shils, but the issue is to define the question upon which their testimony bears most directly and unequivocally. I have said or implied that no one can, or ought to, simply credit the testimony of an expert on the general question of intellectual distinction. But there remains a further question, or pair of questions. Is the present state and predictable future of the social sciences such that the kind of work represented by Geertz is essential to their most fruitful advance and is best served by being lent the freedom and prestige of the Institute for Advanced Study? If so, is the permanent presence of Bellah at the Institute essential to the maximum development of that work? Our discussion did not arrive at the point at which the testimony of the social scientists present could be collected and assessed concerning these questions. But if their honest testimony and considered conjecture would lead them to answer those two questions affirmatively, then I would, for my part, be inclined to recommend that the appointment be made, and hope for the best.

I'm sorry this response has had to be so hurried. The issues involved are of importance to me and I would have liked the time to try to cover them more thoroughly and to arrive at more careful formulations. Be that as it may, I enjoyed my day in Princeton, to the extent permitted by the nature of its occasion.

Yours sincerely,



Stanley Cavell  
Walter M. Cabot Professor  
of Aesthetics and the  
General Theory of Value

SC:pg

CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

202 Junipero Serra Boulevard • Stanford, California 94305

Telephone (415) 321-2052

December 13, 1972

Professor Carl Kaysen  
Director, The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Dear Professor Kaysen:

I can write on behalf of Robert Bellah with the confidence that he is a distinguished scholar with an extensive reputation as a man of important ideas. His books, Tokugawa Religion and Beyond Belief, have been widely read and have proved influential both in this country and Japan. I need not elaborate on these points which are matters of general knowledge. You are interested in having answers to certain specific questions.

First, how substantial a contribution has Bellah made to the understanding of the development of modern Japan? Bellah's Tokugawa Religion is an early book written under Parsons' influence. Its employment of sociological jargon has put some historians off. But the book has been extremely influential. As an early effort to apply Weberian concepts to the Japanese experience, the book has served a pioneering purpose and has broken open new vistas not only for Bellah himself but also for a host of other scholars. The book has been translated into Japanese and has been widely commented upon by Japanese historians. For them it helps to put Japan's modern development into a conceptual structure, other than Marxist, which they can appreciate and respect.

Bellah's early ideas have stimulated several groups of historians to my knowledge. At Harvard, he had a great influence on Albert Craig and other younger Japanese specialists. At Berkeley he has influenced Irwin Scheiner and Scheiner's students. He has had considerable impact on Ronald Dore of England. And he has certainly had an effect on my thinking and on my students. I think it safe to say that at all major institutions with Japanese programs, Bellah's work is highly regarded by graduate students and has been a stimulus to their thinking. How Bellah is regarded beyond these communities of historians with specific Japanese interest I cannot say.

Bellah's articles on Japanese modernization and cultural identity are to my mind his most provocative pieces. The influence of these articles is less measurable, but I know of several young scholars who count them as

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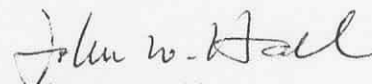
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primary to their own efforts to grasp the dynamics of modern Japan. Men like Harootunian of Rochester and Pyle of Washington have certainly profited from reading them. In a recent talk I gave in Tokyo on the development of Japanese studies in America, in fact, I mention Bellah as one of the formative thinkers of our field whose ideas are just now catching on. Psychological motivation is something of which historians are becoming increasingly aware, and Bellah has led the way in the Japanese field in dealing with this issue.

You ask about Bellah's capacity to handle Japanese primary sources. Clearly he can handle what is to him primary, that is the contemporary writings of Ienaga and Watsuji. More archaic writings and manuscript materials would, no doubt, be out of his reach. But few Japanologists are fully at home in what the historian of Europe would call "primary sources." Bellah was not trained as a Japanese linguist, and he has acquired his linguistic capacities late in his academic life. But he has not been prevented from getting the material he has needed from Japanese sources in order to pursue a creative approach to modern Japanese history. Bellah's writings have each been based on the exploration of large new bodies of materials, and his footnotes reveal that he has mastered these materials.

Are Ienaga and Watsuji worth the effort Bellah has given them? The fact is that Bellah has made them worthwhile. Both men are important intellectual figures, but without the political or literary visibility to have attracted the attention of foreign scholars, at least until Bellah came along. Now the woods are full of young scholars looking for "case study" examples of the kind Bellah found. These men serve, under Bellah's treatment, as perfect foils for the exploration of deeply significant psychological themes in modern Japanese culture. But above all it has been Bellah's ability to weave these themes into a broader fabric, in his Beyond Belief, that exemplifies Bellah's creative achievement.

Sincerely yours,



John W. Hall  
Yale University

JWH/ap

DRAFT MINUTES

Faculty Meeting

January 15, 1973

Board Room

Present: Professors Adler, Bahcall, Beurling, Borel, Cherniss, Clagett, Dashen, Dyson, Geertz, Gödel, Harish-Chandra, Kennan, Langlands, Milnor, Montgomery, Regge, Rosenbluth, Selberg, Setton, Thompson, Weil, White, Whitney

Absent: Professor Gilbert (on leave), Professor Meiss, Professor Gilliam (ill)

The Director pointed out that all the materials related to the meeting had been before the Faculty with ample opportunity for them to be read. He, therefore, would call on Prof. Geertz to open the meeting by stating the proposition before it. Prof. Geertz responded by explaining the complexities of creating a school of social sciences at the Institute--the need for choosing a direction and for constructing a community. He referred to the choice that had been made (before his arrival) to focus on the comparative study of social change, and his own enthusiasm, on which his coming was based, for establishing a new school around a comparative-cum-historical basis which would reinforce a cross-disciplinary interest in the systematic study of how cultures, societies, social structures, economies, states, families, etc. stop being what they are and become instead something else. He spoke of his long-term interest in this field, of his acquaintance with Robert Bellah since graduate school days and of the work of Bellah already done and that projected. He closed with his own enthusiastic endorsement of Bellah, reinforced by recent re-reading of his work, and in conclusion made the motion that the views of the members of the Ad Hoc Committee, as reported in the summary of their meeting and in their subsequent letters, on balance supported his and Carl Kaysen's judgment in nominating Robert Bellah for a professorship in the social science program. The motion was seconded by Professor Dyson. Prof. Kennan, saying he would like to associate himself with seconding the motion, added the comments that (1) he felt the Institute and the Faculty were committed to the development of the program (which he favored but for which he would feel the commitment even if he were opposed) and in making a decision would have to recognize the degree of commitment: (2) he had the highest respect and admiration for Geertz which would lead him to concede higher confidence in making the choice of who would be useful in this situation to Geertz than to himself. He did not like the Faculty's having to take a yes-or-no decision on any matter on which they were so strongly divided as in this case, but it was apparently necessary.

Professor Borel questioned the wording of the motion in view of the report of the Faculty members who had met with the Ad Hoc Committee. Although it was understood they were not to make a formal report, their general concurrence at a



meeting held shortly after the Committee meeting encouraged them to feel a nominal statement should be made such as - "Our personal leanings and the statements of the member of the Ad Hoc Committee have failed to convince us of the advisability of this appointment." They found in their assessment of the statements of the consultants no contradiction of this. Therefore, he felt the motion had two parts - (1) that the Ad Hoc Committee supports the appointment of Bellah; (2) the question of whether the Faculty supports the nomination of Bellah. The Director, making a procedural observation, stated that the Faculty representatives would and should give their individual impressions, but that it was not the intention that they make a report as a group. He stated that all the material was before the Faculty; the Minutes of the Ad Hoc Committee meeting, which had included virtually every correction suggested, had been accepted; a variety of letters were before the Faculty, and there was, therefore, no other piece of information to be considered as being before the meeting. The other procedural question was what motion the Faculty wished to vote on. He recommended voting on Prof. Geertz's motion and, should some members of the Faculty wish to deal with other motions, there would be time to do so. Since the motion of Prof. Geertz represented a certain procedure, he felt it important to continue to hear what might be said about the nature and significance of the views of the consultants and the conclusions to be drawn from them, and he asked Prof. Geertz to repeat the motion.

A discussion followed on the wording of the motion, Prof. Cherniss reaffirming that there were in essence two motions, Prof. Kennan, Gödel, Whitney, Montgomery, and Milnor all commenting. Prof. Selberg then raised the possibility of using the usual motion in such cases which would be simply a motion to appoint Robert Bellah for a professorship as proposed by Prof. Geertz and the Director. This led to further discussion in which Prof. Bahcall (supported by Prof. Rosenbluth) felt he could not vote affirmatively on this motion since his decision to approve the appointment was based on the opinions of the outside experts. Prof. Dyson pointed out that, on the basis of all the materials presented, it was possible to have views different from those of the Faculty representatives at the meeting. Prof. Adler, in saying he would vote for the motion no matter how it was worded, pointed out two responsibilities for faculty members in dealing with proposed appointments not in their own Schools: (a) to see that the appointment is not a mistake in a financial sense so that it would jeopardize the activities of the existing Schools (as in the case of the Miller appointment proposed previously); (b) to see that the appointment is not a bad or disastrous one. In this case the Director had raised funds which eliminated the financial hazard, and there was no evidence from either the Ad Hoc Committee or Prof. White's thoughtful note to indicate that the appointment of Bellah would be a bad thing. His concern was that,



rather than denigrate the Institute by making inferior appointments, the Institute would get a reputation that it is a place that is chewing up distinguished academics, and a negative vote here would not enhance its reputation. Following a discussion of whether or not the Faculty representatives were members of the Ad Hoc Committee, Prof. Setton raised the question of whether the Institute was creating a school of social sciences or whether it was collecting an intellectual coterie of bright people who have the approval of two members of the Faculty.

Prof. White, recognizing the difference between the motion before the meeting and that recommended by Prof. Selberg, asked to place before the group some information in the form of letters (attached) from the following people, collected in order to determine whether the endorsement of the Ad Hoc Committee gave him good reason to favor the election of Bellah - which he felt it did not: Edmund S. Morgan, Department of History at Yale University; Bernard Bailyn, Department of History at Harvard University; George C. Homans, Chairman of the Department of Sociology at Harvard University; Sigmund Diamond, Chairman of the Department of Sociology at Columbia University. Prof. White requested that the letters be returned to him but be made part of these Minutes. Prof. Geertz intervened to say that, had he know this was the procedure, he could have collected a set of supportive letters. Prof. Weil recounted his own activities in connection with participating in the Ad Hoc Committee meeting, the gathering of the Faculty representatives thereafter, and his personal request to Prof. Geertz to withdraw the nomination which he felt had been made by Prof. Geertz without his having consulted widely with the Faculty. Weil then proposed that the motion be amended so that all reference to the reasons for approving the nomination be deleted. Prof. Geertz, in response, recited the extent of the consultations he had had both before and after the recommendation of the appointment, including the fact that he had spent 1-1/2 years thinking about and discussing with others a possible appointment. Drawing attention once again to the need for an amended motion agreeable to the original mover, the Director put before the meeting the motion worded by Prof. Cherniss, that this Faculty accepts the nomination of Robert Bellah for a professorship in social sciences. Comments were made by Prof. Harish-Chandra, who pointed out the original goal that social sciences be at the highest possible level and the difference between the Geertz appointment, which was enthusiastically received, and the lack of confidence of the rest of the Faculty in the social science program should an appointment as widely disputed as the Bellah one be made; by Prof. Gödel who questioned the validity of Bellah's sociological theories and the fact that the Ad Hoc Committee seemed to approve Bellah because of Prof. Geertz's recommendation; by Prof. Regge who felt the importance of Bellah's relationship to Geertz in his work was sufficient to warrant a "yes" vote; by Prof. Dyson who pointed out that

only one Ad Hoc Committee member fell into the category mentioned by Professor Gödel.

A discussion of the candidate's intellectual merits followed Prof. Borel's reference to the letter from Prof. Dore, who, unable to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee, had been replaced by Edward Shils. The Director stated that he felt the Dore letter should not be disregarded; it showed a very fundamental part of the situation - that opinions do not converge in this field. He felt there was no impropriety in Prof. White's having asked for opinions, although it might have been helpful to have had them prior to the meeting. He thought it inappropriate at this time to go into the matter of the composition of such committees as the Ad Hoc Committee, but all the evidence was before the Faculty, and they must decide what to do with it. Prof. Cherniss stated his conviction that Bellah's work did not represent a first-rate mind and that, whatever was said by others, he would feel conscience bound to vote against the appointment. Prof. Weil again brought up the point of Bellah's inferiority to Geertz; Prof. Gödel again questioned the validity of Bellah's sociological theories; and Prof. Dyson pointed out that he had, by reading Bellah's work and without the opinions of others, reached a contrary view to Prof. Cherniss's. Prof. Geertz reiterated that his job was to build a school of distinction and that he felt Bellah was the best man to do that.

The Director called for a vote on the motion and announced the result: 13 No; 8 Yes; 3 Abstain. He added his own positive vote.

The Director then commented that the simplest course would be to state that the bulk of the Faculty does not support this nomination and, therefore, it should die. He did not intend to take that course. He would recommend the nomination to the Board with the full record of the minutes of the meeting and whatever else related to it. He would do this for a number of reasons. Most important was that he remained intellectually convinced by the positive case; the weight of the argument against Bellah's appointment was based on a standard that the Faculty had not consistently applied. In Mathematics and Natural Sciences, because of the nature of the disciplines, there is rarely much doubt about the merits of a proposed candidate. The most comparable experience is, therefore, that in the School of Historical Studies where there are conflicts of judgment and points of view. He thought the historians there knew that even in so technical and narrowly defined a subject as epigraphy, directly opposite views are expressed by people with eminent reputations. He felt in the case of Bellah that there had been a great deal of effort spent in studying the material, consulting with experts and reaching some kind of conclusion, but that the strongest arguments against the appointment were based on an incomplete understanding of what Bellah is about, and an analysis of his work that would not stand up. In other

situations than the present one the consensus of responsible expert opinion has been followed and the benefit of the doubt given in cases of diverging, conflicting views.

In taking what he recognized as a very grave step presenting great personal difficulty, and undoubtedly creating serious questions within and about the Institute, he did so because he thought it the most responsible course for him to take. In anticipation of Prof. Montgomery's wish to register that this action was not in accordance with what was agreed, as represented by the document entitled "The Responsibilities of the Faculty in the Governance of the Institute," he commented that, on reading the documents and recalling the history of the discussions, it was perfectly plain from the silence of the document and the nature of the discussions that led to it, he had never committed himself to be bound by the views of the Faculty. He was committed to allowing these views to be expressed and to transmitting them to the Trustees - the same commitment as in the case of a nomination from one of the recognized Schools. It is conceivable, for instance, that a Faculty nomination in Physics could have a strong majority against it. In his judgment it would not necessarily be wise for a Director to say that such an appointment should not be made; it would certainly be dangerous for him to say otherwise, and he was aware that this step he was taking was very grave. He was taking it in this instance, however, because he was convinced that he was not lowering the standards of appointment represented in the relevant faculties in the Institute. Further, he was convinced that this was a crucial moment for the success of the program in social science. He had heard and was not ignoring the somewhat grave predictions made by some of the Faculty about the effect of this appointment if the Trustees should be willing to accept it, but he felt it his responsibility to come to some conclusion about that, and he had.

In response to comment by Prof. Montgomery, that paragraph 7 of the document implied that the Faculty vote would be binding, the Director again referred to the silence of the document (which was before him and in the hands of the rest of the Faculty) on the particular question, the agreement extending only so far and not denying the Director's power to forward a nomination to the Trustees against the vote of the Faculty. Professors Bahcall and Milnor agreed with this interpretation. Professor White moved that "Whereas the appointment of Robert Bellah for a professorship in the Institute would constitute a major academic innovation; and whereas the Faculty has voted 13 against and 8 for, the balance abstaining: be it resolved that no further action be taken this year on the proposed appointment of Bellah. (See rule 14 of the document entitled 'Responsibilities of the Faculty in the Governance of the Institute.')" The Director stated that he rejected that interpretation of the document and ruled the motion, which had not been seconded, out of order, pointing to

the word "academic" defining innovation in paragraph 14. There was some discussion by Prof. Rosenbluth and others, culminating in a suggested motion by Prof. Milnor. There was further comment by Professors White, Borel, and Weil, on item 14 as to whether this appointment and a consequent forming of a new School of Social Sciences represented a "major academic innovation" or "implies a substantial new long-term commitment by the Institute." The Director pointed out that the question of the formation of a new school had been discussed and essentially the Faculty had accepted that, subject to the financing being available, there would be a School of Social Science. In response to Prof. Montgomery's comment that this had not been voted on, he agreed and said, referring to the Minutes, that it was his view, and, he understood, the view of the Faculty that it would not be voted on.

In the course of a discussion led by Prof. Weil's denunciation of a procedure which permitted the Director to ignore the vote of the Faculty and do as he pleased, Prof. Bahcall referred to his own recollection of what had taken place previously in the Faculty Advisory Committee which specifically made clear that the Director was free to forward a nomination under these circumstances if he felt it was for the good of the Institute. Prof. Milnor supported this view. This led to a query of Prof. Selberg by Prof. White as to his understanding of item 14 when it was drafted. Prof. Selberg said that, when he originally put this forward, what he had in mind was to put some kind of limitation on others beside the Faculty, to find some point beyond which the Director could not ignore the Faculty; but his opinion and what went into the document were different. However, it was his reading of it that a nomination turned down by a sizeable vote would not be forwarded, and there had never been a case where nominations of this sort had been. There had been cases where nominations carried by a bare majority had not been forwarded.

Discussion was resumed on Prof. Milnor's previous motion - that "the Faculty supports the creation of a strong program in social science, and we regret that the majority of us have not been able to support the present nomination, and we hope that a new candidate we can support will soon be found." It was decided to divide the motion and to delete a part of it so that the final motion would, seconded by Prof. Adler, read: "The Faculty supports the creation of a strong program in social science." Prof. Weil expressed his opposition to the motion since it was purely theoretical. If Bellah was the next best man after Geertz, what had the Faculty to look forward to. Results of a show of hands on the motion were: 15 Yes; 2 No; 6 Abstain.

Discussion of the second part centered around the question of the wisdom of the Director's proposed forwarding the nomination to the Trustees and Prof. White's motion that it was the sense of the meeting that it would be a grave mistake for the Director to take to the Board a nomination that had been voted against by a majority



of the Faculty. Prof. Bahcall opposed the motion because he felt giving advice to the Director was superfluous; Prof. Milnor thought it more appropriate for the motion to read that it was a very grave error for the Board of Trustees to accept such a nomination. Prof. Weil, agreeing with Prof. Bahcall, said further that he felt since it was getting late, the Director was right in suggesting that any of the Faculty write in, referring to item 14, asking for another meeting to discuss it. After some other comments from Professors Gödel, Dyson, and Milnor, it was decided to use the simplest form of the motion before the meeting: "The Faculty feels that this nomination should not be forwarded to the Trustees." A show of hand vote was: 14 Yes; 6 No; 3 Abstain.

The Director commented that there would obviously be a great deal more discussion of the questions raised by Prof. White's motion, and since the time was growing late, he suggested the meeting come to a close. Prof. White agreed, and the meeting adjourned at 12:40 P.M.

Prepared from shorthand notes  
and a tape by Ruth Bortell

Vote on the motion to nominate Robert Bellah to a professorship

NO	YES	
—	✓	ADLER
—	<u>ab</u>	BAHCALL
✓		BEURLING
✓		BOREL
✓		CHERNISS
✓		CLAGETT
	✓	DASHEN
	✓	DYSON
✓	✓	(GILBERT) GEERTZ
		GILLIAM <i>absent</i>
✓		GODEL
✓		HARISH-CHANDRA
	✓	KENNAN
✓		LANGLANDS
		<del>MEISS</del>
	<i>ab</i>	MILNOR
✓		MONTGOMERY
	✓	REGGE
	✓	ROSENBLUTH
✓		SELBERG
✓		SETTON
✓		THOMPSON
✓		WEIL
✓		WHITE
	<i>ab</i>	WHITNEY

— —  
13 8 + Dir.  
3 abstentions



Remarks on the Nomination of Robert Bellah

By Morton White

I. Preliminary Remarks

Before I express my view on the nomination I should like to make a few preliminary remarks.

1. First, I want to say that I am heartily in favor of there being a School of Social Science at the Institute, and nothing that I shall say later on should be taken to imply the opposite. My main concern is to express a view of the candidacy of a particular social scientist, namely, Robert Bellah.

2. I should also like to say by way of preface that some of the candidate's interests are not very far removed from my own; indeed they are closer to my interests than are the interests of some of my colleagues in the School of Historical Studies. For this reason I have more than an academic academic interest in this appointment. The candidate is interested in the history of social thought, as I am; he is concerned with the nature of religion, as I am; he has written on the methodology of social science, as I have.

3. My last preliminary remark is that I shall take the opportunity, mentioned in a letter of December 9 from the Director to the Faculty Representatives on the Ad Hoc Committee, to repeat some of the things I said at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee. This will lead me to speak at greater length than I should have spoken had the Minutes of that meeting been fuller, and I apologize in advance for that.

II. What Did the Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee Show?

Since I approached the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee with great doubt about Bellah's distinction, I wish to report that

although a majority of the visitors endorsed Bellah, they did not do so in a way that removed my doubt as to the wisdom of appointing him. It seemed to me that most of the outsiders had come to the meeting with a predisposition in favor of Bellah but did not answer some very critical objections and questions that were raised by internal members of the Ad Hoc Committee and by other professors who came before it in the afternoon. These objections and questions went to the heart of the matter. They touched upon Bellah's originality, his analytical power, his capacity to make a solid contribution to scholarship, his control over the materials about which he speaks, his powers of self-criticism, his failure to write a deep, substantial work since his Ph.D. thesis, and many other matters of crucial importance.

It seems to me that several serious objections and questions were not answered. All six internal members of the Ad Hoc Committee who served as representatives of the three Schools agreed that after reading Bellah's work and listening to the outsiders, they --the internal members--had not concluded that Bellah was a good candidate for a professorship. And my own opinion has not changed since the receipt of the visitors' letters.

Let me try to present some of the reasons why I was not reassured by the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee nor by the letters that have since come to us.

I shall begin with some remarks that bear on Bellah's analytical or theoretical power.

I did not get a clear answer to my question about the significance of Bellah's doctrine of symbolic realism. Indeed, it seemed to me that Shils, who tried to respond to that question, was not prepared to recite on Bellah's most detailed writings on that subject. For example, Shils did not seem to be familiar with Bellah's doctrine of "multiple realities", which Alfred Schutz supposedly derived from William James and then bequeathed to Bellah. And I submit that Bellah's remarks on this and related philosophical subjects in his essay "Between Religion and Social Science" are, as was said by Cavell and others, "term-paperish". I said at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee that Bellah's references to philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Peirce, James, and Wittgenstein were pedestrian and pretentious beyond even the call of journalistic duty, but no one disputed that statement.

If it be thought that Bellah's excursions into philosophy are unimportant for assessing him as a sociologist, let me point out that a number of his essays on Japanese intellectual history--his sociological essays on the subject which supposedly interests him most--depend on his possessing an understanding of philosophy that he lacks. Take, for example, the essay "Ienaga Saburo and the Search for Meaning in Modern Japan". Kitagawa made no brief for that essay because he, Kitagawa, was surprised that Bellah should take Ienaga seriously. You have read in the Minutes of Professor Cherniss' low opinion of Ienaga's views on "the category of negation" in Greek philosophy, views that are warmly praised by Bellah. Moreover, Reischauer did not leap to his defense on the subject of Ienaga, but said that he liked the essay on Watsuji. In my opinion that essay also reveals a defect in Bellah's judgment when he comes to

assess Watsuji's views on western thought and culture; and I am not led to change this opinion by anything that Professor John Hall says in his letter of December 13. Moreover, I find that what Bellah says about Ienaga and Watsuji/<sup>in this regard</sup>is no more distinguished than what he says about Nishida Kitaro, namely, that his thought and that "of a number of other ethical personalists who flourished in the 1920's remains an important resource for building an ethic both genuinely Japanese and genuinely universalistic". ("Continuity and Change in Japanese Society"). Bellah never convinces me that this is so, and when one reads the passages of Nishida favorably quoted in Beyond Belief, one can see that Nishida is hardly a very profound or original mind (see p. 11): an opinion that I have often heard during my three teaching visits to Japan.

I should like to add parenthetically that when a scholar lacks judgment as to what constitutes intellectual distinction it is doubtful whether he should be a professor at the Institute since in that capacity he would often be called upon to assess the intellectual merit of others.

I have heard it said that my reservations about Bellah's doctrine of symbolic realism--of whose obscurity I complained without being reassured by the visitors--are not of great importance in assessing his candidacy because he is, after all, a sociologist and is not a philosopher. In my opinion, however, it is important to recognize that Bellah himself thinks that his doctrine of symbolic realism underlies his own work in the sociology of religion. Bellah writes: "It is my conviction that studies undertaken from the perspective of symbolic realism are more likely to be

accurate and fruitful than psychologistic and sociologistic studies". ("Response to Comments on 'Christianity and Symbolic Realism'", Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Summer, 1970, p. 114); and that "Symbolic realism is the only adequate basis for the social scientific study of religion" (Beyond Belief, p. 253).

I shall spare you a discussion of what I take to be the limitations of Bellah's symbolic realism, but I am prepared, if called upon to do so, to be less merciful to Bellah and to you.

Before I conclude my remarks about Bellah's lack of analytical power, let me call attention to a number of his pronouncements that seem to me to illustrate the same thing. If it be said that I have torn them out of context, I must reply that no context could justify such statements.

Item: "Religion is one for the same reason that science is one--though in different ways--because man is one".

What does this mean?

Item: "Freud was the gravedigger of the enlightenment, the man who disclosed that beneath the frail conscious ego are the enormous nonrational forces of the unconscious. By the very nature of the case the unconscious proved refractory to rational analysis", Beyond Belief, p. 239.

Does Bellah really mean to say that because the unconscious is nonrational, it is therefore not subject to rational analysis? I believe he does, and that what he says is a non sequitur which simply exploits a familiar ambiguity in the word "rational".

Item: "Every theology implies a sociology...and every sociology implies a theology", Beyond Belief, p. 206.



What is the argument for this bizarre contention? Does Bellah believe that his theology implies his sociology, and conversely? Does he really believe, therefore, that his theology and his sociology are logically equivalent? It may be said that I take him too literally but in that case what does he mean by "implies"?

I turn now from some typical statements in Beyond Belief to Bellah's more substantive writings.

At an early point in the discussion of Bellah's candidacy, just after I had read Beyond Belief, I was told that excessive concentration on that work was ill-advised because it did not reveal the sociologist Bellah at his best. I was urged to study Tokugawa Religion. Therefore I studied Tokugawa Religion and I still had doubts--doubts that were not allayed by the visiting scholars. These doubts concerned Bellah's theoretical originality in Tokugawa Religion, his powers of conceptual analysis in that work, and his tendency to shirk the scientific task of supplying persuasive evidence for what he says. Concerning the originality of the theory in Tokugawa Religion little need be said. Everyone seems to agree that it is the work of a disciple of Parsons trying to apply Parsons' views, Max Weber's views, and Paul Tillich's views to a concrete historical case. I realize that it is a doctoral dissertation--though, I emphasize, the last extensive, substantive, published sociological book to come from the pen of Bellah--and that for a doctoral dissertation a promising work. Nevertheless, Tokugawa Religion is certainly not a book to go to if one is seeking



reassurance on the score of Bellah's theoretical powers nor for assurance on the score of his ability and willingness to provide persuasive evidence for his statements. I shall pass over the theoretical shortcomings that I find there because I have dilated enough on what I regard as Bellah's deficiencies in this regard, but I must point out that even in that book one finds Bellah describing his main theses as mere hypotheses and speculations for which he has not provided sufficient evidence. It is clear to me now why Maruyama Masao complained of Bellah's "a priori method of argument" in Tokugawa Religion. In general, it seems to me, Bellah fails in that book to support his Weberian theses about the connection between ideas and society in Tokugawa Japan because he, Bellah, too frequently contents himself with expounding the religious ideas of, say, Ishida Baigan, without going on to support the causal hypothesis that they did in fact influence the economy or the politics of Japan in a certain way. This, of course, has been a standard criticism of the historical work of Max Weber but it seems to me that Weber did far more to show that the writings of some Protestants were causally linked with the spirit of capitalism than Bellah does to link the ideas of Ishida Baigan with the economy of Tokugawa Japan. When I asked the visitors whether Bellah was not deficient in this regard, I received no reassuring reply to my question. And when I asked why Bellah had not tried to back up his speculations on Tokugawa religion in his later writings, I was told that Bellah had wisely abandoned the program of Tokugawa Religion.

Now that is not an encouraging answer. I grant of course that a scholar who sees the errors of his ways, or their lack of fruitfulness, is well advised to flit to other flowers and to forget his old haunts. But when I turn to Bellah's writings on later flowers, I find those writings deficient in the same way. That was the point of my remark that his writings are filled with "perhapses" that are rarely substantiated. In the light of Reischauer's spirited defense of Bellah's modesty in this regard, I must point out that I was not complaining about Bellah's modesty nor about his admirably cautious way of not claiming to possess certainty where certainty was not to be had. When I said at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee that Bellah was excessively prone to advancing mere hypotheses and speculations--not only in Tokugawa Religion, but also in later essays like "Intellectual and Society in Japan"--and that he would often use the word "perhaps" in these contexts, I was not suggesting that a social scientist might not have to use that sign of uncertainty and modesty on some occasions--or maybe even on all occasions. What I meant was that Bellah does not show enough inclination to back up even his "perhaps"-statements by the kind of evidence that they require. Finally, I concur in Cavell's remark that so far from being intellectually modest, Bellah often appears to be quite the opposite in his reflections.

As you know, Professor Shils also tried to explain Bellah's failure to follow up his speculations in Tokugawa Religion with supporting evidence, but Shils took a somewhat different tack.

He surmised that Bellah had abandoned that program because he had attained greater "depth" in his understanding of religion. However, if the depth in question is that which Bellah has supposedly attained in his approach to religion by way of his symbolic realism, then you will know that such depth surpasses my understanding. Moreover, I cannot square this statement of Shils with a remark in his letter that Bellah's popular religious writings do not please him, because I should have thought that if Bellah's new-found depth on the subject of religion is to be found anywhere, it is to be found in those popular religious writings, that is to say, in Beyond Belief.

What, then, did the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee show? In my opinion the most important thing it showed was that even those visitors who praised Bellah's work did not successfully defend it against two of the most serious objections that may be leveled against a social scientist, namely, that he is not adept at conceptual analysis and that he is not adept at supplying convincing evidence for what he says. I should like to add that such criticisms should be regarded as serious by any scholar or scientist, whatever his methodological convictions. I say this because I think it would be a grave mistake to try to defend Bellah by saying that he adopts one approach in social science whereas his critics adopt another, as if the whole issue could be smothered by a reference to such ideological or philosophical differences. I have tried my hardest to avoid criticizing Bellah for adopting substantive views that I do not share. Instead I have criticized shortcomings which I think we can all recognize as serious whatever our methodological

or metaphysical or moral views.

### III. The Question of Authority

Painful as it is for me to say what I have said, I have even greater pain ahead of me, for I must now face up to the fact that I am criticizing a candidate put forth by two of my colleagues who are authorities in the field of social science, and a candidate who has been endorsed by a number of outside scholars.

This brings me to a crucial question raised by Professor Cavell at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee. What does one do when one thinks the candidate's work is not good and the authorities in the field of the candidate's interest think it good? One must make a very hard decision. My own decision in this case is to follow my own hard-earned convictions, but I should like to make some remarks on Cavell's dilemma, beginning with some remarks on the Japanese aspect of our problem.

First of all, it seems to me that those of us who do not know Japanese are not on that score debarred from making a judgment on Bellah. We may not know Japanese but unless I am mistaken, a number of his supporters, both internal and external, do not know Japanese. Secondly, the Japanese experts on the Ad Hoc Committee were prepared to acknowledge that Bellah used poor judgment in speaking so enthusiastically of Ienaga Saburo, and no one of them told me why Bellah had such a high opinion of Nishida Kitaro. Thirdly, Professor Kitagawa seemed to me to be less than enthusiastic in his letter. Fourthly, much of Tokugawa Religion consists of inferences, analyses, and statements that may be assessed without knowing a word of Japanese; as do several of Bellah's later essays on Japan. Fifthly, no expert argued for the originality of the theory used in Tokugawa Religion and no expert denied that it failed

admitted the lack of originality in the thesis that Shingaku provided a morality conforming with the needs of the rising merchant class.

As for the sociological authorities, they seem to avoid the painful subject of Beyond Belief. Merton says that he has not read most of the essays in it. Shils says that Bellah's "popular religious writings do not please" him, by which I understand him to mean that a lot of Beyond Belief does not please him. Both Merton and Shils seem to concentrate on the essay on Durkheim, but surely two authorities of their distinction in their field should be able to cite a lot more than that in support of their high opinion of Bellah. I conclude, therefore, that I cannot rely too heavily on sociologists who, in the course of delivering their favorable opinion, do not cite more chapters and more verses than Merton and Shils do. Citing the essay on Durkheim, whatever its alleged merit, is not enough for some of us who have given precious hours of our time to reading most of what Bellah has written and who have found much of it wanting.

Before I conclude my remarks on Cavell's dilemma, let me point out that toward the end of his letter he seems to be saying that only if Bellah's permanent presence at the Institute is essential to what he calls the maximum development of the kind of work represented by Geertz should a non-expert swallow his reservations and support the nomination of Bellah. I am willing to say in response that while I have the highest regard for the work of Clifford Geertz, I cannot overcome my reservations about Bellah, even should it be the case--and I doubt that it is--that Bellah's permanent presence at the Institute is essential to the development of the kind of work represented by a colleague I admire.

Before I finish my remarks, I also want to say that so far as



experts go, one can find experts who are as critical of Bellah as his supporters are enthusiastic. And what I want to underscore by citing some expert opinion which is critical of Bellah's work is that when the experts disagree we must decide which expert opinion is closer to the truth.

With this in mind I shall make available at the faculty meeting copies of letters I have received from outside scholars who have not objected to my showing their letters to my colleagues at the Institute. Two of them are eminent historians of America. I wrote to these two historians, asking for their opinions of Bellah's essay "Civil Religion in America". One says that he does not see how it can be called a work of scholarship, that Bellah's observations on the subject seem to be on a pretty elementary level, and that he, my correspondent, was not aware that the piece had stimulated much discussion and research. The other says that he did not think much of the article when it first appeared and, upon rereading it, still doesn't. To him it seems to be "very superficial, a kind of bright journalism that is not grounded at all in a close-grained knowledge of the subject. It glides blithely over a hundred topics that have immense literatures of which he [Bellah] seems unaware and from which one could raise innumerable challenges to the generality he proposes".

I also asked two well-known sociologists for their opinions. One declined to offer a thorough assessment of Bellah's work for a reason that is of some interest. He says: "I decided long ago that Bellah was not first class and therefore I have not read his recent stuff".

The other sociologist presents a very fair, very persuasive over-all assessment of Bellah which reinforces the comments of the historians on "Civil Religion in America". But this sociologist goes much further than they do. While he praises some aspects of Bellah's work--for example, his intelligence, his sensitivity, and his capacity to stimulate thought--this sociologist says: "These qualities that I find in his work are important ones, and were I to be considering him in connection with a teaching appointment in an educational institution they would rank, for me, very high indeed. But the talents required for the deepest scholarly research are not necessarily the same as those required for stimulating interest in a field of inquiry, and it is with respect to the first of these that I must confess to some hesitation about Bellah's work". This sociologist then goes on to give the grounds for his hesitation, as well as to compare Bellah unfavorably with a number of other sociologists.

I regret to say that after carefully reflecting on a great deal of the evidence, I have come to the negative conclusion to which all of my colleagues who were internal members of the Ad Hoc Committee came just after the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee. It saddens me to think that this belief separates me from my colleagues in the field of social science, and I assure you that I wish that I could agree with them. It is always painful to have to disagree with colleagues, especially colleagues with whom one lives at such close quarters as we do with each other. But that

very fact of closeness lays a special responsibility on us--a responsibility not to be affected by personal considerations when the scholarly standards of the Institute are at stake. I repeat that I am warmly sympathetic to the idea of a School of Social Science and for that very reason I hope that the next member of the Program will be more distinguished than Bellah, for that is what the Program deserves and what the Institute deserves.

Yale University *New Haven, Connecticut 06520*

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

*237 Hall of Graduate Studies*

November 2, 1972.

Morton White  
The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton  
New Jersey 08540

Dear Morty:

I had not previously seen Bellah's pieces on civil religion. It seems to me a mildly interesting probing of a phenomenon that has perhaps not been defined before. I don't see how it can be called a work of scholarship. It does not present the results of research, but rather suggests a line of investigation that might conceivably be rewarding. The main drawback to it is that the author's own observations on the subject seem to be on a pretty elementary level. To study the significance of a collection of widely uttered platitudes could conceivably be rewarding, but it would have to go well beyond this. You mention that the piece is supposed to have stirred a good deal of discussion and research. I would be interested to know where, I have not heard of it myself.

Bellah's book on Tokugawa religion, which seems to me to be a much superior performance to this essay, may suggest the sort of thing to which a study of "civil religion" might lead. What is lacking in the present essay is any way to locate the subject. If it has to be confined to an examination of inaugural addresses and other public ceremonies, I don't think it can get much beyond the rather simple observations Bellah has made here.

Yours,



Edmund S. Morgan

ESM/khy

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

CAMBRIDGE, MASS. 02138

Widener J  
November 13, 1972

Professor Morton White  
Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Dear Morty:

I am not a specialist on American religion either, but I can tell you that I did not think much of Bellah's article on "Civil Religion in America" when I saw it in manuscript as submitted for the Daedalus issue in which it appeared, and reading it over now I still don't. It seems to me very superficial, a kind of bright journalism that is not grounded at all in a close-grained knowledge of the subject. It glides blithely over a hundred topics that have immense literatures of which he seems unaware and from which one could raise innumerable challenges to the generality he proposes. There is of course a great need for insightful, general interpretative essays on such subjects as this, but to be successful such essays have to be based on real knowledge of the subject and an attempt to grapple with complexities, not just a bright idea.

I assume that this piece is not taken as a serious basis for recommending Bellah for a professorship at the Institute. I am sure he has very fine qualifications in other fields, of which others can speak.

Sincerely,

TS-4

Bernard Bailyn



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

*William James Hall 480  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138*

November 29, 1972

Professor Morton White  
The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Dear Morty:

I have your letter asking my opinion of the scholarly work and promise of Robert Bellah. I have not read any of Bellah's work since he left here years ago and so I really am incompetent to speak about him. But I must say that the things of his I read in the old days did not particularly impress me and I always resisted efforts to get him a permanent position at Harvard, which was proposed at one time. I really think you ought to get an opinion on his current work, but again, for this purpose I am not really sure whom I ought to suggest. Perhaps Daniel Bell in this department, who has been concerned with religion in modern American society, might be a possibility; or Martin Lipset, also a member of this department, but on leave this year at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. In any case, I decided long ago that Bellah was not first class and therefore I have not read his recent stuff. In fairness to him you ought to find someone who has.

All best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

*George*  
George C. Homans

GCH/nm

Columbia University in the City of New York | New York, N.Y. 10027

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Fayerweather Hall

December 4, 1972

Dr. Morton White  
Institute of Advanced Studies  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Dear Morty:

Your request that I send you my views about Bob Bellah in connection with his possible appointment as a sociologist at the Institute has not been easy for me to comply with. With the exception of a few scattered pieces in the field of American religion, Bellah's work and my own have not exactly overlapped, and I am hardly a scholarly specialist in the fields of his professed competence. I have read, however, some of his writings in areas that are pretty remote from mine but for the most part I read these sometime ago and out of a sense of justice to him--and to myself--I delayed responding to your request until I had time to re-read some of his work.

I have no doubt whatever but that Bellah is an exceedingly intelligent and sensitive scholar. He has read widely and has the capacity to stimulate thought by bringing into juxtaposition social phenomena and intellectual issues that often are considered in relative isolation. In his work in the sociology of religion he has not written, as do many of his colleagues in that field, exclusively as a critical, unsympathetic outsider; he has an understanding and a respect for religious experience, and his work is the better for it. These qualities that I find in his work are important ones, and were I to be considering him in connection with a teaching appointment in an educational institution they would rank, for me, very high indeed. But the talents required for the deepest scholarly research are not necessarily the same as those required for stimulating interest in a field of inquiry, and it is with respect to the first of these that I must confess to some hesitations about Bellah's work.

Bellah's book on Tokugawa religion was very heavily marked with the impress of Parsonian theory. At the time of its appearance it was regarded very much as the application to a particular historical situation of concepts and categories associated with Talcott Parsons that had a good deal of interest and some explanatory power, but there was even then--and a recent re-reading of the book does not change my judgment in this respect--the feeling that there was too much bending and straining to get the material to fall into the appropriate categories. Not long after

Page Two  
Dr. Morton White  
December 4, 1972

the publication of his book Bellah came to Columbia to be interviewed in connection with a possible appointment to this department; it was my feeling on that occasion that he had difficulty in thinking about historical situations in terms other than those he was thoroughly familiar with. Just how much one fears this tendency to compress evidence into a particular framework does violence to historical reality depends upon one's own knowledge of the historical situation being investigated, and in my case I knew precious little about Tokugawa Japan. But the far more recent essay by Bellah in the volume edited by him and Bill McLoughlin deals with a subject I do know something about--religion in colonial America--and I must say that the uneasiness I felt earlier has some justification. It is, quite simply, an essay that is uninformed about the substance of colonial religion and about the issues that concern historians in that field.

I think it is only fair to say that in some measure the hesitations I express may arise from differences in the way we pose problems and differences in the kind of rigor we feel to be necessary to justify conclusions. I have not often had the feeling that Bellah has given a great deal of attention to the relationship between the general problem he is interested in and the strategy that ought to govern the research into the particular situations in which he proposes to explore that problem. I find his work, therefore, to be very suggestive--and rarely definitive; somebody else will have to provide the evidence and the proofs.

I am, in short, very respectful of Bellah's very considerable talents, but I do not think that profound scholarship is one of them. There are, in the sociological profession, a number of people whose scholarship and whose intellectual power seem to me to exceed Bellah's. Peter Berger, whose reputation, like Bellah's, was made in the sociology of religion and who, again like Bellah, has now branched out into studies of types of consciousness under conditions of modernization, seems to me to have both a sharper and more original mind than Bellah. My colleague Bob Merton and Edward Shils do most of their work, as does Bellah, in various aspects of the sociology of knowledge, but in my judgment their work is both richer in content and more precise in method. George Homans has done work in both history and sociology which seems to me to be more profound than Bellah's and more tightly organized. In another field of sociology entirely, both Jim Coleman and Hubert Blalock seem to me to have made intellectual contributions of greater weight than Bellah's; both have made their reputations through the application of rigorous quantitative methods to the study of social problems, but the social problems to which they have directed their attention are hardly microscopic--education and race relations. And, finally, to take but one example among a younger generation of sociologists, I would say that while I do

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Page Three  
Dr. Morton White  
December 4, 1972

regard Arthur Stinchcombe as a profound scholar I find his work to be more innovative than Bellah's and tougher and more precise.

It's been far too long since I last saw you. Don't you ever get to New York?

Sincerely yours,



Sigmund Diamond  
Chairman

SD/mag

# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY



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INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

INTERNATIONAL POPULATION AND  
URBAN RESEARCH

2234 PIEDMONT AVENUE  
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720

January 9, 1973

Dr. Deane Montgomery  
The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Dear Deane:

Although I am late answering your last letter because of a tight schedule, I have nevertheless thought about your problem and am willing to make some remarks that you can use or not use as you see fit.

It puzzles me as to why Bellah was suggested for your faculty. Not only is his field (religion and social "values") about the softest part of sociology, but his particular approach to it is non-quantitative and, in my opinion, basically unscientific. If the Institute for Advanced Study wishes to add social and political science to its program, it would seem better to bring in individuals who represent the cutting edge of scientific advance in these fields and who could link up with the scientists and mathematicians at the Institute in a meaningful way. Bellah, whose approach is literary, is certainly not in the vanguard of sociology nor would he be congenial with the faculty there except for Geertz.

By way of alternatives, I would suggest someone like James Coleman of Johns Hopkins, who has proved himself in empirical research and who is one of the leaders in mathematical applications in sociology. He is a man of sound judgment, great prestige, and lively interests. Somewhat older and even more of a leader is Herbert Simon at Carnegie-Mellon. Supposedly a political scientist, he is amazingly familiar with economic theory, psychology, and systematic sociology. His chief field of interest is organizational theory, in which he is preeminent; but his work and knowledge are so fundamental that by many he would be considered the outstanding social scientist in the country outside of straight economics. Another possibility is Robert Dahl, a political scientist at Yale, particularly prominent for his application of quantitative methods in political science.

The Institute might also consider someone working in the rapidly developing field of the sociology of science. The grand old master in this field is of course Robert K. Merton at Columbia. He is perhaps too far along in years for you to consider, but his student Harriet Zuckerman seems to be an excellent possibility. There are also other young people in this field whom Merton could tell you more about than I.



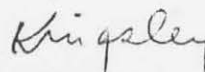
Dr. Deane Montgomery  
January 9, 1973  
Page Two

In demography and human ecology, a man of considerable stature is Otis Dudley Duncan at the University of Michigan, and of course David V. Glass at the London School. Glass is by all odds the most prominent social scientist in Britain outside of economics. He probably would not come to the United States, but one can never be sure. Another possibility is Seymour Martin Lipset, a political sociologist who is a member of both the Department of Sociology and the Department of Political Science at Harvard. He is a rough and ready character, brilliant, well informed, and prolific.

Coleman, Simon, Dahl and Merton are, as you doubtless know, Academy members. Lipset and Duncan have a good chance of being elected in the near future.

I hope these remarks will be of some help to you. If you have any questions, let me know. I am naturally anxious to see the Institute make the best possible appointment. Life was simpler in old Smith College, or even early Princeton, days!

My best,



Kingsley Davis  
Ford Professor of Sociology  
and Comparative Studies  
Director, IPUR

KD:sjr

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY  
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540

SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS

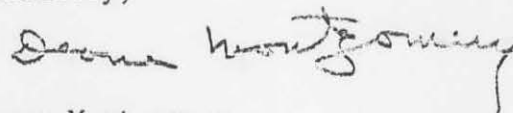
January 11, 1973

To the Members of the Faculty:

Dear Colleagues:

Enclosed are copies of letters which are to be kept in confidence.  
The letters concern our coming faculty meeting and I wish them to be  
appended to the minutes of that meeting.

Sincerely,



Deane Montgomery

Enclosures

Professors Cherniss, Clagett, Gilbert, Gilliam, Kaysen, Kennan, Meiss,  
Setton, Thompson, White

Professors Beurling, Borel, G del, Harish-Chandra, Langlands, Milnor,  
Selberg, Weil, Whitney

Professors Adler, Bahcall, Dashen, Dyson, Regge, Rosenbluth

Professor Geertz

December 13, 1972

Professor Ronald P. Dore  
London School of Economics  
Houghton Street  
London W.C.2, England

Dear Professor Dore:

The Faculty here has before it a proposal to appoint Robert Bellah to a professorship and we are expected to vote on this matter some time in January. In entering upon a new field it, of course, would be essential for the Institute to do so on the highest level of excellence. Professor Kingsley Davis has suggested that you could give me an impartial informed opinion on the quality of Bellah's work and I am writing to ask if you would be willing to do so in confidence. It would be important to know, for example, whether he is among the top few social scientists in the world, or whether he ranks below this category. Any information you care to give me would be greatly appreciated.

I understand that you were asked to serve on a panel of impartial outside experts, but were unable to do so.

Sincerely yours,

Deane Montgomery  
Professor of Mathematics

DM:du

# THE INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

at THE UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX, ANDREW COHEN BUILDING, FALMER  
BRIGHTON BN1 9RE

Telephone BRIGHTON (0273) 66261

Telegrams DEVELOPMENT BRIGHTON

your ref DMcd  
RPD/ER

1st January 1973

Confidential

Professor Deane Montgomery,  
The Institute for Advanced Study,  
Princeton,  
New Jersey, 08540  
U. S. A.

Dear Professor Montgomery,

In order to answer your enquiry about Robert Bellah I have refreshed my memory of three of his writings which came easily to hand: his Tokugawa Religion, an article "Values and social change in modern Japan" in Asian Cultural Studies No 3 (International Christian University), and his article on Ienaga in M. Jansen ed., Changing Japanese attitudes to modernisation. I have not seen Beyond Belief or anything else he has written in the last five years.

Kingsley Davis says that I will give you an impartial opinion on Bellah. That is out of the question. I think I can give you an opinion uncoloured by personal friendship or animosity, but it is asking too much for a sociologist to be impartial about another sociologist who professes a very different kind of sociology. There are people, I know, who hold that the characteristics I shall ascribe to Bellah are characteristics to be admired in a sociologist, and they would, of course, give a different opinion.

First, as a sociologist concerned with ideas and religion, he not only believes that these aspects of society are important: he believes that they are overwhelmingly important. To oversharpen the contrast, he makes the initial assumption that men act because they believe unless proved otherwise, whereas in my view it is always safer to make the opposite assumption that beliefs are a reinforcement of rationalisation of interests and emotions while being prepared to accept evidence to the contrary. Thus his whole book on Tokugawa religion is based on the assumption that the religious beliefs which he analysed were the *raison d'etre* of the religious institutions. He says little of the fact that religions provide, for example, opportunities for people to meet together in solemn circumstances in a certain hierarchical grouping and that the rituals reinforce the grouping and the hierarchy. Thus his book ignores the "family Buddhism" which was the core and centre of religion for the vast majority of Tokugawa Japanese.

/....

Professor D eane Montgomery

1/1/73

Second, Bellah is a sociologist who works with books not with people. As far as I know he has published no work based on either anthropological-type interview or survey research. This is intimately related to the last point. No one who had had any personal familiarity with contemporary Japanese private life would have failed to recognise the central importance of family Buddhism in the scheme of Japanese religion today, and at least have raised questions about it in the Tokugawa period. But family Buddhism gets ignored because it isn't written about in books.

Third, Bellah is not a nominalist; he does not believe that all concepts used by sociologists ideally should be defined with reference to empirical observation in such a way that all observers would agree in deciding whether a given phenomenon was a case of X or not. He believes rather that concepts are fuzzy things with indefinable essences that one chips away at and fusses around and gradually gets familiar with. He has never said so in terms, to my knowledge, but I do not see how, otherwise, he could have offered the definitions he does offer on pages 3 to 7 of Tokugawa Religion. See particularly the way he splatters the word "ultimate" about on page 6.

Fourth, Bellah is reverent. He is reverent to his immediate teacher Talcott Parsons; he is even more obviously reverent to Max Weber. He lacks the wit and cynicism and iconoclasm which in my view go into the making of a good sociologist. Anyone who had a modicum of these qualities could not possibly have taken the windy Ienaga as seriously as Bellah did in the article I referred to. He is reverent above all to the idea of religion (see, again, the definition of religion I have just referred to, or the use of the word "transcendental" in his article on values and social change.) In my view he is a better theologian than sociologist.

Fifthly, he willingly accepts an ethnocentric stand which most of us would more strenuously try (while rarely succeeding) to avoid. His article on values and social change is, in effect, a sustained sermon to the Japanese telling them how to become "modern" and "democratic" like Americans. (I believe his view of the American reality has changed somewhat since then, though I doubt if there has been much change in his definition and evaluation of the ideals and the essence.)

Withal, he is intelligent; he is never trivial: the themes he tackles are big themes, by my values themes of fundamental importance; he is often perceptive -- as when, for example, he is categorising different types of loyalty -- and he can write quite interestingly when he is not engaged in high theorising, but given what I have said you can see why I would not put Bellah among the top few social scientists, to use your phrase. Narrowing the field to sociologists, I wouldn't, I think, put him into the first fifty. But I am



Professor Deane Montgomery

1/1/73

aware that a considerable proportion of the members of the American Sociological Association -- those who, unlike myself, would put Talcott Parsons in the top ten, would also, probably, put Bellah in the top thirty. (Some of the things I have said about Bellah apply equally to the whole Parsonian school.) I think, incidentally, that Bellah achieved some reputation with his first book because he was almost the first to practice Parsonian sociology. For years Parsons had been elaborating his theoretical categories which had a considerable vogue because they promised a sociology which was more than "common sense", with an arcane jargon of its own beyond the reach of laymen. Bellah was the first of his disciples to follow the master's theoretical framework faithfully in an empirical study of an actual social situation. As such it was warmly greeted by all Parsonians; he showed that the conceptual boxes could actually be used to hold a certain amount of water.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Carl Kaysen who originally asked me to join the advisory committee. I presume that you were writing on behalf of the Institute, as it were, but your letter didn't actually say so.

Yours sincerely,

*RP Dore*

R.P.Dore  
Dictated by Professor Dore  
but signed in his absence.

copy to  
Professor Carl Kaysen

# THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540

Telephone-609-924-4400

SCHOOL OF NATURAL SCIENCES

January 16, 1973

## Memorandum to the Director

From: Professor Dyson

Dear Carl:

Since I did not succeed in expressing my views at yesterday's faculty meeting, I would like you to add this statement to the minutes of the meeting when you circulate them to the faculty and to the trustees.

What is at stake in the dispute over Bellah's appointment? The basic question is whether a majority of the faculty should wish to impose its standards of personal taste upon a minority belonging to a different field of study. This is the question upon which the trustees have now to pass judgment.

When I first heard of the proposed appointment of Bellah, I read his two books and made up my own mind about them without talking to anybody. Having had negative feelings about both the previous candidates in the Social Science program, I was delighted to find in Bellah's writing an intellectual style to which I could respond with enthusiasm. To me, this was finally the kind of stuff that the social scientists ought to be doing. It is unlikely that even a strongly negative report from the external members of the Ad Hoc Committee would have changed my view.

My colleague John Bahcall in the School of Natural Sciences had exactly the opposite reaction. As he said at the faculty meeting, "Bellah's writing just turned me off." And although he sat with the Ad Hoc Committee (as I did not) he was unimpressed by the generally favorable opinions of the external members.

Should John Bahcall and I conclude from our disagreement that one of us has lower intellectual standards than the other? Obviously not. I know and respect his standards, and I know my own, and we both have a low tolerance for any kind of intellectual dishonesty or sloppiness. I conclude from our differing views of Bellah that the question of Bellah's merit is not a question of higher or lower intellectual standards but a

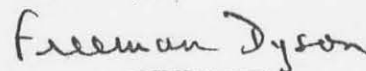
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question of personal taste. And I venture to generalize from Bahcall and myself to the rest of the faculty and to the external consultants and letter-writers. All of us, I venture to say, are making our judgment of Bellah primarily on the basis of our personal taste. It is nobody's fault that this should be so. It lies in the nature of the discipline of Social Science.

In the past the Natural Sciences faculty (before we had our separate School) several times withdrew proposed professorial appointments in the face of opposition from the rest of the faculty. In those cases also, it seemed to me that the opposing views reflected differences of taste rather than of intellectual standards. It is not only in the Social Sciences that strongly divergent personal tastes can dominate the judgment of one man by another. I have always regretted the fact that our former director persuaded us to withdraw those proposals. By doing so, he not only deprived the Institute of good men, but also established the unfortunate precedent which led directly to the present crisis.

In conclusion, I urge the trustees to confirm the appointment of Bellah, and to establish once and for all the principle that a majority of the faculty does not have the power, and should not have the wish, to impose its personal tastes upon a minority in a different field.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Freeman Dyson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Freeman Dyson

FD:eg

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540

Telephone-609-924-4400

THE DIRECTOR

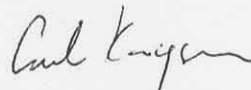
December 20, 1972

Messrs. Linder, Dilworth, Forrestal, Roth, Straus

Gentlemen:

Attached is a draft of the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting which you attended on December 2nd. I would appreciate any suggestions for correction or revision.

Cordially,



Carl Kaysen

cc: Mrs. Gray, Messrs. Hochschild, J. Houghton,  
Simon, Solow

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees held on December 2, 1972 in the Board Room of the Institute. The meeting commenced at 10:30 a.m.

Present: Executive Committee - Messrs. Linder, Dilworth, Forrestal, Roth, Straus

In addition - Mrs. Gray, Messrs. Hochschild, J. Houghton, Simon, Solow

Mr. Linder, the Chairman, opened the meeting by explaining that its main purpose was to join in accordance with the newly instituted practice with the members of the Faculty Advisory Committee, for whatever discussion they wished. Before they came, however, the Director had a number of items.

The Director first presented the attached resolution on TIAA-CREF which was passed unanimously.

The Director then reported on the proposed nomination of Robert Bellah for a professorship. He reminded the members of the Board of the procedure involving the Ad Hoc Committee of outsiders which would meet the following day, and placed before them the list of Ad Hoc Committee Members, Bellah's curriculum vitae, bibliography and a statement on his work by Professor Geertz. He described the current state of the discussion of the appointment in the Faculty, indicating that he expected a sharply divided vote with as many opposing the nomination and abstaining as supporting it. In any event, he expected to press forward with the nomination, which both he and Professor Geertz felt was vital to the progress of the School of Social Science. Should Faculty opposition prove so strong as to raise the question of whether the appointment could be made, the whole future of the Social Science Program and his own position at the Institute would also be in question.

At this point the Members of the Faculty Advisory Committee (see attached list) joined the group. The Chairman asked the Faculty members what they wished to discuss. Professor Selberg responded by observing that the question of the role of the Faculty in the choice of Director was still unresolved. The Board had rejected the possibility of amending the By-Laws, but had assured the Faculty that it did, nonetheless, intend to consult them when the appointment of a Director was in question. There were some members of the Faculty who were uneasy with this kind of assurance and sought something more formal. The Director at this point reminded the group of the course of discussion that had produced the document entitled "Role of the Faculty in the Governance of the Institute" and emphasized the particular status of paragraph 15. He also reminded them of the feelings that he had heard expressed by members of the Faculty concerning the procedures which led to his choice as Director.



There followed a lively discussion on the extent to which the Faculty had or had not been consulted in that choice. Professor White remarked that, at that time, when he was at Harvard he had been asked to comment on specific names and it was a matter of surprise to him to learn when he joined the Faculty here, that no such comment had been invited from the members of the Faculty. Messrs. Hochschild and Dilworth observed that what Professor White had been told did not correspond to the procedure in which they themselves had been involved. Members of the Faculty were consulted and asked their views about particular individuals the Board had nominated, as well as being asked to suggest candidates. In the course of further discussion, Professor Selberg observed that whether by coincidence or not his own views, which he had expressed at the time corresponded closely to what in fact happened. Professor Regge said he had indeed been consulted in the early part of the process, but when it came to the final choice he was notified. Professor Selberg remarked that he thought the Faculty wanted to be reassured on two points, when the appointment of a new Director was being considered. First, that their suggestions for candidates be heard; second, that they be given the opportunity to comment on all candidates who were being given serious consideration by the Board. In his view, the Faculty was not seeking a vote. The Chairman observed that the next time the Board had to act it would have both the record of their past experience and the present discussion before them. Mr. Forrestal said that the Board should have the collegiate view of the Faculty, if offered, but it must be free to make its own decisions. Mr. Roth, in agreement, observed that one of the defects of Paragraph 15 which had led to the Board's unwillingness to recognize it through an amendment to the By-Laws was that it might lead to the Faculty-Trustee Committee giving the Board a single name, and effectively foreclosing any choice. Mr. Straus emphasized the virtue of consultation and dialogue over formal procedure, and pointed out the great changes in the governance of all academic institutions that had taken place since the present Director had been chosen. Professors Bahcall and Geertz spoke strongly of the disadvantages of formal consultation in terms of its power to disrupt consensus and destroy the intellectual peace and quiet at the Institute. They were satisfied with the Board's declaration of intent to consult the Faculty. Disagreement with this view was registered by Professor Setton. Mr. Dilworth observed that the Committee of the Board which made the nomination last time had talked to many members of the Faculty after they had come to a final recommendation, but had not invited an organized response. Mr. Solow drew the contrast between the Institute and a University. The latter was typically an order of magnitude or more larger, and involved an elaborate hierarchy of faculty, including "insiders" who were consulted on important decisions and "outsiders" who were not, etc. None of this characterized the Institute. He felt that in the Institute context, the point made by Professors Bahcall and Geertz had a great deal of force, and perhaps the Board could try to meet the desire for a formal commitment expressed by some without losing sight of that point. The Director expressed his agreement and suggested that the Board make a statement about the substance of consultation along the lines of Professor Selberg's earlier remarks without discussing the machinery. The Chairman, agreeing, suggested he detected a consensus on this point, and several Faculty members agreed. Professor Milnor, also in agreement, pointed out that it was still open to the Faculty to discuss its own procedure for offering its advice to the Board. Messrs. Straus and Simon emphasized

the importance of the continuing process of discussion over whatever statement the Board in fact did make. It was the continual dialogue that would give this statement life. The Chairman, summarizing, agreed that the Board should draft a statement on this matter for circulation to the Faculty and asked Mr. Solow and the Director to try their hands at it.

There being no further business the group adjourned for lunch, at which it was joined by Professors Clagett, Gilbert, Thompson; Atiyah, Borel, Harish-Chandra, and Montgomery.

C.K.

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Ad Hoc  
Committee on the Nomination of Robert N. Bellah

10:30 A.M. - December 3  
1972

Present - Ad Hoc Committee:

Stanley L. Cavell, Prof. of Philosophy, Harvard University

\*Joseph M. Kitagawa, Prof. of History of Religion, U. of Chicago

Robert K. Merton, Prof. of Sociology, Columbia University

Edwin O. Reischauer, University Professor (Japanese Hist.), Harvard U.

\*Edward Shils, Professor, Prof. of Sociology, U. of Chicago and  
Cambridge University

Faculty: The Director and

Historical Studies - Professors Kenneth Setton and Morton White

Mathematics - Professors Armand Borel and André Weil

Natural Sciences - Professors John Bahcall and Tullio Regge

\*Messrs. Kitagawa and Shils came in about 20 minutes after the beginning of the meeting; moment of their entry is noted in the Minutes.

After introductions, including comments on the specialties of the visitors, there was some discussion of procedure. Prof. Borel spoke of the desirability of having minutes rather than trying to circulate the complete transcript which would be difficult to use, and hoped that the individual visitors would put down their views subsequent to the meeting. Dr. Kaysen agreed that both should be done. There followed a discussion of the nature and tasks of this Ad Hoc Committee as compared to the system used at Harvard which was familiar to some. Prof. Weil emphasized that the function of the Committee was to advise the Faculty which wanted to check on the proposal made by the one representative of the Social Sciences at the moment--Geertz. The Faculty wished to be persuaded whether this was the best appointment. Unlike a university the Institute had no need to make appointments to fill positions, and no appointment was justified unless a man reached a high standard in his field and in the general area. Kaysen added to this some comment on the special nature of an Ad Hoc Committee at the Institute, in that outside committees were not used for appointments in the Schools of Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Historical Studies.

In response to a question as to the terms of reference of the outside consultants, Kaysen quoted from the letter he had sent to the members of the Committee as follows:

"The Committee consists of five distinguished scholars who will be asked to assist the Faculty in making a judgment as to the quality of Bellah's work and his ability to contribute to the proposed program. The Faculty hopes that the members of the Committee will evaluate the work of Bellah in relation to that of other scholars

active in similar fields. New professorial appointments in the existing Schools are made on the recommendation of the Faculty of the particular School. In making an appointment in a new area, the Faculty felt it was wise to seek the advice of outside scholars of stature and relevant competence. The Committee will not be asked to make a formal report as such, but the individual members will be asked for their views which they may express when they are here in Princeton or in writing."

At this point Prof. Weil quoted from the nominating letter for Professor Geertz:

... "It is no exaggeration to describe him as the most brilliant younger social anthropologist in this country, whose accomplishments are internationally recognized. His appointment will set the standard of intellectual excellence for the new school that we all expect of the Institute."...

and asked the outside members if they would compare Bellah with Geertz.

Merton responded to the question and began by pointing out that Geertz and Bellah came from different parts of the social sciences but shared the same general cognitive milieu and were both concerned with treating the historical development of cultures rather than analysis at a moment in time. They were both interested in comparative studies of diverse cultures. Both had gone to some pains to acquire the technical skills prerequisite to comparative work, and the mode of their work has led them both to be regarded as rather abstract historians.

(At this point Messrs. Shils and Kitagawa joined the group, and after introductions, Merton resumed his statement.)

Both have been trying to break new ground and therefore both, along with the precious few others who have tried to do the same thing, have been subjected to the criticism that they are trying to move ahead at an excessive pace, a criticism which Merton did not share. He found it difficult to respond to the question of quality of mind with any refinement. He thought both Bellah and Geertz were first-rate, both great scholars. If the comparison were made strictly in terms of sociologists, leaving aside anthropologists, economic historians and others, Merton would put Bellah among the one or two best students of social change internationally.

White asked Merton and Shils to compare Bellah with Parsons and Lazarsfeld in intellectual ability and originality, and then perhaps also with James Coleman and Peter Berger who were more nearly Bellah's contemporaries. Shils, in response, said that Bellah was not now at the level of Parsons, whose capacity for constructing a coherent, systematic generalized picture of the working of society was unique. Lazarsfeld, a brilliant and imaginative man, dealt more with diverse specific problems and was especially gifted as an experimental technician. Bellah was closer to Parsons but not a systematizer in the

same way. Rather he had the capacity to deal with specific cultures and a good deal of detailed knowledge about them which Parsons lacked. Further, as an analyst of cultural phenomena, Bellah was superior to Parsons. If scores were given, Shils could not give Bellah the same position in the Pantheon as Parsons, but he found in him some very distinctive qualities.

Merton said he had no alternative but to agree with almost everything Shils had said. He would emphasize that Parsons was not well qualified to deal with the study of social change. White commented that the question was rather one of general intellectual distinction, and he understood Shils and Merton to be saying that Bellah was not at the general level of Parsons, although he might be better qualified to study social change, which was of particular interest to the School now. Shils, responding, pointed out the difference in age between Bellah and Parsons and observed that he knew Parsons very well at Bellah's age; and he would put Bellah on a par with Parsons at the same age. Of course, the kind of work they did was different.

then asked for a comment on specific works, especially those which were of particular importance. Shils responded by commenting on Bellah's "Introduction" to a selection from the works of Durkheim, the most recent of his writings. He found it a work of profundity of analysis which showed a deeper command of the subject than anyone else, including Talcott Parsons, has achieved. There is a large secondary literature on Durkheim with which Shils is quite familiar, and this excels everything in it. It advances our understanding not only of Durkheim but of the problems with which Durkheim dealt.

White at this point asked whether Durkheim had obscurely stated Bellah's concept of symbolic realism which he (White) found difficult to understand. Although the question appeared to be directed to Kitagawa, Cavell responded. He agreed with White that the limiting concepts in the essays in BEYOND BELIEF were obscure. He was not sure, however, whether it was a useful obscurity which the sociological profession would work to clarify or not. Philosophers can always either find or enforce obscurity. Cavell went on to say that the more important thing that he sought as an outsider in the face of these obscurities was the intangible and difficult thing called intellectual distinction. Although he did not obviously find that in Bellah's writings, his failure might be his unfamiliarity with the material, and he was hoping to have a clearer view as he listened to the discussion.

White commented that he did not understand the concept of symbolic realism; that it seemed that Bellah thought it went beyond psychologistic and sociologistic methods. He understood the method of TOKUGAWA RELIGION, but in



trying to estimate where Bellah was going beyond that, he found it obscure. Setton asked whether Bellah's strength lay in conceptualization and whether the bases of his conceptualization were not at the very heart of his competence.

At this point Kaysen asked that the other consultants comment on the general question of Bellah's stature and achievement before the discussion went further. Reischauer then responded. There were difficulties for him in comparing Bellah with Geertz since he did not know Geertz. However, he was not convinced that conceptualization was the ultimate standard of judgment in these matters. He thought conceptualization one way to throw light on the complications of human and social action, but equally important was the interaction between conceptualization and the treatment of fact. Bellah was in Reischauer's own field of historical work, and his conceptualization threw an interesting light on it. In the broad field of Japanese and East Asian Studies Reischauer considered Bellah as being one of the best minds, and he was doing some of the most interesting things in the whole field. In response to Borel's questions on which specific works Reischauer had in mind, Reischauer said he thought that the more recent articles showed an improvement over TOKUGAWA RELIGION. That was a fine pioneer work; his more recent articles went beyond it.

White asked about the essay on Ienaga, expressing his surprise that Bellah would think him worth considering. Ienaga's book THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOGIC OF NEGATION IN THE HISTORY OF JAPANESE THOUGHT seemed not worth considering. However, in his discussion of Ienaga Bellah's references to figures in the history of western philosophy were pedestrian and pretentious. Nishida Kitaro represented another example of a figure to whom Bellah paid attention, whose work seemed of doubtful value. In his own visits in Japan White had found no one who could take seriously Nishida or Ienaga. Reischauer agreed that Ienaga was an uninteresting figure and did not understand Bellah's concern for him. Watsuji, however, was a more substantial person and Reischauer thought the essay on Watsuji worthwhile.

Borel then asked for comment on the degree to which Bellah has used original Japanese materials and the degree to which he relies on secondary sources. Reischauer pointed out that, of course, in dealing with Ishida Baigan there is really little primary material, since the chief source is a memoir written by his pupils. This material is difficult, but Bellah used it extensively and he came up with interpretations which were interesting enough to the Japanese that they wished it to be translated. Kitagawa added that Maruyama Masao was among the people who commented on the Japanese edition in exactly the sense that Reischauer had, even though Bellah at the time had not so good a command of Japanese. He made important use of documents as well as secondary sources. Borel questioned this and quoted Maruyama to the effect that his use of

original sources was by far not so good as his use of secondary sources. Kitagawa agreed in part, noting that Bellah had been a neophyte at the time. However, he observed that Bellah had read well what was very difficult to read, Ienega, for example. He had help from Japanese, but he did use original materials. White asked whether there was much originality in the observation that Shingaku provided the ethic of the rising merchant class. Reischauer agreed that this was not a very original observation. Kitagawa added that Shingaku itself was one of many movements at the time but not one that was very important or central. In response to further questioning by Borel, Kitagawa added that it was the combination of the sociological perspective and the Japanese materials that provided the interest, and he himself was not a sociologist. When the question was repeated by Kaysen, Kitagawa again said that he found it refreshing to find a sociologist with a deep concern for religious matters and a good grasp of long and complicated religious history. In response to Weil's question as to what was Bellah's best work in the Japanese field Kitagawa answered that, while he did not consider Bellah a professional Japanologue, he is a sociologist who is dealing with cross cultural materials and his attempt at dealing with Japanese religious materials was a very serious one. He was one of the most astute of students on the questions of religion and social change. After further questioning Kitagawa added TOKUGAWA RELIGION was the most significant single piece of work. Reischauer agreed, and added that his later works showed development. In response to a question by Regge, he cited in particular the article on Watsuji. Though not of the same scale as TOKUGAWA RELIGION it was an important work.

White then returned the discussion to TOKUGAWA RELIGION and summarized its general conclusions. First, the dominant political values and the strong polity were favorable to the rise of industrial society. He thought none of this original and cited Sansom's JAPAN, and an essay of Thorstein Veblen's published in 1915, rather parallel to and similar to his more famous book on Germany. Similarly, his conclusions on the role of religion and particularly the ethic of inner-worldly asceticism were hardly new. Bellah himself recognized the latter as an idea taken from Weber and applied to Japan. Thus, if Bellah had any contribution, it was in scrutinizing the facts of the Japanese case to test the hypotheses. Yet Bellah's own final chapter is tentative, referring only to hypotheses and speculations, rather than to conclusions. Why had he not gone on to deepen his study and do more to confirm his hypotheses. Perhaps he was derailed by his new philosophy of symbolic realism, which is to replace his previous psychological and sociological methods of analyzing religion. Shils responded at Kaysen's suggestion. He observed that he could not speak for Bellah out of personal knowledge but suggested that his deepening of perception of the complicated nature of the question had led him to see that his first book was too schematic. In response to a request for clarification by Bahcall, Shils observed that Bellah has become more subtle and realistic in his understanding of the nature of religious

belief. It is not that he has made a new discovery about religion and society but that he has picked up a theme which was neglected in sociology. Parsons had stated it and Bellah was applying it. Durkheim had taught that the image of the deity and the image of the universe were simply copies of the image of society. This is what Bellah thinks of as sociological reductionism, and seeks to go beyond. White in response to Shils comment expressed his surprise at Bellah's reliance on figures such as Tillich and Norman O. Brown. He, White, found Bellah's efforts to arrive at a new philosophy cut him off from anything White could recognize as social science.

At this point Merton suggested it would be helpful to hear from Geertz.

(Originally it was planned that there would be an opening statement from Geertz, but the delayed arrival of Messrs. Kitagawa and Shils led to a change in the procedure.)

Geertz came in and was asked by Kaysen to state his views both of Bellah's work and its relation to his own and the Program in Social Sciences. On Bellah's work, Geertz thought there was little he could say which would add to the material that the Committee was considering, except that Bellah was his choice. The significance of having social sciences at the Institute was precisely for the example it could set to the rest of the academic world of what excellent work was. Both the work of the Faculty and the kind of visitors that were invited in the other Schools had set this example, and it was his hope that social sciences could do the same. As he looks around at the work in social science he feels that the able people are scattered; in many places work is routinized; and in general things are not as effective as they might be. For this reason it was not his concern to advance any particular methodology or theoretical perspective, but rather to gather a small band of excellent people working on problems of social change. He wanted people who are not only first-rate social scientists but first-rate minds. Bellah is technically one of the best sociologists, but an even more central reason for Geertz's choice--and it is a choice he has been thinking about and discussing with others for a period of two years--was his general quality of mind. Bellah and he did not necessarily share either substantive judgments or theoretical orientation, but they did share a view of what needs to be done. Such intellectual congeniality in this small a group is of great importance. They both shared a commitment to high intellectual quality and an openness to work along other lines than their own. Geertz continued, saying that Bellah's work was more on the level of idea systems and their evolution, his own more on cultural forms and institutional change. Geertz would expect further appointments to be more on the economic and institutional side. It was his expectation, if Bellah came, that he would be renewing his work

on Japan with emphasis on intellectual history since the turn of the century.

Merton asked Geertz what he saw as the most important potential contribution that would grow out of Bellah's work in the direction of Japanese intellectual history. Observing the difficulties of speaking for someone else, Geertz talked about the comparisons between the development and growth of Fascism in Japan and Italy and their relation to intellectual history in the two countries. More broadly, this would be an analysis of the making of the modern Japanese mind against the comparative background of the evolution of ideas in the modern world. As part of this comparative background Bellah is hoping to develop also the ideas sketched in the paper on American civil religion and in general, the relation between American political thought and the religious motifs that run through American culture.

Cavell asked for a specific example of Bellah's intellectual catholicity, some kind of work different to his own to which he was receptive. Geertz cited his survey work with Charles Glock, in which Bellah was dealing with questionnaire and similar techniques far outside his usual mode of work. Cavell pursued the question further in terms of Bellah's use of contemporary philosophical text and poetic materials. Geertz accepted these as further useful examples and remarked that Bellah shared with him the feeling that the intellectual history of anthropology and sociology should not be viewed as simply consisting of what was written by anthropologists and sociologists.

Kitagawa asked how far along Bellah's work had come on Miki Kiyoshi whom Kitagawa found the most important of the figures Bellah was now working on. Geertz really was unable to answer, although he assumed that the work was well started and expected that it was the first thing Bellah would pursue if he were here. Kitagawa then asked the relationship between Bellah's interest in American religion and his work on Tokugawa religion. Would the comparisons of belief between Japan and Italy also be broadened to include comparisons between Japan and America, especially on the religious element in political belief? Geertz answered affirmatively that Bellah was moving in that direction. Starting from a more Parsonian framework Bellah has come to a rather original view of what religion is, and this in turn allowed him to see that American political thought had a religious aspect of great importance. Clearly the political aspects of Tokugawa religion sensitized him to the fact that what looks like political ideology can have a religious aspect. In response to Bahcall's question, Geertz identified this as a development of the ideas in the essay on civil religion in America.

Shils asked Geertz to comment on the development of Bellah's thought, how his conception of religion had developed, as contrasted with his earlier, more stereotyped view. Geertz repeated his remarks about the increase



in the sophistication of his ideas on religion. In this respect he has been influenced by the work of Tillich and Ricoeur. He has gone from a functional to a more "existential" view of religion, that sees religion as containing an element of artistic as well as moral response to the human situation, and he is now trying to draw the sociological implications of this change of perspective. So far the results have appeared only in fragments, and there has been no second work of the scale of TOKUGAWA RELIGION. This is what he (Geertz) looks forward to as the product of an appointment here for Bellah.

Weil asked Shils to return to the question of the desuetude into which the sociology of religion had fallen in the last 40 years. Was this only an American phenomenon? Shils replied that it was primarily an American phenomenon, but America was the center of sociological work during this period. Here religion was seen simply in behavioral terms--church attendance, the occupational distribution of members of the various denominations and the like--without attention to the significance of beliefs for conduct and the grounds from which beliefs arose. Parsons helped to reinstate this deeper view of the subject and Bellah pressed on with it within a particular culture in a fine way. Geertz reinforced these observations.

White asked Geertz to comment on the following passage from Bellah:

"At this juncture in order to study religion we must go to the ecstatic aphorists like Norman O. Brown rather than to other dimensions of the intellectual scene to get our lead."

Geertz identified the quote as coming from the review of Norman O. Brown and observed that this was an area in which he had his disagreements with Bellah. The force of the remark was that a behavioral view of religion in terms of the institutionalized churches would simply miss what was happening in the U.S. and that we must look in other places for religious expression, and the writings of Norman O. Brown was one. Geertz agreed with White's characterization that this was then data for a Jamesian examination of varieties of current religious experience, but he was reluctant to say that Bellah would not also find it useful as guidance to the true nature of the phenomena. Nonetheless he was certain that, despite Bellah's higher regard for Brown than he himself had, Bellah was not about to embark on a Brownian social science.

Weil asked what was original in all this. Perhaps it was original only in the U.S. Geertz agreed, but emphasized the importance of Bellah's perceptiveness in dealing with phenomena that others did not.

Merton asked for Geertz's evaluation of Bellah's capacity for cross-cultural analysis. In response Geertz characterized Bellah's range as extraordinary. He was one of the first sociologists to do any serious work on Japan



with an effort to deal with the language. He started even as an undergraduate on the Apaches. He has a reasonable training in Islam, and he was now beginning to work on Italian in order to do the Italian work. In response to a question of Bahcall on his perception in quantitative work, Geertz mentioned this simply as an example of his methodological openness in contrast with many in the discipline to be fixed on one or another mode of work.

Setton commented on the wide range of Bellah's interest and wondered how this was consistent with the notion that he was working in depth. Geertz agreed that Bellah was not, and no one could be, equally deep in so many areas. The center of his depth was Japan. He had respectable knowledge of China and Islam, but this was to get some understanding of alternate societies. Horizontal as well as vertical extension was necessary to a comparative sociologist.

Weil asked that we return to the comments of the outside members, which it was the main purpose of the meeting to get. Shils had given his view of Bellah's essay on Durkheim. He would very much like to hear the views of others on that essay and also on the one on civil religion. Merton, in response to the first question, said that he had a high opinion of the essay on Durkheim, although he would not put it in the same way that Shils had put it. He had studied Durkheim's work--indeed he could say that he had been marinated in Durkheim's thought for some years. The paper, though a brief document of 50 or 60 pages, shows a complete command of Durkheim's thought. There are, to be sure, some comments he could make on the paper by way of improvement, which was not surprising; he had encountered few perfect manuscripts. As one example, he remarked on the confusion on pages 15-16 between a reference to psychic or spiritual phenomena by Durkheim and Bellah's inference that this represented a psychological perspective on his part. This was, however, merely an unimportant slip. In some cases Bellah had absorbed certain intellectual positions so thoroughly that he had not underlined to the students the documentation of that tradition. For instance, the very significant and still important notion of Durkheim that a system of contracts requires an extra-contractual basis; Bellah might have pointed out that Parsons had, so to speak, rediscovered the importance of this point. But these were minor comments, made to show the care with which Merton read. Over all, he found great variety of observations special to Bellah which were illuminating, observations which had escaped him and even more intensive students of Durkheim. This was relative to Morton White's earlier question of the comparison of Bellah with Talcott Parsons. There was no question that Bellah's essay on Durkheim was a cut beyond Parsons' treatment of some of the same matters. Of course, Bellah drew on Parsons; he would not have achieved what

he did without Parsons, but the essay was excellent. He viewed the paper as an excellent step forward with ideas that could be further developed. In relation to the task of judging the quality of the nominee's mind from his visible work and estimating his probable future work, Merton found this a very satisfying document.

Merton preferred not to comment on the essay on civil religion since he had not had an opportunity to reread it and it was not fresh in his mind. In response to Kaysen's invitation to comment, Kitagawa talked about this essay as an indication of the development of Bellah's thought. There was a sense in which he had started out from Parsons and Tillich in disjunction and found one resolution in his formulation of TOKUGAWA RELIGION. It was then a very natural step for him to move into a comparison of the American side in civil religion; and now Kitagawa was waiting for Bellah to move back to a further relation with the development of Japanese thought. He found it intriguing that Bellah was now dealing more with intellectual history than with a direct attempt to talk about change in social structures. That concern has not yet been sufficiently explored in dealing with Japanese materials, and it was in this connection that he was asking about the state of Bellah's work on Kiyoshi.

Shils offered a comment on the essay on civil religion. Although only a sketch, it was a daring and imaginative one which added to the tradition of thought about American political life and public life in advanced countries generally. It spoke to Prof. Weil's earlier concern about depth in that the essay revealed more than ordinarily meets the eye and penetrated a surface that has been created by decades of discussion and analysis. It is certainly true that Fustel Coulanges and other writers for a long time have been aware of the infusion of religious sensibility throughout society, not just in churches but in respect to paternal authority and other forms of secular society and that this, as Prof. Weil pointed out, is a commonplace in relation to Roman culture. However, it is something else to apply it to modern society. It is one thing to recognize this of various pre-modern societies, but the whole train of thought about modern societies has been that they were dominated by a unilinear process of secularization which was going to completion. This was widely accepted by many writers on modern society, students of comparative religion, as well as sociology, and it goes back to the 19th century and applies to many writers then as well as more recent ones. Weil asked whether it was not a commonplace to speak of Communism as a religion and that what could be true of Russian society could not be so novel if applied to American society. Shils denied that this was the appropriate comparison. That existing institutions were treated as objects worthy of worship - or better, idolatry, which is the sense in which Communism is a religion, is quite different from what Bellah is talking about. He is talking about the operation of a notion of religion which refers to the cosmos' infusing existing institutions, and this is quite a different view.

Cavell then raised a more general subject. He, like Weil, felt that some of the essays in BEYOND BELIEF were filled with commonplaces; yet he was brought up by the fact that serious professionals insisted that they were not. Does this mean that we simply could not understand one another, or was there something else involved? Was Geertz saying that some work was so important that it had to be done even if it was not of the highest calibre or not quite complete yet? After all, many of the essays in BEYOND BELIEF were programmatic. Are we saying that what is exemplary is the nature of the work rather than its quality? If so, that would be a different position from what he understood was the position of the other Schools of the Institute. Geertz responded that he had already assumed the worth of the work, and he asserted again that it was in his judgment work of high calibre. He would not wish to invite someone because of the kind of work he was doing if his quality were not first-rate. He had emphasized the relation of Bellah's work to the larger framework for the discussion of the Committee because he thought that was the missing piece he could supply, since the work was before them. Cavell agreed that this was an important piece of information, that one aspect of the exemplary quality of what went on at the Institute had to do with the value of particular directions of work. Certain fields at certain times need cultivation of that sort which can be essential to the future of the field. He could believe an appointment corresponding to this need would be desirable even if the work itself were not, in his view, inherently of first-rate quality. Cavell said he was quite interested in the topics that Bellah treated, and he thought the subject of civil religion was an interesting one, although he was less convinced of the originality of Bellah's approach. He did want more stipulation about the future of the subject, because otherwise he could not evaluate his own judgment of the intellectual quality of the work. In Bellah's work he had not found the concepts confronted on the level he would like. For example, the title, BEYOND BELIEF, is taken from some work of Wallace Stevens that in itself tried to express certain views. And yet Bellah had not fully taken account of the way in which Wallace Stevens used the phrase.

As Cavell understood it, it was essential to the idea of civil religion that it exists to enforce a social contract. But Bellah does not examine the relation of civil religion to the social contract, what the concept of the social contract is, and what it would mean if it were not in effect. Though it is with surprise and even horror that some have accused Bellah of deifying the State, Cavell thought that was to miss Bellah's point; however, he was open to that charge because he had not distinguished some things that happened in the French Revolution from his own work in TOKUGAWA RELIGION. Again, in his use of Freudian ideas, Bellah seemed to assume the universal projection of transcendental feelings on deities. Cavell's own understanding was that Freud said rather that, if a culture's religion embodied the concept

of deities, then transcendental feelings would be projected onto them. In response to an observation of Setton's, Cavell went on to say that breadth was not enough, and the mere act of comparison could not justify the enterprise. Geertz responded that the fact that Bellah's work stimulates serious intellectual confrontation on a sophisticated level was in itself a mark of its value. Cavell returned to the question of intellectual distinction and cited the example of Panofsky. Panofsky had written one brief work on the movies; it really was a kind of by-play. In Cavell's judgment it is a major work in the field. This is as clear an indication of intellectual distinction as he could find. Was there any indication of that level of intellectual distinction in Bellah's essays? Geertz responded that the question should be on Bellah's work in general; too much of the discussion had concentrated on a few of the weaker essays in BEYOND BELIEF. His answer to the question was "Yes." Bellah had intellectual distinction, and Geertz thought no other historical sociologist in this country operated at his intellectual level. Cavell agreed that Geertz's answer was important to him. His wish for a subject to move in a new direction was an absolutely respectable intellectual wish; to want someone with whom one wanted to work was also a respectable wish. Cavell felt that his judgment had to include these facts.

Bahcall returned to the question of the essay on civil religion. He wanted to be sure that Shils had described it as a sketch of the highest quality. Shils responded that it was a sketch on a subject of great importance, and it provided important indications of the way in which further study should go; he did not regard it as a fundamental accomplishment. Bahcall for his part agreed that it was interesting, but he simply did not understand the profundity and thought of it more as a piece of journalism. Weil registered agreement. Shils responded that he saw it in a different sense. The view which Bellah put forward in the essay was rough and imprecisely formulated, but it was not the prevailing view - a view quite contrary to the prevailing view and quite different from that embodied in the notion of Communism as a secular religion. Rather it was the conception that the ordinary routine aspect of institutions and public life contained a religious element, and the respect that these institutions receive from those who participate in them contains some reference to cosmic processes beneficial to these institutions. Of course, as Prof. Weil had pointed out earlier, in earlier days this was a commonplace of political thought, in the days of the divine right of kings, but it is now, and has long been thought, that the distinct thing about modern society was the secularization of life. Bellah's essay puts an opposite view and sketches a program for studying that opposite view. It is an important difference and a fruitful one to follow up.



At this point the meeting was adjourned for lunch. At the afternoon session following lunch, the group was joined by Professors Cherniss, Clagett, Gilliam, Langlands and Montgomery.

Clagett opened the session by asking whether Bellah had followed TOKUGAWA RELIGION by further substantive work which developed the same territory; in particular, had he examined more bodies of historical material to develop further and test the hypotheses and speculations presented in TOKUGAWA RELIGION. Merton answered the question by observing that he himself, of course, was not a specialist in Japanese culture and Japanese religion, and that the sociology of religion in particular was not his greatest interest. It was clear, however, from Bellah's bibliography that he had not done what Clagett described but rather had followed a variety of other questions and interests related to his original point of departure. He was developing conceptual and technical skills rather than following up on the first work. Reischauer then observed that, in his judgment, Bellah's broadening of interest, his exploration into more recent periods, was more valuable than a further exploration of the Tokugawa materials. In his judgment a man who was trying to deal with the development of a whole society should be evaluated in terms of the product, so to speak, of breadth times depth. Concentration on a single subject did not produce breadth; breadth without depth led to a product of zero. Bellah had the depth in Japanese materials; he was received as a competent scholar in the field, not just an outsider who took an intelligent interest. Clagett again asked whether he should not have followed up on the original speculations. Reischauer responded that in his original work the speculations had brought in ideas from the Western world and applied them to Japan in a way that was interesting. These ideas had now been accepted as truisms in the field, and in this sense it is the greatest tribute that can be paid to the man's work that it became the accepted view in the field. Clagett asked whether this meant that these lines of investigation had been confirmed by other people. Reischauer responded that these matters are never confirmed 100%, but that Bellah's work had provided a valuable addition to our concepts of the society and thought of the time and how they tied in with the modernization of Japan. While these were not proved 100%, they were widely accepted as being an important contribution.

In response to an invitation to comment, Kitagawa remarked that he had been thinking during this discussion of the degree to which Bellah's essay on civil religion had been stimulated by his study of Tokugawa religion. In his own mind he felt there was continuity and that Bellah's current work on Miki Kiyoshi displayed the same continuity. His path had been from Tokugawa religion to America and then back to Japan. While in the interim he had been dealing



with more minor intellectual figures in Japan, the work on Miki Miyoshi deals with a figure of major importance. Thus he saw some continuity in the current of thought from Bellah's first work on. Reischauer agreed that the application to America of the idea of civil religion reflected the Japanese experience. In response to Clagett's question on Bellah's linguistic capability in Chinese, Kitagawa observed that it was less than it was in Japanese; and Reischauer added that he had learned Chinese and could utilize it. Weil asked how fluent Bellah's Japanese was. Reischauer responded that he read it with relative ease; he could not have done what he did without reading modern secondary materials and, let us say, 17th through 19th century texts with a good degree of accuracy. Clagett asked the extent to which the documentary translation in Chapter VI of TOKUGAWA RELIGION was acceptable in Japan. Kitagawa responded that those whose mother tongue was Japanese had reservations and comments but there was no question that Bellah read well. Japanese, of course, tended to smile at those who worked on Japan from the outside.

Cherniss then brought up examples of inaccuracies in Bellah's writing on matters about which he had some knowledge, although he had no knowledge whatsoever about Japan and accepted what Bellah said in that sphere. For example, the article on Ienaga Saburo talked about the category of negation, a strange terminology, and asserted that there is no such thing in Greek philosophy; that it had been introduced into Western thought by Hebrew and Christian thoughts. He asked for the Committee's comments on this assertion. Kitagawa observed that Ienaga was, indeed, somewhat mixed up, and the question might be more why Bellah was interested in him. Cherniss agreed that the first statement quoted was a statement of Ienaga's, but in the course of the essay, Bellah adopted it and called it a great insight. This appeared to him nonsense that could not be supported by even a third-rate handbook on Western thought. This was only one example; there were many. For instance, in TOKUGAWA RELIGION, page 179, Bellah spoke of religious beliefs and actions that are concomitant to every central value system, and Cherniss found he could make no sense of that; yet it appeared central to the thesis of the book. Another example (TOKUGAWA RELIGION, page 87)--when Buddhism came to Japan, it was described as a new and powerful influence that would aid in bolstering the position of the monarchy. On a subsequent page it appeared that the progress of Buddhism was weakening the effort at centralization of power. Reischauer commented that the two effects spoken of were separated by a long period of time; Buddhism was a centralizing force at first, and later in the course of its development it acted in the opposite direction. Cherniss said he thought that the passages referred to the same time period and was still troubled by it.

Clagett wondered whether this went back to his own question to which he had received no general response, on whether Bellah's handling of sociological concepts was critical and sound. Merton commented that the sentences read seemed puzzling, but he, of course, was not familiar with the context. However, he was saying again that Bellah was a responsible and sound scholar; he was not saying that he was flawless. Cherniss felt that the examples he mentioned were not isolated, but that they reflected lack of critical thought which was essential to scholarship in any field. Kitagawa at this point, having found the passage in question, pointed out the fact that it did refer to effects spread over a considerable period of time--first to the introduction of Buddhism into Japan and then to its later progress.

Montgomery then observed that his reading of the material suggested a heavy reliance on secondary sources; for example, in talking about the Navajo and Suni religions. In general, there was a flavor of term-paper writing, summarizing the conclusions of others. He wondered whether Bellah used first-hand sources and contributed something original. Kitagawa responded that there was no question of Bellah's ability to rely on primary materials in Japanese and the fact that he did. He could not comment on the other materials. Weil asked whether Maruyama's comment in his review of TOKUGAWA RELIGION that Bellah's use of primary materials was weaker than his use of secondary materials was correct. Kitagawa agreed that this was the case, but noted that this was Bellah's first venture in the field. Montgomery repeated the question of novelty. Reischauer answered that TOKUGAWA RELIGION was filled with new ideas. Although it combined concepts developed in other contexts, it applied them to Japanese materials in a way that had not been done before as extensively. The concepts applied by Bellah were important to people working in the field.

Bahcall asked two questions. First, was there a clear prospect of Bellah's doing future work at a high level; was the trend of his work such that one could with reasonable confidence predict that his future work would make a major impact? Second, was the work he had already done at a high level in relation to the field? Shils responded that it was difficult, of course, to predict what the future would bring. Bellah's work had become stronger, more penetrating, more subtle. The Durkheim essay, for example, was an improvement over material Bellah had written on Durkheim years earlier. He thought Bellah had ascended intellectually in the last 10 or 15 years; however, he would like to see him with a plan for another large comprehensive work, resembling TOKUGAWA RELIGION as far as scale and aspiration are concerned but at a more mature level. This is what Bellah should be doing now. Geertz had told us something of Bellah's current interests; he seemed full of intellectual animation; and Shils expected him to go on to be more productive.

Weil asked Shils to compare Geertz and Bellah in terms of intellectual stature. Shils responded that he placed Clifford Geertz at the very highest level of social scientists, except for a handful of economists, in terms of power of mind, breadth, profundity of thought, sensibility, and vastness of knowledge. He did not think Bellah was of that same quality. On the other hand, in terms of the whole range of social scientists in the U.S., Europe, and Canada, there are very few people on a level with Bellah. He could think only of Eisenstadt in Jerusalem. Eisenstadt in profundity, vastness of knowledge, synthetic ability and work capacity was much like Geertz. Perhaps after Geertz and Eisenstadt he would rate Bellah, and he does not think of anybody else in the same class.

Regge asked whether Bellah had the charisma to lead a school. Shils testified to his energy and motivation and his intellectual passion; however, he was not able to talk to the point. It was observed that Bellah had won an award for teaching. In response to Kaysen's question of Reischauer's observation of Bellah when they were colleagues, Reischauer thought that he had the quality that people were attracted to him and he could have a group of disciples.

Setton raised the question of whether Bellah's work was more than intelligent rationalization on the evidence. He felt that in historical studies intelligent rationalization was the besetting sin. He gave as an example the view that in the 14th century Venetians had pushed the Papacy into two crusades to save their commercial interests in the Aegean, but detailed study of the archives showed that there were simply no traceable Venetian influences behind the crusades of Clement VI. Prof. Cavell's comment this morning had suggested to him that BEYOND BELIEF was largely a matter of intelligent rationalization. He wondered whether this was any more likely to be successful in sociology than it was in historical studies. He directed to the attention of Merton and Shils the thesis of Weber on protestantism and the rise of capitalism. Here again he thought the historical evidence was slight, and the texts of the reformers showed as many that could be cited against Weber's thesis as in support of it. In general, he found Bellah's historical illustrations slight while the rationalization was impressive. To Shils this raised the question of dogmatism. Shils thought Bellah was far from dogmatic; rather he was modest, open to further evidence, and had an exploratory mind. If there were criticism, it lay in the opposite direction of too much openness, too much tentativeness, although he did feel there was a continuity and deepening in Bellah's thought. He thought that any serious scholar would keep his mind open to the truth and that Bellah was a serious scholar who had this characteristic.

White thought that there was clearly too much tentativeness and too little seriousness in pursuing the concepts and generalizations Bellah suggested.

White had already made clear his dubious view of Bellah, and it would not come as a surprise that he could list many examples of statements of a speculative character that Bellah appeared to make no attempt to confirm. In TOKUGAWA RELIGION itself there was no demonstration that the philosophy of Shingaku Confucionism did in fact bring about a great tendency toward industrialization. In the recent essay on "The Intellectual and Society in Japan" the Emperor was variously described as "perhaps" a father figure, "perhaps" a mother figure, "perhaps" both; yet no resolution of these various "perhapses" was offered, nor any explanation of how "the two models of Japanese society associated with these two images will help us to understand the enormous popularity of Marxism among Japanese intellectuals." It may be that Bellah expected to throw out conjectures and leave it to others to collect the evidence, but White felt a lack of seriousness in this approach that was far from reassuring. This was also true of the essays on Ienaga and Watsuji, which combined analytical exposition of the text with sociological reflections as to what and how the text might be associated with more general social phenomena, but no real connection that showed the impact of the ideas on the society in question.

In response to Kaysen's question, Langlands and Gilliam both indicated that they were content to listen and follow the present line of discussion. Clagett then raised again the question for Merton as to how in Merton's view Bellah handled sociological concepts. There was some discussion as to whether Merton had said he would be evasive and Merton said that he had only observed that he would avoid answering questions on which he was not competent. As to how Bellah handled sociological concepts, Merton was quite ready to speak on that. This morning there had been a discussion comparing Bellah to Parsons and he would not repeat it. Bellah's forte was not the creation of large systems of conceptual outlooks which could be combined and permuted in the Parsonian manner. Rather, he found ways of developing more limited conceptual formulations that allowed him to make comparisons between cultures with regard to phenomena in which he was interested, chiefly religion in its interaction with other social institutions. This is what puts him apart from the great majority of contemporary sociologists. Of course he draws on ideas that have gone before him. His distinctive ability is to put them to use in unaccustomed places. Although he draws on the conceptions which had been formulated and his use of them is continuous with work done in the past, he deepens them by using them in a cross-cultural way.

Cavell said that the discussion so far had put him in a dilemma; he was more of an outsider, so to speak, than anybody in the group, and he felt as a result of what he had heard, absolutely ambivalent as to what he thought of



Bellah. On the one hand, some of the questions that had been raised by the non-sociologists about Bellah's work, its "term paperishness", its apparent superficiality and lack of originality, questions of whether he could really handle the primary sources, whether he lacked self-criticism and of the incompleteness of conceptualization in his work, all these were questions that had arisen in his mind as well. Although he wished to re-read the work he did feel that its lack of self-critical power was reflected, for instance, in the way he used concepts taken from others, e.g. Max Weber. On the other hand, he felt that all these doubts might matter not at all so far as the true intellectual evaluation of Bellah's work was concerned. It might be the case that sociology was a more developed discipline than outsiders were prepared to acknowledge. This group would certainly not treat other subjects from the outside with the confidence in criticism that Bellah's work had been treated today. If the experts in an autonomous discipline spoke of a work with interest, then it should be accepted as valuable. What he had read of the work of Shils, Merton and Geertz seemed of unquestionable intellectual distinction. He had not felt the same about the work of Bellah, but these three people tell him that he should have. That represented a dilemma, and it seemed to him that at one stage one should take the experts' word of what the meaning and value of the work is to the discipline. This perhaps was the proper resolution of the dilemma.

At this point Setton, reading from a clipping from the N.Y. Times asked whether this was not exactly the opposite of what Prof. Merton had said in a lecture in New York recently. He, Setton, would regret it if we had to believe that it took a sociologist to understand a sociologist; he would hope that there was some communication among the disciplines. Merton, in response, observed that perhaps the Times was not a primary source on which one should rely. Really the substance of his lecture had been rather different and he had drawn the contrast between specialized knowledge which supposedly came from membership in a natural group, i.e. an ethnic or racial or sexual group, and the knowledge which came from substantial training and learning and being an insider in the sense of an expert in a scholarly discipline. He attributed no validity to the claim of special knowledge arising from the first basis, but full validity to the claim on the second basis. Merton went on to observe that Prof. Cavell's comments pointed to the special and unusual nature of the proceedings here, a kind of ad hoc arrangement which was not comparable to any other with which he was familiar. This put difficult constraints on the whole proceeding. It was not that he thought a better procedure could be devised, but that the difficulties that the situation imposed should be recognized.



In response to Kaysen's invitations for further summary observations, Shils offered a general comment. Looking at Bellah's appointment in the context of the program which was described by Geertz this morning and in the few pages that the members of the committee had received along with their invitation, he thought it was a highly desirable one. One could not discuss any society without a deep knowledge of religion; what was needed was not only a knowledge of religion from the point of view of theologians and church historians, but a combination of the knowledge of religious beliefs and religious institutions with a knowledge of social structure which a sociologist has. In Shils's opinion this combination was indispensable for understanding the operations of any society, whether it was a small African society or a large society like the Chinese Empire. Thus, Bellah was the kind of man with the kind of interests which were vitally needed to develop the program. The fact that he has scholarly knowledge of a particularly important society, including serious knowledge of its history, was indispensable. He was not simply a sociological generalist who knew a bit about everything from the secondary literature, but he knew the monographic literature and some of the primary sources for the very important culture of Japan. This was quite an important qualification for this contribution to the program. This is not to say that other types of training were also not useful and necessary but that this one was essential. Further, Bellah was not one of a great number with these capabilities. Eisenstadt had been previously mentioned; he did not seem to Shils to be available; and Bellah and he were the only ones of quality in this group.

In response to a further request for summary comments, Reischauer said that he had tried earlier to say what Shils had just said, and he would like to repeat it. He does not think a better person than Bellah could be found. Kitagawa expressed his agreement and said he shared Shils's comments.

Reischauer added a further observation in the way of White's question on "perhaps-ing." The nature of the work was such that certainty was hard. Several generations of students had worked on these problems, and often their conclusions were "perhaps" said in 32 words. Cavell joined at this point to say he shared White's reservations about "perhaps." Rather than indicating modesty, it might indicate a special sort of immodesty. Modesty could be seen as a recognition that a specific thesis could be applied to a small amount of data with some certainty that it did indeed apply, and a refusal to generalize beyond that data rather than the open invitation to apply it speculatively over a wide range.

In the absence of further summary comments or questions, the meeting was adjourned.

# THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540

Telephone-609-924-4400

THE DIRECTOR

December 18, 1972

To the Members of the Faculty:

Attached are the materials relevant to the nomination of Robert N. Bellah for a professorship in the Social Science Program, which will be discussed at the Faculty Meeting on Monday, January 15, at 10 a.m. These include the Minutes of the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee with the Faculty representatives on December 3 and a number of letters. The Minutes were prepared by me in draft from the tape of the meeting and corrected on the basis of comments of the Faculty representatives. In preparing the Minutes, I condensed the statements of the visitors less than those of the Faculty members, who, in any event, will have the opportunity to comment at the meeting.

There are six letters attached. Five of these are from the consultants on the Ad Hoc Committee--Professors Stanley L. Cavell of Harvard University, Joseph M. Kitagawa of University of Chicago, Robert K. Merton of Columbia University, Edwin O. Reischauer of Harvard University, and Edward Shils of the University of Chicago and Cambridge University.

The sixth letter, written in response to my inquiry, is from John W. Hall, Professor of Far Eastern History at Yale University. Hall is, I understand, the leading active historian of Japan in this country and one of the leading ones in the world; Geertz and I had suggested him for the Ad Hoc Committee. I do not know him personally and, indeed, have never met him.

OK  
Carl Kaysen

Professors Cherniss, Clagett, Gilbert, Gilliam, Kennan, Meiss, Setton,  
Thompson, White

Professors Beurling, Borel, Gödel, Harish-Chandra, Langlands, Milnor,  
Montgomery, Selberg, Weil, Whitney

Professors Adler, Bahcall, Dashen, Dyson, Regge, Rosenbluth

Professor Geertz

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
EMERSON HALL

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138  
(617) 495-2166

December 6, 1972

Mr. Carl Kaysen, Director  
The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Dear Carl,

Here are my summary responses, so far as I can now articulate them, to last Sunday's interesting and confusing discussion. My initial response, during the hours following our meeting, was one of distress at the group's inability to arrive at a consensus of judgment, or rather to budge an apparently frozen division of judgment. After a night's sleep, however, and putting together a more balanced view of the formal and informal exchanges held in the course of those hours, my view is that the Ad Hoc Committee did not fail to do all it was expected, or could have sensibly been expected, under the circumstances, to do. It was not asked what other academic Ad Hoc Committees, in my experience, are asked by the institution that has convened them, namely whether an appointment, desired by the weight of interested opinion and conviction within that institution, is the best appointment that it can now make. The burden of proof, in this case, was almost reversed. This Ad Hoc Committee, as I read the course of our day there, was met not by a clear weight of desire, on the part of the institution, to go forward with the appointment in question, but by a division of its desire, of such a kind that those negatively inclined were almost asking the Committee to convince them of its propriety. I understand the situation as one in which the Ad Hoc Committee was brought into the sequence of deliberations about an appointment at an earlier stage than is usual, that is to say, a stage at which the question is still whether to recommend an appointment to the monitoring of a usual Ad Hoc Committee. This was perhaps unavoidable in this case if outsiders were to be convened at all, because it is in the nature of this appointment at this moment in the life of the Institute for Advanced Study, as was emphasized in your remarks and the remarks of some of your colleagues, that there is no established sub-group within its Faculty empowered to submit a recommendation in this field for final monitoring. In such a case, of course, the Ad Hoc Committee does not represent, as it otherwise would, a penultimate stage of official decision whose recommendation would normally (i.e. without over-riding considerations to the contrary, and without careful explanation) be followed, but rather represents a group of in-

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dividuals offering what informal judgment and advice they feel moved to offer, which can then be used or ignored as the Faculty sees fit. I rehearse my understanding of these more or less obvious preliminaries because it seems to me that, given this situation, our discussion did not focus as directly as it might have on the wider issues essentially implicated in this appointment. In this sense the Ad Hoc Committee was not as helpful as it might have been in arriving at a difficult decision. The Committee did, however, to my mind, help to clarify, even to dramatize, the nature of the difficulty of this decision. That is the sense in which it was all the help it could have been expected to be. What follows is intended to specify what I mean by this. (I will not, let me say, be very careful to hedge my remarks with recurrent "perhap's" and "in my opinion's". Because I speak as an outsider, both to the Institute and to the profession in question, it should go without saying that my remarks are nothing but the most honest expression I can give to my best judgment of the issue.)

I begin with my remark that the Committee dramatized the nature of the difficulty of this decision. It is a decision in which, so far as an outsider could tell, those present who spoke for the field represented by the candidate without exception firmly supported his appointment, while those present who spoke from within different fields without exception equally firmly opposed it, or at least strongly doubted its value. The drama of the difficulty -- even, one may say, its potential tragedy -- is that neither side of the dispute can be dismissed out of hand. The nature of the decision is defined by that circumstance. The particular people who spoke from within the field of social science cannot be dismissed, because their names are Geertz, Merton, and Shils, and those names are all but unassailably eminent within that field. Outsiders to the field who refuse their judgment of it are put in the position of seeming to deny the intellectual respectability of the field as such. So the question arises: Why is it that the assessment of those outside the field cannot be dismissed out of hand?

Obviously the answer has to do with the nature, or the current state, of sociology itself, something registered in the fact that the criterion of "general intellectual distinction" was recognized by both sides of the dispute to be relevant to its settlement. But this is not a complete answer because a decision within any field apart from mathematics and the natural sciences is apt to involve itself with the appeal to such a criterion, and it is not in principle impossible to arrive at a satisfactory decision based in part



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on such an appeal. (The presence of Geertz at the Institute and the recognized standing of the sociologists on the Ad Hoc Committee are sufficient proof of that.) So the answer must also have to do not merely with something particularly problematic about the candidate in question, but also with something extraordinary about the division between the parties to the dispute about him.

The latter circumstance is less obvious than the former and may be overlooked altogether. Honest division of opinion is to be expected where the criterion of general intellectual distinction is recognized to be relevant, but it is not to be expected that (as happened in our case) this line of division will coincide with the line of division marking off the professionals from the non-professionals, because in that case one is not convinced that the concept of general intellectual distinction is being accurately applied. It is a concept (vague enough no doubt, but not impossibly vague) which by its very meaning is applicable independently of the criteria of professional competence. This explains at once why the judgment of non-professionals cannot be dismissed and also why in this particular case those non-professionals can refuse the advice of the professionals without feeling that they necessarily thereby deny the intellectual respectability of the field of sociology as such; what they may be denying, or doubting, is only whether the concept of general intellectual distinction is being accurately isolated and applied -- something which may easily fail to happen. A further feature of the division we found among ourselves is equally striking. It is not hard to imagine that in a case formally similar to the case at hand -- in particular, one in which the professionals unanimously oppose a unanimity among the non-professionals, and in which older professionals are judging a member of a younger generation within their field -- one would find the older professionals on the negative side of the question. This would be a special case, the most likely case, in which a profession can fail to appreciate the general intellectual consequence of one of its own prophets. I do not know how to interpret the distribution of opinion within last Sunday's group.

This is the state of affairs which produced what I described at the end of our afternoon discussion as the dilemma I found myself in: Bellah's writing does not seem to me to show a magnitude of general intellectual distinction sufficient to convince me that this appointment should be made. (His distinction as an undergraduate teacher cannot overcome this deficiency, if it is there.) On the other hand, on the basis of what I have read of Geertz, Merton, and Shils, each of them does seem to me to show that magnitude and each of them is convinced that this appointment should



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be made. This need not be everyone's dilemma -- which is only to say that it is not a logical dilemma: someone can possess a quality and simply be mistaken in attributing that quality to others. I said at the beginning of this letter that the discussion of the Ad Hoc Committee had helped not only to dramatize the nature of this decision but also to clarify it. I will try to specify what I mean by "clarify" here by trying to clarify the terms in which I could accept a resolution of my dilemma.

It cannot be resolved, I feel sure, by persuading me that Bellah's general intellectual distinction is greater than I find it to be. I am stuck with my conviction that it is wanting. Given my conviction, the question I face, from myself and from others, is why there is a dilemma for me at all. Why doesn't my conviction simply settle the question for me? What considerations could outweigh that lack, in this case? That I think there are such considerations only says that I think there is such a dilemma. And that I think there is such a dilemma is a function not merely of the very high weight I attach to the convictions of Geertz, Merton, and Shils, but also of the direction from which my dissatisfaction with Bellah's writing originates.

I know that some philosophers would criticize the very nature and spirit of Bellah's enterprise as one which in principle must lack intellectual rigor. I do not think this sort of criticism is to be taken seriously. It is precisely because I share the wish to see religious (and artistic) experience and expression taken with the intellectual seriousness they warrant that I am dissatisfied with Bellah's writing. It was said in our discussion, in defense of that writing, that the sorts of subjects Bellah deals with do not lend themselves to very accurate conceptualization. That seems to me a grave error, or to invite grave error. Humanistic studies, or the cultural sciences generally, do not differ from the natural sciences on the ground the latter possess standards of intellectual rigor and the former do not. They do differ, however, in the ways in which the meeting of their standards is manifested. This difference can be brought out by noticing that the history of a natural science is not of professional concern in the work of the practicing scientist. That history can be, so to speak, summarized and, so far as it is relevant, translated into his own terms, with an accuracy that other professionals must be relied upon to assess, more or less swiftly and more or less finally.

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This is part of what constitutes, or makes possible, "progress" in his subject. I do not say that progress is not possible in the cultural sciences, but only that it is not achievable, or measurable, in these terms. Their past remains, oddly and at any moment, of relevance to their present achievements. If the past is invoked, then it must be confronted in its own terms (though not of course necessarily left in its own terms). If, for example, such a scholar, or cultural scientist, finds an idea of Rousseau's to define a topic of his research (as Bellah has found in his paper on "Civil Religion...") then he has ~~an~~ intellectual obligation to employ the idea with the meaning Rousseau has provided for it, or else to show and explain his deviation from it. If such a scholar has organized his research in support of Weber's "thesis" about the relations between the Protestant Ethic and the rise of Capitalism, then he has an obligation, at this date in the discussion of Weber's work, to explain his understanding of that thesis and of the major criticisms that have been levelled against it. If, as Bellah more than once implies, he thinks that a major significance of Weber's thesis lies in its denial of Marx's insistence on the relation between the economic base and the ideological superstructure of society, then he should know that other followers of Weber do not think Weber intended such a denial -- at least no flat denial -- of Marx's insistence, and that serious Marxists are in doubt about how stringent or unidirectional Marx took that relation to be. (In our discussion, I also mentioned Bellah's use, in his paper entitled "Father and Son...", of Freud's claim about the idea of God as the product of the mechanism of projection. I need not repeat what I said. Nor will I repeat what I said about Bellah's citing of poetry.)

Beyond such a scholar's obligation to the integrity of the texts from which he seeks support, he has the further obligation to justify the very choice he makes among texts. (This is a further difference from the mathematical and natural sciences, within which there are, I take it, no general, chronic, and endemic disagreements about which work must be taken into account and which work must be ignored.) This further obligation occurs most nakedly in choosing contemporary texts. Intellectuals with any sympathy at all for the kind of research Bellah is engaging in will be likely to admit the significance of the work of Rousseau, Marx, Freud, and Weber. The same cannot be said for the philosophical work of, say, Ernst Cassirer, Susan Langer, and Paul Ricoeur. I am not interested here in denying value to the work of these philosophers; but I claim that its value cannot, or ought not to be, simply cited as authoritative. The work has to be confronted, and its value won, on the ground of philosophy

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itself. I do not say that those outside the profession of philosophy should not touch philosophical material; I fervently hope for the contrary. But if such material is touched then it should be worked at with a sense of its own motivation. This opens the non-professional to the risk of making a special kind of fool of himself; but that should be regarded as an intellectually respectable risk. (I am, by the way, not encouraged to ascribe to Bellah the knack of handling, or epitomizing, philosophical texts when I find in his writing sentences like the following: "As Wittgenstein said, 'Uttering a word is like striking a note on the keyboard of the imagination'" ("Between Religion and Social Science", p. 242). The quotation from the Philosophical Investigations is something Wittgenstein "said" by way of drawing out and exemplifying a false view of language, or an extremely specialized use of it. It is not something he said in support of, or to exemplify, his own view.) My assumption is, you see, that in such work as Bellah is moved to do, committing himself to the relatively non-quantitative, relatively historical, relatively humanistic, dimensions of social science, the intellectual resources at his disposal are not so much theories as texts. (Or one could say: Such theories are not obviously or safely detachable from the specific texts in which they are most convincingly broached.) Therefore the ability to confront a text dialectically, or argue with it philosophically, constitutes a significant measure of the power of "conceptualization" in this domain. The comparative lack of such confrontation or argumentation in Bellah's work is the reason, I think, that various participants in our discussion found in it a quality of term paperishness.

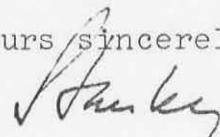
Nevertheless, nevertheless. So important do I take to be the kind of work Bellah does, that I persist in my dilemma and remain open to some favorable resolution of it. The terms of such a resolution, so far as I can see, would have to be along something like the following lines. If it is granted that the Institute is committed to establishing a School of Social Science on a par with its present three Schools, and that it is committed in particular to bringing to the Institute scholars that Geertz can work with profitably, then the fact that Bellah is Geertz's candidate for the next position in itself establishes Bellah as a plausible candidate for the Institute. (Otherwise, Geertz would be justified in concluding that the Institute's commitment to his School is not a serious one.) The other members of the Ad Hoc Committee, as I read their reactions, do not put Bellah in Geertz's league, but they regard him as good enough. For the rest of us, the question is how

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good good enough is. I have said that I am willing to credit the testimony of Geertz and Merton and Shils, but the issue is to define the question upon which their testimony bears most directly and unequivocally. I have said or implied that no one can, or ought to, simply credit the testimony of an expert on the general question of intellectual distinction. But there remains a further question, or pair of questions. Is the present state and predictable future of the social sciences such that the kind of work represented by Geertz is essential to their most fruitful advance and is best served by being lent the freedom and prestige of the Institute for Advanced Study? If so, is the permanent presence of Bellah at the Institute essential to the maximum development of that work? Our discussion did not arrive at the point at which the testimony of the social scientists present could be collected and assessed concerning these questions. But if their honest testimony and considered conjecture would lead them to answer those two questions affirmatively, then I would, for my part, be inclined to recommend that the appointment be made, and hope for the best.

I'm sorry this response has had to be so hurried. The issues involved are of importance to me and I would have liked the time to try to cover them more thoroughly and to arrive at more careful formulations. Be that as it may, I enjoyed my day in Princeton, to the extent permitted by the nature of its occasion.

Yours sincerely,



Stanley Cavell  
Walter M. Cabot Professor  
of Aesthetics and the  
General Theory of Value

SC:pg



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO • ILLINOIS 60637

THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

Office of the Dean

7 December 1972

Dr. Carl Keysen, Director  
The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, N.J. 08540

Dear Dr. Keysen:

Before going into my report, I wish to say how happy I was to meet you and your colleagues at your Institute last Sunday. Your setting is marvelous and your hospitality exquisite.

I trust I was correct in understanding that the duty of the Ad Hoc Committee was "to assist the faculty in making a judgment" as to the quality of the candidate. I make this obvious point because I sensed, rightly or wrongly, last Sunday that some of the Institute Faculty might have expected the Ad Hoc Committee members to "defend" the candidate, as it were. On my part, I endeavored to clarify some of the questions raised in the areas in which I claim some competence for the benefit of the overall discussion regarding the candidate.

I also take it for granted that the Institute has decided to establish a new program in the study of social change and that "the common element in the program is the application of the analytical methods of the social sciences to the study of historical material," as mentioned in your letter of Nov. 3. It is in this context I evaluate the competence and achievement of the candidate.


As to the scholarly competence of Mr. Ballah, I have very little question in spite of the fact that I do not share his scholarly style. While I do not claim competence in all aspects of sociology, I am persuaded that he has excellent training in the discipline. Also, I think he has a genuine scholarly concern with "religion" and "social change" on a cross-cultural basis. I already went on record last Sunday that he has adequate command of the Japanese language to carry on research on Japanese society and culture, using primary Japanese sources. In short, I am very favorably impressed by his training and professional equipment.



Dr. Carl Keyser  
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Much of the discussion last Sunday centered on the question of whether or not his published record gives sufficient assurance that his potentialities will be actualized once he became a member of the team in the study of social change. I have a feeling that no one can give such assurance. In the end, the Institute Faculty members have to decide, one way or the other, even though it might involve some risks. I can only offer three comments on this score. (1) Mr. Bellah has a persistent interest in "religion"--as evidenced in his Tokugawa Religion (1957), "Religious Aspects of Modernization in Turkey and Japan" (1958), "Religious Tradition and Historical Change" (1961), "Religious Evolution" (1964), "Civil Religion in America" (1967), etc. (2) He has also kept up a lively interest in Japanese society and culture, although his recent writings seem to be focused on intellectual history in modern Japan with less reference to social and institutional aspects of that nation and culture. (3) He maintains scholarly interest with theoretical concerns of sociology, as evidenced in his Introduction to Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society. How these three thrusts will be homologized within him in the years to come depends partly on the situation in which he will find himself. Certainly, proper stimulation and encouragement by congenial colleagues would help him to find scholarly focus in the area of social change. Beyond that there is little one can say regarding the future course of another scholar. I am personally inclined to take seriously what Mr. Geertz believes that he can do with Mr. Bellah.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph M. Kitagawa  
Professor, History of Religions;  
Dean, the Divinity School.

JMK:rs

Columbia University, in the City of New York | *New York, N.Y. 10027*

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Fayerweather Hall

9 December 1972

Dr Carl Kaysen  
Office of the Director  
The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Dear Carl,

This letter you have asked me to write about Robert Bellah will be mercifully short for I have little to add to the exceedingly prolonged opinions I expressed at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee with members of the Institute.

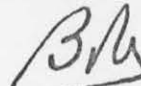
To begin with, we are all agreed, I take it, that Bellah is no latter-day Durkheim or Max Weber. But then, who is? He is, rather, one of the two ablest sociologists of his generation -- Shmuel Eisenstadt is the other -- now engaged in the comparative study of social change. Bellah has played a pivotal role in this field of inquiry, with special reference to the interaction of religion and other social institutions, from the time of his book on Tokugawa religion. His work has done much to reinstate a greatly needed comparative perspective in contemporary American sociology. I was interested to learn from Professors Reischauer and Kitagawa at the meeting that Bellah's influence has also been considerable in the field of Japanology.

I shall not comment upon the essays gathered up in Bellah's book, Beyond Belief, for what is at once the best and worst of reasons: I have not read most of them. But I have read with some care Bellah's most recent work: the extended introduction to his forthcoming edition of Durkheim's writings on morality and society. This is a first-class investigation of the theoretical texture of Durkheim's sociological corpus. It brings out implications of that body of thought that have escaped the notice of generations of Durkheimian scholars, including so exacting a one as Talcott Parsons. As I noted at our meeting, there are two or three lapses in this deeply informed essay; for one example, the questionable assumption that Durkheim's interest in psychic phenomena (of self, person, mind and psyche) necessarily meant his accepting the psychological mode of analyzing those phenomena as appropriate. But these are minor (i.e. easily remediable) flaws. Bellah's essay is much more than deeply informed commentary. It points to new directions of inquiry into normative structures in society and systems of social control.

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I know nothing at first hand about Bellah's book now in press or about his work in progress. But I have great respect for Clifford Geertz and his powers of judgment. It therefore weighs heavily with me, as I trust it does with you and your colleagues, that Robert Bellah is, to Cliff's mind, the social scientist who would do most at this time to advance the development of a school of social science at the Institute.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'RKM', written in a cursive style.

Robert K. Merton

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

EDWIN O. REISCHAUER

Room 503  
1737 CAMBRIDGE STREET  
CAMBRIDGE,  
MASSACHUSETTS 02138

December 5, 1972

Dr. Carl Kaysen  
The Director  
The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Dear Carl:

I am writing, as you requested, about the proposed appointment of Robert Bellah to the faculty of the Institute for Advanced Study. I can be quite brief because my oral testimony at the ad hoc committee meeting at the Institute on December 3 made the same points in more detail.

The Social Science Program proposed by Clifford Geertz seems to me an extremely significant research undertaking which is very well designed. To be truly meaningful, it must be a comparative study including a strong element of non-Western as well as Western cultures. For the program as I understand it, I know of no one who would be more valuable than Bellah. Work of this sort requires both breadth in conceptual analysis and depth in specific historical and cultural knowledge. I doubt if anyone surpasses Bellah in this sort of "breadth times depth" capacity. The professional sociologists at the ad hoc meeting clearly rated him among the very best in their field in what I call here analytic breadth. While he is more than a narrow "Japanologist," in the field of Japanese studies he is rated as thoroughly competent in a technical sense and as one of the most stimulating and innovative in bringing new perceptions to the whole field. His knowledge of Chinese, Islamic, and American Indian cultures, while not to be compared with his Japanese knowledge, adds further breadth-depth capacities that enhance both his Japanese work and his conceptual analyses.

I might add that my personal interest might be better served if Bellah does not go to the Institute, because this might enhance Harvard's chances of luring him back to Cambridge. However, I must admit that I would find it very surprising if the Institute does not choose to invite him.

Sincerely,



Edwin O. Reischauer

EOR:ng

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL THOUGHT

CHICAGO • ILLINOIS 60637

December 13, 1972

Dear Dr. Kaysen:

I am writing to you about Professor Robert Bellah: Professor Bellah is without any doubt one of the foremost sociologists of the United States, and for that matter, of the entire international profession of sociologists. In his own generation, with the exception of Professor Clifford Geertz and Professor S.N. Eisenstadt, there is no one who is his equal in the very important fields of comparative macrosociology and the sociology of religion. He is very exceptional among sociologists in his knowledge of Japanese and his scholarly knowledge of the literature on the culture and society of Japan. If to this one adds a scholarly knowledge of Islam, one readily sees what an exceptional figure he is in sociology.

He has very considerable imaginative powers as well as a meticulousness of scholarship, two qualities which do not often go together. He has, furthermore, an excellent mastery of sociological theory. He has always had a very strong theoretical concern running concurrently with and in active interaction with his more specialized interests in religion and in the Far East.

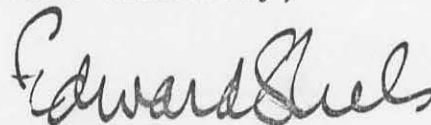
I must confess that Professor Bellah's popular religious writings do not please me, not only because I disagree with them, but also because their permeation with an attitude of distrust toward institutions which is often associated with ambivalence about the traditional forms of scholarly activity in our civilization. In fairness to Professor Bellah, however, I must also point out that his most recent work on Durkheim is a model of scholarship. It manifests the scholarly good taste which one feels entitled to expect from a person at the highest level of intellectual accomplishment.

I would like to take the opportunity at this time to reply to a question which was asked during the meeting of 3 December, but which was passed over. The question bore on relative merits of Professor James Coleman and Professor Bellah. Professor Coleman is of course a very outstanding person. His merits however are very different from Professor Bellah's. Professor Bellah is a scholar, a man of great erudition. Professor Coleman is a very outstanding sociological technician. As a quantitative research worker, he has of course a great lead over Professor Bellah, who has not up until recently done that kind of work. Professor Bellah, on the other hand, is a man of ideas, rich in content and broad in scope. Professor Coleman is far behind Professor Bellah in this respect. For the kind of program in the study of social change which has been drawn up for the Institute, there is simply no comparison between the fittingness of Professor Bellah and that of Professor Coleman. That kind of program requires deep learning about the great civilizations of the world as well as a differentiated and large-scale sociological imagination. Professor Bellah is especially well-equipped in these



respects and Professor Coleman, with all due respect, would be a tyro in such work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Edward Shils". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Edward" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Shils".

Edward Shils

Dr. Carl Kaysen  
The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey

CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

202 Junipero Serra Boulevard • Stanford, California 94305

Telephone (415) 321-2052

December 13, 1972

Professor Carl Kaysen  
Director, The Institute for Advanced Study  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Dear Professor Kaysen:

I can write on behalf of Robert Bellah with the confidence that he is a distinguished scholar with an extensive reputation as a man of important ideas. His books, Tokugawa Religion and Beyond Belief, have been widely read and have proved influential both in this country and Japan. I need not elaborate on these points which are matters of general knowledge. You are interested in having answers to certain specific questions.

First, how substantial a contribution has Bellah made to the understanding of the development of modern Japan? Bellah's Tokugawa Religion is an early book written under Parsons' influence. Its employment of sociological jargon has put some historians off. But the book has been extremely influential. As an early effort to apply Weberian concepts to the Japanese experience, the book has served a pioneering purpose and has broken open new vistas not only for Bellah himself but also for a host of other scholars. The book has been translated into Japanese and has been widely commented upon by Japanese historians. For them it helps to put Japan's modern development into a conceptual structure, other than Marxist, which they can appreciate and respect.

Bellah's early ideas have stimulated several groups of historians to my knowledge. At Harvard, he had a great influence on Albert Craig and other younger Japanese specialists. At Berkeley he has influenced Irwin Scheiner and Scheiner's students. He has had considerable impact on Ronald Dore of England. And he has certainly had an effect on my thinking and on my students. I think it safe to say that at all major institutions with Japanese programs, Bellah's work is highly regarded by graduate students and has been a stimulus to their thinking. How Bellah is regarded beyond these communities of historians with specific Japanese interest I cannot say.

Bellah's articles on Japanese modernization and cultural identity are to my mind his most provocative pieces. The influence of these articles is less measurable, but I know of several young scholars who count them as

Professor Carl Kaysen - Page #2

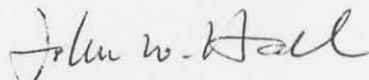
December 13, 1972

primary to their own efforts to grasp the dynamics of modern Japan. Men like Harootunian of Rochester and Pyle of Washington have certainly profited from reading them. In a recent talk I gave in Tokyo on the development of Japanese studies in America, in fact, I mention Bellah as one of the formative thinkers of our field whose ideas are just now catching on. Psychological motivation is something of which historians are becoming increasingly aware, and Bellah has led the way in the Japanese field in dealing with this issue.

You ask about Bellah's capacity to handle Japanese primary sources. Clearly he can handle what is to him primary, that is the contemporary writings of Ienaga and Watsuji. More archaic writings and manuscript materials would, no doubt, be out of his reach. But few Japanologists are fully at home in what the historian of Europe would call "primary sources." Bellah was not trained as a Japanese linguist, and he has acquired his linguistic capacities late in his academic life. But he has not been prevented from getting the material he has needed from Japanese sources in order to pursue a creative approach to modern Japanese history. Bellah's writings have each been based on the exploration of large new bodies of materials, and his footnotes reveal that he has mastered these materials.

Are Ienaga and Watsuji worth the effort Bellah has given them? The fact is that Bellah has made them worthwhile. Both men are important intellectual figures, but without the political or literary visibility to have attracted the attention of foreign scholars, at least until Bellah came along. Now the woods are full of young scholars looking for "case study" examples of the kind Bellah found. These men serve, under Bellah's treatment, as perfect foils for the exploration of deeply significant psychological themes in modern Japanese culture. But above all it has been Bellah's ability to weave these themes into a broader fabric, in his Beyond Belief, that exemplifies Bellah's creative achievement.

Sincerely yours,

  
John W. Hall  
Yale University

JWH/ap