A New Approach

The "Introduction to Technology" series which was pro-posed to the freshmen as part of their "orientation" is to be hailed as one of the few scarily constructive steps yet taken in this direction, despite reams of reports and writings which have emerged from the work of admirably devoted committees. In every freshman may have come away from the talks with an imperfect understanding of the subjects discussed, they cannot fail to have been impressed with the men who spoke, their seriousness, the scope of their efforts, and the importance of their goals.

If a few freshmen become so enthused with the perspec-tives offered by the various speakers that they are inspired by the newly-inaugurated freshmen "research" program this will be a conclusive sign that the lectures were worthwhile, and will perhaps be the best test of the theories realized by the new program. Dr. Land's ideas on abstraction may seem impractical to some, but their value will be shown far better through the initiative of individual freshmen than by an over-reaching administrative venture. The opportunity exists for those who will take it, and this is all that must be asked.

It was a bit unfortunate that some member of the Hu-manities or Economics Departments did not speak to the freshmen. We are told that significant advanced projects have been undertaken at MIT in these areas. If the insti-tute really wishes to demonstrate that these activities were more than mere accessories to the scientific and engineering programs, it could not have done better than to alert the freshmen to the most exciting work currently being done by humanities and economics researchers. Possibly those in charge of the "foundations of Technology" underestimated the breadth of the incoming freshman's interest.

Ivory tower

The end of every rush week finds a group of disappointed and perhaps disillusioned freshmen. These are the freshmen who hoped to join a fraternity but who never received a bid. Their reaction to this will range from a reconciled disappointment to the shrug of the shoulders, to a sour-gapes contempt for the fraternities, to a great emotional shock.

The only reasonable reaction to a bidless rush week is a shrug of the shoulders. A rash debut should consider rush week as an interesting experience which can teach one a considerable amount about himself and about other people. Too many freshmen follow a bidless rush week in sadness. Nothing has really changed to justify his depression. Our disappointed rusher is still the same person he was before. His real reason for MIT, for an education, has not changed. His future has not changed very much, for there is as much possibility in every area whether one lives in a fraternity or a dormitory. Just as not being at Cal Tech does not mean that a man will be a poor engineer, or that not receiving the last big offer does not make one an illiterate, nor being in a fraternity scarcely precludes a full life at MIT.

The dormitories at MIT provide excellent places to live. While their social life may not be as active as at the fraternities the dorms have a full social calendar. More important, however, is just as there are fine people in the fraternities there are fine people in the dormitories, as a glance at the Delta List or membership rolls will testify.

A recollection of the tactics of rush week proclaim that the judgments passed during rush week are hasty and, at best, formed upon a few hurried examinations. The fraternity rusher must make the decision to rush farther or to drop a man in about 30 seconds; everyone included in the fraternity men admit that this is hardly a thorough judgment.

Yet some kind of meaningful judgment is made in 30 seconds. The fraternities know that rush week is imperfect and that they make hasty decisions at times is indicated by the practice of mid-term rushing. In at least one house there are two members who never received a bid during rush week but who pledged later in the year in the more lenient ranking.

Why does the freshman without an invitation to join a fraternity feel with such feeling? Probably because this is his first real contact with MIT. He came to rush week seeking that upshot of the rushing pamphlet. Then he realizes that this life is not as he feels. He feels cast out and this loss of identity during the rush is a part of the movement which includes the unknown life of the dorms. It is only after he has lived in the dormitories that he realizes not being in a fraternity is not a dire fate, but a good life. If rush week were later in the year all the freshmen had been at MIT for a while, those who received no bid would be able to take it in stride. They would understand the MIT—living groups in their proper perspective. However the incoming freshmen has no perspective at MIT and even the smallest of happenings seems gigantic to his impressionable eyes.

Binding all the freshmen together and facing all of them equally is the challenge of MIT. This challenge itself is a bidless rush week as an interesting experience which can teach one a considerable amount about himself and about other people.

Carl V. Swanson, '60

review

The Crucible

A comparison between Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" and Jean Paul Sartre's adaptation of the same play to a forty-screen week would be unfair. The picture may be admired as such and as such it is unsatisfactory. The rhythms of the scenes are slow and tiresome, exhausting at times; according to the movie-making industry, a reasonable chronological sequence in the shooting of scenes is too expensive and therefore all scenes happening in the same locale whether at the end or the beginning of the movie must be taken at the same time. This is felt all along "The Crucible" and nothing ties the story together, as if a strange epidemic of hiccup struck the technical crew.

As for the last part of the picture, it's a confusion of scenery and explanations and motivations, a game of psycho-logical experimentation, in which the spectator gets lost, confused and even bored. The direction is weak and consequently the work of the actors is unsteady, loose, uneven. The photography by Claude Renoir is the only outstanding feature of this picture and for those, and those interested in this aspect of movies, it is worth going to the theater. The action is in Saloon and involves religious fanaticism, fear of witches, black magic, and work on Sundays. It also has love, adultery, pride, social protest, comedy, and whatever is concerned with the human welfare of those who pay for tickets. A slight touch of sex makes it Vivian, a slight reminder of the original dialogue makes it Arthur Miller's and a slight tendency to dress the women too tight (and cast: Mylene Demangeot) makes it exciting. The whole thing is a waste of the elements and will perhaps be the best test of the theories realized by humanities and economics researchers. Possibly those in charge of the "foundations of Technology" underestimated the breadth of the incoming freshman's interest.