**Summer lectures challenge established religious ideas**

By Tom Shroeder

"Embryology and the Self"—"Science and Theology as Intellectual Disciplines"—"On the Beliefs of Robots"—These were some of the titles in a series of weekly lectures held at MIT during the past summer. The series dealt with the interaction between modern science and modern religion. Sponsored by the Tech Catholic Club, these discussions were held most Wednesday evening at 8:00 p.m. in the von Herrman Rush room, from June 9 to September 30. The lectures were designed to challenge rather than support established religious concepts, and the participants represented a wide spectrum of viewpoints.

The roster of speakers included six MIT professors, four from Boston College, and one from each of Brandeis University, St. Stephen's Priory, and the University of California, Berkeley. Modern Cosmology, Prentice Hall, Biblical Research, and Artificial Intelligence were all examined in the course of the summer.

The idea of an "Amateur Philosopher's Club" for scientists arose from two sources: Fortune magazine for May 1965 carried the article "Science: Science Prize" by Professor Vincent D. Boudreau, Chairman of the MIT Corporation, in which Dr. Boudreau delineated the region between science and religion, and the recently popular book "The Phenomenon of Man" by Teilhard de Chardin, which is a pioneering attempt to reconcile the discoveries of modern history and anthropology with traditional religious views.

The writings of de Chardin supplied the starting point for the series, and formed the core of several of the talks. Beginning with a student panel to elucidate "The Phenomenon of Man" on June 9, the subject shifted slightly on June 15, asRev. Eleanor Bannister, S.J., Professor of Philosophy of Science at Boston College, discussed the relation between the philosophy of "Emergentism" characterized by de Chardin, and most of the contemporary philosophers of science. Professor Bannister shared insights on September 6, at which time he compared the means of approach used in science and theology, and explored the possibilities of applying scientific concepts to theology. On August 4, de Chardin's views on evolution were the topic of a talk by John O'Connor, Professor of Religious Studies at Springfield College.

Alone Sheehy, Professor of Philosophy of Science, was the first of the MIT Professors to speak. On July 7, he discussed "Scientific Methodology and Theology," expanding on the work of noted scientists, particularly Leibniz and Whitewash, on the problem of the existence of God, and considered the validity of the scientific method when applied to this function of our intelligence, and the Aristotelian concept of Man and the Christian concept of Man.

The first lecture on June 1, Rev. Michael Stack, O.P., Professor of Psychology at St. Stephen's Priory, brought out the theme of the work of Freud in modern religious thought.

The contemporary philosophy of Bernard Lonergan, known for his treatise "Intuition," was the topic of two lectures by Prof. Gary Schwartzkopf, S.J., of the Boston College Biology Department, who read Lonergan's "Genetic Method" with the approach of de Chardin; and one by Prof. Frank C. Finnegans, S.J., Head of the Philosophy Department of Boston College, explaining the more recent work by Lonergan on the development of understanding throughout history.

July 3 saw three discussion groups at once: Professor James Thompson, Chairman of MIT Philosophy Department, led a consideration of "Science as a Mode of Evolution"; George Przyt, Jr., Professor of Mechanical Engineering at MIT, headed a discussion of the role of science in religion; and Professor Schubert spoke to the theme of "The Future of Man in de Chardin's View." The most controversial talk of the series came on July 21, when William Carlos, Professor of Philosophy at Boston College, discussed "Embryology and the Problem of Robots." Carlos traced the meaning of "self" from the ideas of Aristotle up to the present day, citing the influence of embryological research on ontological understanding. Running a very close second for the "controversy" prize was the Septem- ber 1 talk by Professor Howard M. of the MIT Electrical Engineering Department on "The Beliefs of Robots," in which what could be expected of computer scientists in the next generation, and discussed the possibility of machines doing in machines of superior intellect when machines of superior intellect have been developed.

Baruch Levine, Professor of Languages at Brandeis University, returned from an expedition to Jordan put on "Scientific Techniques in Biblical Research" on August 13. Professor Levine clarified the ways in which modern scholarship has profoundly influenced contemporary interpretation of the Bible.

Cosmology was the theme in August 25, when Philip Morris, Professor of Physics at MIT, spoke on "The Elements of the Elements."