Who defines rationality?

By Tim Moody

"A rational man must be free," said Professor David Ornstein of Monday's Technology and Culture Seminar, "Concepts of Rationality." Professor Aiken is the Goldman Professor of Philosophy at Brandeis University.

Moderator for this seminar was Stephan Chorover, of the MIT Psychology Department, and the respondents to the presentation Associate Professor of History Arthur D. Kalden and Professor of Physics Victor F. Weisskopf.

Aiken opened his talk by emphasizing the atmosphere of freedom of exchange of ideas, and by defining some terms such as "rationality." He said that his own writings on rationality were pluralistic, that is, that he had more than one belief.

He noted that rationality is an "effort to mediate between the claims of rationality and the demands of what is regarded as non-rational or even counter-rational." Freud, on the contrary, incorporated these demands into his reality principle, which is directly within the scope of his view of rationality. Freud saw an element of complexity and tension in rational thought and looked at rationality as strictly a personal matter.

In Freud's view, the pleasure principle, artistic and escapist behavior, not only does not, in the case of James, supply a justification of rationality, but is also part of the ego.

In closing, he summarized some case studies on rationality on the subject. He said it is invalid to suppose that one form of rationality is more scientific or artistic, for example, it is Kalden's first respondent, addressed himself chiefly to the role of the universe in the cultivation of sensibility and judgment. He said that due to the dominance of a particular mode of rationality, called by Aiken, "corporate rationalism," the university today is suffering from a "narrowing of" (Please turn to page 5)