Mazlish examines humanities

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thing is, it is taking place to make us as new conditions, and there it seems to me that the Institute shows a great resiliency. I don't think it's a question of trying to place blame somewhere, I think the thing is to see what the problems are and to move on them, without substituting rhetoric for some of the real things.

Tech: Do you think there has been a major increase in the number of people who come to MIT as humanities majors?

Mazlish: No, I don't think that has taken place. MIT is obviously, for the foreseeable future, going to remain predominantly a scientific and technological institution, but I think there is room for an increased number of students who will want to emphasize the humanistic or social science side, and I think this will come in the next two or three years, but I don't think it has for the moment.

Tech: The freshman requirements being rather restrictive, do you feel that the MIT atmosphere is not geared for a seventeen or eighteen year old freshman who has yet to discover his or her field of interest?

Mazlish: I don't think MIT is unique in this problem. All universities have requirements that must be met. In fact, MIT is extraordinarily open to a student who wishes to learn the ropes and then move as he or she wishes once past the first year.

Tech: Do you think MIT students tend to be narrow and limited in perspective?

Mazlish: Some are and some aren’t. But in general, I’m very impressed with the openness brought to the Department by so many of the students.

Tech: Are there any plans to establish a graduate school in the Department?

Mazlish: Not a formal graduate program, but it might be of enormous intellectual benefit to have a very small number of specially picked graduate students, for example, someone particularly interested in electronic music. MIT is flexible enough so that you don’t need a set graduate program.

Tech: Do you foresee any changes in the Department in the near future?

Mazlish: I’d like to use that question to make a point about humanities. The word humanism is really somewhat ambiguous. There are certain disciplines that are normally covered under that term. Some of the subjects traditionally defined under the term are history, literature, philosophy, music, fine arts, linguistics, sociology, in other words, an enormous range. The Department of Humanities embraces four major disciplines or fields: literature, history, music and archaeology/archaeology. To begin with this is a great range, and these disciplines are extremely different. Literature, for instance, is involved in teaching, is more or less a matter of higher criticism, for others, it is primarily a question of literary history.

Then we have a number of other programs, for example, a fairly vigorous writing program that has been emerging, and a music section that is becoming more and more involved in a program throughout the Institute. Then we have the Cambridge Humanities Seminar, we have Crossroads, possibilities in American Studies or Russian Studies, and the different XXI majors. So when you say what’s (Please turn to page 9.)