To the Editor:

I would like to applaud the basic theme of your editorial of February 8; however, I feel that you err in some of your specifics. It is very true that the basic problems of today's world have their roots in our fractured approach to education. Yet the fault, dear editor, lies not in MIT, but in ourselves. During my year and a half here, I have never been "taught to consider only the immediate effects" of my actions (in fact I tend to do the opposite). Rather, this has become an implicit assumption of the society at large. In fact, the most noted practitioners of this art are to be found on Capitol Hill and in the White House (as they have been since the middle of the last century). I never heard the phrase "should" in educating students for the good of the students. I read a calculus text in his/her for the good of the student. I have further observed the tendency for students to move toward the liberal arts or to the sciences, to the exclusion of the other, when free electives provide them with a world history text). There is a compelling need to teach the concept of utopia to spend a few hours with a world history text). As a final comment on the very real problem of shortsightedness of solutions, it should be noted that MIT, or rather some individuals at MIT (for it is always the individual who finds solutions and takes actions), are busily engaged in understanding and remedying this situation. I refer to the systems dynamics group, under the direction of Professor Jay Forrester, at the Sloan School. Although the accuracy of some of the "detailed world models" of this group may be debated, systems dynamics as a way of looking at the world is of immense importance, if the forest as well as the trees is to be seen. Actually it is little more than Aristotle's Logos revisited and amplified — and hence of immense use to a society which has, by and large, neglected the Greek and Latin classics to a dusty bookshelf on the charge of not being "relevant."

Ralph L. McNutt, Jr.
February 8, 1977

(Denver's editor's note: The article in question was a commentary, not an editorial, and as such does not necessarily represent the view of the editorial board of The Tech.)

feedback

Humanities, classics: necessary education

To the Editor:

Most were aristocrats, slaveholders, or people supported by the money of these. Outstanding examples are Leo Tolstoy and Thomas Jefferson. The reason for this state of affairs is rather simple: the overall standard of living was so low that those with no access to accumulated wealth had no time to be humanists or scientists; they were too busy just trying to stay alive.

Yet all this was changed by the "technicians" without whom there would have been no rapid increase in living standards, for those willing to work, and no opportunity for those not born into the landed classes. I submit that American democracy has lasted as long as it has largely due to the expanding horizons and increasing worth to which engineers have been the midwives (and I invite those cynics who disparage our students are quick to protest any move to make educational requirements more stringent..."

Bigger Nevelson unveiled in S.F.

To the Editor:

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