Bakke case opponent unjust

To the Editor:

We came in search of insight and what we got was garbage.

Those who want to hear James Tisdale attack the Bakke decision and defend affirmative action in his informal debate with Nathan Glazer went home disappointed. Instead of outlining, as did Glazer, the contrasting Supreme Court philosophies and taking a position on each, Tisdale elected to evade the Bakke subject as much as possible in favor of issues and personalities.

In the first place, he absolutely failed to develop the case for affirmative action as it was and is being pursued.

He simply did not understand the problem. His concentration on the role of the state apparatus to combat discrimination, which he called 'bureaucratic paranoia,' was a perfect example. He was quite right in saying that the state is not the solution to the problem of discrimination. It can be a part of the solution if it is used properly, but it is not a panacea. But his attempts to prove that the state is not the solution were not convincing. He did not develop the issues in a way that would make sense to the audience.

He was equally wrong in his treatment of the Bakke decision itself. He did not even begin to address the pros and cons of the decision itself.

Nowhere was Tisdale's lack of balance and perspective more evident than in his gargantuan paranoia. While people, said he, are presently engaged in a "global" conspiracy to oppress the black race, European immigrants were lured to this country after the Civil War, he added in a discussion afterwards, specifically for the purpose of taking jobs away from blacks." (There is no document, he said and when pressed to furnish one as evidence). His practice of assigning people of a particular kind an immutable pattern of behavior and of attributing sinister motives to everyone who does not belong to his group may appeal to the arch ideologue, but to even the most casual observer of human life it will seem a ludicrous fraud.

If the MIT community is to take a step in the direction of justice now and then, it must abandon the Manichean practice of dividing mankind into 'good guys' and 'bad guys' and recognize that good and evil exist within each and every individual. To cultivate the good and control the bad, we must impose the discipline of logic upon our minds at all times (not just in the classroom) and realize that it is in sound reasoning and not emotional indulgence that insights flow. Unless we do this, those who value justice might just as well step aside now and yield the lecture halls to the sophists. -- Roger Kolb