Kurt Vonnegut, celebrated author of *Slaughterhouse Five*, and most recently *Galapagos*, spoke about everything from blue-footed boobies to nuclear war to Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* last Tuesday in Kresge Auditorium.

He correctly assumed that most of the MIT students gathered in Kresge were either engineers or scientists. Focusing on this, he warned them to be cautious as to "whose dreams they make come true." Vonnegut said that fascists such as Adolf Hitler couldn't have carried out their horrible realities without the cooperation and assistance of "chemists, architects and engineers."

An oath, similar to the Hippocratic oath for doctors, should be administered at MIT's graduation ceremonies suggested Vonnegut. Such an oath would facilitate an awareness of the consequences that scientific research holds for civilization, he said.

"We ought to acknowledge that all modern sciences have their roots, if you go back far enough, in the wish to make people well again," he said. "I commend [the Hippocratic oath's] spirit, though not its particular content, to all modern sciences, if we go back far enough, in the wish to make people well again."

Vonnegut also discussed his latest work, *Galapagos*, during his "5-minute monologue." The novel is set in the Galapagos Islands, which were made somewhat of a tourist attraction by Charles Darwin's interpretation of habitation there.

Vonnegut described his role as author of *Galapagos* as a kind of prophetic Darwin, predicting humanity's predicament a million years from now.

He also characterized "survivor of the flimsy," or "Darwinism," as "the religion of our time." He said that both the Republican and Democratic political parties are Darwinistic, with the former the more extreme of the two.

He described World Wars I and II as Darwinistic, whose sole purposes were "killing people, to improve breeding stock." A pacifist, he said he owes this attribute to his growing up in the 1930s, when pacifism was fashionable.

Arms manufacturers were collectively referred to then as "Messiahs of Death," he said.

Times have since changed and "we live in a much more militaristic society," he commented. "But war has lost its glory" with victims of Hepatitis B, and existed long before the AIDS outbreak.

The danger to health care workers is actually less with AIDS than with Hepatitis B, Kane added, because the AIDS virus is more fragile and therefore harder to transmit.

The Medical Department would do what was "clinically indicated" to care for an AIDS patient, Kane said. The AIDS patient is not at risk from the AIDS virus itself, but from infections and diseases which take advantage of the patient's weakened immune system. The care of an AIDS patient involves treating the patient's body, not the disease.

AIDS patients need care which the Medical Department could not provide, the patient would not be sent to an outside hospital, Kane said. "The last thing we want to do is feed into that discrimination."

MIT student with AIDS dies

A March of Dimes research grantee, Dr. Knudsen studies the hearing of owls. If he can discover how it works, develops and adapts to hearing impairments, he will gain insight into hearing loss and deafness.

Such basic knowledge may one day help bring sound to "hables who are born deaf."

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