LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ATO responds to community pressure

On Saturday, Feb. 24, Alpha Tau Omega had their annual "Heaven and Hell" party. The T-shirts associated with this party had a picture of a man holding a woman's bikini top over one of his shoulders and a devil over the other. The caption above the angel reads, "You'll regret it," over the devil it said "Do it. You know she wants it." Underneath was printed "Which would you choose?"

We believe that this T-shirt promotes one of the most insidiously myths about rape, namely that a woman desires to be forced into sex. It allows doubt as to whether when a woman says "No," she means it. This attitude creates a frightening atmosphere for women at MIT.

We understand that ATO neither created this attitude nor monopolizes it. Many members of the fraternity have expressed concern. However, their insensitivity to the implications of this T-shirt, in fact, results in the promotion of date rape.

We condemn this attitude. We also hope that the reaction to this type of sexism will be to educate members of the MIT community. Violence against women is unacceptable.

Rachel Harmon '90

(Editor's note: The Tech received this response on Sunday.)

We, the brothers of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity, would like to address the issues surrounding the T-shirt made for our "Heaven and Hell" party held on Saturday, Feb. 24.

First and foremost, we realize the damage the T-shirt has caused. The design printed on the T-shirt is clearly offensive, with dangerous suggestions and implications. Date rape and violence against women have been caused by sexist attitudes such as these. This way of thinking does nothing more than propagate sexism in our own fraternity and in the community. The brothers of ATO have received much criticism for the forms of rape or violence against women. Accordingly, as a response to the strong and damaging message made by the shirts, we have formally condemned them. Furthermore, we have taken action against the fraternity — as a group — to destroy all of the shirts.

As a house, we are taking a significant financial loss of nearly $1000 by destroying these shirts. But we believe that the costs to us are small compared to the damage which the T-shirts would have continued to inflict on the community and on our fraternity.

We realize that much damage has already been done, yet hope that our actions will succeed in minimizing the harm which we have caused.

The design of the T-shirt was not made with the approval or consent of the house as a whole, but is being paid for by all the members of Alpha Tau Omega, not only from our pockets, but with our tarnished image. We sincerely regret our mistake and the bad judgment which led to the present situation. We recognize the need to take steps to prevent such an incident from happening again.

On behalf of the ATO President, ATO Other members of ATO

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Opinion

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Letters policy

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