THE TAMPONS ARE NOT ALRIGHT: DECONSTRUCTING EPISTEMOLOGIES OF MENSTRUATION IN "MODERN" AMERICA

by

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Abstract

Although tampons were in use for centuries, it was not until the twentieth century that big businesses focused on mass manufacturing, marketing, and design of tampons. Despite these efforts, tampons fluctuated in consumer usage in the United States. This project will explore how misogyny, cultural taboos, and government oversight created a paradigm in which menstrual products were not properly tested and vetted for consumer safety, helping to create the Toxic Shock Syndrome crisis of the 1980s. Moreover, due to the racism and classism pervasive within the corporate and advertising structures of the tampon industry, tampons were primarily marketed to young, white women, partially leading to the result that they made up the typical victim profile, compared to other demographic groups. This research will re-affirm previous work on and provide new insights into the varying marketing strategies of tampon companies, especially after the scandal of TSS, the ways women responded to the unsafety of tampons at various points in time, and public reactions to the tampon-related health scandals.

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Introduction

Although menstrual products, including tampons, have been in use for centuries, the 20th century ushered in the mass marketing, manufacturing, and distribution of tampons in the United States; however, they continued to fluctuate in customer usage.[12] Using market research from the 1960s and early 1970s on tampons, subsequent advertisements found across brands and magazines, periodicals and news coverage of the era, opinion polls, feminist zines, and secondary sources (including medical reports), I argue that misogyny, cultural taboos, and government oversight created a paradigm in which menstrual products were not properly tested and vetted for consumer safety, helping to create the Toxic Shock Syndrome crisis of the 1980s. Moreover, due to the racism and classism pervasive within the corporate and advertising structures of the tampon industry, tampons were primarily marketed to young, white women, partially leading to the result that they made up the typical victim profile, compared to other demographic groups.[3]

The Early Years

On November 19, 1931, Earle Cleveland Haas filed a patent for a catamenial device featuring an absorbent pad, applicator, and plastic string—a device that would come to be known

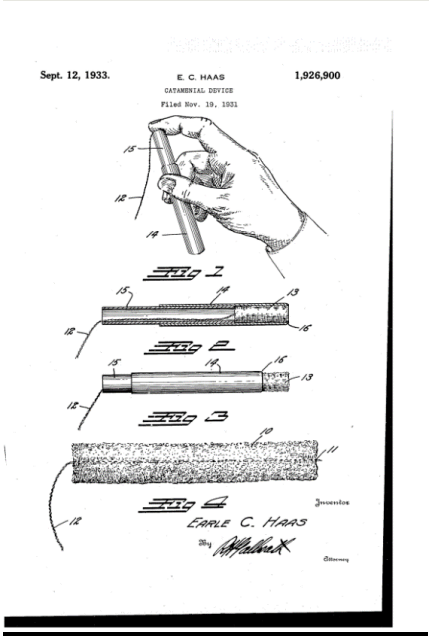
[1] David Edgerton's *The Shock of the Old* first piqued my interest in studying the history of technology in use, specifically the use of tampons in the United States during the 20th century. See David Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old: Technology and Global History since 1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[2] The chapter "Rags to Riches: The Menstrual Products Industry" in *The Cure: A Cultural History* describes the use of paper tampons in ancient Japan, vegetable fiber tampons in Indonesia, soft wool tampons in Rome, papyrus tampons in Egypt, and grass and root tampons in Equatorial Africa. See Janice Delaney, Mary Jane Lupton, and Emily Toth, "Rags to Riches: The Menstrual Products Industry," *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation*, (New York: Mentor, 1988), 139.

[3] The CDC reports on TSS show that the vast majority of TSS victims were white women; however, although advertising and marketing helped create this pattern, one must also consider the racism and classism present within the US healthcare system, leading to underreporting for other racial and ethnic groups. Finkelstein and Von Eye reaffirm that tampon usage is highest among white women compared to other racial and ethnic groups, but also posit that despite this difference in usage, it seems likely that other factors like differences in diagnosing and reporting TSS are also at play, particularly for Black women. See Finkelstein and Von Eye, "Sanitary Product Use by White, Black, and Mexican American Women" in *Public Health Reports* 105, no. 5 (1990): 495.

as the first "modern" tampon.[4] Haas would then sell his patent to Gertrude Tendrich who would soon establish Tampax as the first commercial tampon brand. Tampax would continue to dominate the tampon industry for the next thirty to forty years, with one 1972 market research report even highlighting how Tampax had become so synonymous with the tampon that many women did not know of other brands.[5]

Figure 01:



Source: Earle Cleveland Haas. Catamenial Device. Patent Number 1926900, November 19, 1931.

Setting the Stage: Corporate Competition

After World War I, the Kimberly-Clark Company had an excess of bandaging materials, specifically "cellulose wadding made from wood fibers," that nurses had found to be an adequate

[4] Earle Cleveland Haas. Catamenial Device. Patent Number 1926900, November 19, 1931.
[5] Institute for Motivational Research Inc., *Developing a Market for Tampon Products: Report on Phase I of a Motivational Research Study*. (Yorktown Heights: August 1972): 16.

menstrual product during World War I, eventually leading to the manufacture of the sanitary napkin brand Kotex in 1921. [67]

By 1926, Johnson and Johnson became interested in expanding to the menstrual products division, and, to do so, R.W. Johnson hired Lillian Gilbreth as a market and consumer research consultant for their Modess sanitary napkins, which served as an important development in the market research component of the industry.[8] Traditionally, instead of far-reaching market research studies, corporate men used customer letters and the opinions of their wives and (female) secretaries in evaluating products.[9] As a result, Gilbreth's sprawling 137-page report, released on January 1, 1927, detailing consumer practices regarding sanitary napkin usage, product design improvements, and potentially successful marketing strategies served as a significant point of departure.[10]

One of the most important findings from Gilbreth's report was the potential market for menstrual products, namely the large number of women who could be transformed into consumers. Gilbreth explicitly highlighted this reality, writing that "Only a fraction of the available market has been reached by the manufacturers in spite of the number and variety of commercial napkins offered," and "to a large degree the napkins now offered on the market do not meet or satisfy consumers' demands."[11] Gilbreth's asserted that

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[6] Vern L. Bullogh, "Merchandising the Sanitary Napkin: Lillian Gilbreth's 1927 Survey," *Signs* 10, no. 3 (Spring 1985): 616.
[7] Delaney, Lupton, and Toth, "Rags to Riches," 139.
[8] Rayvon Fouché and Sharra Vostral, "'Selling' Women: Lillian Gilbreth, Gender Translation, and Intellectual Property," *American University Jourral of Gender Social Policy and Law* 19, no. 3 (2011): 838.
[9] Fouché and Vostral, "'Selling' Women," 837.
[10]Thomas Heinrich and Bob Batchelor, *Kotex, Kleenex, Huggies: Kimberly Clark and the Consumer Revolution in American Business*. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004), 63-64; Bullough, "Merchandising," 616-617; Fouché & Vostral, "'Selling' Women," 826.
[11] Bullough, "Merchandising," 618.

> in the United States alone, there are approximately 30,000,000 women between the ages of 13 and 45, the average age of onset and menopause. Following these averages then, each woman during her menstrual life would require a total of 4, 576 napkins. Commercially, this would mean, even if but one-third of the 30,000,000 were taken, a potential market of over 45,000,000 (618).

As a result, Johnson & Johnson began to see the market potential—and thus the possible profit—of the menstrual products industry. After following Gilbreth's recommendations, which included changing the shape and size of the Modess sanitary napkin, retaining the name Modess, and allowing women to survey products before their final introduction into the market, Johnson & Johnson dramatically increased their shares of the market, "soon outdistance[ing] all…rivals except Kotex."[12] Kotex and Modess would remain the main competitors in the sanitary napkin market, without any other contenders until the introduction of Confidets (from the Scott Paper Company) in 1961.[13]

The August 1978 headline of a Wall Street Journal article described the increasing competition in the tampon market due to P&G and Johnson and Johnson introducing new products, just two years before the first study linking TSS to tampon usage.[14] Although Tampax remained the dominant tampon company for several decades following its founding, by the 1960s and 1970s, corporate competition in the tampon market had skyrocketed due to the high profit potential of tampons, particularly absorbent tampons—a race sparked by Procter & Gamble's entry into the field with the super absorbent Rely tampons in 1974, the year P&G

[12] Bullough, "Merchandising," 617.
[13] Rags to Riches, p.139
[14] Deborah Sue Yaeger, "Rising Rivalry: Tampax is Challenged by New Competition in the Tampon Market: Playtex vies for leadership as Johnson & Johnson, P&G offer new brands: fighting over K.C. Women," *Wall Street Journal* (New York City, New York). Aug 21, 1978.

entered Rely into test markets.[15][16] As a result, the marketing and advertisements for tampons increased exponentially, including in the new medium of television advertising. Unfortunately, the thorough testing of these products did not follow the same trajectory. Instead, a focus on profit over consumer safety would lead to a national health scandal.

Market Research: The Institute for Motivational Research

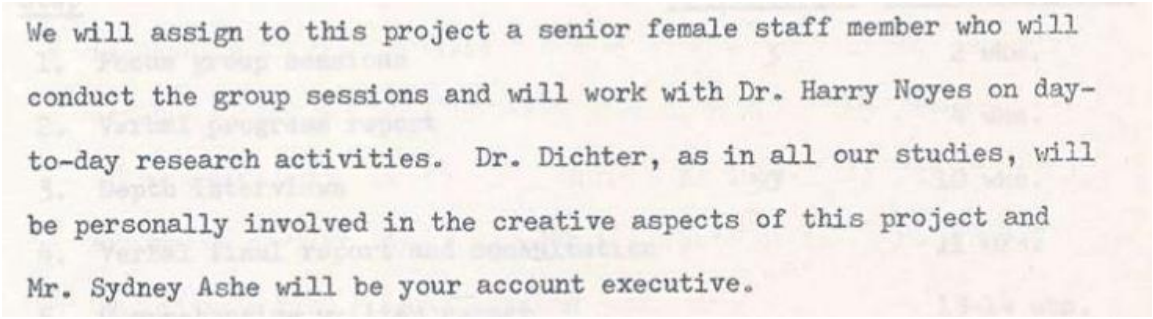
The Institute for Motivational Research, headed by Ernest Dichter, undertook market research reports for several companies within the feminine hygiene product industry, and these reports offer a rich source of data on the advice companies were receiving regarding menstrual products in the 1960s and 1970s.

The Institute for Motivational Research often used two types of interviews to collect data on menstrual product usage: focus group interviews and "depth" interviews. Female interviewers and staff members were essential to the creation and collection of this data; however, they remain anonymous within the market research reports. For instance, three different reports detail how a "senior female staff member" will conduct the focus group sessions.[17] In direct contrast to the unnamed senior female staff member, the reports detail that she will "work with Dr. Harry Noyes" while "Dr. Dichter…will personally be involved in the creative aspects of…[the] project" and the account executive is "Mr. Sydney Ashe.[18] Moreover, "Institute trained female interviewers" conducted all the depth interviews, yet remain unnamed, as seen in Figure 3.[19] As a

[15] Rags to Riches, p.140
[16] Crain Communications, Inc., *Procter & Gamble,* 45.
[17] Institute, *Developing a Market*, May 1972, 11; Institute for Motivational Research Inc., *Strengthening the Market for Modess and Stayfree Sanitary Napkins: A Proposal for Phase I of a Motivational Research Study*. (Croton-on-Hudson: June 1972), 17; Institute for Motivational Research Inc., *Strengthening the Market for Modess and Stayfree Sanitary Napkins: A Proposal for Phase I of a Motivational Research Study*. (Croton-on-Hudson: June 1972, Revised), 20.
[18] Institute, *Developing a Market*, May 1972, 11; Institute, *Strengthening the Market* June 1972, 17; Institute, *Strengthening the Market*, June 1972 (Revised), 20.
[19] Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 4; Institute, *Strengthening the Market*, October 1972, 5.

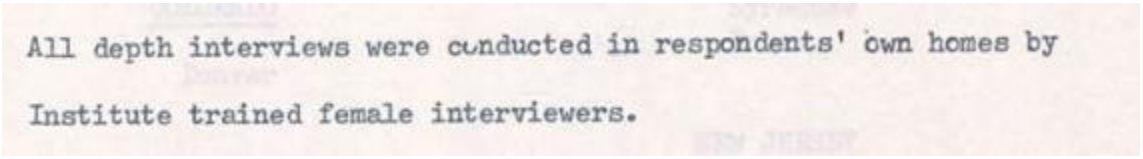
result, although women were involved in the creation and collection of market research reports on menstrual products, their status continued to be inferior to men, seen in the absence of recorded names on the documents. Furthermore, the reports also demonstrate how men tended to occupy positions of power within the Institute for Motivational Research, meaning women were less involved in the final research report and corporate exchange.

Figure 02:


We will assign to this project a senior female staff member who will conduct the group sessions and will work with Dr. Harry Noyes on day-to-day research activities. Dr. Dichter, as in all our studies, will be personally involved in the creative aspects of this project and Mr. Sydney Ashe will be your account executive.

Source: Institute for Motivational Research Inc., *Developing a Market for Tampon Products: A Proposal for Phase I of a Motivational Research Study*. (Croton-on-Hudson: May 1972): 11.

Figure 03:


All depth interviews were conducted in respondents' own homes by Institute trained female interviewers.

Source: Institute for Motivational Research Inc., *Strengthening the Market for Modess and Stayfree Sanitary Napkins: Report on Phase I of a Motivational Research Study*. (Croton-on-Hudson: October 1972): 5.

The demographic data of the depth interviews, particularly regarding geographic distribution of participants, reveals that the majority of participants were most likely white. Additionally, the demographic breakdown of participants in the depth interviews demonstrates an expectation of white as the default. For example, the methodologies of the August 1972, October 1972, and March 1973 reports contain no explicit mention of the ethnic or racial

background of participants—although the reports do stress the geographic and socioeconomic diversity of the participants. However, after cross-referencing the cities listed in the market research reports with the 1970 US Census, it becomes apparent that the locations chosen were often predominately white.[20]

The 1970 US Census used white as the default with all "other races" as a separate category, meaning that the demographic breakdown of cities does not show the reality of the different communities and cultures present in a specific location. Furthermore, the 1970 Census was the first time the question regarding a Hispanic or Latina/o ethnic identity or origins appeared and it was not until the 2000 Census that more than one race could be marked for identity, again reinforcing the notion that although the 1970 US Census provides some insight into the racial and ethnic demographics of the locations mentioned in the market research reports, the reality is infinitely more diverse.

Although many of the larger cities chosen across all three reports had more diverse demographics, especially compared to the rest of the state, the same cannot be said for many of the smaller cities, which were often almost exclusively "white." For example, only two locations had a larger percentage of non-white residents: Brooklyn (a borough of New York City with 50.6% of the population being non-white) and Washington, D.C ., with 72.3%.[21] Comparatively, 13 of the cities had over a 99% white population.[22] Moreover, the location of the Institute for Motivational Research recorded in most reports is Croton-on-Hudson, a city where 98.3% of the population is white.[23] Thus, within menstrual product market research reports of the era,

[20] In 1970, 87.5% of the population identified as white while 12.5% identifed as non-white in the US. Overall, the 1970 US Census placed white as the default—with a separate category for all "other races." See US Census Bureau, *Census of Population: 1970*.
[21] See Appendix B, Tables 3A, 3B, and 3C.
[22] See Appendix B, Tables 3A, 3B, and 3C.
[23] See Appendix B, Tables 3A, 3B, and 3C.

whiteness was centered, meaning that the reports often lacked diverse perspectives and reinforced whiteness as standard. As a result, menstrual product companies—already dealing with the racism, sexism, and classism within their own corporate structures—often reified the racism, sexism, and classism of market research into their advertisements in the 1960s and 1970s.

Age of Consumer in Market Research

Market research reports often emphasize the "best" ages for tampon advertising to target. Across multiple documents, this age is again and again reinforced to be young women between the ages of 17 and 19.[24] One recommendation even stressed that "since most product switching takes place at a young age, it is important to reach women when they are young, that is, between 17 and 19 years."[25] Likewise, another document explains that "when young women go away to college, or at least reach college age, is a time of consensual validation…This is the age at which they are most likely to try tampons, either because of peer pressure or out of a spirit of experimentation…"[26] The Institute also suggests advertising in magazines with a young audience to further reach the target consumer demographic.[27] Unsurprisingly, then, the major target of tampon advertising was teenage girls and young women.[28] As a result, in connection with the centering of whiteness in market research reports, tampon advertisements tended to be geared towards white young women specifically, compared to other racial or ethnic backgrounds.

Type of Consumer

[24] For further details, see Appendix A, Table 1A.
[25] Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 38.
[26] Institute for Motivational Research Inc., *Developing a Market for Tampon Products: A Proposal for Phase II of a Motivation Research Study*. (Croton-on-Hudson: August 1972), 4.
[27] Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 38.
[28] Crain Communications, Inc., *Procter & Gamble: The House that Ivory Built*, (Lincolnwood: National Textbook Company, 1988), 131.

Several of the market research reports stress that "high-income" women are more likely to be tampon users, and thus, companies should advertise to this demographic segment. One report even describes "socio-economically lower income women [as] tend[ing] to hold on to the older ideas and ways of doing things…mostly it is a cultural resistance, a basic distrust of large manufacturers," thus stressing that companies should not aim their advertisements to "lower socioeconomic groups."[29] Instead companies should focus more on the "upper socioeconomic groups" because they "are more open to new ideas, financially and emotionally; they are tampon users."[30] As a result, tampon advertisements often targeted the middle and upper classes.

Common Themes

Within the market research reports, tampons served as a physical embodiment of modernity, especially compared to sanitary pads. For instance, one report stated that "the tampon user wears it as a badge of modernity, and the napkin user wears it as a badge of sufferance."[31] A different report detailed how a "tampon is considered to be a symbol of modernity, a contribution to the progress of women as freer, more flexible beings."[32] As a result, the Institute of Motivational Research often suggested that tampon advertising must "stress modernity, as opposed to newness…stress freedom in normal everyday activities…as opposed to the strenuous 'sports' appeal…stress sociability and the greater security one can feel with others."[33] Absorbency, hygiene, and protection appeared frequently within market research reports, particularly the necessity for tampon advertisements to stress the high absorbency and hygiene of the product.[34] Based upon participant response to various menstrual product advertisements, the

[29] See Appendix A, Table 1B.
[30] See Appendix A, Table 1B.
[31] See Appendix A, Table 2.
[32] See Appendix A, Table 2.
[33] See Appendix A, Table 2.
[34] See Appendix A, Tables 3 and 4.

Institute of Motivational Research advised companies to depict very specific understandings of womanhood, namely the emphasis of motherhood through the depiction of children with their mothers in menstrual product ads and natural femininity (i.e., menstruation as natural and inherent to womanhood).[35] Although the medicalization of menstruation did not occur as frequently within the market research reports as the other themes, the reports often detailed that tampon packaging should recall associations with doctors and hospitals and that medical science helped remove the stigma of menstruation.[36]

Translating Market Research into Advertisements

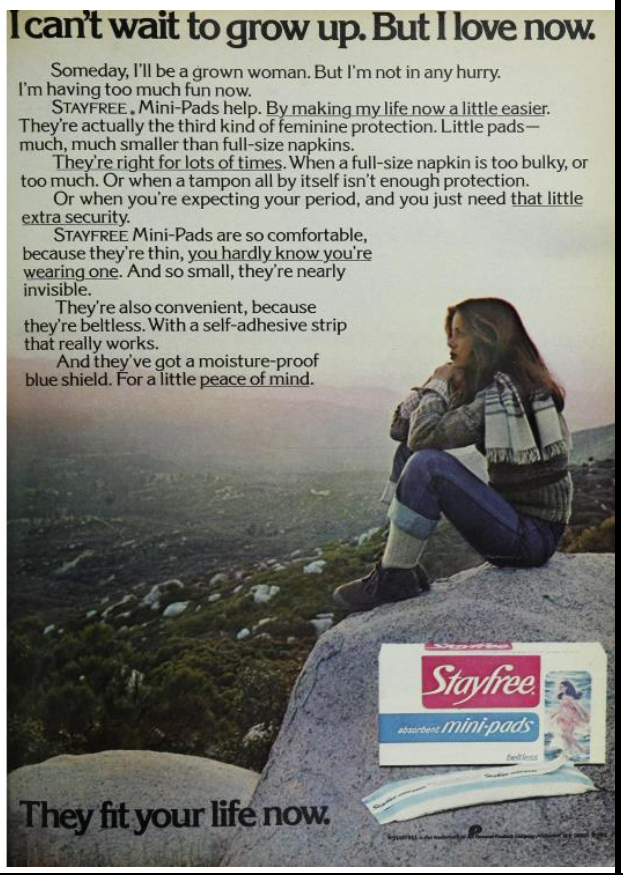
The Institute for Motivational Research also conducted several proposals and reports for the Personal Products Company, a division of Johnson & Johnson, in the early 1970s (1972-1973). The suggestions found within these market research reports directly mirror later advertisements. For example, Table 1 depicts a Stayfree mini-pad advertisement from January 1975, which declares that with the mini-pad, consumers can "be free," "wear what [they] want," and "not let [their] period hassle [them]. Comparatively, in the August 1972 report, the Institute suggests the Personal Products Company should emphasize how their products make menstruation "so easy for you that you can forget the unpleasantness and remember only the positive fulfillment of being a woman," in advertising. In this way, the Stayfree ad is a direct translation through its depiction of the Stayfree mini pad as a tool for reducing the difficulties of menstruation.

In a similar manner, Table 1 also depicts a November 1976 Stayfree mini-pads advertisement found in *Seventeen* magazine, whose readership was primarily young women, features a young woman sitting on rock, reflecting that she cannot wait to grow up, although she

[35] See Appendix A, Table 5.
[36] See Appendix A, Table 6.

will enjoy her life at this moment. The ad further describes the product as being perfect for this stage of life (i.e. adolescence) because of their compact size and ease of use. By emphasizing the excitement and pride of beginning menstruation and being an adolescent, along with the differing menstrual product needs that entails, this advertisement quite closely parallels the Table 1 quote from the August 1972 Report that the Personal Products Company should "address yourselves in your advertising to this sense of pride and excitement: 'We know how proud and excited you were that first time. Here is a product that really understands your needs…'" Subsequently, many of the suggestions found in market research reports often become directly translated into advertisements, meaning the tampon advertisements are often a direct visual reflection of the ideas and beliefs espoused in market research reports and often further reinforce certain epistemologies of menstruation. As a result, certain ideas (i.e., the centering of whiteness, the link between tampons and modernity, the employment of menstrual products as markers of hygiene through their absorbency and protection, the construction of very specific, bio essentialist understandings of womanhood, and the medicalization of menstruation) become further solidified in the public consciousness and construction of menstruation.

Table 1: Comparing Stayfree advertisements to Market Research



It would certainly be advantageous, therefore, to address yourselves in your advertising to this sense of pride and excitement: "We know how proud and excited you were that very first time. Here is a product that really understands your needs and makes this time of the month so easy for you that you can forget the unpleasantness and remember only the positive fulfillment of being a woman."

Sources: Personal Products Company (Stayfree), "I can't wait to grow up. But I love now," advertisement, *Seventeen*, November 1976, 55.
Personal Products Company (Stayfree), "The Stayfree mini-pad. Why wear more than you have to?" advertisement, *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1975, 57.
Institute for Motivational Research Inc., *Developing a Market for Tampon Products: Report on Phase I of a Motivational Research Study*. (Yorktown Heights: August 1972).

Corporate Culture

Many of the leading competitors in the tampon industry had corporate cultures steeped in misogyny and racism, helping to explain why there was such a lack of concern or regard for the safety of tampons. For example, Kimberly Clark struggled with a racist and sexist corporate culture, resulting in the 1973 EEOC lawsuit accusing the company of having hiring biases against both women and African Americans, along with other discriminatory practices.[37] Just four years earlier the company had finally agreed to give its female employees paid lunch breaks—a benefit their male counterparts had already been enjoying.[38] Moreover, Nancy King Reame describes how during her first visit to the menstrual products division at Kimberley Clark Corporation, following her completion of preliminary research on the development of a synthetic fluid that the company could use to test product absorbency, she learned that "most corporate scientists (besides being all male) were trained as paper chemists…[and] started their research

[37] "Kimberly-Clark Accused by EEOC of Hiring Bias Against Women, Blacks," *Wall Street Journal* (New York City, NY), Feb 8, 1973.
[38] "Firm Yields to Women on Lunch Period Pay," *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, CA), Apr 30, 1969.

and development (R&D) careers in the 'feminine hygiene' product line before progressing to more prestigious divisions such as Kleenex and paper towels."[39] Within the Kimberley Clark Corporation, then, there was not a single woman involved in the design or creation of Kotex tampons. Moreover, the feminine hygiene products division was considered far less prestigious than other divisions, like those of Kleenex, and was often considered an unfortunate step on the ladder to "better" positions. Reame further clarifies how inadequate testing practices (i.e., the absorbency of tampons is tested using Syngina fluid, or blue saline solution, not menstrual blood) and regulations (i.e., the lack of a set Federal standard for absorbency ranges on tampon boxes) led to such dire health hazards.[40] Moreover, the bias towards menstrual products and menses itself severely affected the quality and quantity of safety studies.

The corporate culture at Procter & Gamble was also rife with sexism and racism. For example, in 1979, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission even sued P&G on the basis that female employees did not receive the same employment opportunities as men, namely the attenuation of senior positions and guaranteed employment.[41] In fact, by the early 1990s, "no woman ha[d] ever reached senior management ranks." [42] This reality of normalized corporate sexism also extended to the menstrual products division, where there was not a single woman involved with Rely tampons "until after the product was linked…" to Toxic Shock Syndrome.[43] P&G also struggled with rampant sexual harassment.[44]

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[39]Nancy King Reame is a former OB nurse with a Ph.D. in reproductive physiology who served at the forefront of research into Toxic Shock Syndrome and tampon safety through her role as the scientific consultant for consumer groups on the FDA's task force. See Nancy King Reame, "Toxic Shock Syndrome and Tampons: The Birth of a Movement and Research 'Vagenda'" in *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies*, ed. Chris Bobel et al. (Springer Singapore, 2020), 688.
[40] Reame, "Birth of a Movement."
[41] "Suit Accuses Procter & Gamble of Bias Against Female Workers," *New York Times*, (New York City, NY), May 8, 1979; "Procter & Gamble Bias Suit," *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, IL), May 10, 1979.
[42] Swasy, *Soap Opera*, 14.
[43] Swasy, *Soap Opera*, 150.
[44] Swasy, *Soap Opera*, 12.

Racism also occurred frequently at Procter & Gamble. For example, one senior executive, Dick Nicolosi, told summer interns that "P&G had 'lowered its standards' when accepting blacks, and that's why the company lost so many."[45] Unsurprisingly, such attitudes spilled over into advertising with "one [P&G] ad…declar[ing] that Ivory 'civilized' Native Americans" while other ads became notorious for their sexist portrayals of women.[46] P&G's sexist portrayals of women in advertising eventually led to the 1975 boycott of the company, organized by the United Presbyterian Church.[47] This was not the end of boycotts for P&G, with the Concerned Black Artists for Action organizing a 1980 boycott of P&G products due to the company's frequent sponsorship of shows that were "racially unbalanced."[48] The continued acceptance and permissibility of racist and sexist attitudes within the corporate cultures of many menstrual product companies directly translated into tampon advertising while also influencing the care and attention paid to product research and development, eventually culminating in a public health nightmare.

Tampon Advertising, pre-TSS (1970-1978)

Exploring tampon advertisements from 1970 to 1978 found in the Women's Magazine Archives 1 and 2, several themes arise frequently across publications, including the centering of "whiteness' as standard, the medicalization of menstruation and tampons, the linkage of tampons with modernity, and the emphasis on absorbency, protection, and hygiene.

Centering "Whiteness"

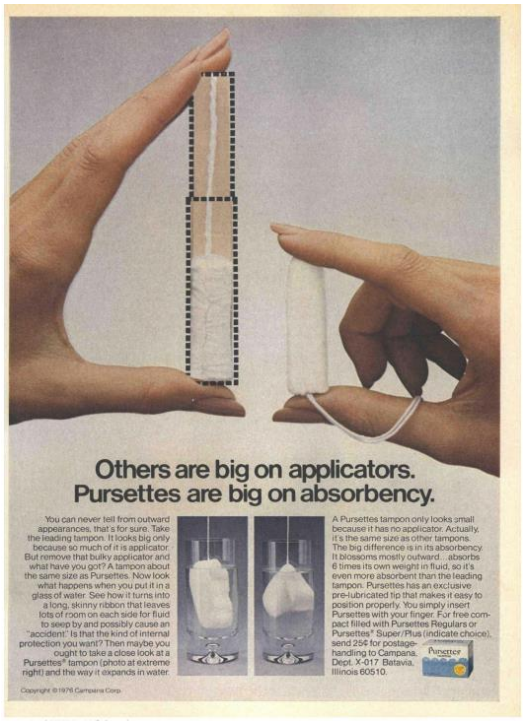
[45] Swasy, internal P&G memo in *Soap Opera*, 15.
[46] Swasy, *Soap Opera*, 106.
[47] Joan Beck, "Sexist Commercials: Men Tell Women How," *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, IL), Jul 25, 1975.
[48] L.C. Fortenberry, "CBAA: 'Don't Squeeze the Charmin,'" *Los Angeles Sentinel* (Los Angeles, CA), Jan 24, 1980.

Many early Kotex advertisements "targeted moneyed, well-educated white women, in the belief that they would be willing to pay the high price of five cents per pad..."[49] Likewise, most depictions of nurses used young white women; however, older nurses sometimes occurred and Black nurses were often used in advertisements aimed at Black audiences.[50] For tampon advertising in the 1970s, this standard of "white as default" continued, with most tampon advertisements featuring white women, except in magazines targeted specifically to non-white audiences. For example, Appendix C shows eight different Kotex advertisements from 1972 with the exact same wording; however, only one of the eight advertisements features a Black woman. Furthermore, the only advertisement featuring the Black woman is solely used within *Essence* magazine whereas the advertisements featuring white women are used across a large variety of magazines, including *Cosmopolitan*, *Redbook*, *Seventeen*, and *Woman's Day*.

Appendix D shows the thirteen different cartoon Pursettes advertisements from 1970 to 1980, and every single advertisement centers white cartoon characters. In fact, there is not a single advertisement depicting a non-white cartoon character. In a similar manner, the same Pursettes advertisement featuring a white hand model, as seen in Figure 8, appeared in *Essence*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Seventeen*. Essentially, there was no alternative advertisements featuring a non-white model, and the advertisement was even placed in a magazine geared towards Black audiences, demonstrating how closely entwined whiteness was with tampon advertisements during the 1970s.

Figure 04:

[49] Sharra L. Vostral, "Masking Menstruation: The Emergence of Menstrual Hygiene Products in the United States," in *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, ed. Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 248-249.
[50] Johnson, "Who Would Know," 46.



Source: Pursettes, "Others are Big on Applicators. Pursettes are Big on Absorbency," advertisement, *Essence*, February 1977, 9.

Pursettes, "Others are Big on Applicators. Pursettes are Big on Absorbency," advertisement, *Cosmopolitan*, January 1977, 77.

Pursettes, "Others are Big on Applicators. Pursettes are Big on Absorbency," advertisement, *Seventeen*, November 1976, 95.

Medicalization of Menstruation

From the very beginning, medical symbols and figures, particularly nurses, were a major component of menstrual product advertisements. For example, during the interwar period, Kotex ads used medical advice and nurses to "imply that sanitary napkins were quasi-medical products."[51] Similarly, the packaging of Kotex featured "white St. George's cross on a blue background in the box design," in order to visually associate the brand with the American Red Cross and its legitimacy as a medical organization.[52] In the immediate post-World War II period (1940-1950), advertisements, particularly advertisements for menstrual products, often featured nurses, who were positioned in either roles of medical authority or as representatives of

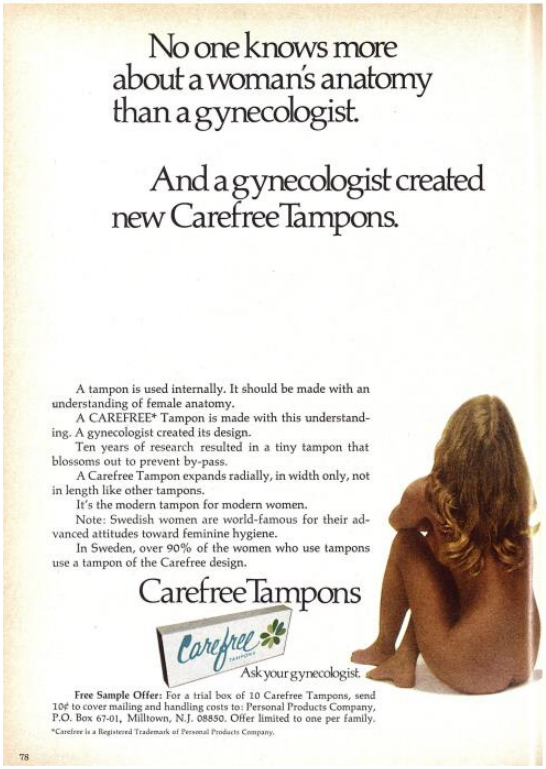
[51] Heinrich and Batchelor, *Kotex, Kleenex, Huggies*, 55.
[52] Heinrich and Batchelor, *Kotex, Kleenex, Huggies*, 55.

"feminine expertise" in family and female health.[53] Thus, the prominent usage of nurses and medical symbols in menstrual product advertisements highlights the increasing medicalization of menstruation that occurred in the first half of the 20th century and continued in tampon advertising in the latter half of the century.[54]

This trend would continue, even into the 1970s, with many brands ascribing the creation of the product to a gynecologist or a similar figure of medical authority. For example, the Carefree brand would often highlight how a gynecologist created the product, as seen in the March 1970 Carefree Tampons advertisement depicted in Figure 05. The advertisement also explicitly declares "no one knows more about a woman's anatomy than a gynecologist," to establish the product's medical authority and further reinforce brand legitimacy as a semi-medical product. However, because of this construction, the advertisement reinforces certain epistemologies about women's bodies, specifically the prioritization of Western medicine and science to other understandings, during an era in which women did not have equitable access or representation in field. After all, only a little over 10% of matriculants to medical school were women in 1970-1971. [55] Furthermore, only 9.2% of medical school graduates were women in 1970-1971.[56] Thus, menstruation and menstrual products became increasingly removed from the expertise of women, instead transferring to specific forms of Western medicine, which were often very male-dominated.

Figure 05:

[53] Emily Johnson, "'Who Would Know Better than the Girls in White?' Nurses as Experts in Postwar Magazine Advertising, 1945-1950," *Nursing History Review* 20 (2012): 46.
[54] Havens and Swenson found a "scientific theme was used to demonstrate the efficiency of the product" including its "exclusive 'design by a doctor,'" in tampon advertisements from 1976 to 1986. See Havens and Swenson, "Imagery," 92.
[55] Anne Walling, Kari Nilsen, and Kimberly J. Templeton, "The Only Woman in the Room: Oral Histories of Senior Women Physicians in a Midwestern City," *Women's Health Report* 1, no. 1 (2020): 279-286.
[56]W.F. Dubé, "Woman Students in US medical schools: Past and Present Trends," *Journal of Medical Education* 48, no.2 (1973): 186-189.



Source: Carefree, "No one knows more about a woman's anatomy than a gynecologist. And a gynecologist created new Carefree Tampons" advertisement, *Parents' Magazine & Better Living*, March 1970, 78.

Modernity

In the 1920s, manufactured menstrual products became a symbol of the "New Woman" archetype, or the image of a "modern" woman, because they could "emancipate" women from the "liability of menstruation."[57] In other words, menstrual products could both conceal and hide women's menstruation in both public and private, freeing them the shame associated with visible displays of menstruation.[58] As a result, menstrual hygiene products became linked to the image of modernity; however, over time, tampons would continue to be heavily associated with modernity, but sanitary pads would not, instead becoming associated with the past.

[57] Vostral, "Masking Menstruation,"244.
[58] Vostral, "Masking Menstruation," 256.

Modernity, specifically in the context of womanhood, is often associated with the freedom of movement, agency and activity, and a role in the job market. The perception that tampons afford greater freedom of movement and activity helps explain its continued conflation with modernity, especially in comparison with the sanitary napkin. Table 2 shows two different Tampax advertisements that stress the "modernity" of tampons through the visual representation of a working woman—an image often used in American constructions of modern womanhood—and the depiction of women in different stages of physical activity—images associated with the freedom of movement and personal agency in the American imagination.

Table 2: A Badge of Modernity

Sources:

Tampax, "Why do modern women in 118 countries use Tampax tampons?" advertisement, *Good Housekeeping*, March 1970, 153.

Tampax, "I trust the facts" advertisement, *Redbook*, October 1976, 74.

Cleanliness is next to Godliness: Absorbency, Protection, & Hygiene

The popularity and success of sanitary napkins in the early-to mid-20th century reflected the increasing obsession with cleanliness in American society, specifically the conflation of "cleanliness" with "civilization," an obsession intimately entwined with the "superiority" of the white, upper-class body.[59] Furthermore, sanitary product advertisements often reinforced prevailing cultural shame regarding menstruation through the construction of menstruation as a

[59] Vostral, "Masking Menstruation,"

"hygienic crisis" needing a protective, absorbent security system that would allow for women to avoid embarrassment.[60] One of the best visual demonstrations of this is the 1974 Playtex ad featured in Figure 06, which describes how the product's use of deodorant adds an extra layer to the protective, absorbent security system of tampons. In describing how the Playtex deodorant tampon provides increased protection—compared to non-deodorant tampons—the advertisement reinforces the construction of menstruation as a hygienic crisis while also reinforcing menstrual taboos regarding odor and blood as "unclean" or "unhygienic."

In a similar manner, the o.b. advertisement found in Figure 07 also reaffirms the construction of menstruation as a hygienic crisis by emphasizing the protective capabilities of the product, specifically through its high level of absorbency. As a result, the advertisement promises o.b. tampons will protect consumers from embarrassment more thoroughly than other tampons on the market. Overall, the themes of absorbency, protection, and hygiene feature heavily across menstrual product advertisements.

[60] Beverly Havens and Ingrid Swenson, "Imagery Associated with Menstruation in Advertisements Targeted to Adolescent Women," *Adolescence* 23, no. 89 (1988): 89-97.

Figure 06:

Playtex, "Everybody's selling tampons as if comfort and absorbency are all you want. Only Playtex adds deodorant for more complete protection" advertisement, *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1974.

Figure 07:

Source: o.b.,"'With the o.b. Method, I don't have to keep checking and changing,'" advertisement, *Cosmopolitan*, December 1977.

The Test Market

As July melted into August during the sweltering summer heat of 1975, Rochester residents began questioning the introduction of Rely tampons into the marketplace, with one local paper declaring that "Rochester women are being made guinea pigs for a new product…."[6162] One of the major concerns plaguing Rely tampons was their construction, namely the fact that Rely tampons contained a "mixture of carboxymethylcellulose [CMC], a wood pulp derivative, and polyurethane, a plastic," compared to the cotton makeup of most other tampons during the era.[63] During the early 1970s, new studies were coming out tentatively linking polyurethane to negative health risks.[64] However, some isocyanates, or one of the compounds that make up polyurethane polymers, are known to cause cancer in animals and are classified as potentially carcinogenic to humans.[65] In other words, polyurethane itself is not regulated by the Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA) as a known carcinogen, but isocyanates, one of the compounds that helps create polyurethane polymers, can have negative health effects. Additionally, although carboxymethylcellulose (CMC) "…is safe enough to be used as an additive in ice cream, P&G did not test to see how it would react with bacteria."[66]

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[61] See "July 1975." Rochester Weather in 1975. https://www.extremeweatherwatch.com/cities/rochester/year-1975. See also "August 1975." Rochester Weather in 1975. https://www.extremeweatherwatch.com/cities/rochester/year-1975

[62] Armand Lione and Jon Kapecki, "Testing Tampons in Rochester: just what can you Rely on?" *Rochester Patriot* (Rochester, NY), July 23-August 5, 1975.

[63] Lione and Kapecki, "Testing Tampons."

[64] J. Autian et al. found an increased rate of cancerous tumors in the rats implanted with polyurethane polmers compared to the control groups See J. Autian, A. R. Singh, J. E. Turner, G. W. C. Hung, 1. J. Nunez, and W. H. Lawrence, "Carcinogenesis from Polyurethans," *Cancer Research* 35 (June 1975): 1591-1596. Stemmer, Bingham, and Barkley reported that polyurethane dust tended to produce inflammation, fibrosis, and scars in the lungs. See also Klaus L. Stemmer, Eula Bingham, and William Barkley, "Pulmonary Response to Polyurethane Dust," *Environmental Health Perspectives* 11 (June 1975): 109-113.

[65] Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), *Safety and Health Topics: Isocyanates*. Washington, DC: US Department of Labor, 2024. https://www.osha.gov/isocyanates

[66] Swasy, *Soap Opera*, 134.

The *Rochester Patriot* channeled this concern, questioning in a July 23-August 5 article "just how much of the polyurethane can escape from Rely in the human body?" and "…how much of the isocyanate is left in Rely's polyurethane?" before revealing that reporter probes to Procter and Gamble were unsuccessful.[67] Shockingly, Procter and Gamble was already aware of the potential risks of Rely's fabrication, a reality captured in an internal memo from February 28, 1975, which describes potential product criticisms, including the fact that some components were carcinogenic and that the tampon "affected the natural microorganisms and bacteria found in the vagina."[68]

After reading the *Rochester Patriot* article, Judy Braiman-Lipson, a tenacious consumer safety advocate, became even more concerned with the status of Rely tampons.[69] Braiman-Lipson's story begins just days after giving birth, when she began coughing up blood while celebrating with family on Christmas Day 1966. At first, doctors diagnosed the condition as pneumonia; however, as Braiman-Lipson's symptoms worsened, the prognosis changed to lung cancer. It was not until after surgeons removed a rib and part of Braiman-Lipson's left lung that a pathologist determined the "rounded nodules" were actually non-cancerous "inhalation abscesses" caused by Braiman-Lipson's aerosol hairspray. [70] This series of unfortunate events sparked the transformation of Judy Braiman-Lipson into a fierce advocate for consumer safety and protection.

By 1975, Lipson-Braiman had already tangled with several corporations ("'I'm not frightened by the size of the company if the facts are right'"), founded the Empire State

[67] Lione and Kapecki, "Testing Tampons."
[68] Swasy, *Soap Opera*, 133.
[69] Swasy, *Soap Opera*, 133.
[70] Consumer vs. Giants: The Making of an Advocate," *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, CA), June 15, 1979; "She's the 'Ralph Nader of Rochester,'" *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, IL), May 6, 1981.

Consumer Association, and was serving on the federal Product Safety Council when she began receiving calls from local women reporting side effects, including vomiting and diarrhea, after using Rely tampons.[71] Braiman would continue to receive reports of side effects, including instances of vaginal itching and burning, painful removals, and even the tampons falling apart while still in use.[72] Despite these problems and reports, Procter & Gamble decided to continue on its trajectory, resulting in "about 60 million samples of Rely…[being] sent [out] to 80% of US households, at a cost of ten million."[73]

Toxic Shock Syndrome and Tampon Usage

Robin Spooner was celebrating her sixteenth birthday on August 26, 1980, when she suddenly became ill. Within two days, she was in critical condition at the Saint Louis Children's Hospital. Less than a month later she was dead of TSS.[74]

Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) refers to a life-threatening bacterial infection caused by *staphylococcus aureus* and characterized by a high fever, rash, hypotension, desquamation (or the shedding of skin), and multi-organ system involvement/impairment.[75] Dr. James Todd first described the disease in 1978 after examining the cases of several children.[76] By 1980, several doctors and the CDC had noticed a troubling association between menstruating women, particularly those using tampons, and the contraction of menstrual Toxic Shock. Shands, Davis,

[71] "Consumer vs. Giants," *Los Angeles Times*; Swasy, *Soap Opera*, 133.
[72] "P&G to Remove Plastic in Controversial Tampon," *Rochester Patriot* (Rochester, NY), December 11, 1975-January 13, 1976.
[73] Swasy, *Soap Opera*, 134.
[74] "Rely Tampon User, 16, Dead of Toxic Shock," *Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), September 25, 1980.
[75] Kathryn N. Shands et al., "Toxic-Shock Syndrome in Menstruating Women: Association with Tampon Use and *Staphylococcus aureus* and Clinical Features in 52 Cases," *The New England Journal of Medicine* 303, no. 25 (1980): 1436-1442; Jeffrey P. Davis et al., "Toxic-Shock Syndrome: Epidemiologic Features, Recurrence, Risk Factors, and Prevention," *The New England Journal of Medicine* 303, no. 25 (1980): 1429-1435; Walter F. Schlech III et al., "Risk Factors for Development of Toxic Shock Syndrome: Association with a Tampon Brand," *JAMA* 248, no. 7 (1982): 835-839.
[76] Todd, James, et al. "Toxic Shock Syndrome Associated with Phage-Group-I Staphylococci," *The Lancet* 2, no. 8100 (1978): 1116-1118.

and others published the first definitive studies linking TSS with tampon usage. Then, in May of 1980, the CDC issued a report denoting the emergence of a "newly recognized illness" known as Toxic Shock Syndrome, and its high prevalence among menstruating women.[77]

By January 1981, the CDC received 941 confirmed cases of TSS from the period 1970 to 1980, 905 of which occurred in menstruating women, the majority of which were white.[78] Furthermore, one-third of all cases occurred in girls between the ages of 15 and 19. In a 1982 report, the CDC confirmed the disease was primarily recognized in young white women: 98% of the TSS cases where the patient's race was known occurred in women with a white, non-Hispanic background.[79] By 1983, the CDC reported that 99% of TSS cases featured tampon users.[80] Furthermore, "race and age distributions remained constant when examined by year of onset," or menstrual TSS cases continued to be associated with young white women.[81] Many different studies also highlighted the higher proportional usage of tampons by white women both during the TSS health crisis and afterward, compared to other racial and ethnic groups, including Black, Asian, and Latina women.[82]

However families continued to be devastated by the death of loved ones, with Robin Spooner's father stating that "'I do feel a lot of animosity toward Procter & Gamble…How would you feel if you had a happy, healthy 16-year-old daughter and all of a sudden she's not

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[77] "Toxic-Shock Syndrome—United States" in *MMWR: Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report* 29 (1980): 229-230.
[78] "Toxic-Shock-Syndrome-United States" in *MMWR: Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report* 30, no. 3 (1981): 25-28.
[79] "Of the 1,355 cases in which the patient's race was known, 1,315 (97%) occurred in white non-Hispanics, including 98% of the menstrual cases and 90% of the nonmenstrual cases." See "Epidemiologic Notes and Reports Toxic-Shock Syndrome, United States, 1970-1982," *MMWR: Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report* 31, no. 16 (1982): 201.
[80] "Of the menstruation-associated cases, information on the type of sanitary product used was available for 1,535: 1,517 (99%) occurred in tampon users; 17 (1%), in users of napkins and minipads exclusively; and one (1%), in a sea-sponge user." See "Update: Toxic-Shock Syndrome—United States" in *MMWR: Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report* 32, no. 30 (1983): 398.
[81] "Update: Toxic Shock Syndrome," 398.
[82] See Irwin and Millstein 1982; Finkelstein and Von Eye 1990; Buchta 1995; Omar et al. 1998; Middleman and Varughese 2012; Romo and Brenson 2012; Dodson et al. 2021.

here?'"[83] Similarly, the grandmother of another TSS victim described how "'Angela had used one box of Rely and some of another…but I got her the Playtex when I heard the bad news about Rely. I didn't want her to use tampons at all, but you know these young girls…I feel like I've lost two children, my daughter and my granddaughter.'"[84]

Corporate Response

Tampax and Playtex voluntarily took their super absorbent tampons off the market after a Harvard medical study found that certain synthetic fibers (i.e. polyacrylate) increased the risk of TSS.[85]

Procter & Gamble

Attorneys from Procter & Gamble often tended to attack victim credibility or attempt to shame victims in lawsuit cases regarding Toxic Shock Syndrome. For instance, during the court proceedings of the lawsuit brought about by Deletha Dawn Lampshire, the lawyer representing P&G argued Lampshire had contracted the flu, not TSS, before subsequently closing the case with an excerpt from one of her essays detailing her accomplishments and activities six months after the illness, questioning if the essay sounded to the jury "like a woman who has been held back or deterred by an illness?'"[86] This attitude mirrors how Frank Woodside, an attorney for P&G, questioned Mike Kehm on his deceased wife (Patricia Kehm)'s sexual history prior to her contraction of TSS, including asking if the couple "had oral sex" and if Kehm was certain that "'[Pat] didn't sleep around,'" resulting in Kehm later reflecting that the questions were

[83] "Rely Tampon User."
[84] Michael DeCourcy Hinds. "Ordeal of a Victim," *New York Times*, (New York City, NY), Oct 9, 1980.
[85] "Two Firms Voluntarily Take Tampon Products Off Market," *The Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.), April 27, 1985; David Stipp, "Toxic Shock Linked to Certain Fibers used in Tampons," *Wall Street Journal* (New York City, NY), June 6, 1985; Ellen Schechet, "Judges using damage awards to shape cop=prorate behavior, *Houston Chronicle*, (Houston, TX), July 28, 1985.
[86] "Company Found Negligent in Toxic Shock Disease Suit," Special to *New York Times*, (New York City, NY), March 20, 1982.

"'downright degrading.'"[87] This strategy reoccurred frequently in Rely cases, with victims often being questioned about their sexual history and/or activity. For instance, three different lawyers, Alfred Congdon, Sidney Siben, and Alfred Julian, all described how they were notified by P&G attorneys that their clients would be asked many questions on their sexual history and activity. Siben left no room for interpretation, explaining how P&G attorneys informed him that his clients "would be asked 'who, where, and when: Who they had sex with, where they had sex, when they had sex, and when in relation to the time they got sick."[88] Julian added how such questions were intimidation tactics "'to make women plaintiffs loath to press a case… [by] smear[ing] them with sexual implications."[89] Congdon described how his 17-year-old client "refused to answer 'a significant number of questions about sexual activity' in a pretrial deposition."[90] One feminist zine from the era even described how "lawyers for Procter and Gamble…apparently are asking explicit questions about toxic shock victims' sex lives in an effort to water down the women's lawsuits against the company."[91] By 1989, Procter & Gamble would spend almost 85 million dollars in defense costs—with 33.8 million owed to victims and 51 million owed to four of the company's insurers.[92]

Procter & Gamble also faced accusations of suppressing data on the link between TSS and tampon use, with some doctors testifying that P&G "grant applications stipulate that research has to be submitted to P &G twenty-one days prior to submission for publication in a research journal."[93]

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[87] Swazy, Soap Opera, 143-144.
[88] "Plaintiffs in Rely Tampon Case Questioned about Sex Activities," *Newsday, Boston Globe*, (Boston, MA), December 9, 1981.
[89] "Plaintiffs."
[90] "Plaintiffs."
[91] "Tampon Makers Use Smear Tactics," *New Women's Times*, February 1982, 7.
[92] Paul Souhrada, "P&G Spent $85 Million Defending Rely Claims," *Cincinnati Business Courier*, (Cincinnati, OH), March 27, 1989.
[93] Swasy, *Soap Opera*, 142.

Johnson and Johnson

Johnson & Johnson was not exempt from lawsuits and had to pay over 10 million dollars to Lynette West, a victim of TSS.[94]

Tampax

In 1981, Tampax decided to capitalize on the public panic regarding Toxic Shock Syndrome and, subsequently, undertook a five-million-dollar promotional campaign reintroducing its all-cotton tampon—with the express purpose of expanding their share of the tampon market.[95] Interestingly enough, Tampax's test marketing occurred in Rochester, New York—one of the two test sites for Procter & Gamble's Rely tampon.

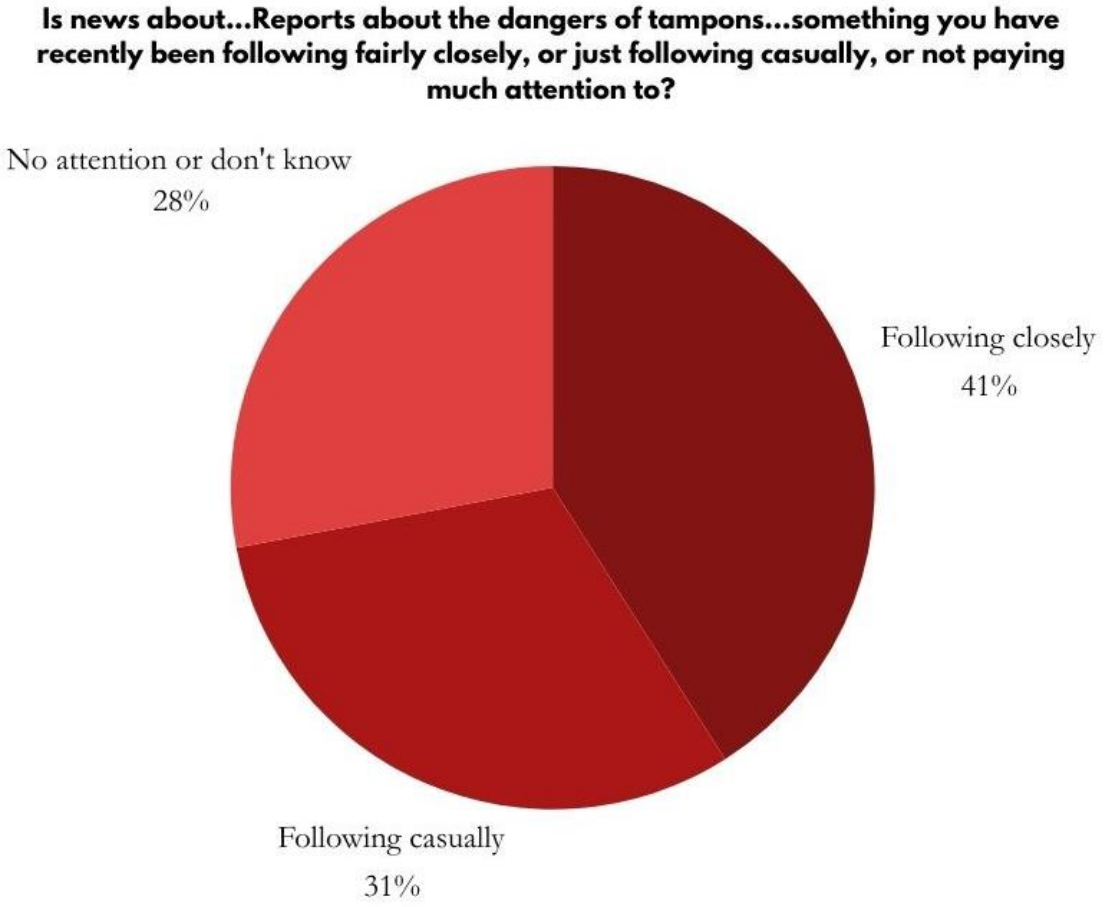
Playtex

Playtex attempted to hire lawyers involved in TSS lawsuits and allegedly attempted to buy others off. For example, J. Michael Liles, an attorney formerly involved in several TSS suits, removed himself from two current Missouri lawsuits against Playtex because a "conflict has arisen," namely that he had signed a $500,000 contract with Playtex.[96] A Kansas lawyer, Mike B. Hutton, claimed Playtex offered him money to stop taking TSS cases; however, one of Playtex's attorneys, Charles McCaghey, denied his statements.[97] Furthermore, one of Playtex's insurers, Columbia Casualty Co., filed a lawsuit against Playtex for fraudulently withholding information about Toxic Shock Syndrome and their tampons to receive recall coverage based upon an alleged

[94] Carrie Dolan and Paul Ingrassia "Toxic Shock Victim Wins $10.5 Million In Decision Against Johnson & Johnson," *Wall Street Journal* (New York City, NY), December 24, 1982.
[95]"Tampax Again to Sell All-Cotton Tampon in Scare's Aftermath: Promotion of Five Million is set for 1936 product in Wake of Toxic Shock Syndrome," *Wall Street Journal* (New York City, NY), February 19, 1981.
[96] Benjamin Weiser, "Playtex Hired Opponents Lawyer in Toxic Shock Lawsuits," *The Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.), October 16, 1989; Benjamin Weiser, "Lawyer Switched Sides in Playtex Toxic Shock Cases," *The Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.), October 16, 1989.
[97] Michael Bates, "Playtex paid; lawyer quit toxic shock cases," *St. Petersburg Times* (St. Petersburg, FL), October 27, 1989.

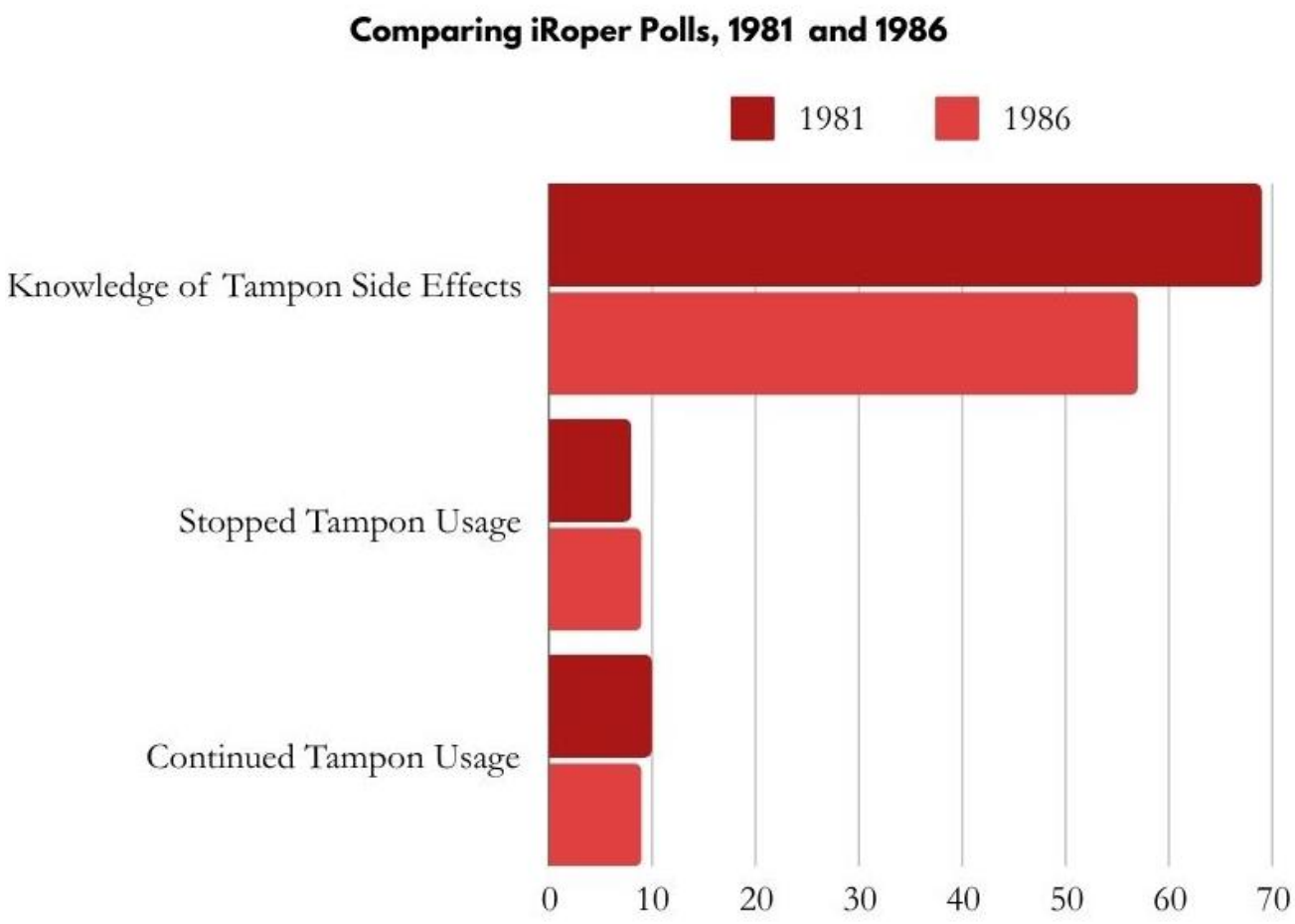
internal memo—obtained by J. Michael Liles—"showing Playtex had been planning to remove its super-absorbent tampons from the market since 1983."[98]

Public Opinions



Source: The Roper Organization. 1980. *Is news about...Reports about the dangers of tampons...something you have recently been following fairly closely, or just following casually, or not paying much attention to?* Cornell University, Ithaca, NY: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

[98] Bates, "Playtex Paid."

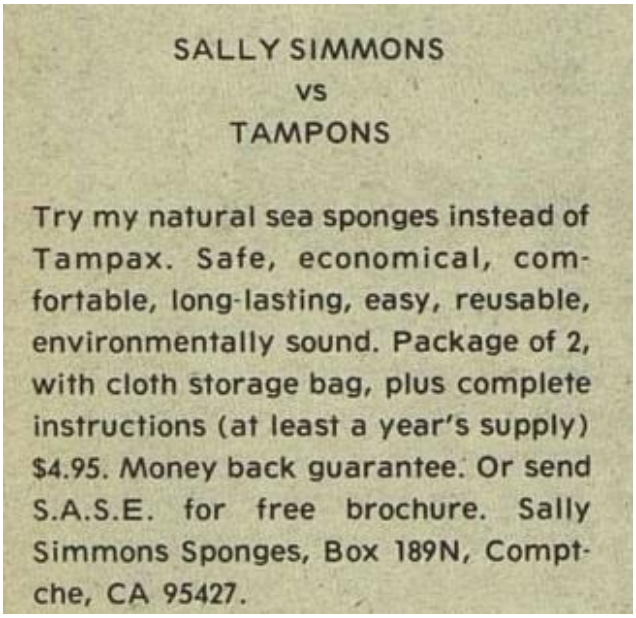


Sources: The Roper Organization. 1981. *Roper Reports Poll: Trade/Consumerism, Questions 87-89*. Cornell University, Ithaca, NY: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.
The Roper Organization. 1986. *Roper Reports Poll: Trade/Consumerism, Questions 95-97*. Cornell University, Ithaca, NY: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

Feminist Reactions

By the 1970s, many feminist zines took issue with the capitalization of menstrual healthcare products, especially tampons, by large corporations. As a result, menstrual sponges began to grow in popularity as an alternative to tampons, with many zines containing advertisements for sponges, often by women-owned businesses, such as the one depicted in Figure 10.

Figure 10:

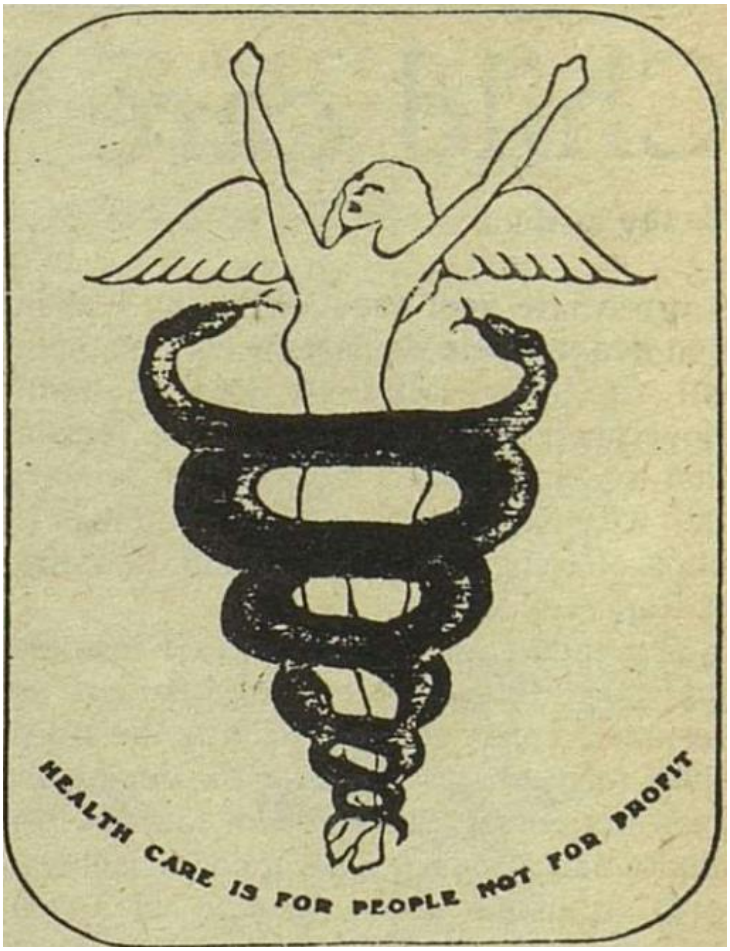


Source: "Sally Simmons vs. Tampons," *New Directions for Women*, November/December 1980, 23.

Following the CDC's report linking tampons to Toxic Shock Syndrome in 1980, more feminist zines began recommending the use of menstrual sponges in place of tampons. One article in the feminist zine Big Mama Rag even uses the title "They Say Stick It/We Say Sponge It" before noting that the use of menstrual sponges over paper sanitary products is a "way of withdrawing support from the patriarchy and taking back control of our bodies." In this way, the use of sea sponges became linked to a form of resistance against patriarchal corporate industries, particularly the tampon industry. As a result, many feminist zines also questioned and challenged the overly capitalistic and male-centered tampon industry. For example, one zine questioned "And, why would a woman contribute money to a multimillion-dollar business for a product she flushes down the toilet?"[99]

Figure 11:

[99] "Toxic shock syndrome," New Directions for Women, November/December 1980, 23.



Source: "Health Care is for People Not for Profit," *New Directions for Women*, March/April 1983, 4.

After discoveries that sponges could also cause TSS, many feminist-aligned organizations removed the product from circulation. For instance, the Emma Goldman Clinic for Women, a women's self-help clinic, stopped selling sea sponges due to the potential health hazards of the product, following recent studies detailing the discovery of harmful substances in sea sponges.

Feminist zines also began organizing campaigns for the FDA to create a uniform absorbency labeling system, due to the discrepancies between brands and the connection between superabsorbent tampons and Toxic Shock. Similarly, zines also asserted that the ingredients used in the production of tampons must become public knowledge, due to the unwillingness of all major tampon manufacturers to reveal the composition of their products. As

a result, feminist zines organized massive letter-writing campaigns to both the FDA and members of Congress to further these consumer safety aims.

Conclusion

Many of the corporations creating tampons had environments steeped in racism and sexism, which spilled into other avenues (like research and development and advertising). Moreover, market research and advertisements found across platforms tended to follow specific thematic patterns, particularly the medicalization of menstruation, the concept of modernity, the centering of "whiteness" as standard, and the hygienic, absorbent protection of the product. Zines from the era highlight some of the feminist responses and reactions to the TSS scandal and the menstrual product industry in general, including alternate solutions to tampons (like sponges) and guides on how to make menstrual products at home. Thus, misogyny, cultural taboos, and government oversight created a paradigm in which menstrual products were not properly tested and vetted for consumer safety, helping to create the Toxic Shock Syndrome crisis of the 1980s. Moreover, due to the racism and classism pervasive within the corporate and advertising structures of the tampon industry, tampons were primarily marketed to young, white women, partially leading to the result that they made up the typical victim profile, compared to other demographic groups.

Appendix A: Market Research

Table 1A: Age of Consumer	
Quote about the Age of the Target Consumer Group	**Citation**
"…a woman can become a tampon user if she is reached close to the moment of her choice, that is when she is young."	Institute for Motivational Research Inc., *A Creative Memorandum on Kotams*. (Croton-on-Hudson: July 1962), 11.
"For Kotam this market is, in a sense, particularly susceptible because the potential young consumer has not yet had time to formulate the psychological patterns of resistance which inhibit tampon use...Equally important would be the launching of a consumer education campaign among young women."	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 11.
"For this campaign, selection of media would be of great importance, with emphasis on magazines having young audiences."	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 11.
"…the younger woman cannot remember the 'age of experimentation' for tampon products. Furthermore, younger women want to be up on the latest, to be modern and not be embarrassed by their friends for being old-fashioned."	Institute for Motivational Research Inc., *Creative Memorandum on the US Tampon Market.* (Croton-on-Hudson: June 1966), 11.
"When young women go away to college, or at least reach college age, is a time of consensual validation…This is the age at which they are most likely to try tampons, either because of peer pressure or out of a spirit of experimentation…"	Institute for Motivational Research Inc., *Developing a Market for Tampon Products: A Proposal for Phase II of a Motivation Research Study*. (Croton-on-Hudson: August 1972), 4.
"This is the age [referring to college-age women] at which they are most likely to try tampons, either because of peer pressure or out of a spirit of experimentation, if they do not already use them."	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 17.
"In order for PPC [Personal Products Company] to prevent appealing to groups too immature to select their own brand, knowing the approximate age at which brand judgment can be expected for sanitary products is vital. Our focus group sessions and in-depth interviews clearly indicated that this age, as related to tampons, is 17 to 19 years.	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 18. Institute, *A Proposal for Phase II*, August 1972, 5. The Dichter Institute, *Developing a Market*, March 1973, 4.
"It is apparent that it is important to reach young women at the late teen or college age,	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 24.

when their brand habits and loyalties are being established."	
"It is significant to note here that in addition to the emotional stress and anxiety accompanying the first menstrual experience, there is often a great sense of pride involved…It would certainly be advantageous, therefore, to address yourselves in your advertising to this sense of pride and excitement: 'We know how proud and excited you were that first time. Here is a product that really understands your needs and makes this time of the month so easy for you that you can forget the unpleasantness and remember only the positive fulfillment of being a woman."	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 37.
"Since most product switching takes place at a young age, it is important to reach women when they are young, that is, between 17 and 19 years. Therefore, selection of advertising media would be of great importance, with emphasis on magazines having young audiences."	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 38.
Teenagers "do not feel secure about talking to their mothers about personal matters, especially feminine hygiene. They are apt to learn from friends or at school."	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 38.
"Another approach might be the use of direct mail to reach girls (17 to 19 years) just starting to switch. This could be tied in with a free offer and with adequate information to offset the fear of the first insertion."	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 45.
"…we strongly recommend PPC pay stronger attention to today's adolescent, girls 12-18."	Institute for Motivational Research Inc., *Strengthening the Market for Modess and Stayfree Sanitary Napkins: Report on Phase I of a Motivational Research Study*. (Croton-on-Hudson: October 1972), 90.
"This is the age at which they are most likely to try tampons, either because of peer pressure or out of a spirit of experimentation, if they do not already use them."	The Dichter Institute for Motivational Research Inc., *Developing a Market for Tampon Products: Phase II of a Motivational Research Study*. (Yorktown Heights: March 1973), 3.
"…the earlier in age women begin using tampons the more likely they are to stay with them."	The Dichter Institute, *Developing a Market*, March 1973, 105.
Table 1B: Type of Consumer	

Quote about the Lifestyle of the Target Consumer Group	Citation
"Socio-economically lower income women tend to hold on to the older ideas and ways of doing things…mostly it is a cultural resistance, a basic distrust of large manufacturers. Upper socio-economic groups are more open to new ideas, financially and emotionally; they are tampon users. Thus, despite the value, low-income groups are less likely to use tampons."	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 11.
"For instance, career and college women are more apt to prefer a tampon product as well as women who work in very athletic or outdoor types of jobs."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 10.
"…a woman who is a housewife is more likely to be the napkin user for she has created a more homebound life for herself and the bulkier, obvious, not as portable napkin product is a more blatant symbol of her servitude as well as a partial explanation for this servitude."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 10.
"Demographically, this group tends toward both very high and very low degrees of education and sophistication. They also tend to be innovators relishing anything new and modern, primarily because it is the latest thing. These are the leaders and trend setters and because of this quality, coupled with their tendency to look upon sexuality as a natural part of living, they are the best products for tampon usage."	Institute, *Strengthening the* Market, October 1972), 96.
"Modess (and Kotex) seems to be associated with women having low incomes living in rural communities."	Institute, *Strengthening the* Market, October 1972), 98
"The 'smart,' urban, high-incomed woman is not viewed as a napkin user."	Institute, *Strengthening the* Market, October 1972), 98.
"These women take pride in their own modern adjustment, pride not to belong to the sufferers. But they also feel the "Missionary Need" to explain to young girls and other non-tampon users about the advance in the state of the art with regard to personal sanitary protection products."	The Dichter Institute, *Developing a Market*, March 1973, 89.

Table 2: Modernity	
Quote about Modernity	**Citation**
"the tampon user wears it as a badge of modernity, and the napkin user wears it as a badge of sufferance"	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 6.
"we have found the tampon user to be more modern, forward-looking, and experimental."	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 7.
"lastly, conceiving herself in a modern, forward-looking image, the tampon user prefers her product because it is newer and more modern than napkins.	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 8.
"emphasize 'modernity, mobility, and fashion.' Pictures of women, young and exuberant, at work or at active play would best be suited to fit this theme."	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 9.
"but their modern appeal and promise of greater freedom prevailed over initial considerations of discomfort."	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 11.
"A tampon is considered to be a symbol of modernity, a contribution to the progress of women as freer, more flexible beings."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 14. Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 48.
"A woman feels that she can wear anything: white clothes with no fears of staining…[and] a woman can do most anything…because she feels more flexible without an uncomfortable, binding napkin to hamper her movements."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 15.
It is necessary to "stress modernity, as opposed to newness…stress freedom in normal everyday activities…as opposed to the strenuous 'sports' appeal…stress sociability and the greater security one can feel with others."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 36.
"The old napkin method is puritanical in men's eyes…For this reason the tampon is an appealing product to men."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 28.
"…the tampon is quite phallic in nature…to some men…it is a threat to masculinity, as well as a symbol of female independence. A woman wearing a tampon can 'do almost anything,'…--just like a man."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 29.
The tampon "is modern, progressive, cleaner…it is not a symbol of the 'stone age.'"	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 31.
"Many men in order to enhance their own self-image in fact want their wives to be up	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 31.

on the latest, with the modern age and not old-fashioned and behind the times."	
"…if tampons are the things recommended by mothers during the first menstruation, when menstruation first occurs, there is great likelihood that as girls grow older they will stick to tampons. Therefore PPC should use modern advertising."	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 40.
"They [referring to the 'body expressive woman'] can also be reached through properly associating their image of the product in the advertising setting. This primarily means emphasizing modernity and mobility."	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 97.
"Tampons permit the natural continuity of bodily activity. The modern woman no longer need be immobilized during her period."	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 97.
"Tampons and its users are viewed as more likely to be enlightened, outgoing, socially active. A whole new image-building campaign is needed to reinforce negative implications about napkin users — strengthening the market for modess and Stayfree sanitary napkins."	Institute, *Strengthening the Market*, October 1972, 24.
"…napkins serve as a reminder of a woman's function as mother and her dependency upon the male. Tampons serve as a liberator and reflect independence and free will."	Institute, *Strengthening the Market*, October 1972, 24.
"Everything implied by the concept 'liberated' is in the psychological environment of the tampon and is virtually indemtical with the philosophy of the product as perceived by its users."	The Dichter Institute, *Developing a Market*, March 1973, 19.
"…they feel themselves freed (bodily) from feminine dependence as these days seem now almost to pass without a trace."	The Dichter Institute, *Developing a Market*, March 1973, 92.
"Even the modern woman is ashamed to be known to be menstruating."	The Dichter Institute, *Developing a Market*, March 1973, 111.

Table 3: Absorbency & Protection	
Quote on Absorbency & Protection	**Citation**
"Two major criteria exist for tampons: 1. simple to use 2. absorbency"	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 4.
"Our findings indicate that the tampon must be able to do the job, thus avoiding any possibility of painful embarrassment.	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 4.
"Advertising and merchandising must emphasize ease of use…they are [also] fool-proof, safe, and comfortable. Advertising should also stress the absorbent capacity of Kotams." Kotams' "compactness gives the impression of a smaller absorptive capacity."	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 5.
"The most important objection to the Kotam tampon—apart from its physical appearance—was the conviction on the part of many women that the pad could not possibly be as absorbent as the brand they were familiar with."	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 18.
"Advertising must stress that not only does Kotams control expansion but, at the same time, assures completely free and uninterrupted absorbency according to your needs. Here it may be pointed out that Kotams is, in fact, twice as absorbent as any other tampon."	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 20.
"It is not enough to **say** that the product is more absorbent; it must **look** that way.	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 19.
"…there is a need for a better, more absorbent tampon product—most women who feel this need state that it should expand more within the body, i.e., it should become wider inasmuch as women often experience staining of their clothing and yet the tampon when removed has not expanded completely and thus utilized all of its absorbency qualities."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 24.
"For most women, protection in the strongest sense of the word (both physical and psychological is of paramount importance."	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 41.
"For Personal Products Company, it means that its advertising and merchandising must emphasize absorbency and protection from leaks; but only are they absorbent, they are	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 45.

sanitary, and with tampons there is no odor problem…there is no chance of embarrassment."	
"…Rather than having one form of protection compete against another, treat tampons as a different model of the same product. 'We know all about protection because we are in the napkin business.'"	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 46.
"The idea of a mini tampon was well received by teenage respondents but older respondents, particularly married women, felt it would not be absorbent enough."	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 73.
"There are those who feel that tampons are not as effective as sanitary napkins because they are not as absorbent."	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 93.

Table 4: Hygiene	
Quote on Hygiene	**Citation**
"Another negative point revealed in our findings was the feeling that the Kotam pad is exposed to the body before being properly positioned. This is a typical reaction: 'The pad would get messy; it would already be messed up before it were in position.'"	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 13.
Those who expressed this feeling believe that the inserter-tube assembly avoids this because the cotton pad is perfectly clean up until the moment it is positioned."	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 13.
"Another appeal that the tampon has for the male population is that it represents a cleaner, more personally hygienic method of coping with an age-old situation ."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 31.
"It is very essential that a package for this type of product have an aura of cleanliness and sanitation."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 33.
The package should "…look rather businesslike, solemn, serious, but very, very clean."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 33.
"But to Tampax-Kotex-Modess-Playtex users the idea of a digital application often seems too unsanitary and even disgusting."	The Dichter Institute, *Developing a Market*, March 1973, 23
"Applicator adherents have two special reasons to defend their system with its insert device. To them, it is repulsive and repugnant to smear their fingers with blood."	The Dichter Institute, *Developing a Market*, March 1973, 23.

"Most applicator users interviewed feel applicator tampons are more hygienic and sanitary than non-applicator tampons.Almost all non-appliactor users interviewed feel there is no difference between the two types of tampons in this respect."	The Dichter Institute for Motivational Research, *Attitudinal Questions to Discriminate Types of Tampon Users*. (Croton-on-Hudson: October 1973), 6.
"…question 8 ["Are applicator and non-applicator tampons equally hygienic and sanitary or is one type more hygienic than the other?"] is helpful in identifying women who are unlikely to use digitals (if they answer that applicator tampons are more hygienic and sanitary)."	The Dichter Institute, *Attitudinal Questions*, October 1973, iv, 6.

Table 5: Womanhood

Quote on Womanhood	Citation
"Pictures of warm, human, natural activities evoked the most positive responses and these should be sought in Kotam's advertising themes. Undoubtedly the picture of the child playing with her mother's glasses contributed to this response. This idea seems worthy of further exploration."	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 27.
"The best liked ad was the one showing a young woman and small child at the beach. Our respondents thought that this conveyed the proper feeling for an ad for sanitary products. Respondents liked the mood of the ad and commented most favorably on its relaxed feeling, its informality, and its warm and human qualities. They told us that to them the ad conveyed the idea that menstruation was a normal, feminine, natural thing, and not at all something repugnant or self-conscious."	Institute, *Kotams*, July 1962, 27.
"…to the successful well-balanced high school, college or career woman the onset of her period simply reminds her in a positive way that she is an alive, vital woman, she is again reassured of the depth of her femininity."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 8.
"An even deeper resistance, however, on the part of many non-users is a repulsion to inserting anything into the body. It is seen as a masculine act…not for a 'lady.'	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 21.

"There is also the emotional attachment to the use of the sanitary napkin as a symbol of long-suffering womanhood, a symbol of the cross one has to bear."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 22. Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 91.
"We know that many women revel in self pity and the attitude that womanhood is a series of long suffering incidents. The more obvious sanitary napkin…symbolizes her womanhood."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 22.
"The most positive symbols to be utilized [when advertising tampons]…are maternity and femininity…Thus pictures of mother and child at the beach or riding a bicycle serve a dual purpose. The soft maternal appeal is very positive to women while the freedom of activity is also conveyed."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 35.
"Many women are convinced that they are endowed by nature to experience a variety of biological and mood 'swings.' Resultingly, women tend to look for and enhance their own tendencies to be moody and short-tempered. Thus, many make a sanitary product decision and use the product in an atmosphere of heightened tension and irritability."	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 26.

Table 6: Medicalization of Menstruation

Quote on Medicalization of Menstruation	Citation
"…medical science has removed to a large extent the feelings of uncleanliness associated with the menstrual period and the taboos that used to exist for thousands of years."	Institute, *Report on Phase I*, August 1972, 46.
For the packaging of tampons, "…whites and blues are probably the best combination of colors, having been associated with hospitals and doctors for an infinite number of years."	Institute, *Creative Memorandum*, June 1966, 33.

Appendix B: Market Research Depth Interviews Demographic Information

Table 1A: Age of Marital Status of Participants in August 1972 Report			
Marital Status	**Age**	**Number**	**Percentage**
Single	15-18	19	35
Married	20-30	18	33
Single	19-30	17	32

Table 1B: Age and Marital Status of Participants in October 1972 Report		
Marital Status	**Age**	**Percentage**
Single or Married	18-25	22
Married with children	20-35	24
Single or Married	Over 35	30
Single	20-35	24

Table 1C: Age of Participants in March 1973 Report	
Age	**Percentage**
16-18	23%
19-24	27%
25-30	24%
31-35	24%
No Answer	2%

Table 2A: Income of Participants in August 1972 Report		
Family Income (USD)	**Adjusted to March 2024 (USD), rounded to the nearest dollar**	**Now (%), Survey Done in July 1972**
0-3,000	Up to 22, 363	11
3,001-5,000	Up to 37, 271	4
5,001-7,000	Up to 52, 180	11
7,001-9,000	Up to 67, 088	9
9,001-11,000	Up to 81, 996	15
11,001-13,000	Up to 96, 905	17
13,001-15,000	Up to 111, 813	13
15,001-18,000	Up to 134, 176	7
18,001 & Over	134, 177 & Over	11
No Answer	—	2

Table 2B: Income of Participants in October 1972 Report		
Family Income (USD)	**Adjusted to March 2024 (USD), rounded to the nearest dollar**	**Now (%), Survey Done in August and September 1972**
0-3,000	Up to 22,256	8
3,001-5,000	Up to 37, 094	—
5,001-7,000	Up to 51, 932	8
7,001-9,000	Up to 66, 769	24
9,001-11,000	Up to 81, 607	10
11,001-13,000	Up to 96, 445	14
13,001-15,000	Up to 111,282	10
15,001-18,000	Up to 133, 539	2
18,001 & Over	133,540 & Over	12
No Answer	—	12

Table 2C: Income of Participants in March 1973 Report		
Family Income (USD)	**Adjusted to March 2024 (USD)**	**Now (%), Survey Done in December 1972**
0-3,000	Up to 22, 047	6
3,001-5,000	Up to 36, 745	6
5,001-7,000	Up to 51, 443	10
7,001-9,000	Up to 66, 141	12
9,001-11,000	Up to 80, 839	10
11,001-13,000	Up to 95, 537	9
13,001-15,000	Up to 110, 235	9
15,001-18,000	Up to 132, 282	11
18,001 & Over	132, 283 & Over	17
No Answer	—	10

Table 3A: Geographic Distribution of Depth Interviews in August 1972 Report			
City	**Percentage of Population Identifying as Non-White in the City**	**Percentage of Population Identifying as Non-White in the State**	**Notes**
Birmingham, AL	**42.2**	**26.4**	
Leeds, AL	**22.8**	**26.4**	
Phoenix, AZ	**6.7**	**9.4**	
Tempe, AZ	**2.2**	**9.4**	
Beverly Hills, CA	**2**	**11.0**	
Cottondale, FL	—	**15.8**	No available data
Miami, FL	**23.4**	**15.8**	
Springfield, IL	**8.4**	**13.6**	
Des Moines, IA	**6.2**	**1.5**	
Wichita, KS	**10.7**	**5.5**	
Louisville, KY	**24.1**	**7.4**	
Baltimore, MD	**47**	**18.5**	
Boston, MA	**18.2**	**3.7**	
Newton, MA	**2**	**3.7**	
Detroit, MI	**44.5**	**11.7**	
Battle Creek, NE	**0.9**	**3.4**	
Bronx, NY	**26.6**	**13.2**	
Brooklyn, NY	**50.6**	**13.2**	
New York City, NY	**23.4**	**13.2**	
Syracuse NY	**12**	**13.2**	
Cleveland, OH	**39**	**9.4**	
Lakewood, OH	**0.6**	**9.4**	
Oklahoma City, OK	**16**	**10.9**	
Bellaire, TX	**0.6**	**13.2**	

Houston, TX	**26.6**	**13.2**	
Seattle, WA	**12.6**	**4.6**	

Table 3B: Geographic Distribution of Depth Interviews in October 1972 Report			
City	**Percentage of Population Identifying as Non-White**	**Percentage of Population Identifying as Non-White within the State**	**Notes**
Tucson, AZ	**5.2**	**9.4**	
Eureka, CA	**4.1**	**11.0**	
Denver, CO	**11**	**4.3**	
Jacksonville, FL	**22.9**	**15.8**	
Bossier City, LA	**8.9**	**30.2**	
Shreveport, LA	**34.4**	**30.2**	
Benton, LA	**35.4**	**30.2**	
Auburn, ME	**0.3**	**0.7**	
North Jay, ME	**0.1**	**0.7**	Village in Jay town
Baltimore, MD	**47**	**18.5**	
Ridgewood, NY	**14.7**	**13.2**	Neighborhood in Queens, a borough of New York City
S. Farmingdale, NY	**0.6**	**13.2**	
Jamesville, NY	**0.4/1.6**	**13.2**	Hamlet comprised of the outskirts of five different towns—the only towns listed in the 1970 Census are Manlius (0.4) and DeWitt (1.6)
Syracuse, NY	**12**	**13.2**	
Bronx, NY	**26.6**	**13.2**	
Jersey City, NJ	**22.2**	**11.4**	

Cincinnati, OH	**28.1**	**9.4**	
Waynesfield, OH	**0**	**9.4**	Rounded to zero
Dallas, TX	**25.8**	**13.2**	
Ellsworth, WI	**0**	**3.6**	Rounded to zero
Prescott, WI	**0**	**3.6**	Rounded to zero
Red Wing, WI	**0.4**	**3.6**	Neighborhood in Sheboygan

Table 3C: Geographic Distribution of Depth Interviews in March 1973 Report			
City	**Percentage of Population Identifying as Non-White in the City**	**Percentage of Population Identifying as Non-White within the State**	**Notes**
Birmingham, AL	**42.2**	**26.4**	
Beverly Hills, CA	**2**	**11.0**	
Eureka, CA	**4.1**	**11.0**	
Denver, CO	**11**	**4.3**	
Bridgeport, CT	**17.3**	**6.5**	
Springfield, IL	**8.4**	**13.6**	
Wichita, KS	**10.7**	**5.5**	
Louisville, KY	**24.1**	**7.4**	
Shreveport, LA	**34.4**	**30.2**	
Auburn, ME	**0.3**	**0.7**	
Baltimore, MD	**47**	**18.5**	
Chestnut Hill, MA	**2**	**3.7**	One of 13 villages comprising Newton (2)
Natick, MA	**1.4**	**3.7**	Labeled "Natick town" in the 1970 Census
Kansas City, MO	**22.8**	**10.7**	
Battle Creek, NE	**0.9**	**3.4**	Battle Creek is counted under

			Norfolk (0.9) in the 1970 Census
Lincoln, NE	**2.3**	**3.4**	
New Brunswick, NJ	**24.1**	**11.4**	
West Cauldwell, NJ	**0.9**	**11.4**	
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY	**3.8**	**13.2**	
Montrose, NY	**1.7**	**13.2**	Hamlet in Cortlandt, which includes Croton-on-Hudson (1.7)
New York City, NY	**23.4**	**13.2**	
Syracuse, NY	**12**	**13.2**	
Cincinnati, OH	**28.1**	**9.4**	
Cleveland, OH	**39**	**9.4**	
Cleveland Heights, OH	**3.2**	**9.4**	
Oklahoma City, OK	**16**	**10.9**	
Philadelphia, PA	**34.4**	**9.0**	
Dallas, TX	**25.8**	**13.2**	
Houston, TX	**26.6**	**13.2**	
Seattle, WA	**12.6**	**4.6**	
Buffalo, WY	**0.4**	**2.8**	
Washington, D.C.	**72.3**	**72.3**	

Sources:

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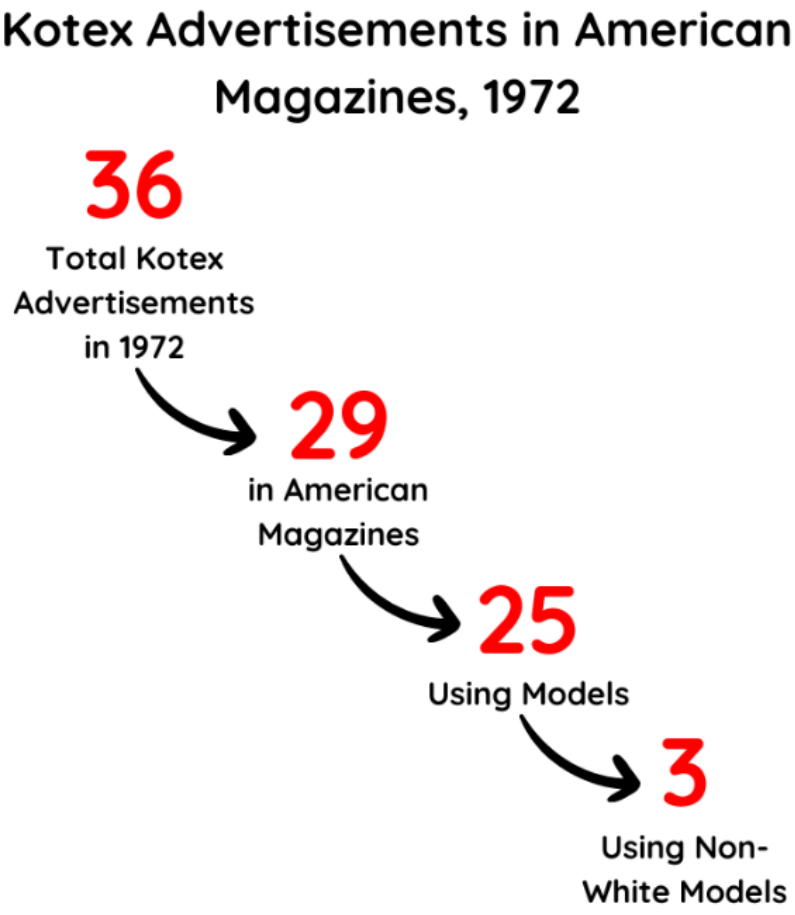
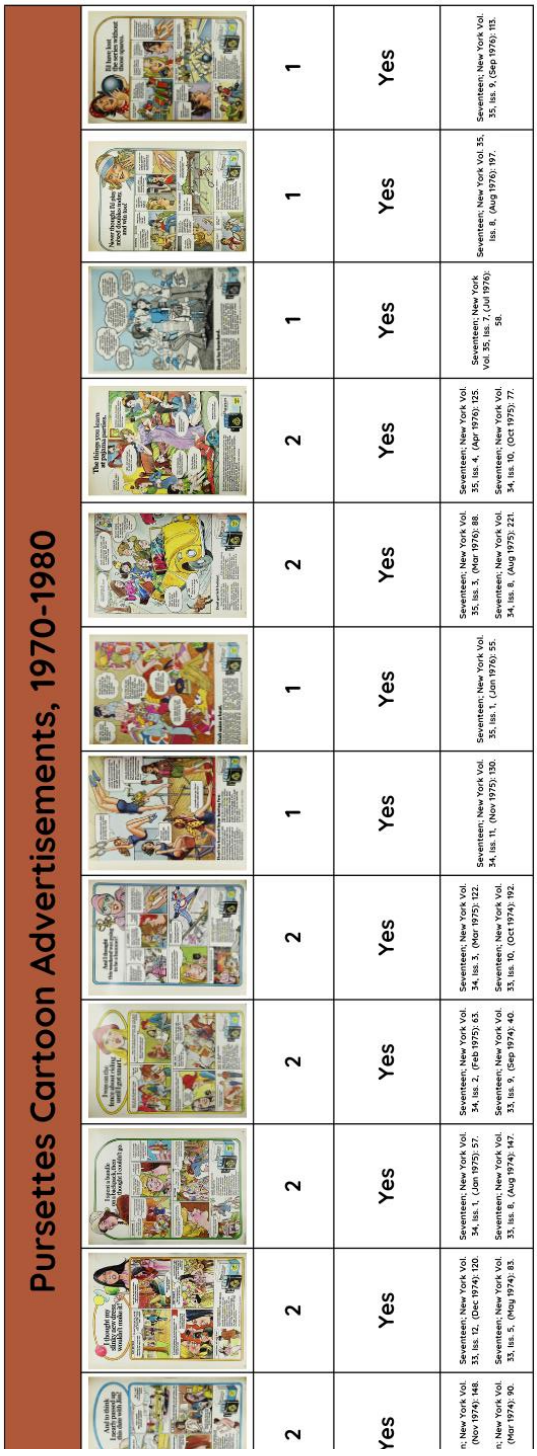
Appendix C: Kotex Advertisements, 1972

Kotex Advertisements in American Magazines, 1972							
Image							
Frequency	3	4	3	6	4	2	3
Magazines	Essence	Redbook Seventeen Woman's Day	Cosmopolitan Redbook Seventeen	Cosmopolitan Redbook Seventeen Woman's Day	Cosmopolitan Redbook Seventeen Woman's Day	Seventeen Woman's Day	Cosmopolitan Redbook Seventeen
White Model (Yes/No)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Citations	Essence; New York Vol. 3, Iss. 1, (May 1972): 10. Essence ; New York Vol. 3, Iss. 5, (Sep 1972): 13. Essence; New York Vol. 3, Iss. 7, (Nov 1972): 91.	Redbook; New York Vol. 138, Iss. 5, (Mar 1972): 51. Seventeen; New York Vol. 31, Iss. 3, (Mar 1972): 162-163. Seventeen; New York Vol. 31, Iss. 4, (Apr 1972): 160-161. Woman's Day; New York Iss. 4, (Apr 1972): 29.	Cosmopolitan; New York Vol. 172, Iss. 1, (Jan 1972): 55. Redbook; New York Vol. 138, Iss. 3, (Jan 1972): 48. Seventeen; New York Vol. 31, Iss. 1, (Jan 1972): 101.	Redbook; New York Vol. 139, Iss. 2, (Jun 1972): 30. Cosmopolitan; New York Vol. 173, Iss. 1, (Jul 1972): 71. Redbook; New York Vol. 139, Iss. 4, (Aug 1972): 60. Woman's day; New York Iss. 8, (Aug 1972): 39. Cosmopolitan; New York Vol. 173, Iss. 5, (Nov 1972): 111. Seventeen; New York Vol. 31, Iss. 11, (Nov 1972): 161.	Redbook; New York Vol. 139, Iss. 1, (May 1972): 25. Cosmopolitan; New York Vol. 172, Iss. 5, (May 1972): 253. Seventeen; New York Vol. 31, Iss. 6, (Jun 1972): 149. Woman's Day; New York Iss. 6, (Jun 1972): 37.	Seventeen ; New York Vol. 31, Iss. 2, (Feb 1972): 109. Woman's Day; New York Iss. 2, (Feb 1972): 13.	Redbook ; New York Vol. 139, Iss. 3, (Jul 1972): 23. Seventeen; New York Vol. 31, Iss. 7, (Jul 1972): 157. Cosmopolitan; New York Vol. 173, Iss. 3, (Sep 1972): 69.

Figure 1 :

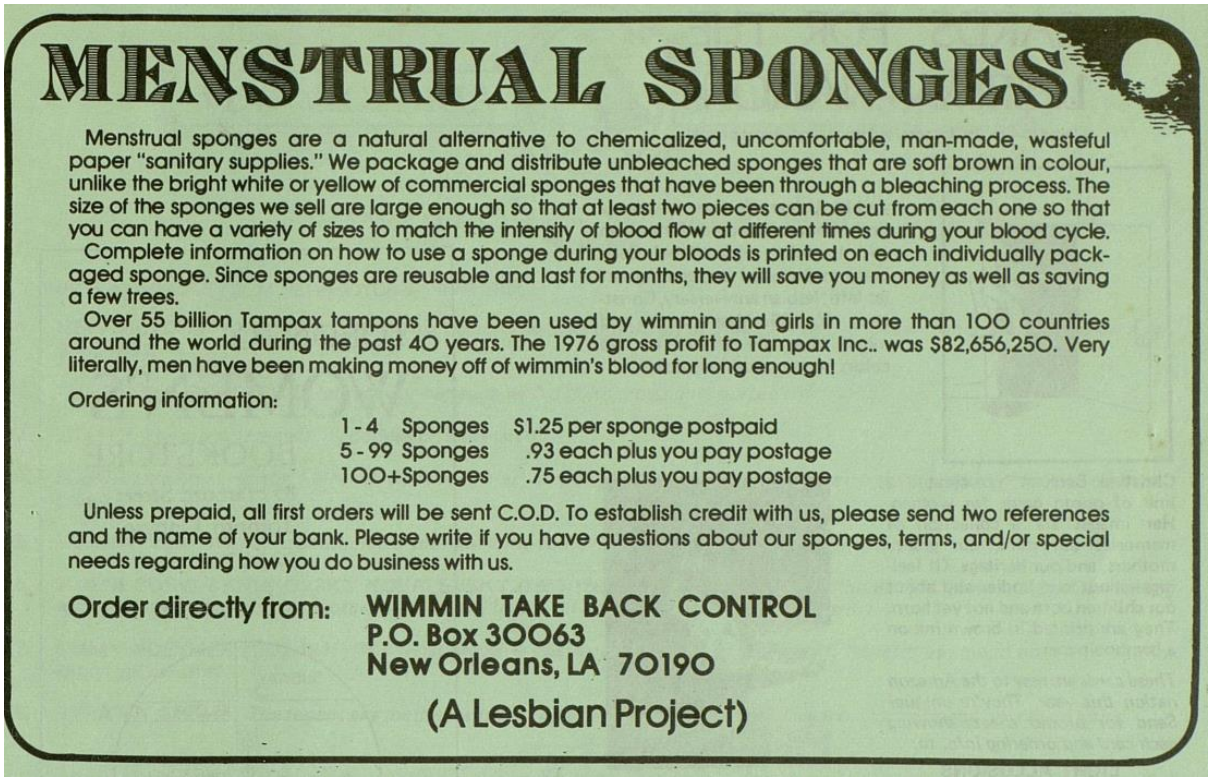

Kotex Advertisements in American Magazines, 1972
36
Total Kotex Advertisements in 1972
29
in American Magazines
25
Using Models
3
Using Non-White Models

Appendix D: Pursettes Cartoon Advertisements, 1970-1980



Appendix E: Zines

Figure 01:



MENSTRUAL SPONGES

Menstrual sponges are a natural alternative to chemicalized, uncomfortable, man-made, wasteful paper "sanitary supplies." We package and distribute unbleached sponges that are soft brown in colour, unlike the bright white or yellow of commercial sponges that have been through a bleaching process. The size of the sponges we sell are large enough so that at least two pieces can be cut from each one so that you can have a variety of sizes to match the intensity of blood flow at different times during your blood cycle.

Complete information on how to use a sponge during your bloods is printed on each individually packaged sponge. Since sponges are reusable and last for months, they will save you money as well as saving a few trees.

Over 55 billion Tampax tampons have been used by wimmin and girls in more than 100 countries around the world during the past 40 years. The 1976 gross profit fo Tampax Inc.. was $82,656,250. Very literally, men have been making money off of wimmin's blood for long enough!

Ordering information:

1 - 4	Sponges	$1.25 per sponge postpaid
5 - 99	Sponges	.93 each plus you pay postage
100+	Sponges	.75 each plus you pay postage

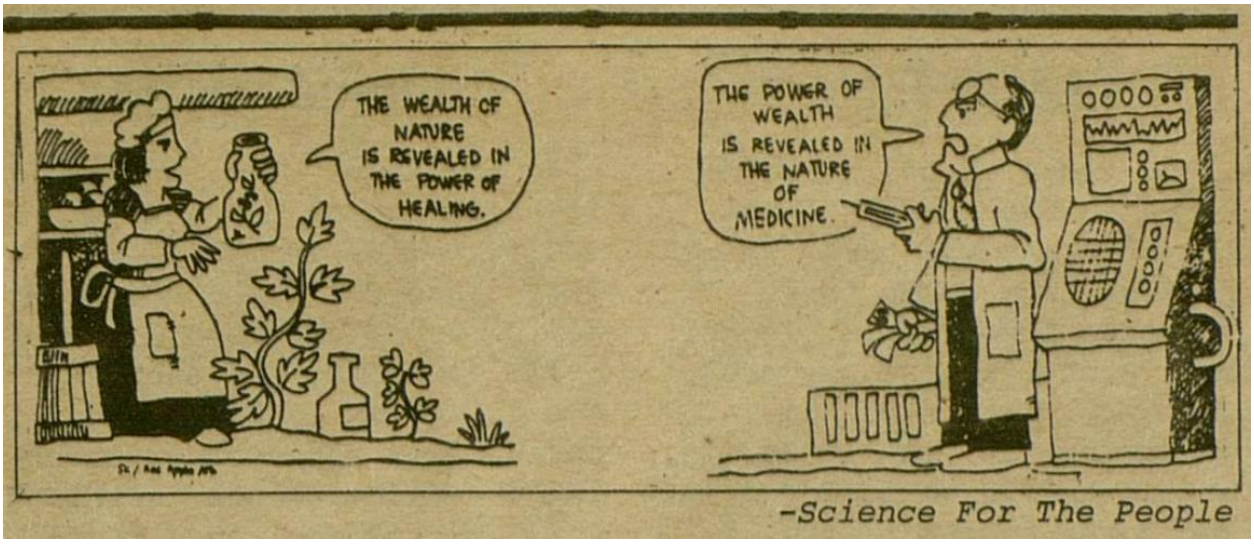
Unless prepaid, all first orders will be sent C.O.D. To establish credit with us, please send two references and the name of your bank. Please write if you have questions about our sponges, terms, and/or special needs regarding how you do business with us.

Order directly from: **WIMMIN TAKE BACK CONTROL**
P.O. Box 30063
New Orleans, LA 70190

(A Lesbian Project)

Source: "Menstrual Sponges." *Lesbian Connection,* December 1978.

Figure 02:

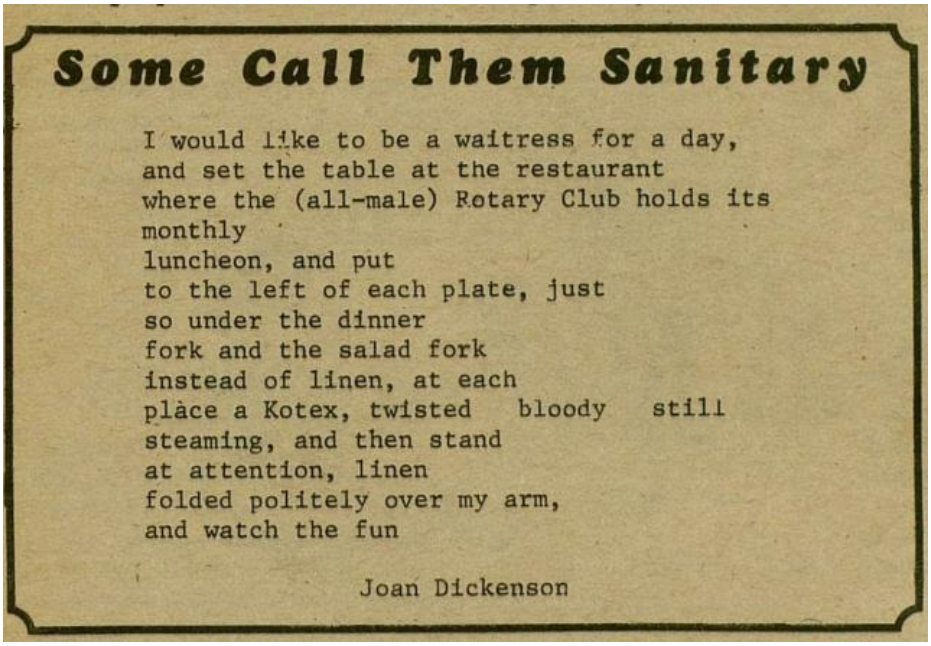


Source: "Science for the People." *Big Mama Rag,* April 1982, 5.

Figure 03:

Source: Medical Myths Must Die Collective. *You Can't Rely on Proctor [sic] and Gamble.* Rochester: 1977.

Figure 04:



Some Call Them Sanitary

I would like to be a waitress for a day,
and set the table at the restaurant
where the (all-male) Rotary Club holds its
monthly
luncheon, and put
to the left of each plate, just
so under the dinner
fork and the salad fork
instead of linen, at each
place a Kotex, twisted bloody still
steaming, and then stand
at attention, linen
folded politely over my arm,
and watch the fun

Joan Dickenson

Source: "Some Call Them Sanitary." *Big Mama Rag*, April 1982, 5.

Table 1: Zines Discussing Sponges as Alternatives to Tampons	
Quote	**Citation**
"However, feminists are encouraging a switch. At least one feminist paper (Matrix, July 1980) prefaced its report with a paragraph urging women to use sea sponges. Sponges have been growing in use among women already because they are made without chemicals, are often distributed by women's businesses, and are cheaper. One sponge will last several periods."	"List of Hazards from Tampon Use Growing." *Big Mama* Rag, September 1, 1980, 13.
"In Denver, they may be purchased at Woman to Woman Bookstore."	"List of Hazards from Tampon Use Growing." *Big Mama* Rag, September 1, 1980, 13.
"If more women know about using menstrual sponges and how to use them, they will use sponges to reclaim their blood cycles in much the same way that we have been reclaiming other parts of our lives. Using sponges instead of paper 'sanitary supplies' is one more way of withdrawing support from the patriarchy and taking back control of our bodies."	"They Say Stick It/We Say Sponge It." *Big Mama Rag,* October 1,.1980, p.3.
"An alternative that many women are using and advocating is the natural sponge. Natural sponges are grown in the Aegean Sea and are used in the US for ceramic purposes."	"What Your Mother Never Told You." *Big Mama Rag* 6, no.1, January 1, 1978, 6.
"Natural sea sponges are the choice of many women including this reporter, who has successfully and solely used sponges for the past five years."	"Toxic shock syndrome." *New Directions for Women*, November/December 1980, 23
"So what's the alternative? Sponges."	"Tampon Alternative Aids Women and Environment." *Distaff*, October 1980, 11.
"They are far better than kotex because you don't have all that mess…plus, they last longer in return."	"Tampon Alternative Aids Women and Environment." *Distaff*, October 1980, 11.
"There is a growing tendency among women in contact with feminist movements to find alternatives to tampons."	Mary Sue Henefin. "Deadly Trade Secrets." *The Amazon*, October 1980, 28
"Before capitalism became rampant as it is these daze, wimmin put soft, silk sponges in their vaginas instead of tampaxes..."	"Sponges: Mom's alternative." Medical Myths Must Die Collective. *You Can't Rely on Proctor [sic] and Gamble.* Rochester: 1977.
"What we can and are doing is to return to using sponges…"	"Sponges: Mom's alternative." Medical Myths Must Die Collective. *You Can't Rely on Proctor [sic] and Gamble.* Rochester: 1977.
"Dear Editor,	Rose Rodgers, "Alternatives to Sponges." *New Directions for Women*, December 1980.

Once again it is women protecting women! Months ago, long before the national release of Toxic (Shock) Syndrome, your newspaper warned usof a possibility of same. When manufacturers are allowed to sell health products without listing contents and women accept blindly, the results are deadly. Thanks for alerting us and for attracting advertisers (Sally Sponges) that offer alternatives…"	
"Sales of sea sponges have increased dramatically since the Center of Disease Control issued a warning that tampons may cause toxic shock syndrome."	"Hot Briefs." *Big Mama Rag*, December 1980, 5

Table 2: Feminist Zines Sharing Information on the Linkage of TSS to Menstrual Sponges

Quotation	Citation
"The Emma Goldman Clinic…said that sales [of sea sponges] would be discontinued until more information is gathered on the potential health hazards of the sponges."	"Hot Briefs." *Big Mama Rag,* December 1980, 5.
"Women who prefer to continue using sponges should take these precautions before using any sponge: 1) check for small particles and remove them; 2) boil the sponge for 10 minutes before using the first time…; 3) soak it in white vinegar for 30 minutes, rinse, and airdry…; 4) remember to change sponges frequently...; 5) keep several sponges and allow them to air dry before reusing…; 6) if you have TSS symptoms during your cycle, remove the sponge and immediately call your doctor.	"Tampons." *Distaff*, November 1981.
"It was hoped that sea sponges were safer as they didn't include the chemical additives found in tampons. But preliminary studies indicate that the sponges present health problems of their own…"	"Sea sponges under study," *New Woman's Times*, February 1981.
The spokeswoman, Paula Klein, of the Emma Goldman Clinic, stated that "'We put them [sponges] out as an alternative to tampons because we felt angry and concerned that tampons were a danger to women's health, and when we found the sponges were along the same line we took them off also.'"	"Sea sponges under study," *New Woman's Times*, February 1981.
"'Some have voiced the opinion that it's like birth control; a number of options, none of which are any good.'"	"Sea sponges under study," *New Woman's Times*, February 1981.

"The fact that tampons are dangerous does not make tampons safe. Since sponges, like tampons, are put into the vagina to soak up blood, the same mechanism that causes toxic shock in tampon users may cause toxic shock in sponge users—and a case of toxic shock has been documented in at least one woman who used sponges exclusively during menstruation."	"Sponges as Shock Absorbers." Reprinted from "Off Our Backs," *Womanews*, February 1981.
"Many women have been advocating the use of natural sea sponges as an alternative to tampons… Dr. Arthur Reingold of the CDC commented, '…we have no way of knowing whether the risk with sea sponges is lower.'"	Mary Sue Henefin. "More Tampon Schlock," *WomaNews*, January 1981, 3.
"One caveat: the CDC notes that a few cases of TSS have been reported in women using sponges."	"Toxic shock syndrome," *New Directions for Women*, November/December 1980, 23.

Table 3: Zines and Public Health Concerns Regarding Tampons

Quotation	Citation
"Because there is no uniform absorbency labelling for tampons, women cannot follow the two-year-old advice of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to reduce their risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) by using 'tampons with the minimum absorbency needed to control menstrual flow.'"	"Consumer Group Calls for Government Task Force." *New Woman's Times*, July 1984.
"A national coalition of women's health and consumer groups is calling for mandatory absorbency labeling which would enable women to make comparisons between different tampon products."	"Consumer Group Calls for Government Task Force." *New Woman's Times*, July 1984.
"In their letter, the coalition called on the FDA to convene a scientific panel to evaluate research on tampon safety needed to protect the public health."	"Consumer Group Calls for Government Task Force." *New Woman's Times*, July 1984.
"Women Health International, a Washington D.C. based organization, is calling on the Food and Drug Administration to start requiring that tampon manufacturers label tampons for their fiber and chemical contents. Currently, the FDA has no rule for labeling tampons, which are a considered class two medical device in the FDA code."	"Women Urge Labelling of Tampon." *New Woman's* Times, January 1980, 8.
"Women Health is urging women to write to the FDA to request immediate labeling of tampons, and to send a copy of their letter to their congressional representatives."	"Women Urge Labelling of Tampon." *New Woman's* Times, January 1980, 8.
"Dear Women:	"Please write FDA re tampon labeling," *Sojourner*, October 1984, 4.

We need your help to get the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to require uniform absorbency labelling on tampon boxes. Then consumers will be able to compare one brand with another. If you use tampons, you need accurate information about absorbency so you can follow the FDA's advice to control your flow. This will reduce your risk of getting toxic shock syndrome (TSS). Unfortunately, thirty women each month are still getting TSS, and three percent are dying from it."	
"An absorbency disclosure system must be simple, straightforward, and non-contradictory. Right now the terms 'regular,' 'super,' etc are of no use when comparing one brand with another."	"Please write FDA re tampon labeling," *Sojourner*, October 1984, 4.
"Consumer letters have gotten the FDA to take tampons seriously, to classify them as a medical device rather than a cosmetic. Recently, other letters have gotten the agency to propose required labelling. Now we need letters so the FDA institutes a system that is best for consumers."	"Please write FDA re tampon labeling," *Sojourner*, October 1984, 4.
"Even if your letter just says, 'As a consumer, I support standardized absorbency terms on tampon boxes,' it is still important, because the FDA acts when it knows someone is paying attention to an issue."	"Please write FDA re tampon labeling," *Sojourner*, October 1984, 4.
"The National Women's Health Network recently took the Food and Drug Administration to task for its handling of tampon labelling and approvals."	"Health Network Criticizes FDA on Tampon Labeling." *Spokeswoman*, November 1980, 3.
"'The FDA failed to protect the public by not informing women of the potential hazards they face when using tampons,' said NWHN Program Director, Elayne Clift."	"Health Network Criticizes FDA on Tampon Labeling." *Spokeswoman*, November 1980, 3.
"The FDA published a proposed warning label for tampons in the October 21st *Federal Register.* The label does not divulge the contents of tampons but warns users of potential risks. Comments on the proposed label… should be sent to …"	"Health Network criticizes FDA on Tampon Labeling." *Spokeswoman*, November 1980, 3.
"There are no government regulations requiring manufacturers to make public the chemicals and other ingredients used in the production of tampons and menstrual napkins. Manufacturers want to protect this information as "trade secrets."	Mary Sue Henefin. "Deadly Trade Secrets," *The Amazon*, October 1980, 28.
"Public outcry may move the FDA and Congress to require that the ingredients used in tampon production be spelled out on the product label.	Mary Sue Henefin. "Deadly Trade Secrets," *The Amazon*, October 1980, 28.

Persons interested in requiring contents labelling for tampons should express their views to…"	
"The tragedy of TSS has affected many women's lives: those who have died or been maimed by the disease and those of us h=who must find safe alternatives to tampons. We must demand that tampons be investigated and regulated in a way that protects women's health. To express your views on required contents labelling for tampons write to…"	Mary Sue Henefin. "More Tampon Schlock," *WomaNews*, January 1981, 3.
"The Food and Drug Administration says by the end of the year it may require that all tampon boxes have a warning label on the possibility of contracting toxic shock syndrome from tampon use	"Companies Retain their Secrets." *New Woman's* Times, February 1981.
"No mechanism was set up to evaluate the safety of materials used to make tampons."	Pat De La Fuente. "Politics Dismembers Tampon Task Force," *New Directions for Women*, July/August 1985, 4.
"Women, as consumers and as healthcare workers, should report any problems related to tampon use to the Device Experience Network of the FDA."	Pat De La Fuente. "Politics Dismembers Tampon Task Force," *New Directions for Women*, July/August 1985, 4.

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