"Like regular underwear, but so much better.": How Thinx Can Create Feminist Embodied Subjects through the Enduring Legacy of *OBOS*

Melissa Stone

Abstract: This article explores Thinx underwear as a feminist embodied rhetorical object that indirectly inherits the spirit of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (*OBOS*). In this article I consider *OBOS* as a text that allows for the collation of feminist health technologies and literacies. Thinx professes to create the ability for menstruators to gain some measure of capacity for feminist rhetorical action. Following Jordynn Jack's call for more scholarship (2016) that takes up feminist rhetorical studies of wearable technologies, this article examines the rhetorical implications of Thinx. Menstrual wearables along with texts like *OBOS* can aid in the creation of what Kathy Davis (2007) deems "feminist embodied subjects" who are empowered through knowledge productions of their own bodies.

Keywords: gender, menstruation, rhetoric, technology, wearables

Underwear for People Who Menstruate

> Across time and cultures, women have used and continue to use a variety of products for catching menstrual flow. The choice often comes down to comfort, availability, convenience, and price. You might find the perfect match right away, or you might try different options, looking for more comfort or a better fit. (*Our Bodies, Ourselves*, 2011)

From its conception in 1969 at a Women's Liberation Conference in Boston, Massachusetts, *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (*OBOS*) has been committed to informing its audience about topics of health and the body through feminist perspectives. While *OBOS* began as a text targeted toward straight middle class white women, each update has been more inclusive of different bodies and identities. Although the production and printing of *OBOS* has been discontinued, *OBOS* creates a tangible legacy for future feminist health literacies and technologies. In this way, *OBOS* provides a means to compare and measure other feminist health texts and objects. In this article, I use that legacy to explore the implications of Thinx panties, which are underwear that can be worn during the menstrual cycle sans other menstrual products, or as a backup to other menstrual products. While Thinx panties were not invented before the last printing of *OBOS* in 2011, their products represent the kinds of technologies *OBOS* contributors would showcase in their feminist health text, which is evidenced in the current *OBOS* blog. In 2015, *OBOS* contributor Miriam Zoila Pérez published a blog post detailing Thinx as a menstrual product that is both innovative and more sustainable than other menstrual products.

Thinx was founded by Antonia Saint Dunbar and sisters Miki and Radha Agrawal in 2011, and they began selling their menstrual products in 2014. This company provides people who menstruate with underwear that can be worn during the menstruation cycle sans other menstruation products, or as a backup to other menstruation products. In product advertisements, Thinx boasts that their "period panties" have a patented four-layer technology that is supposed to allow the wearer to move through their day without the interruptions that other menstruation products can cause. Wearing these undergarments may limit the interactivity a menstruator might normally have with other menstrual products (i.e. tampons, pads, menstruation cups, etc.), as wearers might have less need to check the fullness of the undergarment and actual menstrual byproducts are potentially more fully concealed through this technology. Because *OBOS* and Thinx are part of an evolving ecology of lived practical experiences centered around feminist reproductive health and feminine coded bodies, I consider the following questions in this article:

1. how might a feminist health literacy text like *OBOS* inform how we think about products like Thinx?
2. what do both *OBOS* and Thinx underwear suggest in terms of assumptions made about the size, shape, and movement of menstruating bodies?
3. how does the case study of Thinx underwear as a feminist wearable technology become important for the future of feminist health literacies?

To answer these questions, this article makes a case for Thinx underwear as a wearable technology by expanding upon feminist rhetorical research that considers technological objects from an embodied perspective. Positioning *OBOS* as an agentive prior text, this article shows how *OBOS* has, through its many editions, strived to be inclusive not only of different bodies and identities but also of multiple approaches to reproductive healthcare technologies and activism. Drawing on this foundation, I conduct a materialist rhetorical analysis of Thinx underwear in connection to *OBOS* using Jordynn Jack's feminist wearable technology framework. This article explores how Thinx panties can become a structure of feminist meaning-making that is transmitted through bodies, analyzes the assumptions that this technology makes about menstruating bodies, and argues in the spirit of *OBOS* that powerful agencies are invented in the collaboration among Thinx underwear and menstruating bodies. The concluding discussion focuses on how continued feminist rhetorics of embodiment and wearable technologies are important for the future of feminist health literacies, for complicating Thinx underwear, and for the enduring legacy of *OBOS*.

Feminist Rhetorics of Embodiment and Wearable Technologies

Feminist Rhetorics of Embodiment

OBOS and Thinx both have the potential to empower bodies through feminist rhetorical action; as a result, turning to feminist rhetorics of embodiment can help us better understand their interrelation. Through our embodied choices, we have the agency to create rhetorical action that can empower or disempower our bodies. For example, Maria Novotny and Katie Manthey position the journey of

coming to understand and embrace their bodies as a feminist rhetorical act. More directly, Manthey explains, “How I manage my body and specifically, how I present it to other people through dress practices including clothing that hides or reveals my flesh, is a feminist rhetorical move” (11). A number of feminist scholars have correspondingly illustrated that the intersection between bodies and the everyday is a deeply rhetorical space (Johnson et al.; Molloy et al.). Feminist rhetorics of embodiment can also focus on the agency bodies can have with and through technological objects. In this regard, Lisa Melonçon states, “The instrumental nature of technology means that human bodies exist as tool-beings that use a variety of equipment, or technology, to move through each day” (71). In further drawing from this point, Jack asserts, “...the ways that we live in and through our bodies are inextricable from the technologies we use” (209). Because we are inextricably linked to technologies through our bodies and lived practical experiences an expanded understanding of what counts as a technology is necessary if we want to fully consider the embodied potential of technologies.

Feminist Rhetorics of Technology

Thinx underwear is a wearable technology: a product or material that provides a means to assist the wearer in everyday life. They are, however, an unusual wearable technology in that they challenge the predominant notion of how wearable technologies are currently understood. To better understand Thinx underwear as a wearable technology, we need a broader conception of technology use, particularly within a feminist rhetorical framework. Specifically, we need to consider Thinx and other menstruation technologies from a feminist rhetorical framework that, as Jack contends, considers these objects as “everyday rhetorics” (208). Arguing for a feminist rhetoric of technology, Amy Koerber expands the definition of technology based on feminist observations that address how previous definitions of technology, “…have evolved in a way that excludes the historical contributions of women\” (60). Her expanded definitions by contrast “enrich[es] the rhetoric of technology…by revealing the blind spots inherent in narrow definitions” (60). Jessica Enoch similarly explains that we should open more paths in feminist rhetorical research through “scholarly interventions” that invite more scholars to “push the boundaries of feminist research” (438). However, pathways that push the boundaries of feminist perspectives of technologies must not only consider broader definitions of technologies but also reconsider the rhetorical implications that are disseminated through technological artifacts. For example, Sarah Hallenbeck articulates the idea that “everyday practices gain strength and traction as rhetorical actions through their articulations within the networks that support or subvert them” (22). Feminist rhetorical studies of technological objects, then, should consider and reinvent how technologies enact or subvert imbalanced power relations, binary understandings of gender, and divisions in social categories.

Jenny Edbauer’s work offers an important method for analyzing the relationships between technologies and rhetorical effects and affects. In her proposed reconfiguration of the rhetorical situation, Edbauer suggests a strategy for theorizing rhetorics as “a circulating ecology of effects, enactments, and events by shifting the lines of focus from rhetorical situation to rhetorical ecologies” (9). A rhetorical ecology recognizes how texts and objects circulate and transform those who interact

with them. An analysis of Thinx's "period panties" as a technological artifact should position these objects in a developing ecology of lived practical experiences centered around reproductive health and menstruating bodies.

Feminist Wearable Technologies

While popular definitions of wearable technologies tend to be understood through ubiquitous computing and the ability to collect and track quantifiable data, in this article I take the position that wearable technologies can include a wide range of objects and artifacts that people can wear. Clothing and shoes, for example, provide a layer of protection from natural and synthetic elements. I further argue that it is a feminist rhetorical practice to redefine understandings of technologies to be more inclusive of marginalized experiences that are lived through these technologies. Continually, it seems, broad understandings of technologies often only consider innovative technologies in their definitions. For instance, dominant understandings of wearable technologies commonly connect closely to cutting-edge digital technologies. When the term "wearable technology" is used, many might call to mind images of Apple iWatches, FitBits, GoPros, smart glasses, etc. Isabel Pedersen refers to this type of technology as "wearable computers," and explains them as "...computers that you strap to the body and 'wear'" (183). However, a wearable technology does not necessarily have to be understood as a digital gadget.

Thinx underwear can provide the function of protection from the messes that menstrual periods have the potential to cause, and they can also allow the wearer to move more freely throughout the day. Before the invention of commercialized menstrual products, menstruators used objects like cloth rags, cotton, sheep's wool, handed knitted pads, or even animal furs and plants like grass to stifle blood flow. With the evolution of menstrual products, a menstruator's ability to exist in the world during a menstrual cycle has become easier to manage. Like most menstrual technologies, Thinx stifles a menstruator's blood flow so they are able to move more easily through their day. While these undergarments do not rely on ubiquitous computing technology and do not collect or track data in the usual sense, they do, I argue, have the potential to assist the wearer in their everyday lives. Following Jack's emphasis for further research of wearable technologies that takes up a feminist perspectives of rhetorical embodiment more directly, in my analysis I further explore how wearing Thinx underwear can become a rhetorical act that encourages a feminist embodied subject who can participate in knowledge creation. In order to move forward in this analysis, I now turn to *OBOS* as a forerunner in providing increased agency to menstruators and their bodies.

OBOS and Practices of Inclusion

My understanding of Thinx panties as related to the legacy of *OBOS* is primarily positioned in the ninth edition published in 2011, and I want to start by considering how this feminist health literacy text is situated in a feminist history of inclusion. Different iterations of *OBOS* show how contributors have

strived to be more inclusive of different bodies, identities, technologies, and activist movements. As Heather Stephenson, Zobeida Bonilla, Elizabeth Sarah Linsey, and Marianne McPhearson trace in a 2005 special issue for the journal for the *National Women's Studies Association Journal* themed around the update and revision of the eighth edition of *OBOS*, inclusivity, attention to current reproductive health issues, and the desire to stay relevant through technological advances have long been at the core of the driving beliefs behind *OBOS*. Stephenson, who led the revisions project for the eighth edition update published in 2005, describes how her revisions speak to new and different generations of women. Stephenson explains, "Our aim has been to reach the next generation while retaining the essential strengths that make the book beloved by longtime fans" (173). This commitment to generational inclusion that Stephenson describes is part of what makes *OBOS* a legacy text against which to compare and measure other feminist health texts and technologies.

Inclusion of Language and Identity

The inclusion of marginalized voices and experiences extends to language use within *OBOS*. Bonilla, for example, focuses on the struggle for *OBOS* to continue to be inclusive through the use of the "royal we," how inclusive pronouns are used, and the constructions of the *Other* in the text. Bonilla explains, "The use of the word 'we' in *OBOS* has been a fundamental feature of the book, which has given *OBOS* an accessible and caring tone and a more inviting and embracing voice" (176). She further explains how in the early iterations of *OBOS* the "royal we" did not necessarily include everyone. This point is evidenced in Linsey's article in the same special issue. Linsey discusses her experience with updating the gender and sexuality chapter for the eighth edition of *OBOS*. In doing so she describes how as an "anti-authoritarian African American high femme dyke from a working poor family," she did not feel she fit into the intended audience for *OBOS*, which she describes as white middle class women. However, she states, "When Heather [Stephenson] asked me to write this chapter, I tearfully accepted because I realized that *OBOS* was committed to expanding the breadth and depth of its audience by becoming more inclusive of young women, women of color, and trans and queer people" (184). Through Linsey's example, we can see how *OBOS* has recently attempted to expand its conception of who counts as "we."

Inclusion of Technologies

In various updates through the years, *OBOS* has also worked to include new and emerging technologies and the discussions around them as a means to keep their readers informed about feminist healthcare practices. McPhearson discusses the importance of updating *OBOS* through revising the "textbook feel," updating the anatomy chapter to be more supportive of vulvovaginal self-examinations, and the challenges of including hot topic reproductive issues in such a way for them to remain relevant in print. In particular, McPhearson concentrates on the eighth edition update of *OBOS* by giving attention to menstrual suppression through the technological advancements of the birth control pill. In explaining her rhetorical decisions on how best to address menstrual suppression, McPhearson states, "Many other public spheres give attention to menstrual suppression drugs. I thought that *OBOS* could be a space for a broader debate about suppression in a feminist voice, both

in terms of safety and desirability" (194). This shows the attention paid not only to including new technologies within *OBOS* updates, but also to the importance of including the debates, opinions, and information that surrounds these technologies.

Inclusion of Activist Movements

The inclusivity that *OBOS* has strived for is also apparent in the relationship variations of the text have had with feminist activist movements like that of menstrual activism. Through tracing the history of menstrual activism via key events, Chris Bobel argues that menstrual activism in the 1970s began with gratitude, seeing menstrual products as conveniences; however, due to the rise of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) in 1971 to 1992, that gratitude transformed into skepticism. Through the discussion of key events in the history of menstrual activism, Bobel explains how the Boston Women's Health Collective marked transformations and updates to each edition of their health literacy text and how menstrual activism has shaped the progression of *OBOS* as a text. Today, Thinx is arguably at the forefront of the modern menstrual activist movement because of the company's commitment to inclusivity and dedication to challenging pervasive menstrual stigma.

The Embodied Feminist Subject

Texts like *OBOS* have the potential to create what Kathy Davis describes as feminist embodied subjects. More specifically, she states that *OBOS* creates an "embodied, situated subject who can actively participate in the feminist knowledge project that it represents" (142). Through Dorothy Smith's "sociologically informed methodology" (143) for text analysis, Davis explains that there is "...the active and constitutive relationship between texts and readers, as well as the role texts play in organizing and regulating power relations" (143). This type of analysis, Davis states, provides a way to understand *OBOS* in terms of how it "activates readers" to become embodied subjects who are situated in such a way as to participate in "feminist politics aimed at empowering women in matters concerning their bodies and health" (143). For example, Davis illustrates this argument through her focus on how the first chapter of the ninth edition of *OBOS*, "Understanding Our Bodies: Sexual Anatomy, Reproduction, and the Menstrual Cycle," hails the reader. This chapter calls a reader to action in exploring their anatomical parts via a mirror, rather than just explaining female sexual anatomy to the reader through medical information and depictions about and of bodies.

OBOS includes detailed diagrams to provide readers with visuals as a point of reference. These particular visuals are interesting in comparison to visuals one might see in other health resources because they depart from a sterilized depiction of female sexual anatomy. Instead, the renderings are based in realism and provide details of female sexual anatomy that often go unnoticed. With one depiction in particular, the reader has access to a labeled diagram of human vaginal anatomy, but the visualization also demonstrates using a mirror in a way that will allow a person to explore and examine their own reproductive parts. Again, the text invites the reader to be an active participant in

understanding the body, rather than a passive recipient of information about it. Additionally, *OBOS* includes anecdotal accounts of women describing their experiences with exploring their own bodies. These accounts include multiple experiences, including those that might be positioned as non-normative. For instance, among the anecdotes included in *OBOS* one states:

> I don't menstruate, and have actually always felt kind of alienated by the way in which female experiences are sometimes centered around menstruation—the idea that menstruation makes someone a "real" woman for example, or that menstruation is such a quintessential experience that if you haven't menstruated, you don't know what it's like to be a woman. (18)

Narrative accounts like this one further invite readers to actively participate in exploring their own bodies alongside reading trusted medical information. The text encourages a reader not just to absorb the text, but to experience their body through it.

In addition to inviting readers to learn and explore female sexual anatomy, the first chapter in *OBOS* describes the menstrual cycle in great detail, covering everything from menarche to details about ovulation, ovaries, and the cervix. This chapter also briefly covers certain menstrual products that can be used to catch blood flow. One section in particular, however, specifically covers the stigma around periods. In this subsection entitled "It's Your Period–How Do You Own It?" the editors state, "We may hear jokes about it on television, or we may see advertisements for menstrual products, but rarely is menstruation talked about in honest terms." Further they ask, "When's the last time you heard menstrual blood even mentioned?" and they state, "Being 'fresh' or 'clean' is emphasized, and the fact that we menstruate is hidden" (22). Through deep descriptions, direct statements, and bold questions, *OBOS* challenges menstrual stigma to encourage an agency amongst its readers.

Like *OBOS*, Thinx engenders this agency through challenging menstrual stigma. We can see this in Thinx ad campaigns, and in their ability to collaborate with users and other like-minded organizations both nationally and abroad to assemble and mobilize their aims and goals. In their ad campaigns, Thinx does not avoid using images of real blood, and they take on direct discussions of menstruation via their website. This agency can also be constructed through the wearing of Thinx's menstrual products, which I argue in accordance with Davis creates embodied feminist subjects. In the next section of this article I want to further expand upon how wearing Thinx underwear can aid in the creation of an embodied feminist subject.

Understanding Thinx as a Feminist Embodied Rhetoric

In this section I use Jack's framework to analyze Thinx underwear as a wearable technology. I expand on these three factors to setup a framework for considering Thinx panties as a wearable technology. In drawing from Pedersen's framework for analyzing wearable technologies Jack explains that the following three qualities to consider are movement, interactivity, and beingness.

Movement

Jack states that movement requires that a wearable run constantly in the background but not interfere with our day-to-day activity. With the "signature leak-fighting tech" that Thinx boasts, these undergarments have the potential to augment a wearer's experience by stifling blood flow and odor, and through limiting trips to the bathroom for the purpose of checking or changing filled menstrual products. As advertised on their website, Thinx claims that every pair of underwear is made with their "...signature 4-layer technology for ultimate period protection" (*Thinx*). Fig. 1 shows how this technology works together by way of a moisture-wicking layer, an anti-microbial lining layer, a super-absorbent fabric layer, and finally a leak-resistant barrier layer. Each layer of the underwear takes on a specific aspect of combating the elements of menstruation that have moored menstruators historically and still do presently. In this sense, Thinx underwear as a wearable technology can allow for free movement and unwanted interruptions during a menstrual cycle just like any other menstrual product promises.

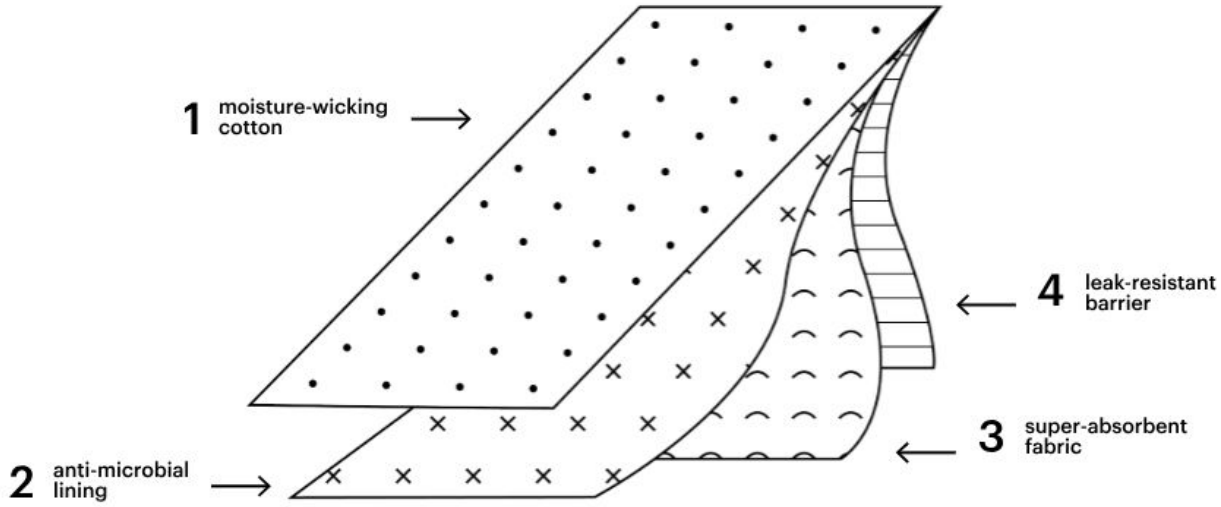

Fig. 1. Thinx's patented four-layered technology. (Image courtesy Thinx, Inc.).

Interactivity

Interactivity in terms of wearable technologies, Jack explains, requires that technologies become present when we call upon them, otherwise they should exist in the background without much notice. With menstruating bodies there is a probability that these undergarments can become present much more frequently than a wearer might like. Often, menstrual cycles cause the stress and worry of leakage and with this stress comes the thought of protection against it. Because of this stress, there is a likelihood that this technology is called upon more times than the wearer might want, especially if a wearer is experiencing this technology for the first time, or has a flow that cannot be accommodated by Thinx's patented technology alone. In this sense, the interactivity of Thinx underwear as a wearable technology becomes complicated. Interactivity differs in the context of wearable technologies and

menstruating bodies because menstrual fluid can function as a catalyst that frequently calls attention to the technology. The involuntary experience of menstruating can be physically felt throughout the day as the menstrual fluid exits the body. This sensation is a consistent reminder that forces a menstruator to consider the level of fullness a menstrual wearable might have.

Beingness

Jack explains the quality of beingness through how wearable technologies allow us to exist in the world. Along with this comes the question of whether these technologies are helpful or harmful. For this final criterion Jack specifically states, "...one might consider how a wearable technology becomes akin to an additional bodily organ that functions automatically" (209). For this, she draws on Pedersen's example of "breathing, swallowing, or perspiring" (194). In this article I add bleeding to the list just as Jack added breast milk. The question here, then, becomes about how wearable technologies are attuned to bodies, or how bodies attune to the act of wearing the object. With Thinx underwear in particular we should consider how the act of menstruating is often described in terms of being uncomfortable, an annoyance, or painful. Discomfort and annoyance from menstruation, in part, comes from levels of menstrual flow, constantly tracking the fullness of menstrual products, and the fear of leakages. Because of these negative experiences the state of beingness a menstruator could achieve when wearing Thinx technology has different potentials depending on how a person's menstrual flow allows them to move or interact in and with the underwear.

Micro-performances of Gender, Status, and Identity

In addition to the qualities of movement, interactivity, and beingness, Jack further argues that wearable technologies can enable micro-performances of gender, status, and identity (209). Although it is a natural bodily function that can be a signifier for healthy bodies, menstruation has historically been an involuntary act that has held back those who menstruate. How menstruation has held people back varies between negative social constructions of feminine coded bodies and actual physical disadvantages that can come with menstruation. In terms of physical disadvantages, menstruators have always had to deal with the pain and overall negative bodily feeling that can accompany a person's menstrual cycle, but menstruators have also always had to deal with how they might move through their everyday lives without bleeding through their clothing and onto furniture and other objects.

Understanding this often-fraught experience of menstruation is one that requires us not only to analyze its texts, but also its technologies and their ecologies. Hallenbeck claims that a feminist rhetorical project "...ought to undertake the work of identifying the impacts of material arrangements and seemingly nondeliberate arhetorical embodied activities on gender norms" (12). While we have typically studied written and spoken communication, Jack contends, "It is not only ideas and beliefs that must change, but also material arrangement of bodies, spaces, and time" (300). To this end, I argue that both objects and textual artifacts must be studied more closely in order to understand the arrangement of bodies, spaces, and time that affect the experience of menstruation in everyday life. Because products like Thinx underwear and texts like *OBOS* allow menstruators to actualize their

bodies and bodily functions in more positive ways, an understanding of these artifacts in terms of micro performances of gender is paramount. This type of understanding is particularly important for menstrual technologies because of the long and persisting stigma that surrounds the involuntary bodily practice.

Menstrual stigma is often used to *other* menstruating bodies. For example, Janice Delaney, et al. in their 1979 book *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation,* point out that menstruation has been stigmatized, undervalued, and all together erased from cultural histories. They state, "In our own culture…women continue to suffer the taboos of centuries. Law, medicine, religion, and psychology have isolated and devalued the menstruating woman" (2). Delaney, et al. additionally discuss the deeply embedded cultural stereotypes that exist around the figure of the menstruating woman. They contend that, "Women who experience the debilitating mental or physical pain of menstruation are made prototype for all; and in the face of statistics to the contrary, women are still considered unreliable workers and unstable human beings at that time of the month" (2). In these descriptions Delaney, et al. show how ingrained cultural understandings of micro-performances of gender, status, and identity can come to be. Hallenbeck, in relation to this argument, explains that we ought to begin our, "…investigations with an everyday practice because the mundane nature of many everyday practices means they are likely to become naturalized activities that escape human scrutiny in their role of re-inscribing or challenging gender norms" (22). By examining Thinx and other technological objects through their use in practice, we can highlight how technologies are responsible for enacting or subverting power relations, binary gender distinctions, and problematic social categories.

How Thinx Extends the Legacy of *OBOS*

As with the commitment *OBOS* had to accounting for change with each update, it is apparent that Thinx is similarly committed to accounting for the consistent changes and updates that relate to feminist healthcare needs. Taking on a responsibility like this requires that the creators and designers regularly reconsider what types of bodies their technologies must accommodate. Thinx's commitment to striving for accessibility for bodies of all types is evidenced in the varied styles of underwear that range in levels of absorbability and through the sizes they offer for each style of underwear, which range from XS to 3XL. The dedication Thinx has to inclusion is evidenced in their Thinx BTWN line, developed especially for new and young menstruators (see Fig. 2). This example in particular also highlights the commitment Thinx has to encouraging positive body literacy from a young age.

Moreover, attentiveness to body literacy and inclusion can be recognized in the introduction of their boy shorts style, which was released in honor of Transgender Awareness Week and advertised by Sawyer Devuyst, a transgender model who menstruates (see Fig. 3). With the assortment of styles and sizes that Thinx offers for their underwear and their attention to bodies, it can be argued that Thinx's products are both well designed technologically and in terms of recognizing the potentiality for the multitude of shapes and sizes among menstruators. With this potentiality there is the chance to

refigure assumptions about who menstruators are and what their needs might be. Further, the inclusivity commitment of Thinx is not just related to exploring the body but also to interacting with bodies through extensions that value how wearable technologies work with bodies.

Fig. 2. Thinx underwear styles. (Image courtesy Thinx, Inc.).

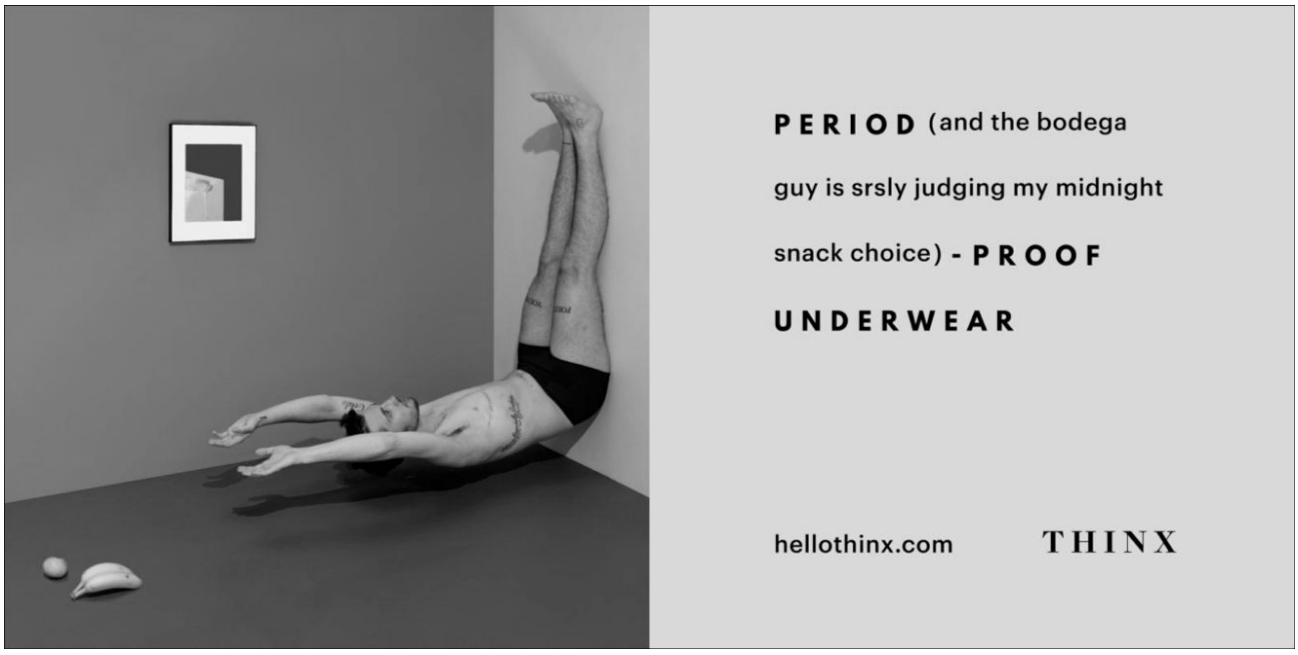

Fig. 3. Thinx advertisement featuring transgender model Sawyer Devuyst. (Image courtesy Thinx, Inc.).

Complicating Thinx as an Extension of *OBOS*

Even after its discontinuation, *OBOS* survives as a text that encourages its readers to have agency over their bodies both personally and politically. However, while the Boston Women's Health Collective, who helped in the authorship and printing of *OBOS*, has always been a nonprofit organization, Thinx has been since its inception a for profit company. Thinx may offer a reusable and sustainable product, which is unlike disposable tampons and pads, but their garments are costly nonetheless. With expensive wearable technologies like Thinx underwear, it is not uncommon for potential users to be priced out of the possibilities for experiencing more positive ways of movement, interactivity, and beingness. The expense of these products can also hinder menstruators' abilities to learn about their bodies and about different experiences surrounding reproductive health because of how these educational practices are so deeply embedded in the market practices of companies like

Thinx, as a for profit company that has an interest in education and issues of social change. Additionally, while Thinx has from the beginning been controversial due to their products, advertisements, and overtly feminist commitment to supporting menstrual equality around the world, the company has also been met with controversy brought on by potentially problematic practices of their former "SHE-eo" Miki Agrawal. Amid allegations of sexual harassment, workplace nudity, and claims of creating a hostile work environment, Agrawal stepped down as the CEO of the company in 2016. These allegations brought against Agrawal highlight how dissonance between the feminist values associated with a brand and potentially problematic leaders in companies can arise.

While it might seem like people have so much more at their fingertips than they did in the past in terms of body literacy, Thinx shows that issues of feminist health literacy access are not necessarily diminishing, but rather are changing form. Thinking about menstrual wearable technologies in relation to these ideas is crucial to better understand the consideration of the lived experiences of menstruation. While *OBOS* has influenced bodily literacy practices for the past forty-five years, moving forward, we need more research that not only helps individuals to better understand the experience of using wearable menstrual technologies, but also research that helps menstruators to understand how the presence and use of wearable technologies can shape how people come to understand their own bodies. Feminist rhetorical perspectives can help inform a more critical approach in this area by making room for tracing the complicated connections between (dis)empowerment that might be created through the use of wearable menstrual technologies.

When reading texts like *OBOS* or in wearing products like Thinx, there is the potential to construct an embodied, situated feminist subject who can actively participate in the knowledge production of their own bodies; however, health texts or health technologies also have the potential to create obverse affects. Further research in this area might draw upon critical, rhetorically informed qualitative approaches to studying menstruation technologies in use. This kind of research should contribute to the idea that for genuine inclusivity to occur in the context of feminist rhetorical research practices we need a broader conception of the kinds of technological artifacts that can be studied from an

embodied perspective. We also need an expanded conception of what a wearable technology is and how these technologies can both encourage and complicate knowledge production about feminine coded bodies. What this allows for is work that considers rhetorical artifacts old and new from a mediated technological perspective that takes up matters of movement, interactivity, and beingness.

In doing this work, we can trace what has and has not counted as technology through a feminist perspective as a way to point out how menstruation technologies have not gained the same recognition, respect, and attention that other technologies have. Katherine T. Durack makes a similar point when she states that because scientific inquiry and technological innovation have primarily been the work of men the "contributions of women have consequently been subsumed, lost, or overlooked" (250). In each of its iterations, *OBOS* has been committed to recognizing menstruation technologies as a way to inform readers about feminist healthcare practices. But in the discontinuation of *OBOS*, we must constantly reconsider both what we deem as an important and innovative technology and what impact and power these technologies can have on our bodies and in our everyday lives.

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