

COMFORTABLE WITH THEIR BODIES:  
MENSTRUATION, CULTURE AND MATERIALISM IN AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the intersection of multiple cultural themes and discourses present in discussion of the alternative menstrual hygiene product, the menstrual cup. Through the qualitative research methods of first-person interviewing and autoethnography, the study forms the characteristics of the American menstrual cultural model and how the model upheld by menstrual cup users differs from it. The study finds that access to alternative channels of information and an innate or learned acceptance of the body and bodily processes were indicators of whether or not an individual would be receptive to the cup. The mainstream consciousness was unlikely to foster bodily acceptance. Bodily acceptance was more likely encountered in individuals with interests invested in activities and lifestyle practices more likely to be labeled “alternative.” Using the cup also had a positive feedback effect in that it habituated users to and made them feel more comfortable with their bodies.

INDEX WORDS: Cultural Anthropology, Feminism, Menstruation, Hygiene, Menstrual Products, Menarche, Sexuality, Pregnancy, Menstrual Cup, Autoethnography