

Advertising and the Depiction of Working Women in *Croissant* during the 1980's and 90's.

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Introduction

Women's magazines can be used as a kind of mirror of the social reality of the time. Even though the content of the magazines does not actually reflect reality, it is still a useful medium to take a peek into the past (Holthus 2000). The magazines come out periodically, in the case of *Croissant*, two-times a month. Each number is supposed to be the "same" as the last one, and each number is "new" and "different" from the last one. This double identity offers the reader both stability and transformation, and allows the researcher to follow the change over the years. Advertisements are a useful way to study this transformation, as they are both a space bought by companies to advertise products, and they are sold to the readers to shape their views and actions (Beetham 2000).

Croissant was for the first time published in 1977. It raised discussions around the years 1988 and 1989, resulting in the publishing of two books, "The Croissant Syndrome" (Matsubara 1988), and "The Anti-Croissant Syndrome" (Waifu Henshuubu 1989), which discussed whether it should be held responsible or not for women delaying their marriage (K. Sakamoto 1999). The magazine had a rather feminist standpoint during the 80's, leaning in the 90's towards a magazine more focused on outward appearance, and placing more emphasis on cosmetics, fashion and dieting (Holthus 2000). By approximately the year 1984, its biggest target public were women in their 30's (K. Sakamoto 2016), and, according to research done by the Pola Cultural Research Institute (Pora Bunka Kenkyuujo), in 1993, *Croissant* has been influential as it was the fifth most read magazine among women aged 35 to 39, 40 to 45 and 45 to 49 (Takeuchi 2000).

Literature review

Zotos and Tsihla, in research analyzing papers focusing on advertisements from across 30 years, argue that projected gender roles are behind the gender roles in reality, and that advertisers use the images of stereotyped gender roles (Zotos and Tsihla 2014). These stereotypes are either a reflection of the concepts regarding ideal gender roles present in society (Pongsapitaksanti 2008), or a way of marketers trying to address these expectations towards gender roles (Zotos and Tsihla 2014) (Arima 2003).

Ford and others analyze 483 advertisements from 13 Japanese popular magazines chosen from the period between October 1992 and February 1993. Women are pictured in decorative or home settings rather than occupational or sports settings. Their main findings are that both men and women are shown in a positive way. Unfortunately, only coding is done for the analyzed sample of advertisements, and no descriptions of the actual occupations that do appear are given (Ford, et al. 1998). According to Cooper-Chen, women that appear as professionals in advertisements are most of the time entertainers or actresses (Chen 1995) (Frith and Mueller 2010).

Ochiai examines women magazines from after the war up to more recent periods. She observes that women in magazines have made a transition from housewives, to being dressed up like provocative foreign models, to more serious grown up women who want to get somewhere in the world. However, there is no portrayal yet in serious occupations (Ochiai 1997). As Sakamoto and co-authors also state, women are being displayed as more knowledgeable, possibly because more women started to go to university, however they are not shown doing serious jobs as in reality they are also still struggling to win equality in that field (Sakamoto, et al. 1999). Yasumoto also concludes that image of women is moving away from the traditional portrayal of women, and the women are shown as more empowered, and less oppressed (Yasumoto 2006).

MacGregor does a study of Japanese magazine advertisements of the 1960's and 1990's. She observes that towards the 1990's, people in advertisements are more and more presented as individuals and no longer in their family or societal roles. The ads from the 1990's are also more indirect and less informational compared to those during the 60's (MacGregor 2008).

Maynard and Taylor examine advertisements in Japanese and US teen magazines "Seventeen", 4 issues each, and discover that Japanese ads in general had more smiling women, and women appeared more girly compared to the similar magazine in the US. They state that since there is still a more clear distinction between gender roles in Japan, the notions of femininity are stronger, and women need to differentiate themselves more from men (Maynard and Taylor 1999).

Belk and Pollay examine ads in three Japanese magazines (Bungei Shunju, Chuo Koron and Shukan Asahi), between the years 1953-1983, and focus on the display of materialism in home settings. They conclude that the emphasis on the practical or functional of objects has declined since the 60's, as well as the emphasis on luxury or pleasure appeals since the late 70's. Status appeals however increased, as is the theme of materialism (Belk and Pollay 1985).

Huang and Lowry do a content analysis of 1524 models in 12 Chinese magazines. They focus on the occupational status of Chinese women, foreign women and Chinese men. They look at whether women are working or caring for the family in the magazine advertisements. They find that men were most likely shown in a professional and business role, Western women in a beauty model role, and Chinese women are either presented in an office or blue collar working environment, or in family

roles (Huang and Lowry 2015).

Because there are not many works focusing on representation of women in working roles through advertisements, and not many works that would provide the detailed description of the portrayed women, this research discusses how women are reflected through their professions in printed advertisements.

Methodology

From each year the first numbers of January and July of *Croissant* published bimonthly between 1985 and 1997 were taken. Out of the advertisements published in the issues, the ones portraying women who work, or the ones referring to working women were chosen. The ones that referred to working women, but had no portrayal of said women, were left out.¹⁾ Through the portrayal of working women in these advertisements, I discuss what was expected of working women, or what was the image of working women that was displayed in society during the second half of the 80's and during the 90's.

The portrayal of working women

The advertisements tend to portray women in a positive way. There is pressure put on women to look beautiful, to please other people's gaze. Working women, if they have families, are also portrayed as the ones that are responsible for taking care of the household. However, the women are not portrayed as being tired from working long hours, or from doing the laundry or cleaning, but as happy and energetic humans. Many find joy in working, and a meaning in life by doing their work. However, there are also simplified portrayals of working women, and simplified portrayals of jobs marketed at women.

The pressure to look beautiful at work

There is pressure on women to look beautiful while working. In an advertisement of 1985, for hand lotion, women are warned to pay attention to their body. Because there are more chances for women to go outside than in the past, they need to pay attention to other people's gaze. They need to stay beautiful, at work and during leisure activities. Working women are advertised to pay attention to the look of their hands and use hand lotion (Croissant 1/10 1985).

Similarly, Libene, a facial care cosmetics line, stresses out the fact that young female workers need to stay beautiful. Women in the company that is introduced, Kagaku Production Cosmopia, need

to cover up the effects of overworking that might appear on their faces. They need to smile and hide the signs of being over-stressed. Even if they cannot get enough sleep, or they do not have enough time to even wash their make-up off, while at work, they need to appear lively, bright, and show a smiling face to others. Important to mention is that almost all women in the mentioned company are young, as the average age is 24 years old. Most of the workers are also not full-time employees. It appears as if the women who work there are working part-time, and only as long they are new-comers. The presented women keep up their appearance and make sure they have the requested smile on their faces, whether it is during a meeting, a presentation, or when they apply the advertised cream on their faces. This smile can carry multiple meanings, such as acceptance or not being hostile towards the other person, or it places the smiling person in a humble position. The other persons here are the coworkers. That would indicate that women need to accept the acts of their coworkers (Goffman 1979). Also, through the quotes in the article, it appears as if the interviewed women take more care in making sure they look good enough to please the gaze of others, rather than doing a good job (Croissant 1/10 1986). Other moisturizing cosmetic products are to help women keep their skin healthy in the air-conditioned rooms (Croissant 7/10 1988), or to protect hands from the damage done by doing office tasks (Croissant 1/10 1987). Some products are to be used after five o'clock, before meeting one's friends (Croissant 7/10 1988), and yet other, such as Alpina face care products can be applied in the evening, so that the next morning at work, the signs of the left-over tiredness are not noticeable anymore (Croissant 1/10 1995). There is also a special kind of electrical device advertised, that helps to prevent wrinkles. The procedure takes only very little time, and is the perfect solution for a busy person who wants to take care of her beauty (Croissant 7/10 1996).

Success at work can be even achieved by using a certain type of underwear. Through a caricature image of a woman as if she would be sitting at a desk and working in an office, the reader learns that a woman could reach success because she was equipped with the right underwear (Croissant 1/10 1991).

Working women have to pay attention to keep their appearances. They need to stay beautiful so that they leave a positive impression on other people. They need to keep a smile on their faces, keep their skin looking fresh, and not show any signs of being tired. The necessity for smiling agrees with the findings by Maynard and Taylor, that say that a smile is more often seen in Japanese advertisements (Maynard and Taylor 1999). Once the next working day starts, women need to be full of energy again. They can make use of different cosmetic products during and after their working hours, and even special underwear to help them keep the right posture, but they need to keep the smile on their faces to bring positive energy into their office.

The pressure to manage both household and work

There are devices marketed at working women, to help them manage doing the household while working. During the discussed years, the most common type of such advertisement targeting working women, is an advertisement for a washing machine. As it is expected of a woman to do the laundry in the morning, and hang it outside to dry, washing machine advertisements target working women especially, since they have very little time in the morning before they can leave for work. "The time in the mornings is valuable for a working woman" (Croissant 1/10 1986), says a catch-phrase in the advertisement for a Sharp washing machine. The washing machine is automatic, with a timer option, so by the time the woman wakes up, the laundry will be done, and she only needs to hang it out to dry. The woman on the photo wakes up, and seems relaxed. She has gained extra time to feel relaxed during the morning. Ten years later, an advertisement for a side loader washing machine, also by Sharp, has also working women as the target group. A woman can set up the laundry in the evening, and get it out, clean and dry, in the morning. An interviewed user of the washing machine, working in Tokyo, is satisfied with using the washing machine. She is convinced that even though she is working, she still has to do her housewife responsibilities properly (Croissant 1/10 1996). Working women responsibilities are no different than these of someone who takes care of the house full-time, is what the advertisement implies.

To make taking care of the household and children easier, jobs that make it possible to work from home often make an appearance. These would include the Duskin store, where a woman opens a store at her own home (Croissant 7/10 1986) (Croissant 1/10 1987).

Another option for combining housework and work is to acquire skills through a mail-order course set. After passing a qualifying exam, a woman could work in the newly acquired profession (Croissant 1/10 1988) (Croissant 1/10 1988). The mail-order courses are marketed as jobs that can be done from home, within flexible time work (Croissant 1/10 1989) (Croissant 7/10 1994). Working part-time, for just a short period of time, is also an option for combining the household responsibilities and work (Croissant 7/10 1989).

Women are also expected to do the cleaning at the office where they work. In an advertisement for a hand cream called Atrix, female hands are photographed doing some office tasks, and wiping off a desk. The text next to the photos mentions that working with water can damage hands (Croissant 1/10 1987). As all of the photographed tasks take place at the office, one expects that the cleaning which involves working with water, also takes place in the office space.

Working women are expected to do their duty of doing the laundry and keeping the house clean. As they have very little time available at home, they need to make use of the advertised washing machines. Nothing has changed during 10 years of advertisements for Sharp washing machines, only

the machines have improved. It is always the working woman that does the laundry in the morning. She also thinks it is her duty to do the laundry properly. Jobs allowing house-work and paid work are seen as favorable. Even in the work space, women are expected to the simple cleaning tasks.

Women are satisfied with their jobs

Women are presented as being satisfied with the jobs they are doing. When they talk about their jobs, they seem to be enjoying their work.

Libene uses an actual company, and actual people working there to present their products. Kagaku Production Cosmopia company, together with their female workers, is presented in an article promoting the Libene products (Croissant 1/10 1986). Even though the company's ideology requests from their workers to keep an appearance of cheerfulness and brightness usually associated with being young, the presented women appear professional in the photos. Their strong points are mentioned next to the photos, and most importantly they look genuinely happy with their jobs.

In 1986, in an advertisement for a Duskin shop, a store for cleaning products and services, a woman talks about her experience of starting a Duskin store. She can combine childcare with managing her store, and she can work during flexible hours. She sounds satisfied with her job, and even finds time to enhance her hobbies. However, she refers to herself as a housewife who also has a career. In other words, she still sees herself as a housewife, who also happens to work. This might be due to the nature of the advertisement, that is targeting women who stay at home. However, because the interviewed woman still sees herself as a housewife, it means that she sees her house related responsibilities as important, or even as more important, than her job.

An interior coordinator has changed her career path at the age of 25, because she has discovered that a job has to be interesting to be worth doing (Croissant 1/10 1988). Cyntia Gibb, an actress and a dancer in an advertisement for vitamins by Sato, Yunker E Gold, says that her "life is dancing". She looks energetic, and smiles brightly into the camera (Croissant 1/10 1988). Nishitani Michiyo who is a diving instructor, does her passion of swimming as her job (Croissant 7/10 1988). Yoshimoto Yumi has decided to become a lyric writer and has become successful (Croissant 7/10 1988). Matsuno Akemi, a marathon runner, is presented as a person working hard to reach the top records (Croissant 7/10 1991). A worker at Ricoh interviewed in a Wella advertisement, appreciates the fact that she is recognized by the people at the Ricoh company and is given a lot of responsibilities. Another woman working at Hitachi, has found it difficult at first to adjust to long over-hours, but she likes her job so she does give her all when working (Croissant 7/10 1991). Saitou Keiko is so dedicated to her work of acting that she gains and loses weight to fit the image of the character she is playing (Croissant 7/10 1996). Arimori Yuko, a marathon runner, does her best to get the most out of her body, to get

the best results (Croissant 7/10 1997). Andou Kazu, an essayist and a commentator, is happy doing her job which requires a lot of travelling from her, and has stopped worrying about unnecessary things. She even looks out to join a hobby club together with her daughters (Croissant 7/10 1997).

The above mentioned women seem to thrive through their jobs. Even if they face some problems, or need to do effort to adjust themselves to the company rules, they do not seem to mind this effort. They focus on what they want to do, or what they want to reach, and do their best. They are portrayed in a positive light, as bright and energetic people.

Women share their experience in reaching their dream job

There are advertisements portraying women through the lens of their job. However, the portrayed women do not see their work as just work they perform every day, but they see it as a reason for living. They do their best in their profession, they realize their dreams and follow their hearts.

Gotou Hiroko is interviewed in an advertisement for Dai-Ichi Kangyo Bank. She smiles and looks full of confidence. In the interview beneath she admits that she had some doubts as to the kind of profession she has decided on, a computer graphics producer, but now she knows it is the right way to realize her childhood dreams of reaching people's hearts through making movies (Croissant 7/10 1985). She is presented in a human way, she has had her doubts whether she has made the right choice deciding on her profession, but through pursuing her job and through her experience she has understood that she can reach her dreams, even though her job is different from the one she had dreamt of as a child. Through her efforts she has found her way of life.

Chiba-Bonnier Mariko in a Volvic water advertisement tells the reader her life story. By meeting her French husband, she has become active in judo again. Professionally, she works as a translator from the French language. She balances the mental and physical activity well, her work of translating, and the physical exercise during judo practice (Croissant 7/10 1988). She does her passion, translating from French, and she has rediscovered her passion for judo.

Nishitani Michiyo, in an advertisement for Johnson cotton buds, is introduced as a diving instructor. She feels very responsible for the people she needs to take care of, because she has to make sure of everyone's safety. From the time she was very little, she has always loved swimming, so it was only natural for her to pursue a job that involves swimming (Croissant 7/10 1988). Her love for water and swimming has led her to become a diving instructor. She does what she loves as her job, and her words in the interview express how enthusiast she is about her profession. She has deepened her knowledge in biology, sea life and medicine, to pass the exams for a diving instructor. She is presented as a highly professional and intelligent woman.

Enjou Mika is a flutist, presented in an Ajinomoto column. Even though the column format does not allow the interviewed person to speak much about herself, Enjou Mika is shortly introduced as a person who started practicing at an early age of 8 years old. From the time she was 15 years old, she went studying abroad, in Germany, for the following six years. She practices playing every evening. She is a professional flutist who lives alone (Croissant 1/10 1989). She is presented as a highly skilled, hard-working person.

Andou Kazu talks about herself in an interview-like advertisement for Nestle sweetening products. She is an essayist, commentator, and a member of the Ministry of Education's Education Council Committee. While she is a mother of two children, she works and holds lectures on different topics across the whole country. Rather than having things done for herself, like having a birthday party organized for herself, she wants to make other people happy. She feels she has succeeded when she is needed by the people around her (Croissant 7/10 1997). Andou Kazu sounds like a person who attained her self-realization. She is presented as an intellectual, and can speak up on different topics such as women, life style, child upbringing, environment or energy problems, fashion or cooking. She wants to live her life freely, and do the things she likes. While she is very busy doing her job, she also treasures her family and cannot wait until she can do the same hobbies with her children.

All the above women are portrayed through the form of an interview. They are presented as intellectual women. They have found what they want to do and pursue this goal. It is their personality that is projected to the reader. Their energy, and their passion towards their jobs is used to draw attention towards the advertised products.

Women projected through their jobs

Women work at various professions. A computer graphic producer talks about her dream of making movies (Croissant 7/10 1985). Some women are presented as working in the office, in a company that specializes in book publishing, manual making, web content making and other IT or education related services (Cosmopia Co.,Ltd.) (Croissant 1/10 1986). Other women open up a Duskin store to deliver cleaning services. There are female workers presented in the professions typically associated with women, such as nursery school teacher, waitress, or illustrator, but there are also women who are also given more important positions such as boutique manager (Croissant 7/10 1986). Other job being described as attractive for women, and being sought after, is TV and radio caster. Kusayanagi Fumie who is lucky enough to be a TV and radio caster, is presented as a busy person, but also as a person who has her dream job and feels satisfied with her life (Croissant 1/10 1988). There are professions coming to existence through mail-order courses, namely the POP writer (Croissant 1/10 1988), interior coordinator (Croissant 1/10 1988) (Croissant 1/10 1989), flower

arrangement specialist (Croissant 1/10 1989) and proofreader. These are all advertised as professions suitable for women (Croissant 1/10 1988). Yet another profession is that of singer, dancer and actress, presented in the person of Cyntia Gibb (Croissant 1/10 1988). A translator from French, exercising judo in her free time also makes an appearance (Croissant 7/10 1988). A profession out of the ordinary is that of diving instructor (Croissant 7/10 1988). A popular lyric writer, Yoshimoto Yumi, also makes an appearance (Croissant 7/10 1988). A flutist, practicing playing from the age of 8, is interviewed in an Ajinomoto column (Croissant 1/10 1989). A lyric writer and singer, Aran Tomoko, appears in Splie whitening cosmetics advertisement (Croissant 7/10 1989) (Croissant 7/10 1990) (Croissant 1/10 1991). Rosanna Katou, a singer and life coordinator is presented in an Ajinomoto column (Croissant 7/10 1989). The profession of model and writer appears in the advertisement for a Panasonic word processor (Croissant 7/10 1990). A fashion producer promotes SK-II cosmetics. She sees all women as producers of life style, choosing the right interior, food, or fashion (Croissant 7/10 1991). A professional marathon runner is photographed for Mitsubishi Trust Bank's advertisement (Croissant 7/10 1991). A secretary and a manager talk in an interview done by the Wella company (Croissant 7/10 1991). An actress, Wakui Emi, promotes a pain killer medicine (Croissant 1/10 1992). A proofreader is photographed while receiving an award for being the best student from the Minister of Education (Croissant 7/10 1994). Azuma Terumi, an actress, is photographed for an advertisement of Alpina cosmetic products (Croissant 1/10 1995). Yuginuma Junko, a professional figure skater, promotes a water purifier (Croissant 7/10 1996). Saitou Keiko, an actress, talks about losing weight in an advertisement for dieting pills (Croissant 7/10 1996). Another actress, Matsuoka Kikko, talks in an interview about a beautification device (Croissant 7/10 1996). A 36 years old model, Kusuda Yuko, appears in an advertisement for Wella coloring shampoo. The coloring shampoo helps her to be confident in her looks and to continue working as a model (Croissant 1/10 1997). A professional marathon runner, Arimori Yuko, who has won second place in the 1992 Summer Olympics held in Barcelona, promotes a sport and fitness drink (Croissant 7/10 1997). Andou Kazu, in an advertisement for Nestle coffee sweetening products, is presented as an essayist, commentator, and a member of the Ministry of Education's Education Council Committee (Croissant 7/10 1997).

Fig. 1 Women's professions portrayed in advertisements 1985-1997

Technical professions	White collar professions	Creative professions	Sport professions	Blue collar professions
Computer graphic producer	Unspecified office workers	Illustrator	Dancer	Waitress
Diving instructor	Manager of a Duskin store	Writer	Marathon runner	
	Nursery school teacher	Singer	Figure skater	
	Boutique manager	Actress		
	Secretary	Translator		
	Manager	Flutist		
		Model		
		Fashion producer		
		Lyric writer		
		Life coordinator		
		Essayist		
		Commentator		
		Interior coordinator		
		POP writer		
		Flower arrangement specialist		
		Proofreader		
		TV and radio caster		

The portrayed women often appear in jobs that are possible to do within a flexible time, or by working from their homes. The women presented in creative jobs, often work as intellectuals, and thus work as writer, lyric writer, commentator, and have the flexibility of choosing their work time and the possibility of working freelance. The portrayal of women as intellectuals confirms the previous findings by Ochiai and Sakamoto (Ochiai 1997) (Sakamoto, et al. 1999). However, while women are portrayed as people who have decided themselves what they want to do as profession, they are portrayed as intellectuals in jobs that give them more freedom in time, and in what they do. The focus lies on the aspects of flexibility and freedom.

There are almost no technical professions shown, in fact the only two that appear are in the years 1985 and 1988. There are also few portrayals of ordinary office workers, and only one blue collar job. Sport players appear more often than blue collar or technical professions. Women are seldom presented in service related jobs, such as a waitress, but it seems as if women tend to occupy creative jobs, such as writer, lecturer, singer or actress. Women are portrayed as intellectuals who have

passion for their jobs. They are portrayed as free beings using their minds to make the world a better place.

The busy, but thriving portrayal of women

There are two sides of presenting women as being busy with their jobs. They can be presented as being burned out, leading an unhealthy life style. However, in most cases they are presented as being busy, with that business being the source of their life energy and happiness. They thrive because their job makes other people happy, and because other people find them necessary.

In the first category, women are presented as being busy, so busy they just fall down on their bed and sleep once they get back home. They have no time to take off their make-up (Croissant 1/10 1986), or to eat breakfast, so they need to drink meal replacements in the form of vegetable juice (Croissant 7/10 1985).

However, most of the women are presented through the second category, where they are introduced as busy but thriving people. A woman in an Uchino home wear advertisement, says she works from 9 to 5 on high speed. However, once at home she knows how to switch to a relax mode, and she enjoys her time at home (Croissant 1/10 1988). Kusayanagi Fumie,²⁾ a radio and TV caster, is followed around for a day by an employee of Orbis. She wakes up at 7, attends her work meetings in Tokyo in the morning, and in the afternoon she travels for a job assignment in Nagoya. She gets back home by 9 in the evening and still finds time to relax. She is presented as an organized person, who can manage her work responsibilities and take care of her health (Croissant 1/10 1988). A woman in an advertisement for a bracelet to prevent painful shoulders, is walking at a train station, while reading a newspaper. She is a person who has to answer numerous phone calls simultaneously, work overnight to finish a project, and still finds time on the train to keep herself educated and up-to-date with current issues (Croissant 1/10 1990). She is a very busy person, too busy to pay attention to her surroundings, but at the same time she is presented as a capable person, not letting a single moment of time go to waste. A woman working at Hitachi, even though she has to stay over hours at work, because she likes running, she goes jogging every day (Croissant 7/10 1991). Andou Kazu is presented as a very busy person who can only sleep peacefully while travelling in the train or car. She travels throughout the whole country to give lectures on various topics. She enjoys helping others. She enjoys her life, has hobbies, and does not worry over small things (Croissant 7/10 1997).

The described women are presented as people who are very busy with their jobs, but also as people who can manage their busy schedules. They organize their time effectively, and even find time to have hobbies. They take care to keep their bodies in good health and do their best at work. Their reason for living is the work they are doing.

Women self-educating

Advertisements to encourage the self-education of women appear throughout the discussed years. One form of stimulating self-education are the Duskin store advertisements from 1986 and 1987. The presented woman has learned how to manage a store, and has gained more faith in her own abilities (Croissant 1/10 1987). In the case of the other woman who also has decided to open a Duskin store, her new work has had a positive influence on her, and she can engage in her hobbies more (Croissant 7/10 1986). The Duskin company helps to start the store, but the women have to manage it by themselves, so they need to learn how to be a manager of a newly opened business.

There are advertisements that stimulate self-education, and gaining new skills to use them later on a professional level. A POP writer advertisement is an advertisement for an educational kit, to help a person gain skills in making posters or other kinds of advertisements by hand-written letters and hand-drawn drawings. After a six-months time period, one can do the exams and gain a professional recognition in POP writing (Croissant 1/10 1988).

Another advertisement which is similar in style is one to become an interior coordinator. A woman can use the knowledge she has gathered up until now, in her daily life, and with the help of the course she can gain interior coordination knowledge, that she can later apply on a professional level, in a job outside the home (Croissant 1/10 1988).

A year later, in 1989, in an advertisement for an interior coordinator, combined with a flower coordinator advertisement, a self-learning course set is advertised for people who would like to become professional in the above mentioned professions. However, different from the previously discussed advertisement, this time the focus is placed on gaining a skill that would be applied in one's home first, and only later could be used as a job done outside home (Croissant 1/10 1989). The gained skills would be used to improve the personal sphere, whereas a year before the same skills were foremost advertised as useful skills on the job market.

Following the trend of learning a skill and applying it at work, an advertisement in the same year for wall paint, suggests that a woman would buy paint and repaint the walls by herself. Here the skill of bathroom renovation would be applied only at one's own home. She can notice by herself where the origin of the smelly walls lies, and fix the problem by herself (Croissant 7/10 1989). She is a person who can manage any problem within her household. She is going to try painting and learn herself what is needed to fix her house and how it should be done.

The self-educating advertisements, where the gained skills are to be used at home, continue with an advertisement for a word processor by Panasonic. The advertisement calls for people to send in works made with the word processor, that would fit in style with the summer season. The project form is free up to the testers, it could be a postcard, a videotape or a family dinner's menu. To gain

skills in designing such works, a seminar is advertised. For the ones that are alright with following a book by themselves, a guidebook is introduced. The advertisement promotes gaining new skills in designing and working with a word processor. The newly gained skills would be used at home (Croissant 7/10 1990).

In 1993, an advertisement for improving English skills targets people who are otherwise too busy to attend classes somewhere else. The set requires listening to the tape three hours a day. However, even though the advertisement mentions working people, rather than using the gained skills at work, it suggests that the improved comprehension and hearing skills would be used during leisure time. The English skills would be used during travel, or to watch movies or news, and to be able to speak and listen more freely. With the improved comprehension, one would be able to enjoy source material in the English language (Croissant 1/10 1993).

A proofreader advertisement in 1994 switches back to promoting the acquired skills to be used at work. With the advertised course, a person could gain knowledge and pass an official exam to become a proofreader. Because the printing industry is blooming, finding an employment as a proofreader should not be difficult. However, the advertisement places emphasis on the possibility of working from home, after gaining some experience as a proofreader (Croissant 7/10 1994).

Expanding one's knowledge and understanding one's body is promoted through an advertisement for a series of educational books. Magazine House Publishing markets books that explain bodily concerns such as menstruation, suffering from cold hands or feet, or giving birth at a later age (Croissant 1/10 1995). It is to raise awareness about one's body, and to understand the processes involved in, for example, pregnancy.

The advertisements are directed at women to gain new skills. At first, during the years 1986–88, the skills would be applied at a job outside. The argument to convince the reader to aim for becoming a professional would be to fill a hole in the market, as the market is growing and there are not enough people to answer the demand. However, from 1989 until later on, even though the argumentation of this kind of advertisements would keep in the same lines, the newly gained skills would be applied in a home environment, either to save money, instead of asking a professional to do the same work, or to make your own space fitting your individuality. From 90's, even when using a professional tool like a word processor, it would be used to make everyday life more pleasurable, or just to have fun. Better English skills are also to enjoy watching movies in English. Even though the proofreading advertisement stresses the validity of an exam to become a professional proofreader, the key sales-point of the self-education kit is that the job can be done from home. The positive influence of the advertisements is that they stimulate educating and developing oneself. However, they also suggest that women should stay at home, and work from there, even though the advertisements suggest gaining new skills.

The minimalistic portrayal of women during the middle of the 90's

Starting from around the beginning of the 90's, women are presented in the advertisements using just a short introduction of their name, profession, and maybe their key achievements. In the series of advertisements for the whitening cosmetics by Takeda, starring Aran Tomoko, only her name and a short introduction of her is written. It is her presence that advertises the product (Croissant 7/10 1989) (Croissant 7/10 1990) (Croissant 1/10 1991).

However, in the middle of the 90's that simplicity takes another turn, and even in the advertisements which are made in the form of an interview, there is very little information about the interviewed person. In an advertisement for the Cleansui water filter, Yuginuma Junko plays the role of an "image character". However, rather than her, the surrounding drawings of women speak about the purifier. Even though each woman says something about the purifier, they focus on the design of the purifier rather than its functions. They do not say anything about how the taste of water would have changed, or about their experience with using the device. They find it fashionable, easy to use, even by a woman, or they praise the design (Croissant 7/10 1996). All the presented women sound very simple-minded, as if they cannot think of anything better to say than focusing on the looks of the device. Whether the advertisers wanted to put forward such an image of women, or whether this is the way they wanted to present the product is hard to say. According to Belk, there has been a downward trend in presenting the functional side of the product since the 60's (Belk and Pollay 1985). MacGregor's research agrees with this. MacGregor's also saw a general decline in information given about products. Advertisements in the 90's are vague and say less about the advertised product than advertisements around the 60's (MacGregor 2008).

Saitou Keiko talks in an interview for dieting pills, "System Six". She has a chance to talk about herself and her job of acting at the beginning of the interview, however, she has to do so through the lens of gaining weight. She has gradually gained weight to fit the image of the character of the roles she was playing. However, later the topic about eating escalates, and by the end of the interview she sounds as if she is thinking only about eating and needs to use the pills to fill her stomach, and to stop herself from eating (Croissant 7/10 1996). As a result, she does not come over as an intelligent person, but as a person who likes eating and has trouble controlling her appetite.

Matsuoka Kikko, an actress, in a three pages long interview, has even less chance to talk about herself or her work. She only praises the device that helps to prevent wrinkles, and she values it because she can do the treatment in just 10 minutes, so it fits her busy life style. The only time she can mention her work is when she says that she works until late hours. She only discusses the device (Croissant 7/10 1996). There is no interest in Matsuoka Kikko's personality, her dreams or goals. She sounds simple-minded, repeating her praises about the beautifying device.

The following year, 1997, has similar advertisements. Kusuda Yuko, a model, 36 years old, talks about her hair in the Wella coloring shampoo advertisement. She is presented as a woman confident with her looks, but she does not have the chance to speak about herself or her work except for her hair. Her model job requires her to take care of her hair and her skin, and that is the only reference to her work (Croissant 1/10 1997). That makes her sound as if she only cares about her hair, and is satisfied once she has colored her hair.

Arimori Yuko, a professional marathon runner, promotes a sport and fitness drink. In the interview, rather than through her extensive training and running, she is presented as if her success is due to her drinking the sport drink. The sport drink has managed to get the best out of her body, so she could achieve the best results. It is not her motivation or endurance that helped her, but the sport drink that triggered her body to run until its limits. However, next to her photo, there is a short introduction about her achievements. The Barcelona and Atlanta Olympic Games are mentioned, and the fact that she is the first female athlete to gain a medal in a row (Croissant 7/10 1997). However, the fact that her effort is taken away from her in the article, and that all the glory seems to come from a sport drink, makes her look as if her winning the medals was not a success made on her own.

The presented women do not get a chance to talk about their own success, their dreams or goals. They only have to speak about something related to the product. That makes them sound simple-minded, as if they have nothing to say. Even their own success is taken away from them, as in the case of Arimori Yuko. No personality of the interviewed people is projected in the interviews; all the presence is being taken over by the product information. The people resemble simple puppets who just follow the lines of a script.

Advertisement of jobs that suit female qualities

Advertisements tend to promote work, or the skills that are to be used at work, as a job that fits female qualities. The work is supposed to be easy to do just because the one doing it, is a woman. The acquired experience and the already present inborn sense would be used in the advertised work.

The advertisement for Libene products is built in the form of an article based on an interview among Cosmopia workers. The workers are praised for their smile during work, or for choosing colorful accessories placed on a meeting table. The explanation for these is because the ones working there are women, so naturally the working sphere is different (Croissant 1/10 1986). The fact that this smile, which is in fact forced by company rules, is seen as something that comes out of female qualities, contradicts the information already given in the advertisement.

In a Duskin shop advertisement, being a housewife is presented as having useful skills. Working from home is seen as a way to combine housework and work, as the woman can work in a flexible

work-time (Croissant 7/10 1986). In the following Duskin advertisement, women's natural abilities to keep good relationships with their neighbors are praised. This skill, which they already possess, can be used while managing the store and delivering services to clients (Croissant 1/10 1987). Women would use the experience they gathered through housekeeping and expand their housewife qualities into the Duskin store.

A POP writer is presented as a "female profession". Because women naturally like writing cute things, and like the activity of writing itself, especially writing round letters, and also like drawing, this job is ideal for women. A woman who decided to gain skills in POP writing would work and do things she already likes, and earn money at the same time. The skills are advertised as easy to learn, and with the qualifying exam after a learning period, a woman should be able to find employment in this profession (Croissant 1/10 1988). The fact that learning the profession sounds so easy, and that it is perfect for women, sounds as if these women would not like to learn anything which requires a considerable effort.

An advertisement for an interior coordinator kit calls for female qualities, for women of all ages. If a woman is young, she will bring fresh ideas into the profession, if a woman is older, a housewife with children for example, she can use her accumulated experience in her new job. The job is suited for women because women like shopping, keep on coordinating their own houses and are skilled at fashion (Croissant 1/10 1988). In an advertisement for an interior coordinator printed during the next year, women are praised for their skills of making houses easy to live in. Due to managing a household with children they have gathered enough experience, and can apply these skills on a professional level (Croissant 1/10 1989).

A summer part-time magazine advertisement aims at women. With this magazine, a woman would find a job, even if it is only for short time. She will embrace the coming hot weather and not yield to the rainy season or a hot summer (Croissant 7/10 1989). The focus lies not on working part-time, but on women finding a part-time job.

The proofreader advertisement is directed at women, because women already like books and magazines. They could correct printed texts as their job. A successful proofreader receiving a prize is introduced in this advertisement. She still proofreads, but she works freelance from her own home (Croissant 7/10 1994). The advertisement suggests that as a proofreader one can work from home, in a way which is supposed to sound attractive to women.

The presented jobs are aimed at women. In the case of the mail order courses, they suggest that women are already equipped with the skills or sense necessary for the advertised professions, they just need to polish them up with the advertised course. Women of all ages are the target group, whether the person is young, or has taken care of children and house, the freshness of mind, or the experience can be applied to the new job. Interestingly, older women without children are not the

target group of this kind of commercials. This is probably because these women have a full time job, while the discussed advertisements tend to portray the professions as ones that can be done from home, during free time. Women tend to be portrayed as people working from home, even in the case of opening a Duskin store, the presented women work from home and refer to themselves as housewives. In other words, working from home seems to suit women best. The advertisements also suggest that the new skills are easy to learn. As long as the person is a woman, she is able to do so. That would suggest that there is no effort needed to learn a new skill. That could also imply women do not want to start with something which requires time to master it.

Conclusion

Working women portrayed in advertisements tend to be portrayed in a positive way, as people who have passion for their work. They are often portrayed as busy people, but at the same time some of them find time for hobbies, or time to relax.

The noticeable change through the years is that advertisements stimulating self-education, to gain professional skills, suggest that a woman would use these skills at her home, for her own use, or for work, but done from the home environment. The same kind of advertisements from the middle of 80's suggest that a woman would use newly gained skill to fill a hole in the market and work outside. The reason for this might be in the economic crash during the 90's where many people became unemployed and people had a harder time finding a job. The result is that smart women are pushed back into their house as they are in the group that gets hit hardest when there is a crisis (Verick 2009).

Women are portrayed in only a small variety of professions. Blue collar jobs or technical professions make almost no appearance. Apart from women being portrayed in white collar jobs, women are shown as intellectuals, working as writers, actors, or singers. Many of the intellectual oriented professions are jobs that allow flexible working time, and some of them allow working from home. That flexibility of work time and the creative aspect of the job is what seems to be desirable in a profession for women.

The so-called "feminine" aspects of certain kinds of jobs, or jobs marketed as being perfect for women, may show women in a bad light, as this way of marketing implies that women cannot learn anything new or anything requiring real effort. It sounds as if women can only learn what is suitable for women, and what they already know just because they are female.

There are very few portrayals of working women with families, two women have mentioned their children in an interview (Croissant 7/10 1989) (Croissant 7/10 1997), one married couple (Croissant 7/10 1988) and one couple (Croissant 1/10 1988) were presented. Except for the cases when the

housekeeping aid products are advertised, such as washing machines, it is possible to assume that other women are presented as single women. Like MacGregor said, the focus is more on the individual, no longer on the family or society (MacGregor 2008). But even this individual seems to be losing the spotlight in favor of the product, if the advertisements from the middle of 90's are an indicator. The interviews where we learn about the people presented are mostly gone, and left are mere husks which sell the products only by being present.

Endnotes

- 1) For example, an advertisement for make-up base product targeted the group of women that works in a lightbulb light. To make their skin appear more lively, the advertised cosmetic product could be applied. However, as there is no reference to exactly what kind of job the women would be doing, or anything that would describe the users of the product, such kind of advertisements were left out.
- 2) Kusayanagi Fumie died at age 54 due to suicide. During the last years of her life she was not very active socially and was supposedly fighting an illness (Kusayanagi Fumie-san jisatsu, 54-sai fujin no byouki de nayamu 2008).

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