The Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
(Interdisciplinary Studies)

Vivian M. Smith
1975 University of Western Ontario BA
1977 University of Western Ontario MA

“The Daily Upholders: Canadian Women Print Journalists Explain Their Careers”

February 25th, 2013
11:00 am
Fine Arts, room 112

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Lynne Van Luven, Department of Writing, UVic (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Darlene Clover, Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies, UVic (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Annalee Lepp, Department of Women’s Studies, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Barbara Freeman, School of Journalism and Communication, Carleton University

Chair of Oral Examination:
Jillianne Code, Department of Curriculum & Instruction, UVic
Abstract

Canadian women print journalists both protest against and acquiesce to the patriarchal culture of newspapering in their daily work. Utilizing narrative analysis and the feminist theory of intersectionality, this dissertation argues that other social characteristics interact with gender as practitioners negotiate the multiple hegemonies of their workplace, and that the impacts of these characteristics change over time. The purpose of the qualitative study was to do fieldwork needed to respond to scholarly uncertainty about journalists’ individual motivations on the job and their perceived impact on the socio-political agenda. Individual interviews and focus groups were conducted over 2010-2011. Participants included 27 Canadian women print journalists in five newspapers across Canada, as well as one former journalist, now an academic. Key generational differences appeared when participants’ stories were examined with age and gender intersecting as an organizing theme. Senior participants tended to see themselves as lucky survivors in frustratingly gendered newsrooms; those in mid-career were self-sacrificing, hard workers who needed, but were not getting, workplace flexibility; and the most junior ones presented themselves as individual strategists, capable of handling whatever routine injustices were thrown at them. They wanted to stay in the business long enough to “choose” between careers and parenthood, with technological proficiency as a lifeline. Participants’ narratives revealed how the most senior tended to combine their multiple identities and externalities into a coherent whole, while younger participants experimented with and exploited aspects of their complex identities and larger societal influences to survive in a high-stress, gendered environment. This study produces evidence that the
participants’ career paths are influenced in fluid and often hidden ways by other characteristics as they intersect with gender. Assumptions about these characteristics, such as age, race, parenthood status and class, further complicate the shaping of participants’ experiences in their workplaces, offering them other possible positions from which to either reinforce or resist the newsroom culture. The participants take up navigating these confused seas in ways that often leave them frustrated and angry, but ultimately most say they feel they make a difference in the socio-political agenda because of their complex identities and as voices for those deemed “voiceless.”

**Awards, Scholarships, Fellowships**

2011/12  University of Victoria Interdisciplinary Fellowship  
2010/11 University of Victoria Interdisciplinary Graduate Award  
2008/09 CanWest Global Fellow in Media Studies, University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Information and Media Studies, School of Journalism

**Presentations**

1. **Smith, V.** “The Daily Upholders: Why are so few women promoted to senior positions in Canadian print journalism?” Ideafest, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada,.March 8, 2012. (poster)

2. **Smith, V.** “How Canadian Women Journalists Describe Their – and Our- Lives.” Graduate Women’s and Gender Studies Conference, Politics of Knowing,
University of British Columbia, Liu Institute for Global Issues, Vancouver, Canada., April 2011. (oral)


**Publications**
