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:
Dr. Jillianne Code, Department of Curriculum & Instruction, UVic
Abstract

This dissertation is concerned with how it is that Canadian women print journalists are underrepresented in the highest levels of newspapers across the country and why it matters. Using narrative analysis and the feminist theory of intersectionality, I respond to scholarly uncertainty about journalists’ individual motivations and impact on the socio-political agenda, arguing that practitioners’ social characteristics, including gender, race, age, parenthood status, ability and others, come into play. The impacts of these characteristics change over time, influencing the study participants’ decisions to stay or leave. Participants’ narratives reveal how the most senior tend to combine their multiple identities and externalities into a coherent whole, while younger participants tend to describe experimenting with and exploiting aspects of their complex identities and larger societal influences to survive in a high-stress, “macho” 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 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.” In this way, their everyday actions from inside corporate media function to both reproduce and protest against multiple hegemonies.
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)


Publications
