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Pink Ghetto

Susan Ayres

Texas A&M University School of Law, sayres@law.tamu.edu

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PINK GHETTO

Susan Ayres[†]

I teach legal writing.
That says it all
for about 80% of the faculty
nothing more to ask.

So, they pretty much leave me alone.
At best, pass pleasantries
in the hall,
at worst, make social engagements
in my presence
ignoring me.
“Like to come by for wine
after class?”
“Nothing fancy, just some wine and crackers
you know.”

I smile at this play.
The Emperor’s New Clothes
I’m a shirt? Trousers?
No—something really invisible
a stained t-shirt worn
under a crisp Oxford shirt
yellow armpits that no one sees.

The Other. Their Dark Continent.
*“The philosophical constructs itself
starting with the abasement of woman.
Subordination of the feminine
... for the functioning of the machine.”*¹

Students ask me to be faculty
advisor for the Women’s Law Caucus.
They perceive the school advances women’s issues

There is no feminist jurisprudence course
There is no full-time advisor for their organization

[†] Visiting Assistant Professor, Roger Williams University School of Law.

¹ Hélène Cixous, *Sorties*, in *NEW FRENCH FEMINISMS: AN ANTHOLOGY* 91, 92 (Elaine Marks & Isabelle de Courtivron eds., 1981).

There is no full professor who is a woman

A male professor starts to say
something (derogatory?)
about the Women's Law Caucus.
Interrupted, or kicked under the table
he never finishes.
*"If they believe, in order to muster up
some self-importance,
if they really need to believe
that we're dying of desire,
that we are this hole
fringed with desire . . ."*²

A tenured professor confides,
"Grading all those papers, never
again. I did that, too
when I first started."
Other (women) professors chat, ask concernedly,
"You surviving?"
I'm learning:
*"We are in no way obliged to deposit
our lives in their banks of lack."*³

² Hélène Cixous, *The Laugh of the Medusa*, in *NEW FRENCH FEMINISMS: AN ANTHOLOGY* 245, 260 (Elaine Marks & Isabelle de Courtivron eds., 1981).

³ *Id.* at 255.