

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

The divinity in cultural appreciation.
View this email in your browser



Join Us at Northeastern Illinois Univeristy

Our friends at Northeastern Illinois University have invited Silk Road Rising to screen our 2019 video play, *Obstacle Course*, to help generate conversations about public policy, Islamophobia, NIMBYism, and the limits of free speech. Whether or not you have already seen *Obstacle Course*, we hope that our Silk Road audience will join us for this lively exchange. It's been way too long since we've seen each other in-person. And the event is free!

Thursday, March 31 at 7:00pm CST

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

Auditorium
Northeastern Illinois University
5500 N St Louis Ave
Chicago, IL 60625

All guests must wear a mask.

About *Obstacle Course*: Set in Naperville, Illinois, this 45-minute video play, adapted from Jamil Khoury's stage play *Mosque Alert*, explores reactions to a proposed Islamic Community Center on the site of a beloved landmark. Allyship, municipal politics, and Islamophobia all intersect in this head-on collision between Not in My Backyard fear mongering, well-intentioned liberalism, and the peaceful practice of faith.





Polycultural
Institute

Excerpt from

***The Case for
Polyculturalism***

**A new essay-in-progress
by Jamil Khoury**

In last week's excerpt, we explored how cultural appropriation and cultural imperialism are not only antithetical to polyculturalism, but to the pursuit of restorative and reparative justice. At the same time, we also established how integral cultural interchange has been to human development and behavior and to our myriad understandings of history, leading us to imagine an interchange that is devoid of colonial power and infused with egalitarian spirit. This possibility is cultivated and expressed in cultural appreciation: learning from and respecting another culture in order to deepen understanding, broaden perspectives, and exchange ideas and practices that help us advance an agreed-upon common good.

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

place of curiosity, humility, openness, and gratitude. It is not about taking credit, but rather giving credit, in the many ways that credit manifests in societies: cultural dignity and respect coupled with economic imbursements. It's also not about fleeting admiration for a culture's food, jewelry, or dance, but about caring for the people who actually create and inhabit the culture. Cultural labor is never free, and a true act of appreciation understands that. In most cases, appreciation assumes a relationship and demands mutuality. It's not

about crashing the party; it's about showing up if and when invited—and bringing a gift. We are not replicating a classroom or a spectator sport; we are building active, reciprocal engagement.

The desire to learn with and from another culture is ultimately about listening, loving, and ascribing value. It asks us to focus our attention outwards, not inwards, and to be grounded in self while being selfless and open. The intent is to better one's self through new knowledge and experience, not to aggrandize one's self. When we acknowledge the wisdom and beauty, the brilliance and ingenuity, of the culturally "otherized" or the culturally "distanced," we avail ourselves of transformation. We are transcending tribe and expanding possibility, which opens us up to a bigger, more exciting world. Suddenly, our affinities needn't always look or speak like us.



There is also a spiritual component to cultural appreciation in that we are discovering the divinity, the Godliness, in the ties that bind. There is a higher power in our quests for understanding and exchange. In strengthening human connectivity and eliminating barriers and fears, we can start healing the soul, body, and mind. In elevating consciousness and exploring new cultural ideas, we begin to unlearn the ignorance and egoism that produces racism and hate. Ethics and goodness remind us that we can be inspired by a culture without laying claim to that culture, and we can learn from a culture without denying the source of the knowledge gleaned. When cultural appreciation and the pursuit of justice converge, humanity evolves.

In a Clear Precise Arabic Tongue **by Yussef El Guindi**

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

In a Clear Concise Arabic Tongue is a collection of Yussef El Guindi's short plays and monologues that have been produced over the years (2001 to 2021). Most of Yussef's plays explore aspects of the Arab and Muslim American experience. He writes from a place of nuance, contradiction, and self-awareness in order to challenge, to disrupt complacency, and to entertain us without letting us off the hook.

"Yussef El Guindi is one of the most exciting, thought-provoking, and courageous playwrights working in the American theatre today."

- Jamil Khoury, Co-Executive
Artistic Director



Order Direct from the Publisher

Also Available on Amazon

**Support a Vision of America that is
Welcoming, Polycultural, and
Dynamic.**

Subscribe

Past Issues

Translate ▼

Open, Willing, and Creative.

Support Silk Road Rising and Donate Today

Copyright © 2022 Silk Road Rising, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

Want to subscribe to receive future emails from Silk Road Rising?
[Sign up for our list!](#)