

What are the implications of polygamy for women's friendships?

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In today's e-newsletter, we learn why Jamil is obsessed with polygamous Mormons and what that has to do with Fouad Teymour's new play, *Twice, Thrice, Frice...*

Then we learn about the National Arts in Education Week, recognizing the creative opportunities Silk Road Rising offers Chicago's public school students with deep arts learning programs.

Finally, we close out the e-newsletter with a flyer and information for how you can buy tickets to *Twice, Thrice, Frice...* We're very excited to have you join us!

Letter from the Founding Artistic Director Jamil Khoury



Fouad Teymour has been attending plays at Silk Road Rising since 2007. I first got to know Fouad as part of an active group of theatre-goers affectionately referred to as “the Egyptians” (a group that includes at least one Armenian!) Along with his dear friends, and our cherished patrons, Omar Khalil, Muhammad Eissa, and Effat Moussa, **Fouad is a fixture in the Silk Road Rising community. His participation reveals a true renaissance man:** an engaged audience member, an active company member (as Artistic

Associate), a cultural consultant, an advisor on Islamic practice and belief, an actor, and of course, a playwright. On top of that, Fouad has a day job. He's a professor of chemical engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology!

It is on Fouad the playwright that I will focus, particularly in light of what he's created with *Twice, Thrice, Frice...* I should probably begin with a full disclosure. Starting with the TV show *Big Love* and continuing with *Three Wives, One Husband*, my husband Malik and **I have become a bit obsessed with polygamous Mormons**—I know, I know, the mainstream Mormon church disavows them. But they sure make for great storytelling! I think part of **our appreciation for TV's “fundamentalist Mormons” is bound up in the fact that polygamous marriages, not unlike same-sex marriages (until recently, sort of) exist outside social sanction and the law, and are subject to negative scrutiny and prosecution.** We can relate.

As another aside, I don't oppose polyamory. Who am I to tell people how to structure their relationships? I oppose patriarchal polygamy, with all its sexist and heterosexist dictates and tropes. As for those

should be asking this: **does the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion extend to their religious conscience?** Where

does religious liberty begin and end? **What**

are the implications of polygamy for women's friendships? Can gender justice and polygamy co-exist equitably? **Are religious conservatism and feminism mutually exclusive?** A lot to ponder, but important questions nonetheless.



Fouad asks us to open our minds and consider polygamy in his own faith tradition, Islam, a practice notably legal in most Muslim-majority countries, and regarded by many, though not all, Muslims to be a religious right. As for the Muslim American community, only a tiny number practice polygamy, albeit, with great discretion and secrecy and avoidance of the state. Numbers notwithstanding, it's the utility and the ethics of polygamy, in an American context, that *Twice, Thrice, Frice...* grapples with so intelligently.

I do think it's important to note that Fouad is a man who has written a play about women with agency, women with integrity. **The three Arab Muslim women who comprise the world of his play are smart, funny, courageous,**



Rehearsal photo featuring Catherine Dildilian, Marielle Issa, and Annalise Raziq

daring, and complicated. If society directs women to focus on the men in their lives, then these three women do so with an extraordinary sense of self, mindful of their needs, rights, and desires as women, and determined to uphold their dignity. Women who possess the power to navigate American culture, Arab culture, religion, family, and friendship are women who defy stereotypes and male caricatures. As someone who has been blessed to know "versions" of these women, they sure do ring authentic and true.

I hope you'll find *Twice, Thrice, Frice...* to be as moving, challenging, insightful, and humorous as I do. Three cheers for Fouad Teymour!

[Purchase Tickets to "Twice, Thrice, Frice..."](#)

**Celebrate Arts Education:
September 8–14, 2019**

NATIONAL
**ARTS IN
EDUCATION WEEK**



happens in the home, school, or community. **Students of all ages—from kindergarten to college to creative aging programs—benefit from artistic learning, innovative thinking, and creativity.** Celebrating National Arts in Education Week is a way to recognize this impact and share the message with friends, family, and communities.

Silk Road Rising's EPIC (Empathic Playwriting Intensive Course)

Sixth-grader Selena is withdrawn and nervous. During group games, she sticks to the back of the room, willing herself to disappear into the wall. When she speaks, she is tentative, as if seeking permission to have an idea and longing to hear that her idea is alright. **She is especially quiet among peers, but can be engaged and helpful with teachers and other adults.**

Selena's mother abandoned her when she was ten. She doesn't talk about it, ever, but during a Silk Road Rising artist residency, her story slowly starts to unfold. She has several false starts, stories about fear and guilt told from a distance through implausible scenarios borrowed from horror movies like Stephen King's *It*. **With patience, the teaching artist encourages Selena to allow her story to become personal and honest.**



In her ten-minute play "Homeless" Selena presents 13-year old twins Leo and Leona. **The twins learn in the second scene that their parents have gone away, instructing the school by letter: "Please take care of our babies; we can't anymore."** Selena gives the twins space to grieve, to wonder what they did wrong, and worry about their future as they attempt to comfort and reassure each other. She then constructs a happy ending for

the twins as their teacher decides to adopt them. Leo and Leona graduate from high school in the final scene, with their new mom beaming in the audience.

At the end of the semester, Selena sat in her school auditorium, herself beaming as four professional actors brought this play to life on stage and her classmates and teachers applauded her work.

Last year, thanks to Silk Road Rising's school based arts-learning program, EPIC (Empathic Playwriting Intensive Course), nearly 600 Chicago teens and preteens were able to express their hopes and fears creatively and openly, many for the first time. They wrote plays about topics that impact them directly such as conflicts with parents and coaches, bullying, poverty, abuse, immigration and deportation, and school violence. Some tackled issues a bit more removed: political corruption, world hunger, and paranormal activity in a school boiler room.

Previews to *Twice, Thrice, Frice...* begin October 1, 2019

**TWICE,
THRICE,
FRICE...**

Written by
FOUAD TEYMOUR
Directed by
PATRIZIA ACERRA

In this 90-minute comedy, three Muslim women confront adultery and polygamy when one of their husbands marries a second wife. Friendship, fidelity, and faith are called into question as each woman reevaluates bonds once believed unbreakable, and discovers humor amongst the heartbreak.

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE
OCTOBER 1–NOVEMBER 10, 2019

Preview performances (October 1–12) will occur:

Tuesdays	Saturdays
7:30pm	4:00pm

Starting October 13, performances will occur:

Mondays*	Tuesdays	Fridays	Saturdays	Sundays
7:30pm	7:30pm	8:00pm	4:00pm	4:00pm

**October 21 and 28 only*

TICKETS
\$38 each (\$28 for Previews)

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Preview tickets are \$28 and regular run tickets are \$38 each.

To purchase tickets, call us at 312-857-1234 x201 or go online [HERE](#).

Download flyer for the play [HERE](#).

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