Reading Questions: *For Bread Alone* (p. 77-150) by Mohamed Choukri (with additional readings by Allen, Badawi, and Cachia on *ERes*)

1) After witnessing the riots on May 30, 1952, the narrator of *For Bread Alone* has the following dream:

I had dreamed that there was a long line of naked men in a big square, passing one by one in front of another line of three or four men standing before them. They had a table in front of them and some medical equipment. They were cutting off the men’s genitals and throwing them into a big barrel, and all around the square behind the wire, there were naked women weeping for the men. (*al-Khubz al-hafi*, p. 122, trans. Tanoukhi, “Rewriting Political Commitment”, p. 140).

This episode is missing from Bowles’ English translation of the novel. Why do you believe this episode didn’t make it into Bowles’ translation? What might be its thematic significance in the Arabic version of the novel? (Katie)

2) In the view of Mohamed Choukri, sexuality, literacy, and political consciousness are inextricably bound to one another in this novel. How and where in *For Bread Alone* does Choukri communicate this belief? (Emily, Alex)

3) Looking at the power point presentation from Monday’s (Oct. 20th) class, what aspects of this novel – including specific episodes and narrative style - would have appealed to Paul Bowles’ literary aesthetic, and thus drawn him to translate it into English? Without recourse to the Arabic original, what elements of this translation do you think would have rung false to Mohamed Choukri? (Meredith)

4) In reading M.M. Badawi’s “Commitment in Contemporary Arabic Literature”, what do you think Mahmud Mas’adi would have made of Choukri’s *For Bread Alone*? What might Dr. Abd al-Azim Anis have said about it? Who from among the participants in the listserv discussion of *For Bread Alone* (https://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/mehr.htm) take the positions articulated by Mas’adi and Anis? (Mariam)

5) In reading Allen’s and Cachia’s description of literary commitment in the Arab world, how would you say that *For Bread Alone* responds to call for commitment? What form, tone, or “mood” (see Cachia, p. 94) of literary commitment seems closest to Choukri’s intention? (Claire)