The Ideological Implications of Agentless Passivisation in President Macron's Declaration on "Audin's Death" (2018) on the Franco-Algerian Memory Conflict

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Abstract:

The core thrust of the article is to examine the ideological implications of President Macron's utilization of agentless passivization in his declaration on the "Audin's death" (2018). Being the first French president to admit France's responsibility for grave abuses ranging from illegal detention and systematic torture to murder, Emmanuel Macron was cautious enough not implicate the responsibility of any particular official institution in those encroachments. President Macron, thus, appealed to agentless passivisation to pay a lip service to those who expected those recognitions without going as far as ascribing responsibility for those violations to any specific entity within the French establishment. By critically analyzing President Macron's declaration, the study at hand seeks to conduct a contrapuntal reading of Macron's claims to demystify the ideological implications of the usage of agentless passivisation on the substance and the worth of President Macron's recognitions and hence on the Franco-Algerian rapprochement mainly over memory conflict.

Keywords: President Macron; Maurice Audin's death, agentless passivisation; Said's contrapuntal reading; Franco-Algerian rapprochement.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Although language is never neutral, it draws its might from speakers endowed with a symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991: 7-8). For Bourdieu and Wacquant, authoritative actors within a community enjoy the exceptional status of unrivalled claimer makers with the ability to blur the lines between the "subjectivist" and "objectivist" perceptions. To them,

> social reality is a 'contingent ongoing accomplishment' of competent social actors who continually construct their social world via 'the organized artful practices of everyday life' . . . Through the lens of this social phenomenology, society appears as the emergent product of the decisions, actions, and cognitions of conscious, alert individuals to whom the world is given as immediately familiar and meaningful. (p. 9)

What emerges from the above is that authoritative actors in a society dispose of a wide array of tools to utilize language to persuade en enlist support for whatever goal fixed by those holding official offices. The rhetorical power wielded by influential people equips them with a host of exceptional tools that enable them to construct "reality," "knowledge," "truth," "the very conditions of knowing" as it "structures belief systems, and provides the fundamental bases for decisions" (Hill and Beshoff, 1994, pp. xi-12; George, 1994, p. 30; Medhurst, 2000, p. 6). For Bourdieu, who conceives of power as culturally and symbolically created, and constantly re-legitimised through an interplay of agency and structure, grammatical forms within a text or a text's genre are instances for how an orator or a discourse wielder infuses his language use with the symbolic power he holds and the .ideological beliefs that he cultivates (Wacquant, 2005, p. 316). Given the inherent intricacies related to the language-power nexus, the language utilization of those influential people can be studied critically and with close scrutiny (Renkema, 2009, p. 19).

Being not always innocent or gratuitous, linguistic choices are widely held to both reflect and affect language users' views of events, beliefs and plans. A great deal of evidence has been adduced to substantiate the claim that the choice of agentive or non-agentive expressions may affect

reader perceptions of responsibility and blame (Fausey & Boroditsky 2010, p. 650). An example in point is that a speaker's choice to use agentless passive rather than active expressions could be in many cases be attributed to the speaker's ideological beliefs which range from de-emphasising the responsibility of some actors to the total deletion or their utter exemption from responsibility for illegal or immoral actions that are deemed detrimental to their status and reputation (Bohner, 2001, p. 520).

The memory contention between France and Algeria is a highly complex and sensitive topic with deep historical ramifications that have evolved over time. Stemming from the two countries' competing and irreconcilable memories about colonization and the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962), rapprochement and reconciliation between the two parties is more than ever challenging (Stora, 2021, pp. 57-61; Stora, 1992, p. 13). After 60 years of independence, the domineering and the supremacist stance of the French colonial perceptions regarding its occupation, its transgressions in the Algerian War, its univocal historical narrative and its denial of truth still cast their long shadow over post-1962 French successive presidencies from Georges Pompidou to Emmanuel Macron, though at varying degrees.

In the immediate aftermath of the Algerian War of Independence, the French historico-political stage was overwhelmingly dominated by political elite that cultivated a policy of "concealment." This last rested solidly on control over the terminology utilized in narrating colonial history as well as the broad amnesty decreed by French authorities making a *tabula rasa* of all the transgressions and atrocities committed by French forces in Algerian War of Independence (Jansen, 2010, p. 277).

It would not be far-fetched to argue that this "memorializing process," which consists in elaborating and determining the contours of a national memory of war or any other crucial event, with all its lacunas and mistakes, has a far more pervasive impact on the identity of a nation (Davidson, 1998, p. 66; Renan, 1947, p. 89). The same process utilizes war (or any other pivotal event) to create the nation itself by defining what it means to be any member of the nation (Davidson, p. 66). Often the process, which is triggered by decolonization, is, as Fanon (1990) argued,

underpinned, by an "inevitably violent process between two forces opposed to each other by their very change nature" implying the impossibility of a univocal discourse to capture its dissonance (pp. 27-28).

One core inference to be drawn from the above claims is that what may make peoples and nations clash and disagree are not memories, which are, by nature "multiple," "diversified," "collective" and "pluralized" and "individualized" (Nora, 1984, p. xix). Capturing the gist of Nora's claims in this regard, Said (1994) asserted that "nations themselves are narrations" (p. xiii). What makes peoples clash are histories which are often the selective sanctifications and mythicisation of some memories as embodiments of the official historical experiences of nations and hence conduits for their official discourse (Nora, 1984, p. xix). As such, the official narrative of the historical experiences of a nation is more often than not the biased and self-serving historicization, and hence legitimization, of some memories to the detriment of others (Nora, 1984, p. xx; Rousso, 1991, p. 4; Geertz, 1973, pp. 312-319).

2. Methodology

For the sake of investigating the ideological implications that could be drawn from President Macron's usage of agentless passivisation, the present study utilizes Edward Said's contrapuntality approach in order to consolidate findings related to President Macron's endeavours to perpetuating the silencing of other inevitable voices for the same colonial experience.

At first, it is of paramount importance to underscore the merits of choice of agentless passive by noteworthy officials in delivering their official discourses. Indeed, there is substantial evidence that agency plays in the articulation of world phenomena in that the enacting of agency, its coming into being both hinges on and determines how human action is depicted through linguistic means (Foley and Van Valin 1984; Grimshaw 1990; Hopper and Thompson 1980).

Given the fact that language is an ideological phenomenon par excellence, as Kress and Hodge argued, it, above all, involves systematic

distortion in the service of class interest (Kress and Hodge, 1979, p.6; Fowler, 1991, p. 10).

Having detected the limits of pure linguistic analysis, specialists in discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA) extolled the unrivaled merits of CDA in demystifying and displaying hidden ideological motivations and positions. The core implication of these claims is that "meaning cannot be read off from syntax alone (Richardson 1985/2002, p. 240). Arguing in a similar vein, Van Dijk asserted that "ideologies cannot be 'read off' texts and talk" (van Dijk 1998, p. 210). In the case of agentless passivisation, the literal examination of syntax of the sentence gives no clues about who is responsible for the activity (Van Leeuwen 1996, p. 60).

The core claim of this study is that politicians resort to transformations of passivization and agent deletion for diverse reasons such as averting blame, eschew responsibility or manipulate public opinion to achieve some particular political goals. Most importantly, passivization and agent deletion often emanate from the concern of discourse wielders in the realm of politics that the divulgation of the agent could be detrimental to their political designs (Stubbs, 1994, p. 204).

The analysis of the ideological implications of the choice of agentless passivisation is consolidated by Said's approach of contrapuntality for the sake of illuminating the muted aspects of France's colonial experience which is firmly rooted in the voice of the periphery (i.e. the former colony). The core thrust of Said's contrapuntal approach hinges on the importance of engaging with historical experiences contrapuntally rather univocally. For him, the reading and analysis of the "metropolitan" history is inherently insufficient to provide the reader with a full-fledged picture of what effectively occurred unless supplemented with the histories of those against whom (and together with whom) the discourse wielder interacted (Said, 1994, p. 51). For Said and Barsamian (1994), imperialism ought to be construed as "an intrinsically 'contested and joint experience': domination and resistance are co-constituent parts of a whole" (pp. 71-73).

Metropolitan history, as Said argued, draws its ostensible truthfulness and validity from an "incorporative," "universalizing" and "totalizing" molds and codes that narrate history and depict experiences

from an exclusively Eurocentric perspective of colonizing, imperializing and globalizing powers. Examining experiences contrapuntally, thus, centers on highlighting injustice and standing up for the voiceless who was deprived of agency and indicted of being incapable of representing himself which gave the dominant imperializer an *imprimatur* to construct him as a malleable and controllable "Other" (Said, 1996, p. 1; Marx, 2019, p. 573). It also implies the enmeshing and entwinement of "discrepant" and "dissonant" experiences and narratives and counter-narratives of domination and resistance regardless of the peculiarities of their internal formations, their internal coherence and their ostensibly commonsensical truthfulness into an imbricated version that welcomes their dual claim to reality and legitimacy (Said, 1994, pp. 18-32; Said and Barsamian, 1994, pp. 71-73).

Most importantly, Said's contrapuntal approach permits to address the power dynamics inherent in the memory issue. It allows to question certain narratives have been privileged or excluded. In so doing, it enables us to move beyond a one-sided, and hence lop-sided, understanding of the France-Algeria contentious memory issue. By so doing, it purports to open paths for a more inclusive, more nuanced and more comprehensive analysis of this historical and memory issue. Most importantly, this implies, in George M. Wilson's words (1994), "[[reading the narrative of the colonizers alongside those of the colonized, thus examining opposite and intertwined histories" by juxtaposing "the claims of internal or intrinsic readings of a work," and "the claims of various forms of external critique (p. 265).

Said's concept of contrapuntal reading encourages us to examine a miscellany of perspectives and narratives simultaneously, allowing for a more nuances understanding of complex historical events. More specifically, Said's idea that "the legacy of imperialism gives shape to the present" impels historians and researchers to "read the great canonical texts, and perhaps also the entire archive of modern and pre-modern European and American culture, with an effort to draw out, extend, give emphasis and

voice to what is silent or marginally present or ideologically represented n such works (p. 67).

In the case of France and Algeria, both countries have different interpretations and memories of the colonial past, which continue to shape their relationship. By appealing to a contrapuntal approach, we can explore the interconnectedness and the imbrications of these perspectives. This implies engaging not just with the dominant French narratives, but also the Algerian perspectives that have often been marginalized and muted. Elaborating on this line of reasoning, Benjamin Stora asserted that the objective behind the idea countering Western-centric historical narrative is not to write a common history nor to explain together the colonial event nor to believe that the issue could be resolved by making a definite verdict (Stora, 2023, p. 102).

1. Data of the study:

The examination of the French regime's policies of systematic lies, detention, torture and murder during the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) is conducted by critically analyzing the use of agentless passivisation in Macron's declaration about Maurice Audin's death on September 13, 2018. In his visit to Maurice's 87-year-old widow, Josette Audin, at her house, French President Emmanuel Macron put an end to a three-decades-long French history of denial to truths about a host of falsehoods, allegations, illegal detentions, systematic torture and murders committed by the French military and police in the 1950s and the 1960s to put down the Algerian War of Independence.

In this declaration, President Macron was hailed by many local and international observers as having taken an unprecedented, historic and bold step that none of his predecessors had had the political courage to sustain. President Macron's declaration came effectively as the first official French acknowledgement and recognition of France's responsibility for the detention and ultimately the death of Maurice Audin who said to have disappeared from in 1957. Despite the circulation of a great deal of information about his possible "kidnapping," detention, torture and murder by the French military at that time, but the French regime discarded these claims as mere rumours.

Maurice Audin, a mathematician and a communist anti-colonialist activist, who disappeared after being arrested at his home, was accused of harbouring independence fighters. His disappearance became a symbol of French abuses in Algeria which the French colonial regime denied. In the fact, the French regime went to great lengths to reject the very idea of French colonialism of Algeria by utilizing epithets like "episodes of the Battle of Algiers" and "law enforcement operation."

4. Results:

4.1. Agentless Passive and the Mystification of the Decision-Taking Process

The meticulous scrutiny of President Macron's declaration on Audin's death (September 13, 2018) laid out a host of important results related to the ideological implications involved in his choice to use agentless passivisation as he admitted France's responsibility for grave abuses committed during the Algerian War of Independence. On top of these implications, it is worthwhile to emphasise President Macron's usage of agentless passivisation to screen off and delete the direct responsibility of the French regime for the handling of the files of cases of detainees captured, tortured and ultimately murdered by French army in very mysterious conditions.

Table 1. Agentless Passive and the Mystification of the Decision-Taking Process

01	The Audin file **is closed** once and for all in 1962 by a "non-lieu", due to the amnesty decrees **taken** at the end of the war of Algeria, which put at end to any chance of prosecution.
02	This (the 1956 law) **was implemented** by an order of the Prefect, first in Algiers, and then across the whole of Algeria in 1957.

4.2. Agentless Passive and the Camouflaging of France's Direct Responsibility for Illegal Detention

President Macron's deployment of agentless passive to eclipse and drown France's direct responsibility for the egregious violations committed as part of its repressive war against Algerians was instrumental in deleting

the identities of those who were behind the extra-legal detention of freedom fighters (*Moujahideen*) and France's opponents in general. The table below contains samples of clauses with agentless passive to demonstrate the diverse formulations made by President Macron to hide the identities of those who were officially responsible for what was tantamount to extra-legal abductions. Maurice Audin, who was a renowned mathematics assistant at the University of Algiers and a member of the Algerian Communist Party and an activist in the anti-colonialist cause, was arrested on June 11, 1957 by the French army. Nowhere in his declaration did President Macron make the foggiest hint at the responsibility of the French army for his arrest and his enigmatic disappearance. The table below provides ample illustration of the miscellany of facts proffered by President Macron about the procedures of detentions namely of Audin without providing the slightest allusion to who exactly took charge of those operations.

Table 2. Agentless Passive and the Camouflaging of France's Direct Responsibility for Illegal Detention

03	At the time, it is clear to all in Algiers that the men and women **arrested** in these circumstances do not always return.
04	some **are released**,
05	others **are interned**,
06	and still others **are put on trial**.
07	These "disappearances", **deplored** on all sides during the conflict, soon total thousands.
08	She (Josette Audin) **was detained** for several days in her apartment.
09	As soon as her freedom of movement **is restored** to her,
10	she immediately takes great pains to try to find out where her husband **is detained**.
11	This was the standard response **made** to families looking for information.
12	The complaint for abduction and holding her husband against his will that she filed then, **is consigned** to the road to nowhere, as were others, in the silence or on account of the lies of key witnesses who obstruct

	the investigation.
13	the physical integrity of the men and women who **are detained** under their sovereignty (that of successive governments).
14	It is important that this story (the responsibility of successive governments in ensuring and safeguarding the physical integrity of **detained** men and women) **is known**;
15	that it (the responsibility of successive governments in ensuring and safeguarding the physical integrity of detained men and women) **is looked upon** with courage and lucidity.

4.3. Agentless Passive and the Concealment of France's Direct Responsibility for Systematic Torture

Via a process of "a passive-evasive way of acknowledging error," the utilization of agentless passivisation by President Macron in his declaration on "Audin's death" was highly instrumental in deleting France's direct responsibility for the "systematic torture" of detainees. President Macron's technique of admitting or more precisely pointing out the existence of torture by means of agentless passive clauses gives him the possibility of sparing his country the blame or any kind of responsibility for the unusual and extra-legal violence inflicted on detainees. Through the use of samples culled from President Macron's declaration, the table below provides ample evidence of how the president's recognition of the existence of torture somehow in the vacuum made it sound more or less non-conclusive and bootless.

Table 3. Agentless Passive and the Concealment of France's Direct Responsibility for Systematic Torture

16	But torture **was allowed** to spread its wings and soar unpunished because criminal sanctions have not clipped its wings.
17	And it remained unpunished because the idea behind torture, was that it **was** a weapon in the fight against not only the FLN, which launched the insurrection in 1954 but also against those who **were seen** as its allies: those fighting and supporting independence;

18	an arm (torture) **considered** as legitimate in that war, despite having a rotten, illegal core.

4.4. Agentless Passive and the Disguising of France's Direct Responsibility for Extra-judicial Killing

The merit of the choice of agentless passivisation by salient politicians to avert responsibility and blame for illegal and immoral acts are also shown President Macron's presumable recognition of the ostensible death of Audin. President Macron's utilization of agentless passivisation was of paramount importance to conceal and deny France's direct responsibility for his death. Nowhere in his declaration did President Macron state clearly that Audin was killed nor did he provide the slightest shred of information about those who stood behind his torture and ultimately his killing. The table below encapsulates, through samples of the clauses extracted from President Macron's declaration, the unwavering determination of the French president to perpetuate the dissimulation of the perpetrators the extra-judicial killings committed by France during the Algerian War of Independence.

Table 4. Agentless Passive and the Disguising of France's Direct Responsibility for Extra-judicial Killing

19	Clearly, we have here a set-up, to disguise the fact that he **died**.
20	All the evidence **received** during the investigation of the complaint filed by Josette Audin or following testimonies, indicate without a shred of doubt, that **he had been tortured**.
21	Several hypotheses **have been formulated** on the death of Maurice Audin.
22	Another hypothesis is that Audin **died** while being subjected to torture.
23	it is in this spirit that it (recognition of French state's responsibility for murder during the Algerian War) **is thought** and today **formulated**.
24	It flows from the honour of all the people of France, civilians or soldiers, that have disapproved of torture, that have not surrendered or escaped, and who today, as yesterday, refuse **to be assimilated** with those that established and practised torture.

25	Failing to seek the truth would leave the Republic incompetent to minimise or excuse crimes and atrocities **committed** by either side during this conflict.

5. Discussion

Firstly, it is paramount to highlight the delicateness of the issues of memory, history, identity and nationalism that for more than a century tied up the Algerian and the French peoples. Even after Algerian independence, the successive French governments condoned too little change in their conceptualistion to post-independence Algeria' history, culture and identity as they continued to reject France's responsibility for a great deal of abuses and violations committed before and during the Algerian War of Independence. The post-independence memory lobbies consisting essentially of the Black Feet (*Les Pieds Noirs),* the *Harkis* and other right-wing entities such the National Front leave a too little margin for maneuver for the French political elite when addressing the French colonial history.

These memory lobbies, which stand out as the unrivaled guardians of what historian Giddens (1985) labeled the "ontological security" in France, would never allow that historical routines and conventional accounts be jeopardized (pp. 44). For them, any attempt to question or re-invent the French official historical account is liable to spark feelings of loss, disorientation, fear and skepticism vis-à-vis everything around him. Encapsulating the substance of this issue, Giddens (1990) asserted that

> [t]he phrase of [ontological security] refers to the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action. A sense of the reliability of persons and things, so central to the notion of trust, is basic to feelings of ontological security; hence the two are psychologically related. (p. 92)

The argument here, in a nutshell, is, as historian Sylvie Thénault argued, that in French political culture, anti-colonialism has always been an extremely fringe movement. President Macron himself is amply aware of the tethers that hamper his political ambitions. Indeed, despite his euphoric declaration in 2017 as part of his campaign for presidential election that

France's colonization of Algeria was "crime against humanity," he conceded later, in interview with *Jeune Afrique* magazine, the limits of his political ambition. France, said Macron, is "locked in a sort of pendulum between two stances: apologising and repentance on the one hand and denial and pride on the other" ("Macron urged to set up…").

Considering the unprecedented courage that President Macron showed in handling the tangled issue of history, identity and memory that relate the former colonizer, France with the former colony, Algeria, the declaration made on the death of Maurice Audin carried a special importance. In comparison with the stances and the initiatives of former French presidents from Jacques Chirac to Nicholas Sarkozy, the declaration made President Macron signaled, to a large extent, a clear departure from the long-lasting refusal of the Élysée to recognize its responsibility for torture, murder and the disappearance of a great number of Algerian resistance fighters.

The Algerian War of independence was characterized by intense violence and brutality on both sides. Instances of oppression, torture, and massacres were documented, raising questions about the accountability an acknowledgement of these actions. The issue of recognizing French crimes committed during this period remains a point of contention and debate between different parties. For French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1992), there is no possibility for different parties to conceive of or retrieve past events through a common intelligibility grid. For him, "our perceptions of the past are affected by the mental images we employ to solve present problems, so that collective memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present" (p. 34). In a nutshell and as Tzvetan Todorov claimed, "there is nothing new even in the claim that everything [about history] is an interpretation, except the euphoria that now surrounds the claim (p. 5).

The recognition of France's responsibility for torture in Algeria by President Macron took place in a specific domestic context. President Macron made this acknowledgement during his presidential campaign in 2017 and later as president in 2018. His actions were part of wider efforts to address the historical legacy and consequences of the Algerian War of

Independence. However, regardless of the bona fide intentions of the French president, it has to be emphasized that the state, through its official institutions, wields and funnels the historical narrative of individuals through its control over what Halbwachs called "collective memory" (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 33; Johann, 2010, p. 20). Being not necessarily the sum of individual memories, Halbwachs' "collective memory" refers to "the framework through which "present generations become conscious of themselves by counter-posing their present to their own constructed past" (p. 28). This selective perception of past events and experiences through the lens of present situation is what ensures "historical continuity" (p. 33).

Recognition of France's crimes is significant for historical truth and reconciliation. It allows for a deeper understanding of the past, fostering healing and dialogue between the French and Algerian communities. Acknowledgement of wrongdoing can also contribute to addressing the lingering effects colonialism and promoting justice.

However, it is important to note that the perspectives on how to address this issue may vary among different groups and individuals. Some argue for an official apology, official recognition, or reparations, while other emphasize the importance of education, remembrance, and promoting cross-cultural dialogue. All in all, as Lorde (1979) asserted, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."

President Macron's declaration about Maurice Audin's death was of significant importance for a miscellany of reasons. Firstly, it marked a break from the previous official position held by the French state, which had denied any involvement or responsibility in the death of Maurice Audin during the Algerian War. Macron's acknowledgement of the French state's responsibility stood out as a salient attempt towards addressing the historical injustices, rooted in cultural biases, committed during that period. Emphasizing the daunting power held by certain subjective and idiosyncratic historical narratives that were mythicized and elevated to the status of self-evident and objective history, Barnes (1989) asserted that "We all know objective truth is not obtainable, that when some event occurs we shall have a multiplicity of subjective truths which we assess and then

fabulate into history, into some God-eyed version of what 'really' happened" (p. 245).

Secondly, the declaration brought closure and vindication to the Audin family and the broader Algerian community. Maurice Audin's death had been widely held as a symbol of the "state-sanctioned violence" and "repression" that the French colonial forces inflicted upon Algerian civilians during the Algerian War of independence. By recognizing the responsibility of the French state, Macron's declaration acknowledged the suffering endured by Audin's family and recognized the pain meted out upon Algerians during the war (Thomas, 2015, p. 221-234).

The domestic context in which President Macron made his recognition included factors such as evolving societal attitudes, changing narratives about colonial history, and demands for truth and justice form various groups. France has a significant Algerian population and a history deeply entwined with Algeria due to its colonial past, which contributes to the sensitivity to the topic. In a nutshell, President Macron's declaration about Maurice Audin's death carried a great significance in terms of recognizing historical injustices, providing closure to the Audin family and the Algerian community, and promoting a more nuanced and reconciliatory approach to history.

However, President Macron's largely fell short of putting military officials who contributed to those abuses in front their responsibilities. In examples 1 and 2, President Macron depicted the laws and the procedures destined to deal with resisted French occupation ranging from detention to killing passing by torture as if they were taken by some hidden hand. In other words, there was no clear reference to those who planned, legislated, decided, executed measures related to the repression of the Algerian War of Independence.

Likewise, in examples 3 to 15, President Macron referred to the operations of arrest and detention of the opponent of French occupation by using verbs in the passive voice such as "arrested," "released," "interned," are put on trial," and "are detained" without providing the foggiest hint at those were in charge of those operations. The recognition of the existence of operations of arrest and detention without mentioning clearly those who

stood behind those acts makes the French president's sound more or less futile and bootless as they are by far insufficient to satisfy the longings and the expectations of those who expecting recognition, apology and reparation. These last, could not unfortunately be achieved in the absence of a genuine ambition on the French side to look things in the face.

Even with respect to President Macron's presumable recognition and admission of the existence of torture as part of French repression of the Algerian War of Independence, the French president, as it is clearly shown in examples 16, 17 and 18, simply paid a lip service to those who expected France to acknowledge in good faith its guilt with regard to those who bore the brunt of French war of repression. Indeed, in his portrayal of the operations of torture that the French army perpetrated, President Macron appealed to verbs in the passive voice such as "was allowed," "was seen" and "considered" with reference to "torture" without providing the slightest shred of information about the identities of those were embroiled in what amounted to "systematic torture."

At it is shown in examples 19 to 25, where President Macron ostensibly made unprecedented recognitions and confessions about massacres and extra-judicial killings of the opponents of French colonialism, the French president deployed verbs in passive voice such as "died," "had been tortured" and "committed" without making the tiniest allusion to those who were in charge of those crimes punishable by international law. By making such a choice, President Macron clearly had no intention to disclose the identities of those were responsible for those abuses. Therefore, President Macron was intent to run with hares and hunt with hounds in that he wished to satisfy the victims of French war of repression with half facts and the semblance of recognitions without exposing an official French entity or personality to the risk of being sued in justice for their implication in punishable violations and transgressions ranging from illegal detention to extra-judicial homicide passing by systematic torture.

It is paramount in this regard to concede that President Macron has a too little room for maneuver and that regardless of his real intentions he

was, by all accounts, at the end of his tether. His handling of the memory issue tying up France and Algeria is conspicuously restricted due to the hefty pressure exercised by the far right parties such as Marine Le Pen's *Rassemblement National (RN)* and Éric Zemmour's *Reconquête* and memory lobbies under the aegis of Black Feet (*Pieds Noirs*) and *Harkis*. Although it changes nothing in the ultimate result whether President Macron dissimulated truths on purpose or under duress, it is crucial to emphasise that despite his power capital, President Macron could not surpass the confines of his culture habituated him to do. Portraying the state of any language wielder with a community to what is akin to a cultural determinism, Bourdieu (1990) asserted that:

> those decisions are always already made: 'The most improbable practices are therefore excluded, as unthinkable, by a kind of immediate submission to order that inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity, that is, to refuse what is anyway denied and to will the inevitable.' (p. 54)

In the same vein, examined through the lens of Foucaultian approach to power, which transcends politics and sees power as "an everyday, socialised and embodied phenomenon" and that each society has its "regime of truth" or its "general politics of truth," President Macron's will to truth would be understandably dwarfed (Gaventa, 2003, p. 1; Foucault 1991). To Foucault, the concept of power is too elusive to be confined to the mere authority exercised by some official institutions or authoritative figures. Therefore, power, according to Foucault, could be more plausibly be construed in total detachment from agency or structure which strongly suggest the existence of a too little margin for maneuver or practical action (Foucault 1991).

6. Conclusion

Through a close scrutiny of President Macron's mobilization of agentless passive in his declaration on "Audin's death," the study has revealed that this grammatical choice was instrumental is concealing direct French responsibility for the violations committed during the Algerian War on Independence. His tacit attempts to perpetuate this blackout on alternative accounts about France's colonial abuses was paralleled by attempts to pay a

lip service to those who expected a mollification in France's rigidly univocal historical account.

By stressing the importance of President Macron's choice to use agentless passive, the study has displayed that despite the French president's admission of France's responsibility for the "system of torture" that prevailed during the Algerian War of Independence, his undertaking remains symbolic. By emphasizing the deletion of the agents in the passive clauses ostensibly destined to furnish facts about France's responsibility for abuses such as illegal detention, systematic torture and extra-judicial killing in President Macron's declaration, the study has, thus, shown the persistence and the recalcitrance of French official historical account that allows no space for any alternative interpretation or construal to France's colonial experience in Algeria.

It, therefore, seems plausible to assume that President Macron's recognition of torture, which was widely commended as an unprecedentedly daring step, was just a new phase in the French long-running prevarications and maneuverings to stabilize the delicate and intricate equation of exorcising the ugly ghosts of France's colonial past and the preservation of historical and identity homogeneity and integrity and hence its political viability.

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