

THE ABSURDITY OF VIOLENCE IN ALBERT CAMUS' *LES JUSTES* AS A LENS FOR DECIPHERING BOKO HARAM'S IDEOLOGICAL PARADOXES

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Abstract

*This paper critically investigates the inherent contradictions within the Boko Haram ideologies and practices. It utilised the philosophical framework of Albert Camus's dramatisation of revolutionary violence and moral conflicts experienced by Russian terrorists in the early 20th century. The study focuses on tyrannicide, and it provides a broad and profound framework for examining the justification, limits and consequences of violence in the pursuit of justice. The article highlighted the inconsistencies between declared beliefs and real actions within extremist movements by contrasting the existential and moral quandaries that Camus' characters face with Boko Haram's radical interpretation of jihad and its violent campaign against Western education and democratic values. The study employs Russian Formalism and Maqasid al-Shariah (the higher objectives of Islamic law) concept to show how terrorist acts, particularly Boko Haram's acts, essentially violate the Islamic teachings and the values of justice they profess to support. The findings of this study reaffirmed the ridiculousness of using violence to achieve justice. The paper argues that just like in *Les Justes*, the reasoning behind violence destroys itself in its contradictions. The findings of this paper further demonstrate that the logic behind terroristic violence does not result in freedom or righteousness.*

Keywords: Tyrannicide, terrorism, Boko Haram, drama, violence.

Introduction

The 21st century has experienced a surge in extreme ideologies. This painful bash of terrorism on humanity has placed the nations of the earth on a high terror alert. Today, there are serious concerns over the

definition and rationale of political violence due to the ongoing threat of violence posed by extremist organisations like Islamic State West African Province ISWAP, Al Qaida, Al Shabaab and Boko Haram. Since 2009, Boko Haram, whose name means “Western civilisation is forbidden,” has been waging a bloody war in northern Nigeria that has left entire villages unstable, caused mass casualties, and resulted in massive internal displacement of people (Mamman, 2020). The group, which has its roots in an extreme Salafi-Wahabi interpretation of Islam, says it is waging jihad against perceived injustices, but its tactics—such as mass murders, kidnappings, and attacks on Muslims and non-Muslims—have been widely denounced as being incompatible with Islamic values and human rights (Mamman, 2020). Fanaticism, intolerance, and a claim to unique religious truth are the characteristics of Boko Haram. While the group claims to defend Islam and challenge Western dominance, its actions highlight a significant disparity between its professed ideals and the violent tactics it employs. The most notable modus operandi of this sect is its relentless opposition to education, democratic institutions, and civilian populations. This dissonance prompts critical ethical and philosophical inquiries regarding the legitimacy of employing violence in the pursuit of justice.

Albert Camus’s *Les Justes* was first published in 1949, and it centres on the portrayal of inner conflicts encountered by Russian revolutionaries while trying to fight oppression and injustice. Unarguably, works of literature on terrorism abound, and facts documented by nations, international organisations and individuals are testimonies that a lot has been done to tame this multifaceted “demon. However, despite the historic track record of sophisticated intelligence gathering, intensified espionage, surveillance, widespread communication and technology, the nihilistic and terrific effects of terrorism have still not abated, and this is of great concern. Today, terrorism ranges from cyber, nuclear, politicide and eco-terrorism crimes to tyrannicide. Tyrannicide, which is its more

ancient form, is the focus of this article. It is imperative to state that tyrannicide has evolved with society and space; therefore, it has been increasingly difficult to completely eradicate it. Bevir (2010) describes tyrannicide simply as the killing or assassination of tyrants. A tyrant is a ruler who is cruel and unfair and who has complete power over a country. It is a truism that the manifestations of tyrannicide are rebellion, anger and destruction, which oftentimes seem to be the solution to injustice. In this regard, Neimams (2017: 4) posits that the passionate rejection of injustice provides a rebel with a target which can be the political, social or economic system upon which this injustice is based, as well as those individuals who perpetuate it. Tyrannicide today is evolving beyond the target, which is the ruler, to the mineral resources of the land. This has led to a nihilistic approach that injures anything possible, without sparing even the terrorists themselves. This study aims to shed light on the inconsistencies and absurdities that occur when violence is used as a tool of justice by examining the group's doctrinal defences and contrasting them with Camus' philosophical analysis of violence. By doing this, it advances human knowledge of how political violence is treated in literature as well as the realities of radical ideology today, emphasising the humanism of Camus in the face of contemporary extremism.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 1 introduces the paper, Section 2 discusses the evolution of terrorism and the Boko Haram terrorist group, and Section three examines the relevant literature reviews to the study. Section 4 focuses on the theoretical framework and methodology. Section 5 discusses the comparative Lens: Camus and Boko Haram, while Section 6 discusses findings and recommendations. Section 7 concludes the study.

The Origin of terrorism and the evolution of the Boko Haram terrorist group

The history of terrorism dates back centuries, and the term is not unconnected to the human mind, history, beliefs and aspirations, hence its various forms, ranging from mild to wild. Challand & Blin (2007) aver that historians of terrorism link the word “terror” to the state terror of the French Revolution; however, they often neglect to add that, to varying degrees, the phenomenon was a constant of earlier eras, that is, it predates the French Revolution and has also been prevalent ever since. Terrorist acts, today, continue to unfold in different forms, considering the spate of unjust mass killings and destruction from time to time. The word terrorism is derived from terror, which has the Latin etymology “*Terrere*”, which means to crush, tread underfoot, or oppress (Haziri, 2017).

Historically, Russia has been the theatre of numerous acts of terrorism. This explains the historical perspective or fabric from which Albert Camus produced *Les Justes* in 1949, translated into English as “The Just Assassins”. However, today this assertion could be strongly opposed as terror has become a frequent occurrence not only in Nigeria but also in other parts of the world.

Albert Camus’ *Les Justes* presents a case of tyrannicide, which is considered one of the earliest forms or manifestations of the terrorist technique (Chaliand & Blin, 2007). According to Chaland & Blin:

“ Tyrannicide was the most widespread form of terrorism of the pre-modern era. The most fearsome organisation of that period, acting in the name of ideological purity, was the Assassin sect active in the 13th and 14th centuries. It bears some resemblance to certain contemporary terrorist

It is a truism that the principal aim of terrorism is to terrorise. This aim underpins the historically broader and generally acceptable view that

terrorism is a violent warfare that provokes psychological trauma and physical destruction. Hoffmann (1998:43) posits that terrorism is designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target. This implies that terrorism can oppress the human mind. Mental oppression appears to be mild on the surface; however, subtly it kills the soul of the individuals and renders them soulless. Furthermore, it supports the killing of innocent people unjustly, which has a devastating effect on the terrorists themselves as well as on the people who suffer their attacks. Mild terrorism can be described as weaponless terror, which can be emotional, psychological or environmental. It is violent and provokes torture and trauma. The human mind and heart are the centre stage of such. Wild type of terrorism refers to a weapon-aided form of terrorism. In other words, terrorism could be defined as weaponless or weapon-aided violence and torture that leads to the trauma or death of an individual or a group of people. It is a targeted mission by a group of people to achieve a particular aim, vision, ideology, religious belief and even economic gains. It could be religious terrorism or state terrorism. Crenshaw (1990: 18) asserts that terrorists choreograph their attacks mainly to intimidate, to panic an alarmed citizenry into demanding that national leaders somehow put right the perceived wrongs that serve, at least to the terrorists themselves, as justifications for their murderous campaigns. A vivid illustration can be seen in the Nigerian Nollywood movie produced in 2024 titled *Hijack'93*.

Literature Review

Philosophical explorations of violence, especially within revolutionary frameworks, have deeply influenced ethical and political discourse for many years. Esteemed scholars like Hannah Arendt in his work titled *On Violence* and Frantz Fanon in his work titled *The Wretched of the Earth* provide us with contrasting perspectives. Arendt draws a critical distinction between power and violence, suggesting that they should not

be conflated, while Fanon defends the notion of decolonial violence, positioning it as a form of catharsis for oppressed peoples. In a compelling departure from these views, Albert Camus's **Les Justes** offers a more nuanced and human-centred examination of violence. Rather than glorifying it, Camus invites us to deeply interrogate its implications and moral weight.

To the best of our knowledge there is a noticeable lack of scholarly work that directly compares Camusian existentialism with the ideologies of Islamic extremists. However, there is a growing recognition of the broader connections between secular existential ethics and acts of religious violence. For example, Olivier Roy's "Jihad and Death" and Faisal Devji's "Landscapes of the Jihad" examine jihadist reasoning from a sociopolitical perspective, yet they frequently overlook the moral and philosophical dimensions that Camus offers. By incorporating "Les Justes" into this dialogue, this study addresses a significant gap, providing not only a comparative literary and philosophical critique but also an ethical framework that helps to navigate the ideological contradictions present in groups such as Boko Haram.

The study of terrorism and extremist ideologies has further attracted significant scholarly attention, particularly as researchers seek to understand the interplay between political violence, religion, and socio-economic discontent. Boko Haram, in particular, has been examined not merely as a transnational terrorist organisation but as a movement deeply embedded within Nigeria's historical, political, and social structures (Roelofs, 2015). According to Roelofs (2015), the account of how the Boko Haram sect developed is so profoundly different as to indicate a general lack of clarity and knowledge about the group rather than a range of facts. Anugwom (2019) opines that the origin of Boko Haram is often contentious. While some accounts claimed that the sect originated from Kanamma in Yobe State of Nigeria, others believe that this is improbable

because the Kanama group is a splinter faction of the Boko Haram that broke away from the group that was from Maiduguri headquarters and led by Muhammad Ali, a former lieutenant of Yussuf, the first leader of the Boko Haram sect.

Muhammad Ali believed that Yusuff was too slow in ushering in the righteous era of Islam. The Kanamma faction broke off in 2003 and described itself as the “Nigerian Taliban” (Anugwon, 2019:46). However, the group had no link with the Taliban, and it was later wiped out by the Nigerian Military. Anugwon (2019) avers that Mohammed Yusuf, the first leader of Boko Haram, had nothing to do with the Kanamma group, even though he ran to Saudi Arabia in the middle of the crackdown. Rivers (2015), however, asserts that Boko Haram originated from the Muslim Youth organisation formed in 1995, known as Shabaab. The group was led by Abubakar Lawal at inception, who later left to further his education and handed over to Mohammed Yusuf, who skillfully turned the group into a political organisation. Onuoha (2010: 15) also notes that Boko Haram started in 1995 under the leadership of Abubakar Lawan, and it was then known as *Ahlusunna wal’jama’ah hijira* or the Muslim Youth Organisation. The group later changed its name several times from *Ahlusunna wal’jama’ah hijira* to “Nigerian Taliban”, “Yussufiya sect” and ultimately to Boko Haram. Anugwon (2019), however, opined that this account is full of information from the Nigerian Defence source, and it is riddled with contradictions because the sect never referred to itself as Boko Haram. The name Boko Haram appeared in 2005 in response to frequent decrying of the lexicon in Yusuff’s copious sermons (Roelofs, 2015). The Lakurawa group, another splinter group of the Boko Haram is now a big problem in Kwara State of Nigeria. Oluwafemi (2025) assert that this group, originally were operating somewhere around Kebbi and Sokoto states but are have now become prominent in Kwara State Nigeria. The governor of Nassarawa State Abdullahi Sule in Nigeria observes that another group

known as the Wulowulo has infiltrated the North- Central zone geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This group is now causing problem in parts of the state (Oluwafemi, 2025).

The Boko Haram terrorist group and other splinter groups can be understood more as a local movement with deep social and political roots than simply a transnational terrorist organisation. Their actions have primarily revolved around local power dynamics, often being co-opted by politicians, especially in Borno State, where it initially found some degree of social acceptance. Despite this, the Boko Haram group does not advocate for a structured political agenda or engage in electoral processes. Instead, its primary objective appears to be the destabilisation of the Nigerian state while rejecting the principles of Western secular governance.

Theoretical Framework

Russian Formalism

Russian Formalism, particularly through the insights of Viktor Shklovsky and Boris Eichenbaum, underscores the significance of literary devices over mere messages, highlighting how form can transform and defamiliarise content. This perspective provides a valuable framework for exploring how Albert Camus navigates the complexities of moral uncertainty in his play *Les Justes*. In contrast, doctrinal critique takes root in the traditions of comparative theology and Islamic jurisprudence. This approach invites engagement with scholars like Khaled Abou El Fadl and Amina Wadud, who advocate for a humanistic and justice-centred reading of Islam. Their interpretations stand in sharp opposition to the dehumanising strategies employed by groups such as Boko Haram, illustrating a profound divergence in how religious texts and principles can be applied in contemporary society.

Russian Formalism was pioneered by Opojaz (The Society for the Study

of Poetic Language) in 1915, before the Russian Revolution of 1917, with prominent figures like Viktor Shklovsky, Yury Tynyanov and Boris Eikhenbaum. Its former movement was led by Roman Jakobson and Petr Bogatyrev, who both later helped to found the Prague Linguistic Circle in 1926. Selden (1993:30) places a significant emphasis on form as a powerful device, often prioritising it over the content itself. Russian Formalism focuses on form that serves to defamiliarise the familiar, allowing for a deeper exploration of the underlying themes within a work. It explains that human emotions and ideas expressed in a work of literature were of secondary concern and provided the context only for the implementation of literary devices. By that idea, Russian Formalism tends to the text as the main source of literature. It differentiates literature (art) from other forms of writing (non-artwork) and presents literature in three folds :

- A machine with various devices and functioning parts.
- An ‘organism’;
- ‘systems’.

Les Justes can be described as a machine with various devices. The themes and the structure of the play make it an organism or system that unfolds contemporary issues, from the exposition, and the denouement; the characters depict the ideology of the writer that is hinged on the literary and philosophical movements of humanism, Dadaism and existentialism, coined from sociopolitical experiences. Russian Formalists, however, stress that only the ‘plot’ *suzhet* (*сюжет*) is strictly literary, while the ‘story’ *fabula* (*фабула*) is merely raw material awaiting the organising hand of the writer. This aligns with our text of study, *Les Justes*, which was translated as *The Just Assassins* in English. The Fabula in *Les Justes* depicts realism as it replicates a true happening of the past, with the names of characters slightly modified. The fabula is a true-life raw material that Camus exploited in the plots. The assassination of Duke Serge in 1905 in Russia by young terrorists and

revolutionaries, its precedents and antecedents. The plot is not merely the arrangement of story incidents but also all the ‘devices’ used to interrupt and delay the narration. In *Les Justes*, all these are evident: The arrangement of the incidents that take place in a play. There is a period of climax and suspense during Kaliayev's moments of throwing the bomb, his hesitations and the anxious waiting time of his fellow terrorists. The Climax (Denouement and Antagonism also reveals facts in the plot. In this regard, Tomashevski states that one fabula can provide material for many *suzhet*, a notion which was taken up by later formalists and was also to provide a link with structuralism. Russian Formalism, particularly through the insights of Viktor Shklovsky and Boris Eichenbaum, underscores the significance of literary devices over mere messages, highlighting how form can transform and defamiliarise content. This perspective provides a valuable framework for exploring how Albert Camus navigates the complexities of moral uncertainty in his play **Les Justes**. In contrast, doctrinal critique through the Maqasid al Sharia takes root in the traditions of comparative theology and Islamic jurisprudence.

Maqasid al-Sharia Approach

This article also utilises the Maqasid al-Shariah (the higher objectives of Islamic law) approach to analyse the inconsistency between extreme violence and fundamental Islamic principles of the Boko Haram terrorist group. The maqasid approach is the higher objectives of the Sharia law. The approach stresses that legal ruling in the Islamic religion is backed by a deeper wisdom and have their benefits (Auda, 2008).

Discussion on the story of a successful tyrannicide and the morality that follows in *Les Justes*

Les Justes depicts a historical trend of the forties, a period marred by revolutions, wars and terrorist attacks across the globe. A group of young Russian terrorists or revolutionaries who were on a mission to

murder a tyrant are webbed into a difficult situation. The revolutionaries, their thoughts and attitudes, represent those of the masses of that era. The presence of innocent kids during slaughter attempts invites questions on justice, innocence, humanism and morality. Many critics of the play have, over time, described various episodes of the play as hinging on contemporary matters, making the play a masterpiece of all time. The main character, Kaliayev, is an embodiment of the morality and justice that are craved in our contemporary world.

In the view of Neiman (2007: 8), Kaliayev was troubled by his inaction. Choosing to give up the rebellion might preserve Kaliayev's feeling of solidarity, but would come at the cost of accepting the injustices perpetrated by the Grand Duke. Kaliayev's approach to murder in rebellion is authentic because he neither rejects nor attempts to resolve the moral dilemma created by the conflicting values of solidarity and justice. In *Les Justes*, Kaliayev was appointed to assassinate the Duke, who was a tyrant, by bombing him. In the first attempt, he refrained from the act because of the presence of innocent children. However, he finally threw the bomb at the tyrant without hoping to be saved. He was expected to die in the act. Kaliayev, even when he came out alive (after throwing the bomb), however, preferred to die. He rejected all forms of salvation because to accept being pardoned and live is what makes him a terrorist. For him, the bomb was thrown at a tyrant and not a man, since he believed he was fighting a just cause - *J'ai lancé la bombe sur votre tyrannie, non sur un homme* (Camus, 1949:83)

Assessing the act of terror, Onah (2024:14) asserts that Camus believes that it is not simply a decision or desire to adhere to morality that makes a slave or someone subjugated be involved in a rebellion that affirms human dignity. For him, revolt is born of a passionate and disinterested care for humanity that is independent of the appreciation of the desideratum of morality or a desire to act morally”.

Contemporary ‘faces’ of Tyrannicide:

Chaliand & Blin (2007: 1) assert that after the Cold War, most of these cloak-and-dagger men (terrorists) had advanced their modus operandi. This includes nuclear proliferation, usage of weapons of mass destruction, and organised crime. Tyrannicide has now evolved into a form of impunity, and this raises fundamental questions about democracy, human rights (right to self-defence), justice and morality. Omer (2007) emphasises that there is a need for a synergy between politics and morality and a reconciliation between justice and freedom, which are two independent moral values, through political idealism and moral transparency. This is because impunity has become popular, justice is not measured by humans, and in politics or governance, the people’s views are not taken into account. By impunity, one implies the absence of punishment or accountability for reprehensible or illegal acts. It is the quality of allowing guilt or excesses to go unpunished. Impunity breeds tyrannicide and can be observed in a variety of contexts, such as criminal impunity, which is the absence of prosecution or conviction for crimes or offences; political impunity, which is the lack of accountability for acts committed by leaders or public officials’ refusal to obey court judgments when a prominent figure in society is guilty of crimes or offences. This is as a result of the weakness of judicial institutions, as well as socio-economic impunity, which refers to the lack of social condemnation for reprehensible behaviour and the absence of sanctions for illegal or fraudulent economic activities. All of this leads to the agitation for nationalism, ethnic separation, as well as self-determination.

Conflicts, impunity and human rights abuses have sparked discussions on governance in many democratic settings. Little wonder, Shughart (2006:12) notes, that terrorists succeed more in democratic governments because of the disappointments the terrorists encounter with the government. There is, therefore, a need to revamp the judiciary apparatus

as resistance, accountability, advances in technology, and social media have changed the dynamics of governance and provoked a call for prudence in the administration and for a just society. But the question keeps arising: How can impunity be neutralised in humans? Considering the bestial nature of man? Can the angelic aspect of man suppress his bestial nature? “The Penal Colony” (Fowler, 1979) fictionalises the murder of impunity in his tale of an absurd and totalitarian country where an officer invites a researcher cum traveller to witness the execution of a prisoner convicted of sleeping on the job. The culprit was denuded; while lying on his stomach on a bed, and his body was pierced by a monstrous machine consisting of a portcullis in small strokes and the law he had broken was pencilled on his body. This practice of cruelty and impunity was, however, strangely and tragically revered. A new commander hated the practice and wanted to abolish it. The cruel machine failed in its task, and its operator became the victim of the machine himself by placing himself on the machine. The machine then unravels and rips him to shreds, so that he is unable to witness the mystical experience of the prisoners he was executing. This metaphorical machine and its operator are the justice system and its operators. The image presents the hunter being hunted by what could be termed an invisible force of justice.

The terrorist is not a poet.

The terrorist is not a poet was a statement attributed to Stepan, a key character in Camus’ *Les Justes* and this was directed to Kaliayev/Yannick. This statement is a reproach against his colleague Kaliayev /Yannick, who, in his view, is not cut out as a ‘cloak-and-dagger man’. Stepan contends that Kaliayev, who was appointed to throw the bomb at the Duke, failed in his initial attempt because the Duke was with two little children. To him, this represents an act of cowardice. Not killing the duke because of the innocent children is out of point for Stepan, who stated that « *Je n’ai pas assez de coeur pour ces niaiseries. Quand nous nous déciderons à oublier les enfants, ce jour-là,*

nous serons les maîtres du monde et la révolution triomphera » - (I don't have enough heart for this nonsense. When we decide to forget the children, on that day we will be the masters of the world and the revolution will triumph'). Stepan justifies Kaliayev's cowardice by alluding that he has a lover, Dora, and for him, this is a form of distraction because lovers are like poets, who most time are romantic in their speeches and thoughts, hence Kaliayev's inability to differentiate between action and decision. In the play and on many occasions before him, Kaliayev and Dora made statements that betrayed the ideals of a terrorist organisation. They had difficulty in separating love and their task, which irritated Stepan, who believed that love is not for the terrorists but poets. A true revolutionary cannot love

Who then is a poet? A poet is someone who writes poems. He always combines words, sounds and rhymes to evoke images and suggest sensations and emotions. Poets occupy an important place in human society. They use words and rhymes to transmit their message to their audience. A poet is also a dreamer and a creator who is passionate about life. On the contrary, a terrorist is a man of swift action, who is not afraid to die. He is also considered to be emotionless, having his conscience seared with hot iron. This poet analysed in the work of Camus, is also a critic. He is an artistic terrorist who writes to express his feelings, to denounce injustice and fight against societal ills. His words are likened to bombs that are thrown at the unjust, the tyrants and oppressors. Stepan asserts that necessary and prompt actions, revolution and not the words of a poet, are more potent tools to fight against injustice because true justice comes from the cannon of firearms and bombs; with these, one can become powerful. Possible truth because Yanek in *Les Justus* finally acknowledged his weaknesses when he stated that "*Aujourd'hui, je sais ce que je ne savais pas. Tu as avais raison, ce n'est pas si simple. Je croyais que c'était facile de tuer, que l'idée suffisait, et le courage*" (Camus, 1949: 71) «Today, I know what I did not know. You were

right, it is not easy. I thought that it was easy to kill, that ideology was enough, and that courage » (Our Translation).

Unleashing terror requires courage and sudden action, not inspiration, as in the case of the poet described in *Les Justes*. Camus's work shows that certain attributes are needed to be appointed as a man of “cloak and dagger”, that is, a terrorist. These attributes are evident in the following statement made by Stepan:

- I don't like people who become revolutionaries because they're bored.
- I don't love life; I love justice, and justice is higher than life.
- I came here to kill a man, not to love or welcome our differences
- I don't like people who will become revolutionaries because they are bored.

Injustice should be battled not not denounced (Camus, 1949: 4).

Comparative analysis of the modus operandi of terrorists in the *Justes* and the Boko Haram

Albert Camus' play (*Les Justes*), the Just Assassins and the Boko Haram terrorist group possess major ideological, methodological, and motivational contrasts. Camus' fictitious terrorists follow a logical and moral framework; Boko Haram, however, uses terrible violence motivated by extremist religious doctrine. Below is a detailed description of their differences and similarities

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Terrorist Modus Operandi: Camus' *Les Justes* vs. Boko Haram

Aspects	Les Justes	Boko Haram
Tactics	Meticulous planning for targeted assassination by a	i. The use of broad insurgent tactics such as kidnapping, mass

	small cell.	<p>murder of innocent people, explosions, and bombings.</p> <p>ii. <i>Psychological terror</i>: Their tactics also include forced marriages, child marriage, enslavement, and public executions to instil fear.</p>
Violence	An extremely selective form of violence that focuses on high-profile political figures (e.g., the Grand Duke) while avoiding collateral harm; for example, abandoning a terrorist effort to spare children.	<p>i. Indiscriminate attacks, including mass killings that lead to the loss of lives and property, abductions of children and women, and internal displacement of local populations.</p> <p>ii. They also employ suicide bombings without regard for civilian casualties (Faluyi et al., 2019).</p>
Structure of the Organisation	A close-knit cell with strong camaraderie, intense debates over methods and aims, and clearly defined roles for each member (e.g., bomber, commander).	<p>i. Boko Haram possesses a hierarchical structure with splinter factions, intricate recruitment networks, and resource mobilisation systems.</p> <p>ii. They maintain command over vast geographic areas.</p>

Rationalisation	One of the defining features of the terrorists in <i>Les Justes</i> is constant moral reflection, including conflicts between goals and means, and a refusal to injure innocent people for the sake of their cause.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Little concern for civilian casualties. ii. The use of mass terror as a deliberate strategy to instil fear and disrupt society.
Justification	<p><i>Philosophical justification:</i> The terrorists in <i>Les Justes</i> (fictional “Just Assassins,” based on Russia’s 1905 Socialist Revolutionary Party) employ existential and ethical arguments to explain their actions. They debate the moral consequences of killing for a cause.</p> <p><i>Public justification:</i> The terrorists attempt to justify their conduct morally, even handing out pamphlets explaining</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>Religious justification:</i> Boko Haram, a religious extremist group, adheres to a radical interpretation of Islam and seeks to establish an Islamic caliphate in Nigeria (Pérouse de Montclos, 2014). ii. <i>No moral constraints:</i> Unlike Camus’ assassins, Boko Haram habitually targets civilians, especially women and children (e.g., the 2014 kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls). At the onset, Boko Haram also handed out

	their motivations.	pamphlets to spread their ideology.
Mindset	The terrorists in <i>Les Justes</i> have a sacrificial mindset. Kaliayev, for example, accepted his execution as part of the moral sacrifice, demonstrating personal accountability.	i. <i>Brainwashing</i> : Boko Haram members are indoctrinated to believe that Western education is forbidden and that virgins await them in paradise if they die for the cause. This indoctrination fosters a sacrificial mindset among recruits.
Accountability	Camus' assassins were accountable in their behaviour when carrying out their act against the Grand Duke.	No accountability: Unlike Camus' assassins, Boko Haram leaders avoid capture and justify atrocities through distorted religious doctrine.

Findings

In Camus' narrative, the act of killing a tyrant while undeniably tragic is enveloped in layers of doubt, urgent moral consideration, and emotional restraint. Even when the characters engage in violent actions, they do so with a profound awareness of the spiritual toll it exacts. Camus' philosophical framework underscores that, in order for justice to remain truly just, it must bear the weight of its consequences. The logic behind terroristic violence does not result in freedom or righteousness.

Conclusion

This study goes beyond simply comparing a piece of literature with a militant movement. It reveals a deeper philosophical insight: any ideology, whether religious or secular, that seeks to eliminate moral nuance in favour of an idea of absolute purity ultimately leads to absurdity. Camus' drama serves not only as a framework for examining the ethics surrounding revolution but also as a moral tool for analysing real-world extremism. The implications of this understanding are significant for narratives surrounding counterterrorism and efforts aimed at peacebuilding. The repercussions of our counterterrorism narratives and peacebuilding strategies are indeed significant. This comparative study between Camus' "Les Justes" and the ideological framework of Boko Haram uncovers a significant and thought-provoking paradox: the use of violence in the pursuit of justice becomes counterproductive when it lacks ethical reflection and moral boundaries. In examining both Camus' "Les Justes" and the troubling reality of Boko Haram, we are ultimately faced with a profound and unsettling question: Is it possible for justice to arise from acts of violence? Camus presents a compelling perspective. He suggests that justice must engage with the suffering of its victims, acknowledging the sorrow inherent even in necessary acts of violence if it is to nurture hope for humanity's redemption. In stark contrast, the actions of Boko Haram lack this essential ethical dimension; they do not embody true justice, but rather represent a corrupted version of it. This study concludes that the rationale behind terrorist violence, much like the themes explored in "Les Justes," is inherently self-defeating within its own contradictions. Consequently, genuine justice does not stem from unwavering certainty but rather from a deep-seated moral conscience.

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