

Existentialism and International Relations II: Panel

Tuesday, 22 June 2021 11:00 (1h 30m)

What place, if any, there is for existential thinking in IR? To what degree has it been, or should it be, taken up? Indeed, apart from a set of essays in the *Journal of International Political Theory* in 2013, or an essay in *Ethics* in 1960, there has been no systematic study of the role or place of existentialist thought in IR theorising. This absence is perplexing given existentialism is centrally implicated in so many of the debates that we have today on subjects such as war and world-making, empire and economics, health and humanity. This is before we even turn to consider the import of literature like Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* or Albert Camus' *The Plague*, the representation of authoritarian leaders as Albert Camus' *Caligula* or the issue of racism in Richard Wright's *Outsider*.

This panel offers a reading of Jean Paul Satre's *Road To Freedom* as an IR text, reflects upon the existential threat of nuclear weapons, explores disappointment's role as an existential emotion in social movements, and considers the existential origins of ontological security studies. In sum, we ask: what are the contributions of an existential approach to international relations in the present political moment? (While our roundtable assesses the relevance of existentialism, our panel develops fresh existentialist arguments about IR).

Track Classification: Contemporary Research on International Political Theory Working Group