

POLITICAL PARTIES AND SARTRE

Political Parties and Sartre



POLITICAL PARTIES AND SARTRE

I. Functions of Political Parties



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1. Provide for the orderly transfer of power.

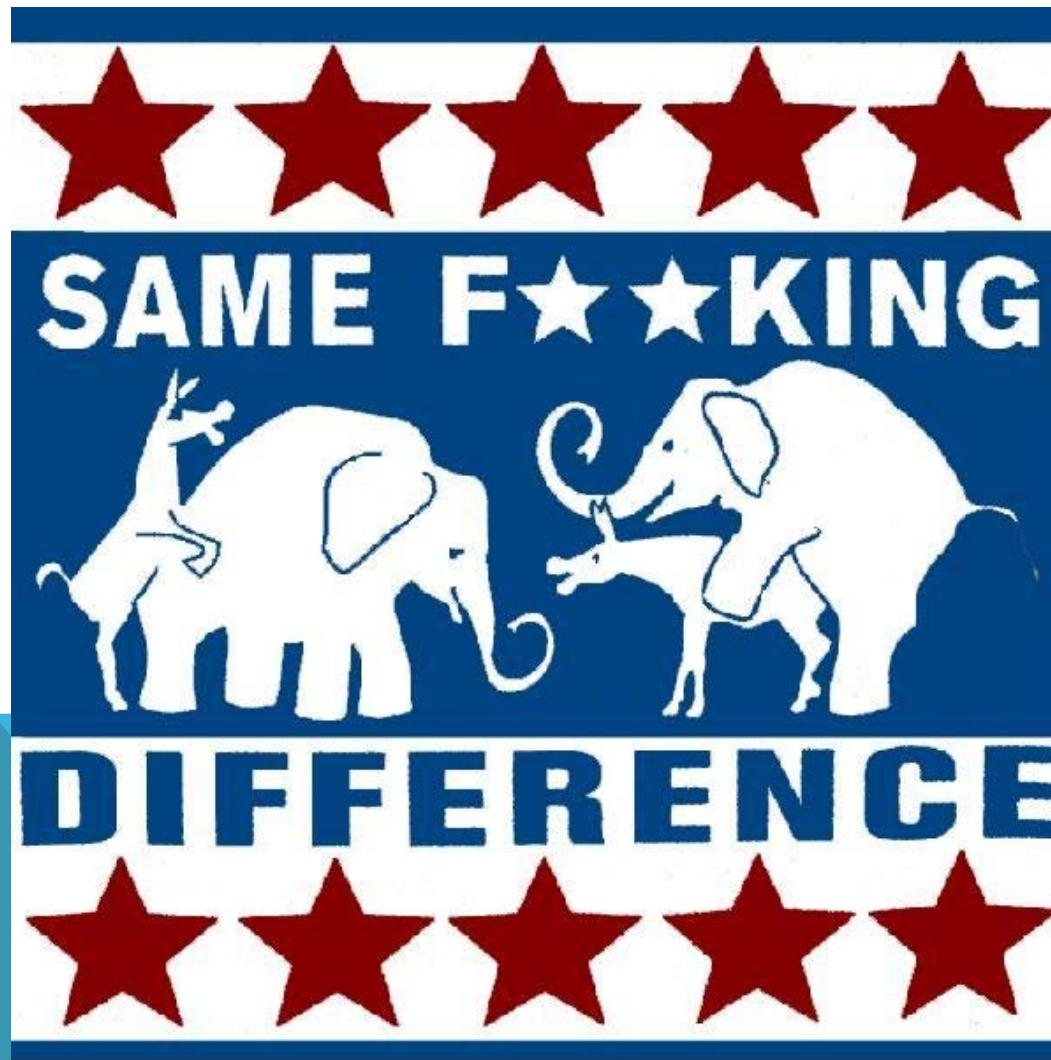
Transfer of Authority

- Orderly transfer of power is vital to social stability
 - Systems of **Rational-Legal Authority** have clearly defined systems (typically elections) that determine successor
 - Systems of **Traditional Authority** typically transfer power through family lines
 - Systems of **Charismatic Authority**- No rules of succession. Power is put up for grabs.



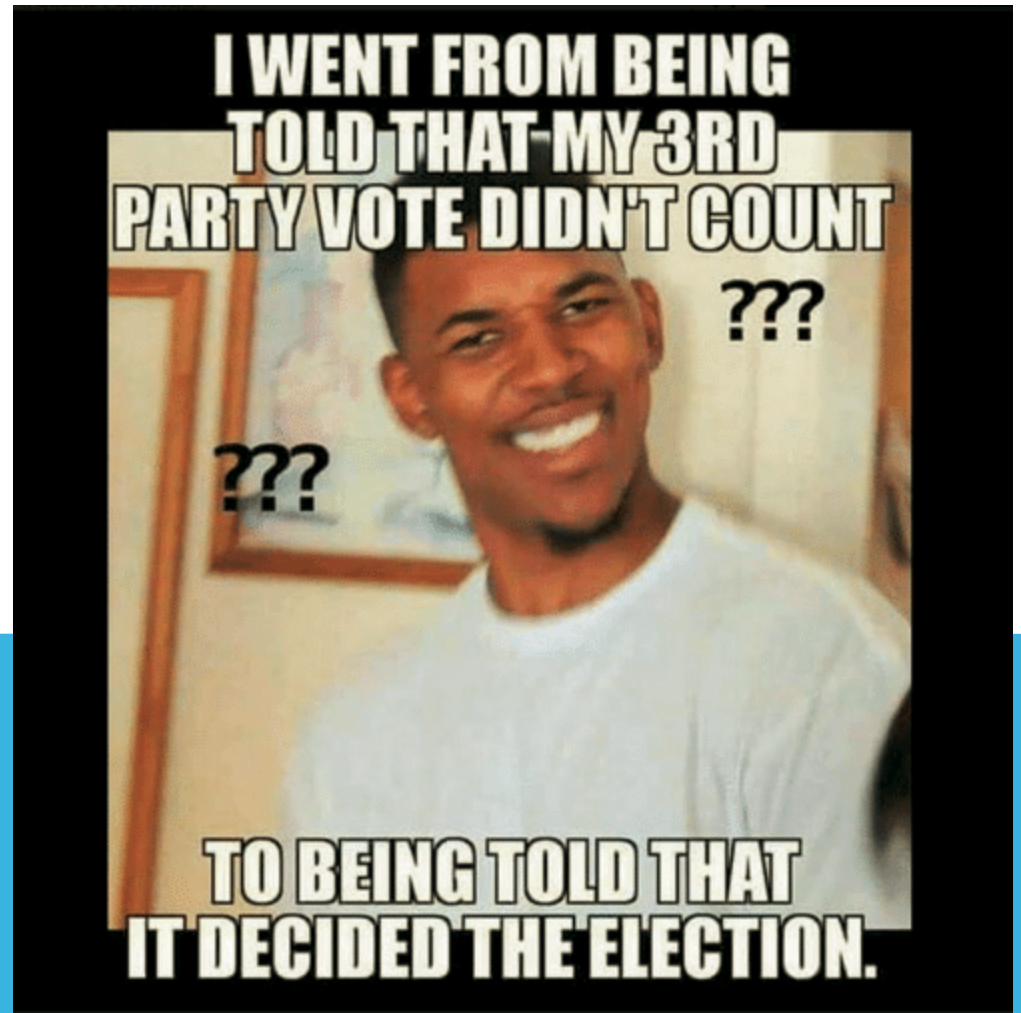
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2. Offer Party Alternatives



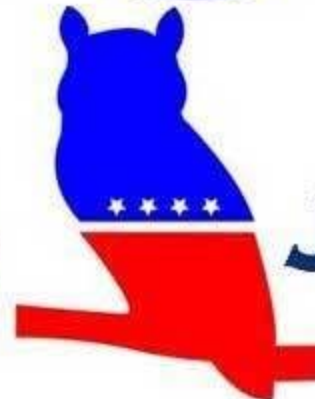
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a. In Two-Party Systems – parties promoting particular, narrow positions are usually marginalized in third parties, although their ideas may eventually be appropriated by one or both of the major parties.



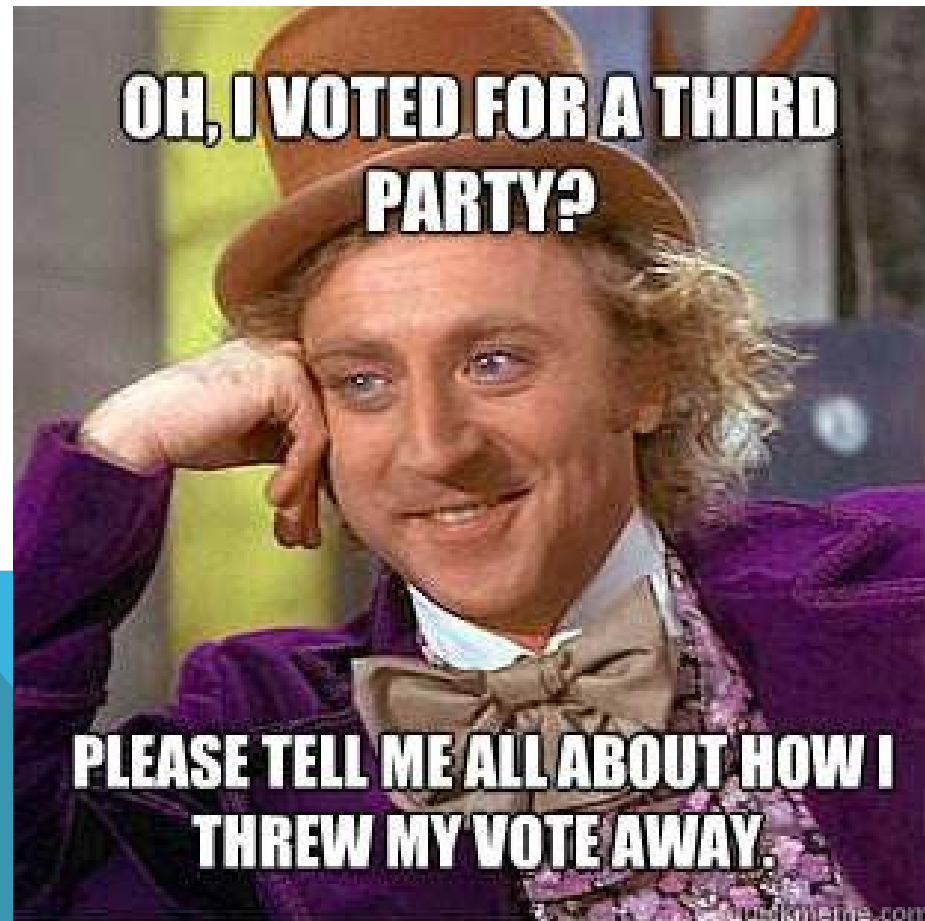
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b. In Multiparty Systems – parties advocating narrow causes may continue to survive on the periphery of the electoral system.



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3. Roles and Goals – the *goal* is to win. This means that major parties tend to be “flexible” and third party candidates are “rigid.”



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II.

Types of Party Systems



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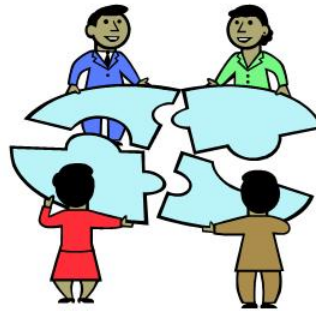
1. Two-Party Systems – winning presidency requires a majority of *electoral* votes, winning a seat in Congress requires a *plurality* of votes.



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A Multi-Party System

- In a multiparty system, parties represent a wide variety of class, religious, sectional and political interests, often making the government unstable.
- These systems must have parties form coalitions within the government in order to accomplish goals.



2. Multiparty Systems – usually parliamentary systems, which use proportional representation.

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3. Comparing the Two – fewer two-party than multiparty systems in democracies today.



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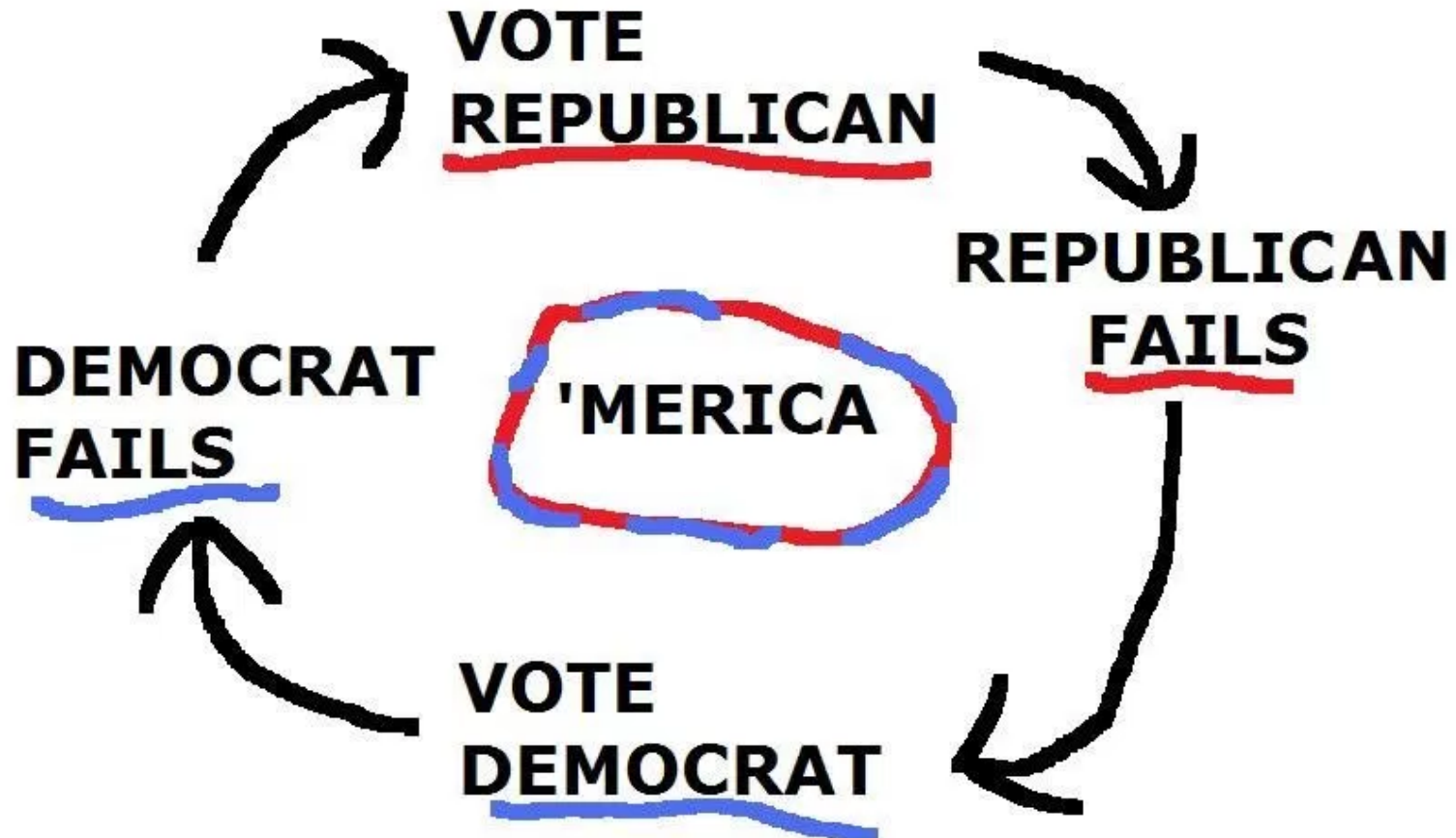
- a. Natural tendency for parties to move toward the middle in two-party systems.

Party Systems	
Multiparty	Two party
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Coalition government is necessary▪ Minor parties have an incentive to persevere▪ Proportional representation▪ Governments tend toward instability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Winner-takes-all system• “Wasted vote” syndrome discourages minor parties• Government tends toward stability• Policy change is incremental

The U.S. is a two-party system; most other democracies have a multiparty system

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- b. Less tendency in a multiparty system which allows “extremist” parties to exist.



*Okay then...
Who ordered their
shit-sandwich on
White, and who
wanted it on
Whole Wheat?*



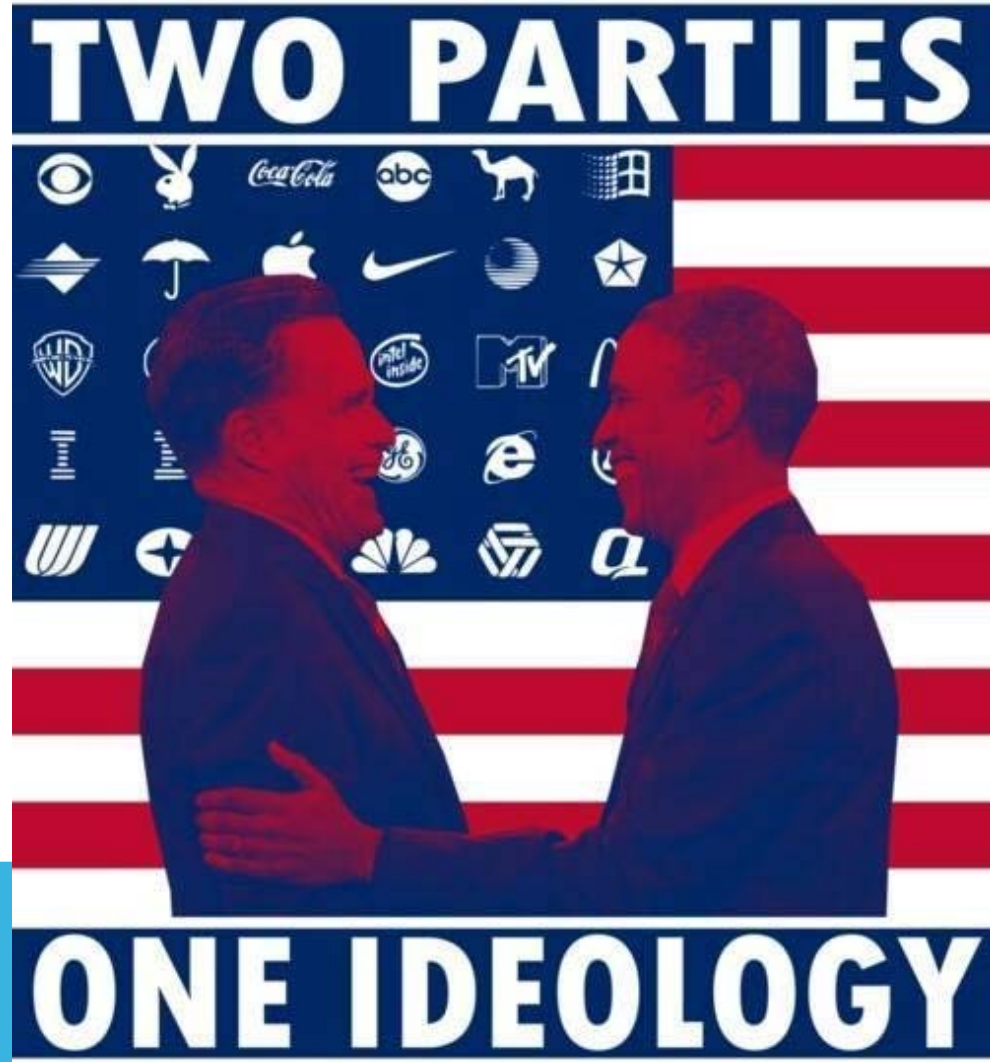
The Two Party System gives you a choice.

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4. Single-Party Systems – usually totalitarian oriented or based on military control.

One party system

- In some countries, only one party is allowed to control and run the government. These are called one party systems.
- For example, in **China**, only the Communist Party is allowed to rule.



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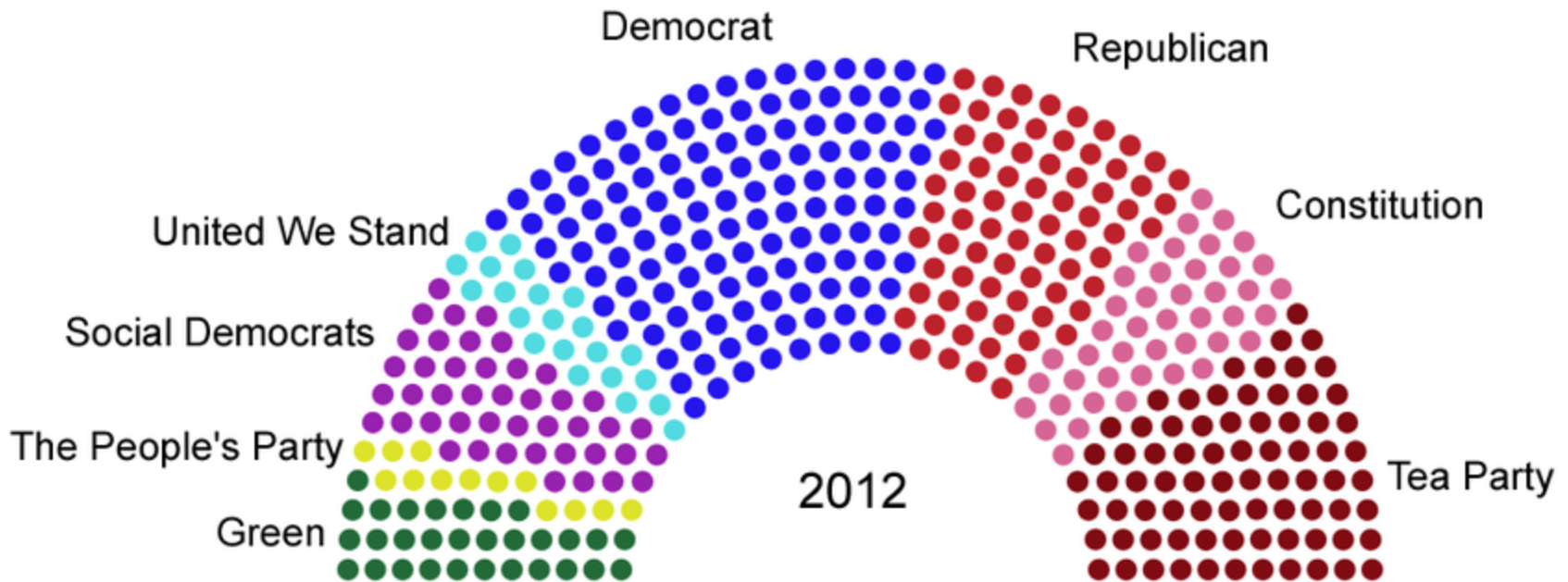
III.

Electoral Systems



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1. Proportional Representation – utilizes multimember districts to allow parties to elect representatives in proportion to their electoral strength.



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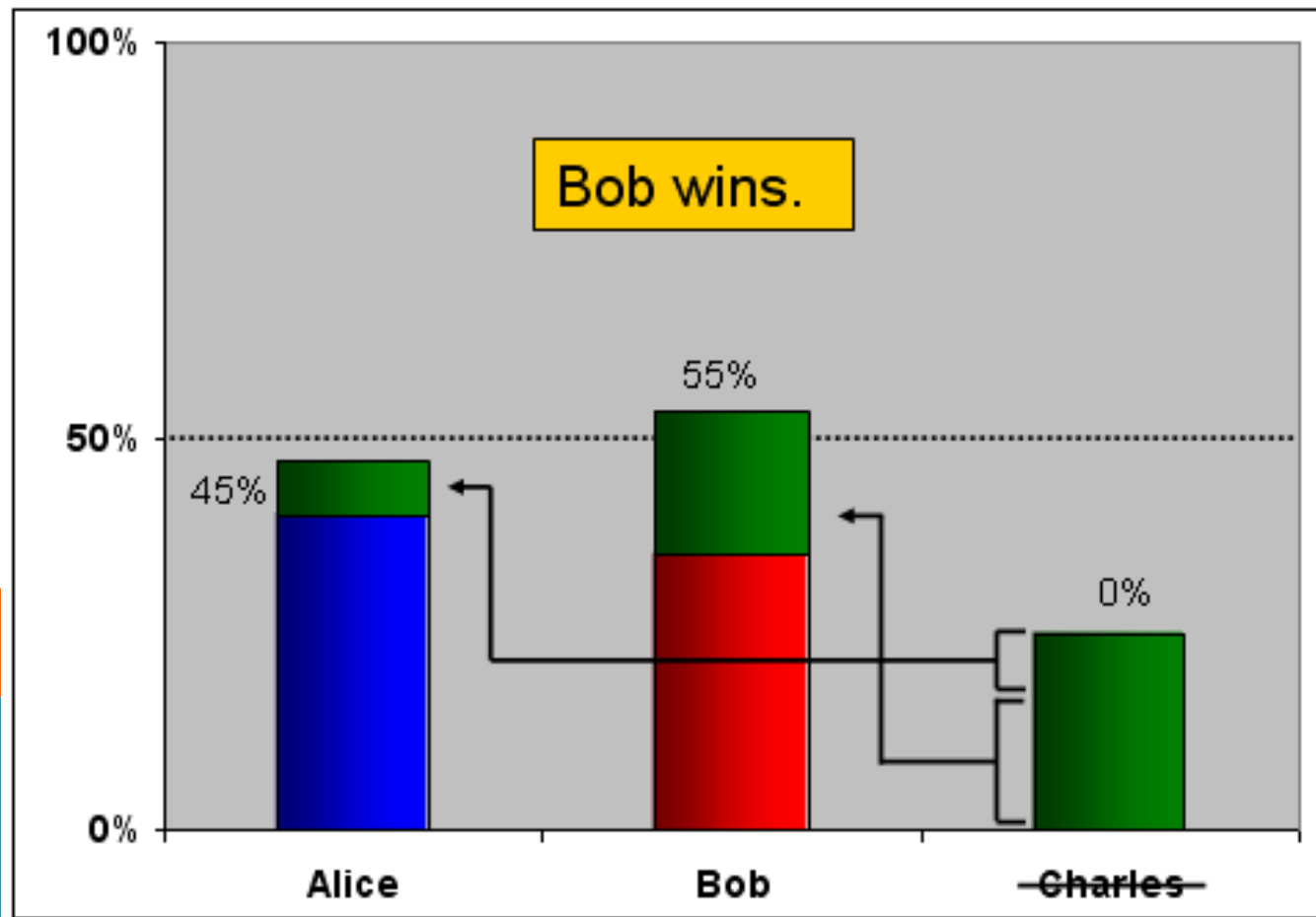
2. Simple Plurality – whoever gets the most votes wins.

Single-Member District, Plurality

- in Single-member district plurality (SMDP) systems individuals cast a single vote for a candidate in a single-member district. Candidate with the most votes is elected
- E.g.: United States, Britain, Canada, India, Jamaica
 - Advantages:
 - Simplicity; easy to administer and low in cost
 - Accountability
 - Clear majorities (see UK elections results)
 - Disadvantages:
 - Potential for unrepresentative outcomes
 - Encourages strategic rather than sincere voting
 - May not discourage ethnic voting where ethnic groups are territorially concentrated (Africa)

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3. The Ballot – voting for a single candidate or Instant Runoff Voting (IRV).



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IV. Party Organization

Party Organization



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1. Local and National Levels



POLITICAL PARTY PLATFORM



- Is a list the principles which a political party supports in order to appeal to the general public.
- Its purpose is to get their candidate elected.
- Individual topics are called planks of the platform.

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2. Types of Parties:



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- a. **Mass Parties** – usually based on labor organizations but also affiliated with churches.
- b. **Government Parties** – derive their directions from their elected officials in government.
- c. **Electoral Parties** – have local, state, and national units with no dominating external organization controlling them.
- d. **Charismatic Parties** – usually dominated by a single leader; highly centralized.

History of Major US Political Parties		
Years	Major Political Parties	
1792-1824	Federalists	Democratic-Republicans
1828-1854	Democrats	Whigs
1854-Present	Democrats	Republicans

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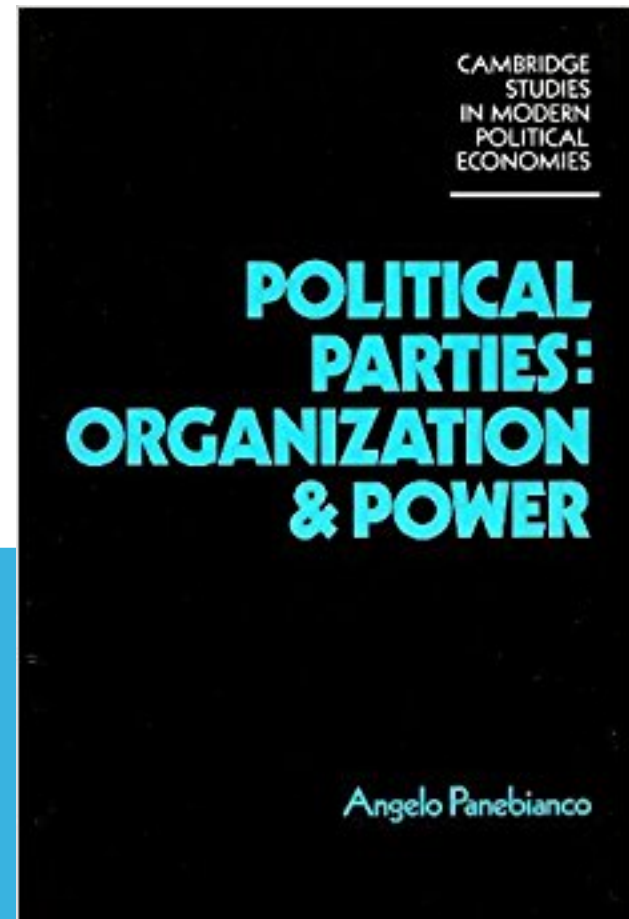
V. Party Change and Democratic Policy



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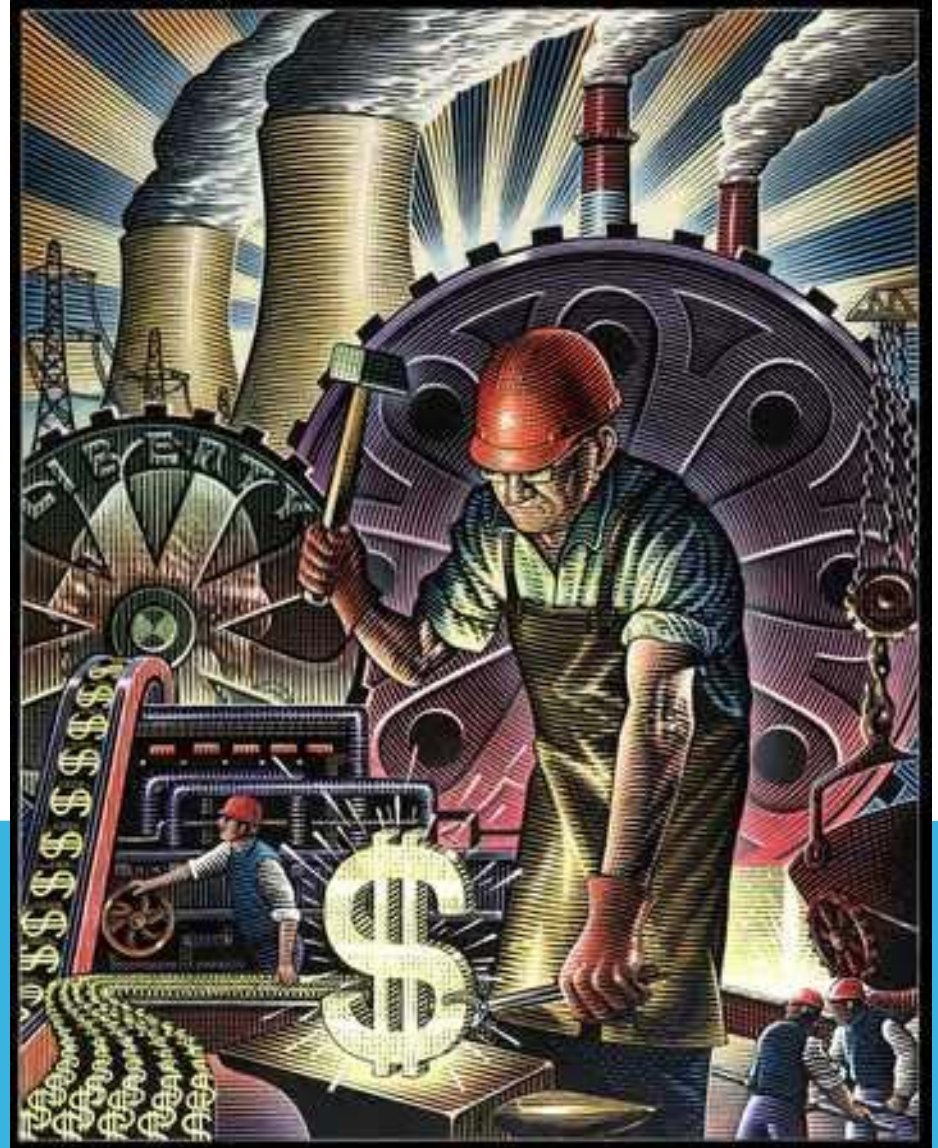
1. Panebianco's Party Transformation

Italian political scientist who argues that more inclusive, less ideologically rigorous parties are becoming the dominant form of party organization in mature democratic systems for 2 reasons:



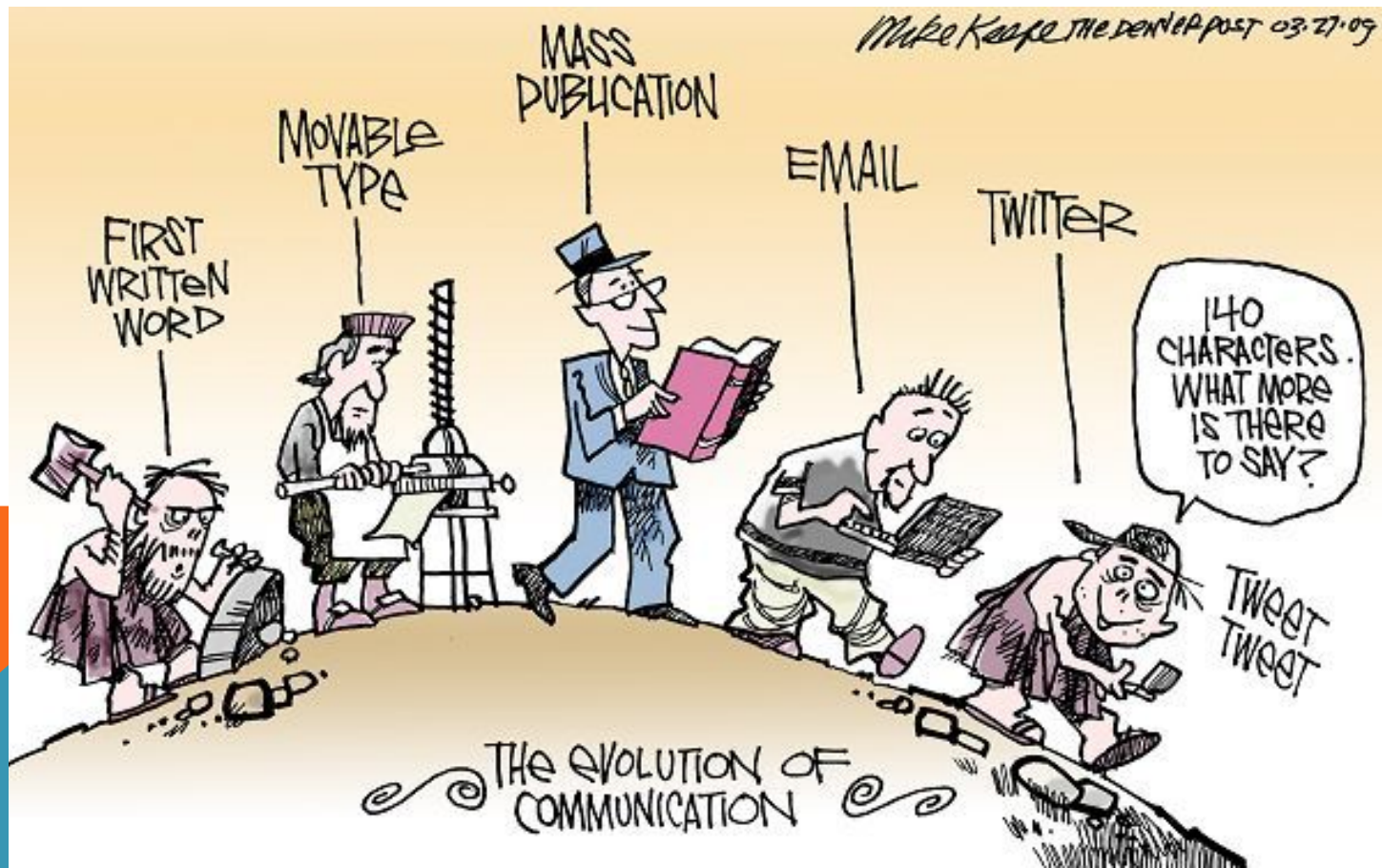
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a. Class bases of mass parties being diluted by democratic movements and economic prosperity.



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- b. Advances in technology and media communication have made the methods of the old-party bureaucrats outdated.



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**Sartre
and
Existentialism**



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The “Core” of Existentialist Thought

1. General theories about human nature leave out the “uniqueness” of the individual.



Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself.
Such is the first principle of existentialism.

(Jean-Paul Sartre)

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2. The *meaning* or *purpose* of the individual is more important than scientific or metaphysical truths about him/her.

Sartre's Existentialism

- Alienation of individuals
- Loneliness, uncertainty
- Meaninglessness of universe
- Man's struggle to create meaning
- "Nothing can be good for us without being good for all." -Sartre



**“Subjective” experience over
“objective” truth.**

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Man Is Condemned
To Be Free; Because
Once Thrown Into
The World, He Is
Responsible For
Everything He Does.

- Jean-Paul Sartre

LinesQuotes.com

3. The
importance of
freedom in
human beings

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I. Theory of the Universe



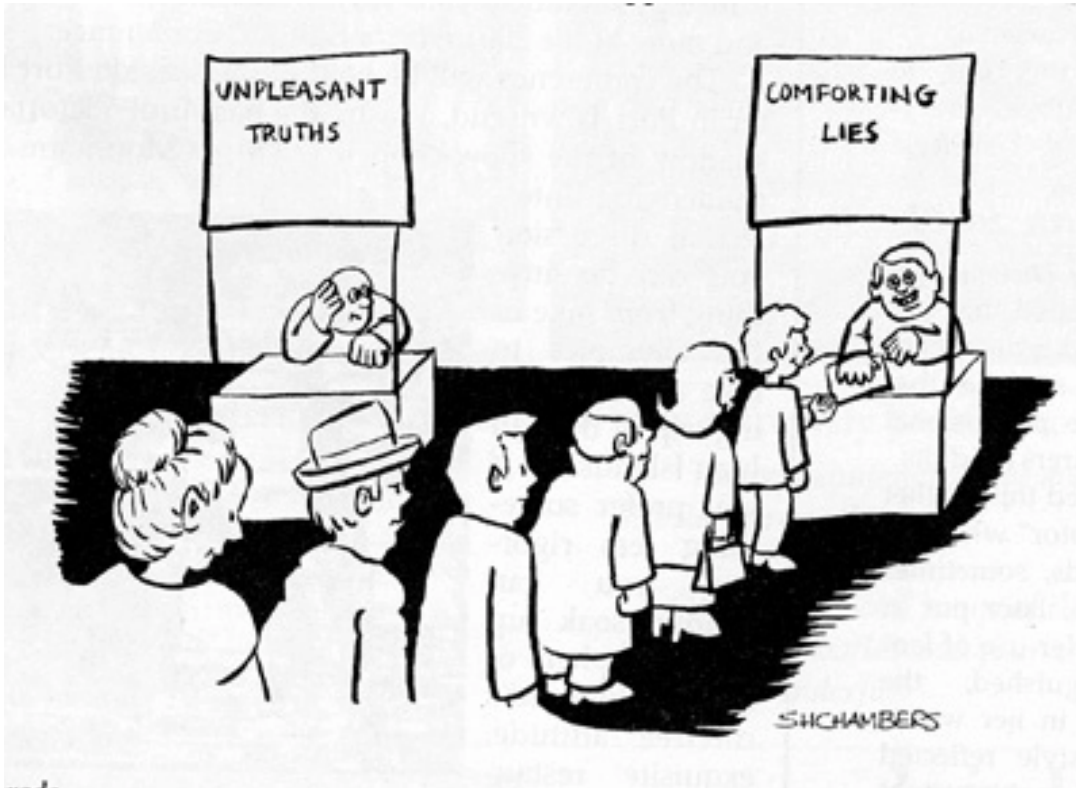
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1. There is no God (what does this nonexistence mean for human existence?).

Atheistic Existentialism: Existence Comes Before Essence

- If no God then for Humans "Existence Precedes Essence"
- No pre-existing human nature
 - No God to form conception of it
 - No Universal Human Nature in Platonic Sense
- Humans First Exist, then define their nature afterwards

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2. Thus, there are no transcendent objective values set for us, whether laws of God nor Platonic forms.

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3. There is no ultimate meaning or purpose inherent in our existence; life is “absurd” and there are no external or objective justifications for the values, actions, and way of life that anyone chooses to adopt.



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I. Theory of Human Nature



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1. There is no such thing as “human nature” for there to be true or false theories about!



EXISTENTIALISM

Claire suddenly realized that existence precedes essence, and she was free to kill all the old gods.

motifake.com

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2. We have no “essential” nature and we have not been created for any particular purpose, by God or evolution or anything else; we just “exist” and have to *decide* what to make of ourselves.

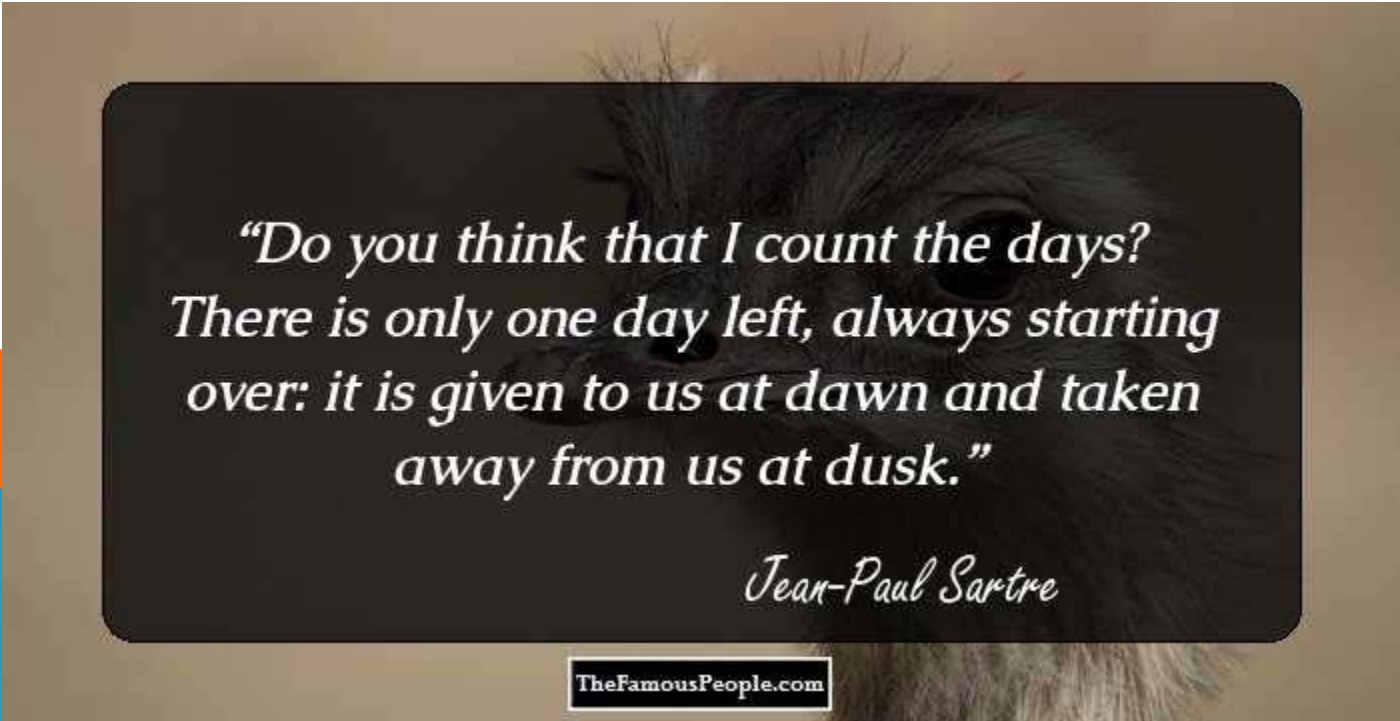


**Everything has been figured
out, except how to live.**

Jean-Paul Sartre

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3. If **Sartre** does have any suggestions about human nature it is that of human *freedom*. We are, for Sartre, *condemned to be free!* (There is no limit to our freedom, except that we cannot cease being free, and consciousness of this freedom causes us great “anguish”).



*“Do you think that I count the days?
There is only one day left, always starting
over: it is given to us at dawn and taken
away from us at dusk.”*

Jean-Paul Sartre

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Freedom

- ❑ Existentialists write about the loss of freedom or the threat to it, or the enlargement of the range of human freedoms.
- ❑ Freedom means human autonomy. Sartre said that we are condemned to freedom. Because there is no God, **we must accept individual responsibility for our own becoming**. Nothing explicitly implies that in becoming a free individual one becomes a virtuous person.
- ❑ The religious existentialists include God as a factor. They stress the man of faith rather than the man of will. Man's essential nature is God-like – and we should not alienate ourselves from it. We should heal the chasm between the two, that is, to find salvation.
- ❑ **Freedom is the acceptance of responsibility for choice and a commitment to one's choice.**

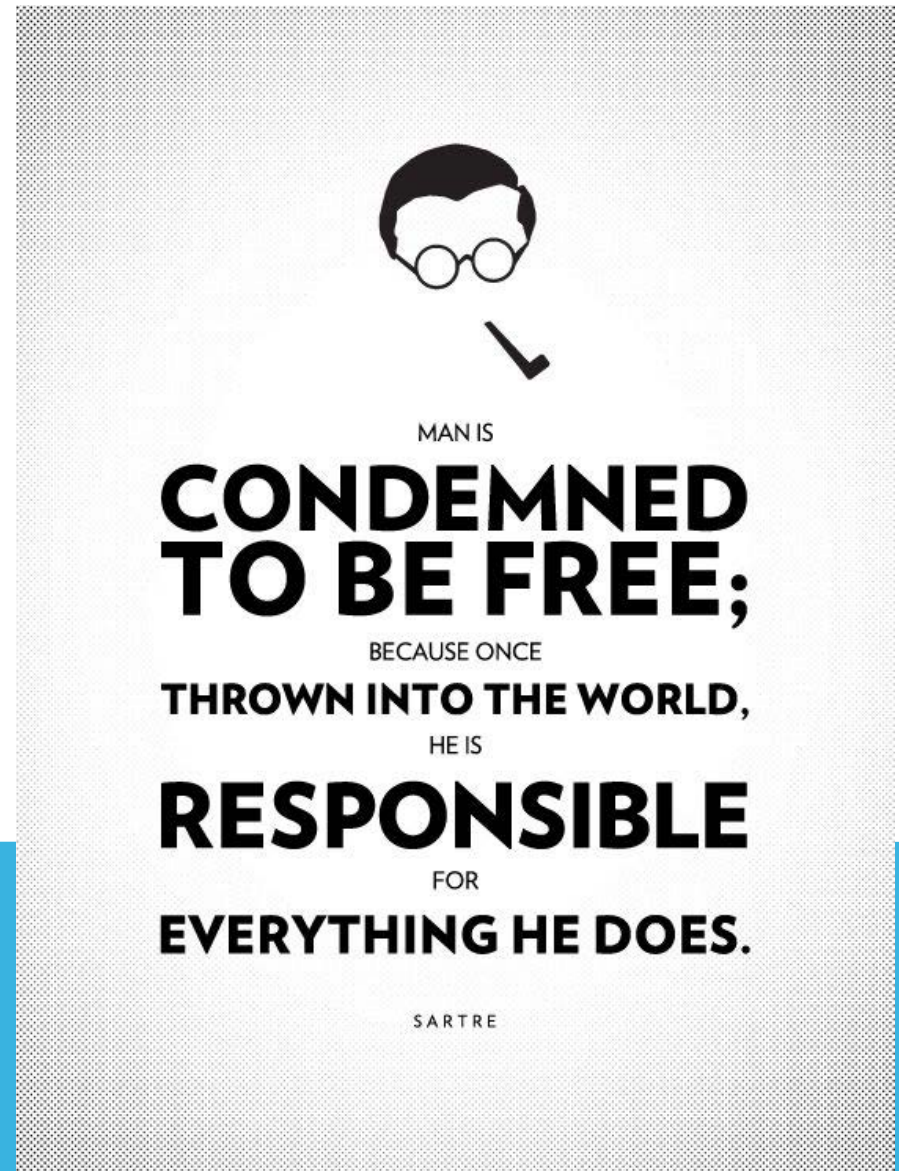
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III. Diagnosis



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1. We are conscious beings who are conscious of our freedom, which is painful, and we would actually prefer to have no choices (not be free).



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2. This condition leads us to engage in “bad faith” which is a situation where we blame others or other factors (situation, character, relationship to others, social role, etc...) instead of our *own* choices.

Bad Faith

- ◆ not a value judgment (bad vs. good)
- ◆ Sartre’s conception of self-deception
- ◆ the deliberate creation in oneself of the appearance of a belief which one in fact knows to be false
- ◆ people oftentimes lie to themselves: “I am not an alcoholic,” says the alcoholic
- ◆ determinism is really the root of bad faith

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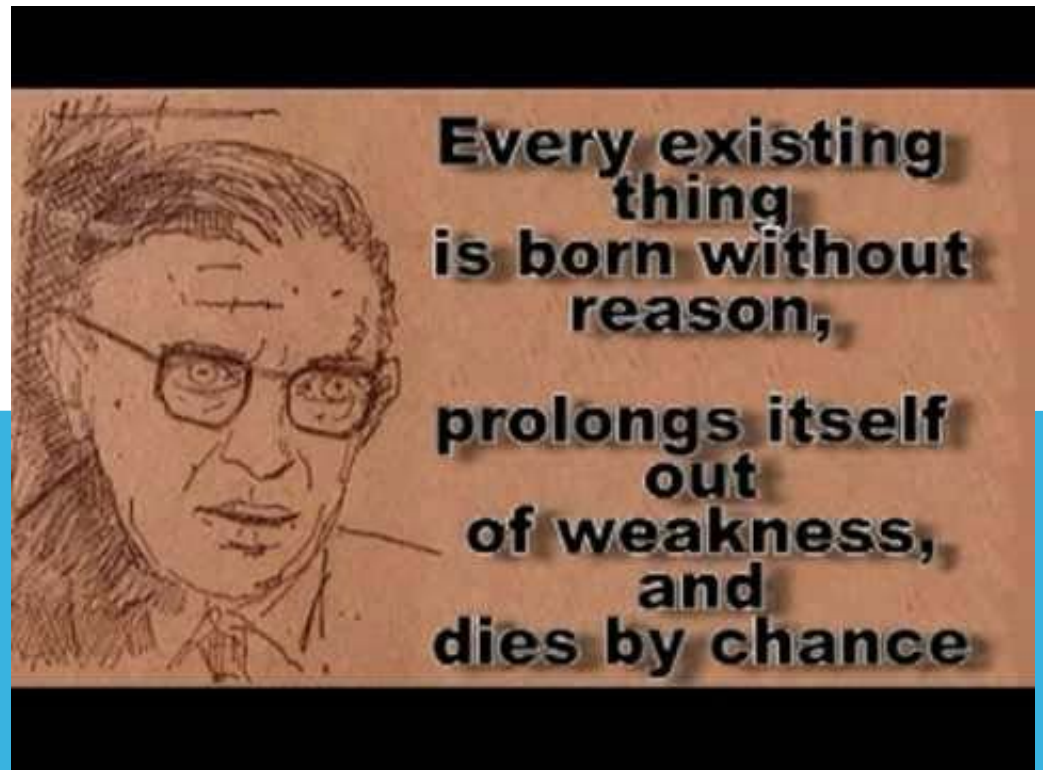
Authenticity

- ▶ In fact, Sartre's philosophy has a very positive message which is that we have infinite freedom and that this enables us to make authentic choices which escape from the grip of bad faith. To understand Sartre's notion of authenticity therefore requires that we first clarify his notion of freedom.

3. Even “good faith” or “sincerity” is problematic, since we can never be mere objects to be observed and described.

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4. Sadly, two conscious beings will always be in conflict and want to “possess” (objectify) the other; (leading to a strange state-of-affairs where the slave actually has more power because the master needs the slave to accept him as master).



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IV. Prescription



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1. In the final analysis, **Sartre** is unable to recommend any *particular* way of life other than to say you should not engage in “bad faith” – i.e. pretending you’re not free to make your own decisions.



If you are lonely when you're alone, you are in bad company.

(Jean-Paul Sartre)

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2. People should live “authentically” which means accepting responsibility and change what you don’t like.



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3. The idea that *values* are objectively in the world rather than sustained by human choice is an illusion that must be decisively repudiated.

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V. Critical Discussion



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1. If no reasons whatsoever can be given for choosing one way rather than another, and human choices are thus totally arbitrary, do we commend those who “authentically” choose to be lazy, mean-spirited, or even a serial killer?



The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion.

~ Albert Camus