

Review of: "The Inconceivable God in Lagerkvist's The Sibyl"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Thank you for bringing to light what, at least for me, was an opportunity to become aware of Lagerkvist's "The Sibyl" and the interesting link you have made to Sartre's ideas about God. I have just a few thoughts that occurred to me upon reading the article. However, as a dilettante in philosophy, I hope to tread lightly. My expertise is machine learning and artificial intelligence.

To chime in on Sartre's view of the timelessness of God, Augustine, a very early Christian theologian, wrote this:

"In created and changeable things, what is not said according to substance can only be said according to accident. In God, however, certainly there is nothing that is said according to accident, because in him there is nothing that is changeable" (The Trinity 5:5:6 [A.D. 408]).

Augustine isn't alone: <https://www.catholic.com/tract/god-has-no-body>

Sartre's conflict between matter and consciousness that asserts the impossibility of God is certainly a different approach than that of those who sought to prove God's existence through logic alone, e.g., Anselm and Aquinas. I think Sartre's argument could be challenged by his definitions of matter and consciousness. While it may have been otherwise in Sartre's time, consciousness is now a highly contentious topic.

It is interesting that Sartre's life almost exactly overlapped with that of the logician Kurt Gödel, who shocked the mathematical world by proving that we cannot have a logical system that is free of contradictions, and that there are truths that cannot be proven. Gödel defined self-referencing statements to discover this, along the lines of "this statement cannot be proven." It could be speculated that consciousness itself is a self-referencing system liable to contradictions. But we all think that we exist, don't we? So why not a conscious God? But if God is constant, confined to doing the most perfect thing, there is no free will. What then is the point of God's consciousness? I am reminded of a cartoon in which a human being asks why God gave him free will. God replied, "What makes you think I had a choice?"

On the "imbecile" son as a demigod, it is to my knowledge the usual case that deities are revealed to be anything other than intelligent and powerful figures. It is an interesting foil to lull the reader into disregarding the significance of a character that will later turn the tables. Here are a couple of other instances that come to mind:

- In the book "Perelandra", by C. S. Lewis Satan is described as putting on props of power, such as intelligence, as though putting on a pieces of clothing. If the situation does not call for it, Satan is quite content to sit in a corner like an imbecile, pulling the wings off of flies.
- The horror author H. P. Lovecraft's primary cosmic deity, Azathoth, sometimes referred to as the "Blind Idiot God", is a

“dreaming monster who rules the Outer Gods and created them, along with many other worlds. Azathoth can't understand anything in his dream, hence his title.”