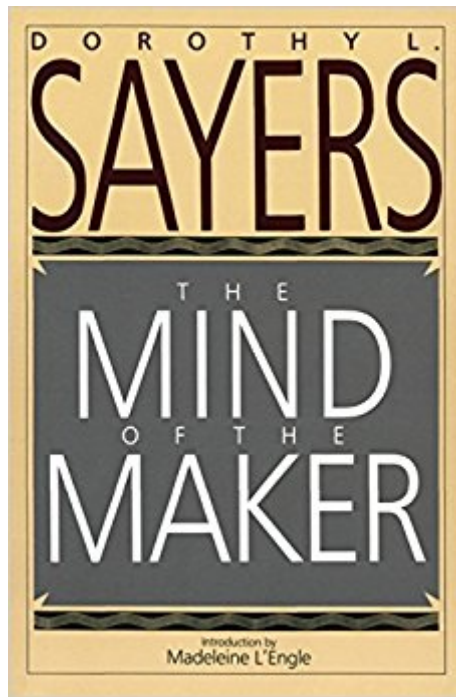


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The Mind Of The Maker



Synopsis

This classic, with a new introduction by Madeleine L'Engle, is by turns an entrancing meditation on language; a piercing commentary on the nature of art and why so much of what we read, hear, and see falls short; and a brilliant examination of the fundamental tenets of Christianity. The Mind of the Maker will be relished by those already in love with Dorothy L. Sayers and those who have not yet met her. A mystery writer, a witty and perceptive theologian, culture critic, and playwright, Dorothy Sayers sheds new, unexpected light on a specific set of statements made in the Christian creeds. She examines anew such ideas as the image of God, the Trinity, free will, and evil, and in these pages a wholly revitalized understanding of them emerges. The author finds the key in the parallels between the creation of God and the human creative process. She continually refers to each in a way that illuminates both.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In Dorothy L. Sayers' book, *The Mind of the Maker*, between a fantastic discussion on creative writing (detective fiction, primarily) the author addresses two of the biggest sociological questions: "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?" The answer to the first question is simply: a human created in God's image. The answer to the second question is a bit more complex, as Sayers first explores what God's image is, particularly the triune nature of the Christian deity. By comparing The Creator to an artist (primarily a creative writer, Sayers' forte), Sayers shows the purpose of life to be that of a creator as well. While Sayers' analogy works best for those with an already artistic temperament, in

her final chapters she addresses the question of what happens if you work on a toilet assembly line or some equally unglamorous profession. In the case of the toilet assembler, Sayers suggests that while he or she may simply be turning a screw, what's really being created is a more sanitary and hygienic world. She observes that individuals need to separate the value of money from the value of the work (why both capitalism and communism are, she says, ultimately dehumanizing) and find a higher purpose in one's occupation instead. While rethinking one's purpose may be the over-all goal of the book, it certainly isn't the only subject addressed. The origin of evil, the difference between human and universal laws, free will, and some of the ancient creeds come up for discussion. If you've been confused by the topic of the Trinity, Sayers provides one of the best analogies I've ever read. If you've been stymied by skeptics accusing the church of casting God in man's image (instead of the other way 'round), Sayers' response alone is worth the purchase price of the book.

Contrary to popular belief, this is not primarily a book about God. Sayers wisely does not try to tell us about God directly, but about what is godlike in ourselves. 'The characteristic common to God and man,' she says, is 'the desire and ability to make things.' She draws a vivid and detailed analogy between the Christian Trinity and our own creative imagination. In working out the details of this analogy, she tells us a great deal about them both; but, inevitably, more about our own minds than God's. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit correspond to what Sayers calls the Idea, Energy, and Power. For a writer, the Idea is the book as he first imagines it; the Energy is the book as actually written; the Power is the impression it makes in the mind of each reader. The analogy applies equally well to all art forms. Sayers makes the Trinity seem as plain and familiar as a conversation. If you ever knew what you wanted to say but couldn't find the words, you felt the difference between the Father and the Son. If someone took your words to mean something you never intended, you felt the distance between the Son and the Spirit. Critics may say the Trinity is not real, but they can never again call it incomprehensible. The rest of the book concentrates on the purely human maker. The longest chapter, 'Scalene Trinities', discusses the ways that the creative imagination can go wrong, and classifies them as failures of the Idea, the Energy, or the Power. I find this the most useful part of the book. Whatever kind of work we do, we find it all too easy to become obsessed with technical details (the Energy). We almost forget that we are trying to express an Idea, and so our work loses the Power to benefit other people. We need to be fully aware of all three parts of the process.

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