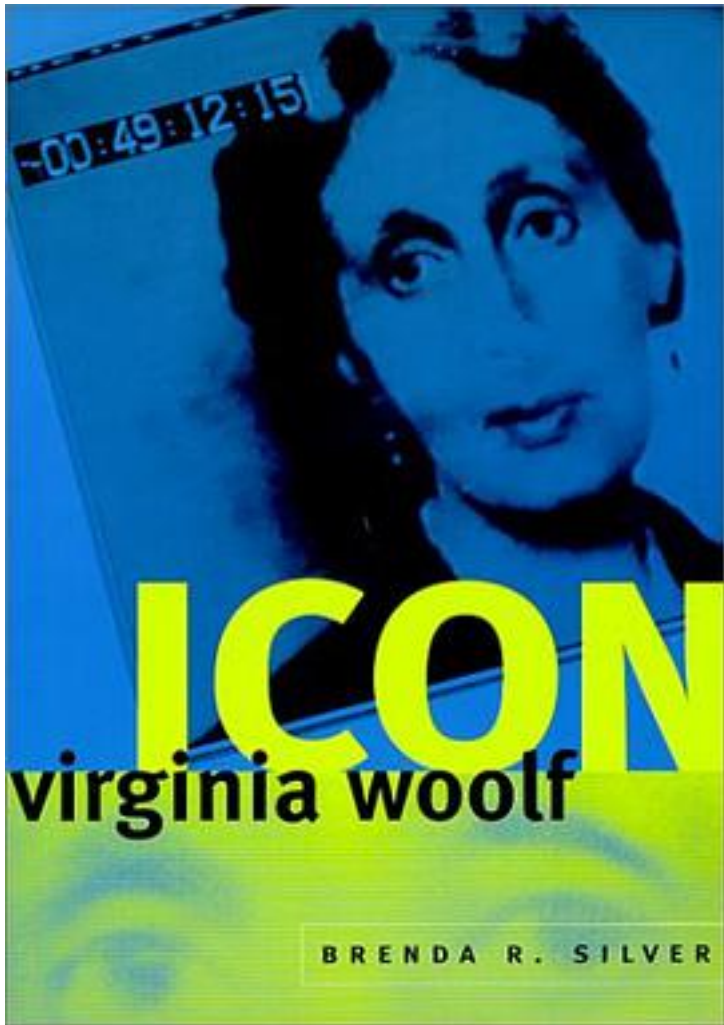


Virginia Woolf Icon



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著者:Silver, Brenda R.

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This text is about "Virginia Woolf": the face that sells more postcards than any other at

Britain's National Portrait Gallery, the name that Edward Albee's play linked with fear, the cultural icon so rich in meanings that it has been used to market everything from the "New York Review of Books" to Bass Ale. Brenda Silver analyzes Virginia Woolf's surprising visibility in both high and popular culture, showing how her image and authority have been claimed or challenged in debates about art, politics, anger, sexuality, gender, class, the canon, feminism, race and fashion. From Virginia Woolf's 1937 appearance on the cover of "Time" magazine to her roles in theatre, film and television, Silver traces the often contradictory representations and the responses they provoke, highlighting the recurring motifs that associate Virginia Woolf with fear. By looking more closely at who is afraid and the contexts in which she is perceived to be frightening, Silver illustrates how Virginia Woolf has become the site of conflicts about cultural boundaries and legitimacy that continue to rage at the end of the 20th century.

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