



Dr. Seuss: American Icon

Philip Nel

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Published in time for the centenary of Seuss's birth in March 2004, *Dr. Seuss: American Icon*, celebrates one of the most influential authors and artists of the 20th century: Theodor Seuss Geisel, best known as 'Dr. Seuss'. Dr Seuss's ascendance from children's author to American icon confirms that his cultural significance rests not just with the beginning reader, but with the scholar, the artist, and the poet.

Seuss's Beginner Books (starting with *The Cat in the Hat* in 1957) have obscured the enormous range of his contributions to American literature. Similarly his art, unfairly overlooked because it appears in children's books, cartoons, and commercials, actually covers a range of styles, including Surrealism, Art Nouveau, and Cubism.

Bringing to light the adult perspective behind the children's writer, Philip Nel examines Seuss's lesser-known works, such as the 'adult book' *The Seven Lady Godivas* (1939), and the live-action musical *The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T* (1953). The book also features the most comprehensive Seuss bibliography ever produced, documenting his prodigious output.

As well as establishing Seuss's place among poets and artists, *Dr. Seuss: American Icon* links the Seuss people know and the Seuss people do not know.

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