

**BAMBI TURNS 100!**  
**BUT WHAT IS THE CLASSIC BOOK REALLY ABOUT – AND DOES DISNEY MISS THE POINT?**

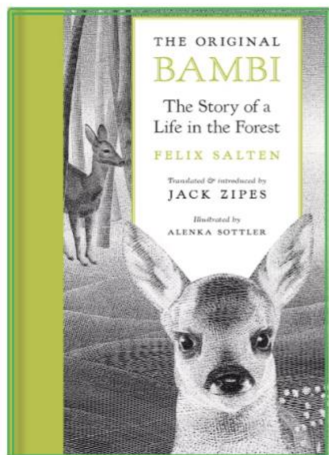


Illustration by Alenka Sottler. Please see full credits below

**Join the SinaiFree Film Society on Wednesday, October 18, at 7:30pm, on Zoom for a provocative discussion with fairy-tale and children’s book scholar Dr. Jack Zipes**

Bambi, the fawn gamboling through Disney’s 1942 movie, is now one hundred years old! He was created by the Austrian Jewish author and journalist Felix Salten, and his story first appeared in book form in 1923. But what does Salten’s *Bambi: A Life in the Woods* mean for us today? Is it simply about a deer coming of age...or is it an intimation of the tragedy soon to befall European Jewry? And how does Disney’s famous film depart from the novel?

To explore these questions, the SinaiFree Film Society is delighted to host an **online conversation** with special guest **Dr. Jack Zipes**.



Dr. Zipes (Jack) is Professor Emeritus of German and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota, as well as a prolific author, translator, and editor with more than fifty books to his credit. In 2022, his masterful new translation of *Bambi* was published by Princeton University Press. Beautifully illustrated by Alenka Sottler, *The Original Bambi: The Story of a Life in the Forest* is available from the [publisher](#) and other sources, possibly including your local bookstore or library. Those who [register](#) for the program will receive a 30% discount code to purchase the book online, courtesy of Princeton University Press (reading the book is optional, of course).

Felix Salten was born Siegmund Salzman in 1869 and was raised by parents who aspired to assimilate, although his paternal grandfather was an Orthodox rabbi. But with the growing antisemitism in Europe, he began to rethink his relationship to Judaism. As a young man, Salten met Theodor Herzl, and their growing friendship “awakened” him to Zionism. His journalistic writings (including a weekly column for *Die Welt*, a newspaper founded by Herzl) created momentum for Herzl’s ideas and helped bring modern political Zionism to public attention.

After Herzl died in 1904, Salten succeeded him as a writer of feuilletons for the *Neue Freie Presse*. In 1924, he visited Mandatory Palestine (his book of essays about the visit was published the following year), and in 1929, Salten’s moving tribute to his friend appeared in a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary memorial volume issued by the Zionist Organization of America.

In childhood, many of us loved Disney's Technicolor film, which is "from the story by Felix Salten." But how do they differ? Does Disney present a "cleaned up" version that reinforces social norms and prettifies reality for the sake of mass appeal? And does the only translation then available, by a young Whittaker Chambers (later a Soviet spy), affect the story in any way?

Although Salten loved animals, he was also a hunter. Therefore, it is unlikely that he meant the human violence in *Bambi* to be a censure of the sport. Instead, as Dr. Zipes explains, Salten's story can be read as an allegory about loneliness and the brutal treatment of minorities, even when they try to live in peace. In 1936, the book was banned by the Nazis.

**How to watch *Bambi*.** The film can be streamed on Disney+ and FshareTV.co (a free site). It can be rented for \$3.99 from Amazon, AppleTV, YouTube, Google Play, Vudu, Microsoft and DirecTV. There are 16 DVDs in the Westchester Library System and 17 DVDs in the New York Public Library.

Please click [here](#) to register and receive the Zoom link, as well as a 30% discount code to purchase the book online, courtesy of Princeton University Press.

Contact Joel Wald at [waldspeak@gmail.com](mailto:waldspeak@gmail.com) with any questions.

We hope to see you on **Wednesday, October 18, at 7:30pm**, for an intriguing and thought-provoking conversation with Jack Zipes!



**If you'd like to learn more, you may want to read the following:**

["Bambi: The Lonely Destiny of Outsiders,"](#) By Jack Zipes

*The Original Bambi: The Story of a Life in the Forest*, By Felix Salten. English translation by Jack Zipes  
[Chapter 1](#)

**Credits (images):**

*The Original Bambi: The Story of a Life in the Forest*. Translated by Jack Zipes from the novel by Felix Salten. Illustrated by Alenka Sottler. Copyright © 2022 by Princeton University Press. Illustrations copyright © 2022 by Alenka Sottler. All rights reserved

The Walt Disney Company