

Inspiring Walt Disney: Literary Texts and Contexts

Dates	Mondays 12, 19 and 26 September 2022
Times	18.30–20.30 BST
Location	Learning Studio, Lower Ground Floor
Tutor	Dr Emma McEvoy
Level	All Levels, with Advance Reading



Course Description

Explore the literature associated with some of Walt Disney's most iconic films. From J M Barrie's play *Peter Pan* (1904) to Dodie Smith's *The One Hundred and One Dalmatians* (1956), we'll discuss changing attitudes to heroines, heroes and villains, alongside themes of magic, metamorphosis and the business of adaptation.

Session One: Beauties and Beasts

In our first session, we'll explore four short tales: Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont's version of 'Beauty and the Beast' (1756); the Grimm brothers' 'Aschenputtel' (1812) and 'Briar Rose' (1812); and Edith Nesbit's 'Melisande, or The Long-Haired Princess' (1900). We'll discuss the phenomenon of the literary fairy tale and explore what we mean when we talk about 'folk literature'. We'll also think about transformations and magical helpers. Finally, we'll discuss some key elements of fairy tales, including the desirable qualities in a princess, what constitutes a happy ending, and what makes a hero.

Session Two: Peter Pan

Our second session will be devoted to J M Barrie's 1904 play, *Peter Pan* – a ground-breaking work in the history of children's theatre. We'll start by looking at the evolution of the Pan material from adult novel, to children's play, then to children's novel. We'll discuss the ways in which *Peter Pan* manages to appeal both to adults and children, and think about the complex evocations of childhood, adult life and parenthood in the play. We'll also consider Barrie's enchanted island in the context of the secret spaces of children's literature and film more generally.

Session Three: The One Hundred and One Dalmatians

In our final session, we'll investigate Dodie Smith's *The One Hundred and One Dalmatians* (1956). We'll consider Smith as a satirist, looking at her depictions of fashion, the fur trade and consumerism. We'll also look at the legacy of Cruella and discuss the part played by fear in the wider field of children's literature. Smith's work gives a lively portrayal of 1950s England, and we'll also examine the concept of social class in the novel and discuss its evocations of the rural and the urban. Finally, paying special attention to the novel's narrative voice, we'll explore what might be involved in the process of adaptation.

Course Tutor

Emma McEvoy is a senior lecturer in the School of Humanities at the University of Westminster, where she teaches a course on children's literature. She also teaches courses on literature for institutions including the British Library, and has published widely in the fields of Romantic and Gothic Studies. She is currently writing a book for Cambridge University Press on *The Music of the Gothic 1790-1830*.

Previous Skills, Knowledge or Experience

None required. This course is designed as an introduction to the subject.

Joining Information and Format

This course will be taught at the museum. Each course session duration is 120 minutes, including a five-minute comfort break. Tickets are for all three dates. After closing at 17.00, the museum will reopen from 18.00 to course ticket holders only.

Recommended Reading

Participants will get the most from this course by undertaking the recommended reading in advance of each session. Copies of each text are widely available but you may find the following links and recommendations useful.

Session 1

Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont's version of 'Beauty and the Beast' (1756):

<https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/beauty.html>

Edith Nesbit's 'Melisande, or The Long-Haired Princess' (1900):

https://www.gutenberg.org/files/49913/49913-h/49913-h.htm#Page_159

Grimms' Ashputtel and Briar Rose:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2591/2591-h/2591-h.htm>

Session 2

J M Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1904). Suggested edition is *Peter Pan and Other Plays*, ed. Peter Hollindale, Oxford World's Classics.

Session 3

Dodie Smith's *The One Hundred and One Dalmatians* (1956). Available widely in paperback.
