NOTE-TAKING EXERICSE

Patrick C. Fleming, *Animating the Victorians: Disney's Literary History* (2025)

PART I. PAPER ANNOTATIONS

PAGE	KEYWORD(S)	YOUR COMMENTS

Chapter One

Disney and the Victorian Tradition

T. S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919)—which has been called "the most influential English-language literary essay of the twentieth century"[1]—argues that any individual work of art must be considered as part of a tradition, a constellation of other works that came before and after it. Creating or interpreting a work of art, says Eliot, requires "a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence."[2] The Walt Disney Company takes Eliot's statement a step further, recognizing the presence of the past not only in its creative products but also in its corporate practices. Disney's acceptance of Eliot's credo is encapsulated in the orientation course for Disney employees, or "cast members." The course is called "Traditions."[3]

Diane Disney Miller, Walt Disney's daughter, once remarked that "mom and dad both loved the Victorian period."[4] Though the immediate reference is to her parents' home décor, it might be expanded to include not only the numerous Victorian texts that Disney adapted (many of which I discuss in this book) but also to Victorian culture more broadly. Many of the traditions that inform the Walt Disney Company's output, structure, and ethos have their roots in Victorian literature and culture.

Walt Disney traveled through Europe after the London premiere of *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), visiting several sites that had opened during the Victorian period, such as Denmark's Tivoli Gardens, which opened in 1843, and Neuschwanstein, the Bavarian castle built in the 1880s and opened to the public after King Ludwig's death in 1886. Upon his return, Walt "plunged

back into Disneylandia and his park."[5] Neuschwanstein would be the basis for the theme park's centerpiece, Sleeping Beauty's Castle, and Tivoli Gardens has distinct themed areas, which may have given Disney the idea to divide his own park into Adventureland, Frontierland, Tomorrowland, and Fantasyland. The latter, Disney told audiences in the first episode of the *Disneyland* television series, was inspired by Wonderland and Never Land, from two quintessentially Victorian texts.

In London, Disney couldn't have missed the Festival of Britain, which was being celebrated on the South Bank during his visit. The festival marked the centennial of the Great Exhibition of 1851, the high-water mark of Victorian culture. The Great Exhibition, held inside a glass building known as the Crystal Palace, inspired the World's Fairs that were common over the next century. Walt Disney's father worked as a carpenter at the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, and the 1964 World's Fair was an important event for Disney: he produced four exhibits, all of which were later incorporated into his theme parks.[6] In 2023, Disney celebrated its centenary with "Disney 100: The Exhibition," which toured the United States and Europe. Its title quietly evokes London's Great Exhibition, as does the Crystal Palace restaurant in Florida's Magic Kingdom.

Disney's films were frequently based on Victorian texts and its theme parks had important Victorian precursors. But "tradition," in the sense that Eliot means it, is more than simply a set of works. Eliot builds on the Victorian critic Matthew Arnold, who wrote that for artists to produce their best work, "two powers must concur, the power of the man [sic] and the power of the moment."[7] The same might be said for a corporation. The Walt Disney Company took shape in the mid-twentieth century, with the concurrence of the right cultural institutions (a widely shared children's literature and a vast entertainment industry), legal protections (cross-media and international copyright), and technologies (moving pictures and sound recording). Those institutions, protections, and technologies all emerged during Victoria's reign. In the 1830s, writers like Charles Dickens had no control over stage adaptations of their novels, nor did they profit from the pirated editions sold in the United States, unauthorized spin-offs of their works, or the merchandising of their characters and stories. The invention of photography in the 1840s and of motion pictures at the end of that century further threatened authors' control over their works. But revisions to copyright law began to protect adaptations across media, and the 1886 Berne Convention formulated the first international copyright law. By 1901, when Victoria died and Walt Disney was born, the stage was set for a global media corporation built on adaptation franchises.

The Golden Age of Children's Literature

In the twenty-first century, one can't think of "Snow White," "Cinderella," or "Beauty and the Beast" without thinking of Disney's versions. Lamenting this hegemony, Jack Zipes, a folklorist and expert in the history of fairy tales, titled his most famous essay "Breaking the Disney Spell."[8] But fairy tales had begun to homogenize long before Disney. Originally an oral genre, fairy tales shifted to print culture in the eighteenth century and became popular in England after Edgar Taylor translated Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's *German Popular Stories* (1823). The tales the Grimms collected had existed in various forms across multiple countries. Over the course of the nineteenth century, those tales, and their corresponding tropes, solidified into the versions we recognize today. Victorian illustrated narratives and stage performances distilled the Cinderella story into the elements that Disney would feature in its 1950 film; it was the Victorians who established the stepsisters' ugliness and who made Cinderella's most prominent feature her beauty rather than her personality.[9] Similarly, the tropes of the princess's trance, the palace that sleeps alongside her, and the heroic prince who awakens her with a kiss are Victorian revisions to the "Sleeping Beauty" story.[10] "Beauty and the Beast" was one the most popular Victorian fairy tales, circulating in fairy-tale collections, picture books, and theatrical genres like the fairy extravaganza and the pantomime.[11] Disney's fairy-tale films may have cast a spell on the fairy tale in the mid-twentieth century, but the tales on which those films were based were not timelessly authentic. They were Victorian. And the same cultural factors that consolidated the fairy-tale tradition—the emergence of child consumers, legal protections for artists, and new media—also laid the groundwork for the Walt Disney Company.

Walt Disney expected whole families, not just children, to enjoy his films. "Dad never thinks of children as his primary audience," remarked Diane Disney Miller. She quoted her father as saying, "When we make our movies, we try to please ourselves instead of some composite, imaginary child."[12] Such a qualification would not have been necessary in the early nineteenth century, as the "composite, imaginary child" had not yet come into being. A separate literature for children is a relatively new phenomenon. Only in the mid-eighteenth century did publishers begin marketing works explicitly for children; John Newbery's *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* (1744) is commonly cited as the first children's book. Early children's texts balanced entertainment with instruction, addressing a child who presumably needed only knowledge and practice to become a full-fledged adult.[13]

In the early nineteenth century, poets like William Wordsworth instead envisioned childhood as an innocent, imaginative state, helping change the general cultural image of the child. Teachers, psychologists, and social reformers also began to identify childhood as a separate stage from adulthood. In school, children interacted mostly with peers of their own age, and the Victorians established juvenile detention centers instead of prisons and separated children from their parents in the workhouses for the poor.[14] By the turn of the century, it had become possible to envision the "composite, imaginary child" to which Disney refers.

As childhood began to be considered a separate state from adulthood, the boundaries between children's and adults' reading were constantly shifting. Most reading took place in the home, and even literature not explicitly aimed at children was influenced by Victorian family structures.[15] Victorian readers found the widest selection of reading material at subscription-based libraries. The most famous library, Mudie's, opened in 1842 and became synonymous with the era's moral strictures. Mudie's helped ensure that mid-nineteenth-century fiction was appropriate for reading aloud in a family setting. Novels that wouldn't be approved for purchase at Mudie's likely wouldn't be published, and savvy writers adjusted their works accordingly.[16] Mudie's proprietors didn't openly adumbrate the forbidden content, but publishers and novelists were keenly aware of the implied moral guidelines.[17]

Many of the informal restrictions associated with Mudie's were later codified by the Motion Picture Production Code of 1930. Known as the Hays Code, this document governed film content from 1930 through the late 1960s. As Nora Gilbert has argued, the Hays Code's explicit constraints drew on the implicit moral guidelines from the Victorian period, and filmmakers' language about the code echoes the self-imposed restrictions of nineteenth-century writers.[18] All of the films that Walt Disney produced during his lifetime would have been governed by the Hays Code, and those films established the brand for which the company is still known.

The Walt Disney Company struggled after Walt's death in 1966, and its challenges are usually attributed to the death of its founder. But the Hays Code was suspended the same year, and Disney was not alone in its declining profits. Blockbusters like *The Graduate* (1967), *The Godfather* (1972), *The Exorcist* (1973), and *Jaws* (1975) featured violence, sexuality, and sacrilegious content that would have been prohibited a decade earlier. These taboo-breaking films alienated some viewers, shrinking the market and threatening the major studios.[19] The market recovered as studios

began targeting niche audiences, and this new structure left a space for Disney to profitably distribute the same films they had been producing for decades.[20] Disney produced family friendly content not because of externally imposed restrictions but because a more subtle, self-imposed, censorship based on an understanding of the marketplace. In this sense, Disney had more in common with Victorian writers than with some of his Hollywood contemporaries.

The setting that Mudie's imagined for its customers, reading aloud in the family, was a long-established activity. Expanding educational opportunities, however, meant that by the end of the Victorian period most children could read by themselves. It was a major change. Children had few educational opportunities prior to Victoria's reign. Boarding schools like Eton and Harrow had long histories, and the Enlightenment brought about a range of Dissenting Academies, which not only offered a new curriculum, including the sciences, but also educated girls as well as boys. Nonetheless, these institutions served a very small proportion of English children. Things began to change in the early 1830s, as the broadly progressive movement characterized as Reform led to public funding for elementary education.[21] The 1870 Education Act started a push towards universal mandatory education, and after 1880 basic schooling was both state-funded and mandatory. The last generation of Victorian children would nearly all have known how to read.

Increasing literacy rates and changing perceptions of childhood corresponded with, and indeed helped bring about, the first Golden Age of children's literature.[22] By the end of the century, children had a literature of their own. In *Juvenile Literature As It Is* (1888), Edward Salmon wrote, "it is only within the last quarter of a century that [children's] literature has deservedly assumed a high place in the public regard."[23] Salmon describes both the quantity and the quality of newly available children's literature, including English writers like Lewis Carroll and Robert Louis Stevenson as well as Americans like Louisa May Alcott and Europeans like Hans Christian Andersen and Jules Verne. Much of the new children's literature came in juvenile periodicals like the *Boy's Own Paper*, which published Verne's stories, and *Young Folks*, where Stevenson's *Treasure Island* was first serialized. These respectable publications competed with myriad "penny dreadfuls" like *Boys of England*, which flooded the market in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, providing young readers with cheap (and mostly forgettable) fiction. By the end of the century, children's literature was a wide open market, and authors and publishers rushed to fill it.

STOP.

PART II. PAPER ANNOTATIONS

Use your own method

Copyright Law, the Victorian Business Ethos, and New Technologies

Children's literature was by no means the only genre to expand rapidly during the late nineteenth century, and its expansion was not merely the result of education and literacy. Legal protections, corporate structures, and print technologies played an equally important role in the explosion not just of children's literature but of all kinds of media.

The Walt Disney Company has a reputation for being especially litigious in defense of its copyrights. Under Michael Eisner the company's synergistic strategy relied on deploying its trademarked characters across different media, and in protecting those characters the company went so far as to sue a daycare center that had painted Disney characters on the walls and even the Academy Awards for an unlicensed use of Snow White in a performance during the 1989 Oscars.[24] Disney remained synonymous with copyright enforcement even after Eisner's tenure. In 2015, amidst debates about the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Mickey Mouse became synonymous with American media exports, protection of which was a key component of the international trade agreement.[25]

In the twenty-first century, however, with the rise of social media and widespread online piracy, Disney has revised its hardline policies. The synergistic strategy that required dogged defense of copyright in the 1990s now benefits from more relaxed enforcement, as unlicensed parodies, compilations, and clips on sites like YouTube expand films' reach and drive visitors to in-person experiences like theme parks and stage shows.[26] But a foundational legend about Walt Disney helps perpetuate the company's reputation for defending its intellectual property. In the first extended biography of Walt Disney, Diane Disney Miller told the *Saturday Evening Post* how Charles Mintz had wrested away control of Disney's first popular animated character, Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, and also poached several of his top animators.[27] Disney learned that he had lost the rights to Oswald when he visited New York in early 1928. According to legend, a frustrated Disney came up with a new character on the train ride back to California. He called the character Mortimer Mouse. His wife, Lillian, suggested a different name, and by May Disney and his few remaining animators had finished *Plane Crazy*, the first Mickey Mouse cartoon. *Steamboat Willie* debuted in November. Years later, a Disney executive explained that the event shaped Walt's business ethos, and that he always "negotiates like he's afraid someone might take another Oswald the Rabbit away from him."[28] The anecdote, in the legend of Disney's biography, provides not only an

origin story for Disney's most famous character but also an object lesson in copyright protection.

Not everyone takes kindly to Disney's copyright practices. Pointing out the irony that so many Disney films are based on works in the public domain, Jonathan Lethem calls the company "the most pernicious source hypocrites of all time."[29] As early as the 1960s, Frances Clark Sayers was arguing that Disney "shows scant respect for the integrity of the original creations of authors."[30] Richard Schickel worried that Disney's merchandizing "had a natural tendency to blanket the original" and he quotes a joke about Disney being the author of *Alice in Wonderland*, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and the works of William Shakespeare.[31] The joke is clever, but it belies an ineluctable fact about cultural production. New works always incorporate precursors. Shakespeare famously borrowed freely from his predecessors, and to the Victorians he was the quintessential example of an individual genius transforming others' stories into new creative works. In Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838), the hero grants that Shakespeare "brought within the magic circle of his genius, traditions peculiarly adapted for his purpose, and turned familiar things into constellations which should enlighten the world for ages."[32] *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* are no less original for using borrowed stories.

The fact that some texts are more closely associated with Disney than with their original authors is one of the main assumptions underlying this book. Opinions vary about that association, as they do about the company's staunch defense of its own trademarks. But the legal possibility is the result of Victorian developments. *Nicholas Nickleby* was the first novel Dickens published after *Oliver Twist*. As would be the case for all of Dickens's novels, unauthorized productions appeared on stage while the novel was still being serialized. The stories were pirated before they were even finished. Nicholas Nickleby, who voices Dickens's frustrations, contrasts Shakespeare, who adapted the "plots from old tales and legends in general circulation," with a "literary gentleman" who adapts novels for the stage without their authors' permission. Nicholas accuses the playwright of stealing "the uncompleted books of living authors . . . which have doubtless cost him many thoughtful days and sleepless nights,"[33] and then goes on to chastise him for dragging "within the magic circle of your dulness, subjects not at all adapted to the purposes of the stage."[34] Such criticism echoes what Lethem, Sayers, and Schickel say about Disney.

Nicholas Nickleby rebukes the plagiarist on personal, moral, and aesthetic grounds, but the practice he denounces was not illegal. In legal terms, copyright is a business arrangement granting the exclusive right to make and sell a particular work, and the arrangement holds because it is "respected by

colleagues in the industry and guaranteed by the state."[35] Today we take it for granted, but copyright was barely a century old when Dickens was born. Only in 1710 did the Act of Queen Anne establish an author's rights to their work, and well into the Victorian period it was common practice for most writers to sell those rights to a printer or publisher.[36] However much we think about intellectual property as belonging to a single creative genius, in legal terms it is a business arrangement, and most often it is the domain of a company rather than an individual.

In the 1830s, Dickens's novels were protected by copyright but his characters and stories were not. Others could freely adapt them into other forms, writing new stories about them or transferring them to other media.[37] Stage performances were an especially a grey area of nineteenth-century copyright law. Because performance involved a collective effort, a playwright was considered just one among many creators. The 1814 Copyright Act restricted printed copies of a play but didn't limit performances.[38] The 1833 Dramatic Literary Property Act finally extended protection to playwrights, but only for works written expressly for the stage; novelists still had no legal recourse if their stories were adapted into theatrical productions.[39] Dickens advocated for changes to copyright law, and with his Christmas stories he tried to find loopholes by releasing his own stage production simultaneously with the text. But he would not live to see a legal solution to the problem of other writers adapting his novels for the stage, even before he had written the ending.

The case of Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878) and *The Pirates of Penzance* (1880) demonstrates the continued absurdity of performance copyright a decade after Dickens's death. *Pinafore* was wildly popular but plagued by copycats from the start. A dispute among investors led to a theater riot, and the investors took the original costumes and props and launched their own production. So even in London, Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pinafore* competed with another production of the same play at a different theater. Things were worse in America, where eight productions of *Pinafore* ran simultaneously in New York City, and over a hundred nationwide.[40] Gilbert and Sullivan received no compensation for any of these performances, and they were determined to better secure the rights to their next work. But they faced a paradox. They could secure English copyright only after a first performance. Stage productions typically premiered a "copyright performance," which could be simply a reading of the play for a small public audience, often acquaintances of the playwright who would accomplish the legal fiction by paying for tickets.[41] But such a performance secured only the English copyright. The American rights to a play required the first premiere to be in America, effectively meaning that a work couldn't be copyrighted in both

nations at once.[42] To subvert this absurdity, Gilbert and Sullivan arranged a fully staged English premiere of *Pirates of Penzance*, and then set sail for America to premiere the show in New York. The two premieres occurred on the same day, in different nations, ensuring copyright in both.[43]

As this anecdote suggests, the expanding American market raised the need for international copyright agreements. Americans could legally pirate British books for most of the nineteenth century. A 1790 ruling had denied US copyright protection to foreign authors, and the US and Britain did not come to an international copyright agreement until 1891.[44] Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), a cornerstone of American literature, was published in London before it was published in America, so that Twain could secure the English copyright. Charles Dickens fumed about American piracies of his works, giving regular speeches on the subject during his first trip to America in 1842. The speeches had a significant impact. A few decades later, an *Atlantic* writer, remembering the visit, remarked that "Dickens's opinion of the country rose or fell, according to the chances of its passing an international copyright bill."[45] Cheap reprints of British books made American readers intimately familiar with British culture. Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) was the century's best-selling novel in both America and England, called the English canon "a glorious inheritance."[46] And as public education expanded at the end of nineteenth century, the Victorians featured prominently in American textbooks whose publishers were free from legal restrictions.[47]

Dickens's complaints about American piracies and the steps that Gilbert and Sullivan took to even *try* to protect their intellectual property reveal the tenuous state of international copyright law during the Victorian period. Dickens didn't live to see it, but modern international copyright would take shape by the turn of the twentieth century. In the wake of these laws, newly published British literature actually became less available in America (and American books less available in Britain).[48] For this reason, twentieth-century American audiences further associated British books with the Victorians, who were the most recent authors in the public domain and whose works were frequently included in textbooks and anthologies. This association no doubt contributed to the midcentury "vogue" for Victorian literature and culture, to which I refer in the introduction.

STOP.

PART III.

The copyright laws that emerged at the end of the Victorian period ensured that Walt Disney could both adapt classic texts and claim copyright of his own productions. Copyright made Disney's business possible. And the Walt Disney Company is, first and foremost, a business. In an oft-quoted memo, Michael Eisner claimed that a media company's only obligation is to

ELECTRONIC ANNOTATIONS FOR THE REST OF THE TEXT

Computer, laptop, etc.

make money. "We have no obligation to make art," Eisner stated. "We have no obligation to make history. We have no obligation to make a statement." The line, which appears in numerous memes, sounds like a capitalist manifesto and captures one view of Disney as a corporation. Eisner's next sentence, however, is less frequently quoted. "But to make money," Eisner continued, "it is often important to make history, to make art, to make some significant statement."[49] Art and entertainment are a business, a fact that was as true in the Victorian period as it is today.

During the Victorian period, commerce became, in the words of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the "paramount principle of action in the nation at large."[50] Soon after Victoria's coronation, Thomas Carlyle prophesied that the culture's obsession with money would soon give way to a new society, helmed by industrial leaders rather than military or political heroes.[51] Today they might be called "innovators" or "disruptors," but Carlyle, situating the new entrepreneur within the heroic tradition, called them "captains of industry." The phrase became "the most widely echoed Victorian reconfiguration of masculinity."[52] Practical businessmen appear frequently in Victorian fiction. In George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1870), for example, Caleb Garth expresses his disappointment that his son has "taken to books instead of that sacred calling 'business.'"[53]

Samuel Smiles's *Self Help* (1859) further popularized the commercial spirit. Smiles presented brief biographies of exemplary captains of industry such as James Watt, the inventor of the steam engine, and Josiah Wedgwood, the eighteenth-century potter whose china and porcelain company is still in business today. Although he includes artists and writers among his exemplars of industrious men, Smiles is clear that money measures success. He goes so far as to suggest that Shakespeare took more pride in the practical management of the theater company than in his writing.[54] Critics called *Self Help* "a eulogy of selfishness,"[55] but such accusations did little to detract from the book's popularity. *Self Help* was an immediate bestseller.

Self Help not only celebrates practicality but also derides culture and education. Smiles writes, "we find in daily life so many instances of men who are well-informed in intellect, but utterly deformed in character; filled with the learning of the schools, yet possessing little practical wisdom."[56] Such a statement exemplifies the anti-intellectualism that went hand in hand with the Victorian business ethos. Even the sciences, when not directly applied, were deemed impractical. Speaking at the inauguration of a scientific college in 1880, Thomas Henry Huxley identified two groups who opposed introducing the physical sciences into university curricula.[57] He spends most of the speech responding to classical scholars who saw teaching science as inimical to education's primary goal of propagating tradition. Matthew Arnold

wrote a famous rejoinder,[58] and Huxley's essay is most often remembered in the context of their exchange. In the mid-twentieth century, the dispute was resurrected in a debate between C. P. Snow and F. R. Leavis, for which Snow first coined the phrase "two cultures" to refer to the split between humanists and scientists.

But before addressing the classicists, Huxley first acknowledges objections from "the men of business who pride themselves on being the representatives of practicality."[59] Huxley speaks of these men of business in the past tense, assuming that most businessmen have since come to recognize the "demonstrative evidence of the practical value of science."[60] And rightly so. For all his dismissals of formal education, many of Smiles's exemplars built their fortunes on technical innovations. By the end of the century, the Victorian business ethos had come to include science and technology. Walt Disney shared that ethos. The Carousel of Progress, which debuted at the 1964 World's Fair and was later installed at Disneyland and the Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World, showcases new technologies by portraying family life in different decades.[61] It starts in the twentieth century but nevertheless reveals Disney's interest in the history of technology.

Steamboat Willie, arguably the most important cartoon in Disney's early history, was a technological triumph in itself. It so successfully linked the visual gags with the soundtrack that it was immediately recognizable as something new.[62] Its content also references a technology that had transformed the globe in the previous century: the steam engine. The first sounds heard in *Steamboat Willie* are those of smokestacks and steam whistles, both of which had become a part of life during the Victorian period. In 1842, Dickens expressed his astonishment at the "Britannia steam-packet" that transported him to America.[63] A decade later he described the fictional Coketown, in *Hard Times* (1854), as "a town of machinery . . . where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness."[64] Even William Wordsworth, best remembered for poetry celebrating the natural world and the pleasures of country life, welcomed the new technologies. In "Tintern Abbey" (1798), his best-known poem, Wordsworth laments "the din / Of towns and cities" and affirms that "Nature never did betray / the heart that loved her."[65] Such a poet might be expected to denounce the incursions of railways and steamships. But an 1833 sonnet, "Steamboats, Viaducts, and Railways," asserts that "Nature doth embrace / Her lawful offspring in Man's art."[66] At the start of the Victorian period, it was already clear that the world would be changed by new technologies.

Steam technology transformed all aspects of Victorian life. Steam powered not just the ships that brought Dickens across the Atlantic but also the railways

that transformed the English landscape. In 1902, H. G. Wells claimed that the steam-powered train was the defining symbol of the nineteenth century.[67] The first line connecting two major cities, the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, opened in 1830, and by the end of the century railways were ubiquitous both in England and in its colonies. Building on the already-established systems of stagecoach travel, the railways fundamentally altered England's sense of community.[68] Transportation networks facilitated by railways and steamships drastically reduced postal costs and led to unprecedented communications both locally and globally.[69] The tedium of a long journey could be alleviated by railway editions of novels, cheaply produced thanks to steam-powered technologies in printing and paper-making.[70] Railways altered time itself. Railway Time was introduced at stations in 1840, and the construction of Big Ben in 1859 (assisted by steam-powered machinery) created a monument to standardized time.[71] In *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), Virginia Woolf describes the sound of Big Ben as "leaden circles dissolving in air," providing an acoustic symbol of Londoners' shared experience.[72]

Like the burgeoning business ethos, new technologies raised questions about their moral and environmental impact. By the end of the nineteenth century, London was the largest city that had ever existed, and industrial modernity had changed the very atmosphere: the word "smog" was coined in 1905, describing for the first time a human-caused climate feature.[73] Dickens's *Dombey and Son* (1846) chronicles the destruction and displacement of a London neighborhood, Stagg's Gardens, by the introduction of the railroad. "The first shock of a great earthquake had, just at that period, rent the whole [of Staggs's Gardens] to its centre," writes Dickens. "In short, the yet unfinished and unopened Railroad was in progress."[74] The novel returns to the same scene, years later. "There was no such place as Staggs's Gardens. It had vanished from the earth . . . The carcasses of houses, and beginnings of new thoroughfares, had started off upon the line at steam's own speed, and shot away into the country in a monster train."[75] *Steamboat Willie* celebrates a technology that changed the world but nonetheless had always been viewed with ambivalence.

Advances in transportation technologies were matched by new media technologies. By midcentury, photography, first invented in the 1820s, had displaced painting as the favored mode for realist representation. While painting is necessarily connected to an individual artist, photography claimed to represent its subject without bias. Unlike the human eye, susceptible to changing moods and attention spans, the camera "seemed relatively neutral and impervious to such influences, as only a machine could be."[76] This new form initially seemed a marker of modernity. In *Great Expectations* (1861), the retrospective narrator remarks that he'd never seen his parents

because "their days were long before the days of photographs."[77] But cheaply available photographs, and new methods for printing them, quickly made pictorial items like mass-printed photographs a part of daily life.[78] In the 1880s, photography was common enough to be a children's pastime, and both *Boy's Own Paper* and *Girl's Own Paper* encouraged readers to learn photographic skills, form clubs, and enter competitions.[79] Just a quarter-century after *Great Expectations*, the search for Mr. Hyde (in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* [1885]) is rendered difficult both because witnesses can't accurately describe him and because he had never been photographed.[80] These two facts sit casually side by side, as if, by 1885, being photographed was as normal as being seen.

The quotations from Dickens and Stevenson imply that photography accurately represents the world, but not all Victorians shared that view. Victorian art photographers combined and altered images, creating "photographic fictions." Rather than faithfully replicating real-life scenes, Victorian photography was "pressed into the service of fictional creation."[81] Film and sound recording would later be similarly associated with realist representation, but like photography, these technologies were equally interesting for their ability to defy the laws of the physical world. If *The Jazz Singer* (1928) offered an experience analogous to seeing Al Jolson perform live, *Steamboat Willie* presented an unrealistic spectacle, as objects and animals are transformed into musical instruments. Those transformations, and Mickey's impossible bodily contortions, have roots in Victorian photographic fictions.

A plethora of optical toys like the thaumatrope (1825), the phenakistoscope (1832), and the zoetrope (1843) educated the Victorians in different visual effects, not only shaping the contours of modern children's media but also laying the groundwork for moving pictures.[82] In February 1896, Robert W. Paul exhibited the first film in London, at the Finsbury Technical College. A month later he rebranded the apparatus and moved the display to the Alhambra Music Hall in Leicester Square. The relocation marks a shift in how film was perceived.[83] What had first been a technical wonder, akin to optical toys and exhibited at a technical college, now became a public entertainment, displayed in a music hall. Sound recording, also a Victorian innovation, followed a similar trajectory. Thomas Edison traveled to England to record the voices of famous personages; thanks to Edison, we can listen to Victorian poets Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning. But phonograph recordings quickly became entertainment fare. In 1888, Horatio Nelson Powers composed "The Phonograph's Salutation," a poem told from the perspective of the phonograph and purposely composed to showcase the technology.[84] Edison's electric company also helped spread entertainment culture in the

early twentieth century. Electric companies and trolley companies built amusement parks at the ends of their lines, as a way to entice customers to ride the trolleys on weekends. Disneyland was originally envisioned in direct contrast to those parks.

By the turn of the twentieth century, a family culture, international and cross-media copyright laws, a business ethos, and new media technologies were firmly in place. All had emerged in the decades following the 1830s. And as these disparate elements developed, a public entertainment industry was emerging to unite them. Victorian theatricals, elaborate spectacles with musical accompaniment, readied the public for Disney's animated musicals in the twentieth century, while public displays like wax museums, panoramas, and the Great Exhibition laid a conceptual foundation for Disney's theme parks.[85]

Victorian Theater and Disney's Films