AROUND THE WORLD

IN 80 DAYS

By Mark Brown

Produced by The Public Theatre,

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A STUDY-GUIDE

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THE AUTHOR. Adapted for the theater by Mark Brown from a novel by Jules Verne, the stage version of *Around the World in 80 Days* is thus the work of two authors.

Jules Verne published the original novel in 1872, spelling out "eighty" in the title (*quatre-vingts*) rather than using numbers to designate the duration of Phileas Fogg's trip around the globe.

Verne was born in 1828 in the city of Nantes, France. He enjoyed his first major success as a writer with the publication in 1862 of *Five Weeks in a Balloon.* That was followed by a string of more than sixty popular adventure novels including *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* and *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas.* Verne wrote about submarines, flying machines, and travels in outer space before any of these phenomena existed, earning a reputation as a sort of prophet of modern technology.

He died in 1905.

Mark Brown was born in New Jersey and began his career in theater as an actor. He discusses his life and work in the following interview from 2009:

INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT MARK BROWN

MARK BROWN is an award-winning writer and actor who has appeared in theatres across the country, including South Coast Repertory and Utah Shakespearean Festival. Films include *Out of Sight* (with George Clooney), *Holy Man* (with Eddie Murphy and Jeff Goldblum) and *Amy's O* (Winner Best Film: Santa Barbara Film Festival). Notable TV credits include the Emmy Award-winning series "From the Earth to the Moon" (with Tom Hanks), "House," "Ally McBeal," "Providence," "Diagnosis Murder," and countless commercials and made-for-TV films.

His play *Around the World in 80 Days* has literally been produced around the world. Awards for *80 Days* include two Lillie Stoates Awards, including Best Production (Orlando Shakespeare Festival), four Shellie Awards, including Best Production (Center Rep Theatre), five Sarasota Magazine Theater Award nominations (Florida Studio Theatre) and two Los Angeles Ovation Award Nominations (the Colony Theatre). The Sacramento Bee named *80 Days* Best Theatrical Comedy of 2004.

Q: When did you launch your theatrical journey with *Around the World in 80 Days?*

A: It began in 1999 when several of my friends and I sat around discussing one of our favorite subjects---what novels would make good stage adaptations---and *Around the World in 80 Days* came up. Someone said, "It'll be great. We'll follow the balloon from country to country." I piped in with, 'There's no balloon." I hadn't even read the novel but somehow I knew there wasn't a balloon in it. How I knew this little bit of trivia I'll never know, but it's true. There's no balloon. There's no balloon in the book. There's no balloon in my script. It's the curse of the movie, really. The one with David Niven that won five Academy Awards. The film had a balloon. It's what everyone remembers. But there's no balloon in the book and there's no balloon in this show.

Q: So other than having no balloon, what challenges did you encounter in turning a classic novel into what has become a classic play?

A: I did several different versions of the play. Originally I tried to do it using the original words from the book with characters commenting on their own feelings, but the first act ended up being two hours long. We would have needed a dinner break to do the entire play.

Q: Fortunately, you chose to cut the play down. Is that when you came up with the concept of using only five actors to play three dozen roles?

A: I actually set that parameter at the beginning, to have five actors. I had flow charts that showed costume changes, things like that. I really wanted to keep it to five actors. There was one scene where I needed a sixth actor, so I ended up having one actor excuse himself to use the bathroom, and then quickly come back on as another character. It's the only reason he goes to the bathroom.

Q: Did you find that your experience as an actor helped in the writing of this play?

A: I think it helped in writing this play, and my other plays as well. I wanted this one to be fun for the audience, and for the actors. Sometimes I think actors want to kill me for what I have done. But I sort of knew what was possible for quick changes, and breaking down the fourth wall as well as breaking down time and space throughout the entire show.

Q: Since writing *Around the World in 80 Days* and having it premiered at Utah Shakespeare Festival several years ago, it has been performed – fittingly enough – around the world. Does the play's success surprise you?

A: It was big hit in South Africa, and has been done in England, in Canada, around the United States, and just had an off-Broadway run. I thought it was fun, but I never thought it would take off like this. Of course, it has great name recognition, and it has a small cast. You don't need a backdrop or elaborate sets, it is as simple can be. I did not put a lot of stage directions in the script because I really wanted directors to bring their creativity to it. I wanted set designers and costume designers to figure out how to create this world on stage. I did not want to nail it down to anything.

THE SETTING. The most widely-known version of *Around the World in 80 Days* is doubtless the Hollywood film adaption of 1956, starring David Niven as Fogg, Shirley MacLaine as Princess Aouda, and the Mexican comedian, Cantinflas, as Passepartout. The millions of viewers who have seen that movie have come away with vivid impressions of Fogg's hot-air balloon floating from one glamorous location to another during the course of the canonical 80 days. That balloon has become an icon inseparable from the story of Fogg and his world-circling adventure. However, as Mark Brown points out above, no such balloon sails through the novel or the play. Instead, Verne, and Mark Brown, make Fogg firmly earth-bound (or sea-bound) throughout the entirety of his journey. Trains, ships, and elephants carry him from here to there, and the difficulties presented by these modes of transportation create the obstacles that define the plot. And they also present a challenge for the play's director and scene designer.

In Jules Verne's novel, a few pages filled with words are enough to transport the reader from London to Suez, or from Japan to California. The change of setting requires no laboriously-constructed three-dimensional scenery, no literal movement of characters through space, no cloth to make their costumes or electric power to light them in jungle shadows or under the

bright sun of the high seas. A wave of the verbal wand does the trick. But unlike narrative prose, theater doesn't operate through words alone. So playwrights and designers adapting Verne's work to the theater face a fundamental problem: How can a stage measuring a few hundred square feet accommodate a narrative spanning tens of thousands of miles? And since traveling through space also requires movement through time, they face a corollary problem: How do you compress eighty days of travel into a two-hour performance?

Solving these problems would have been technically complex and highly expensive for the doggedly realistic theaters of the nineteenth century when the novel was written. Playgoers and producers liked their scenery to be forthrightly literal: if the script called for an elephant—as both Verne's novel and Mark Brown's adaptation do—then, by Jove, there would need to be something on stage that looked as much like an elephant as possible, preferably the real thing. In 1871, for example, the world premiere of Verdi's grand opera, *Aida*, featured a dozen elephants marching along with the human cast of singers and dancers. (The spirit of 1871 was still being honored 134 years later by a production of the same opera in Los Angeles in 2005 which featured ersatz elephants, life-size figures molded in plastic.)

In fact, a dramatized version of the novel found its way to the stage in 1874, at which time the reviewer, symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé, raved about the scenery. William Butcher quotes Mallarmé in an appendix to his edition of the novel: "this [is a] fairy delight . . . One really must see the Snake Grotto, the explosion and sinking of the steamer, and the ambush of the train by the . . . Indians." Clearly, like *Aida* three years earlier, the production was a scenic extravaganza, though Mallarmé doesn't mention Kiouni, the elephant on which Philias Fogg rides through the forest. But the costs of such productions are elephantine, and the performance space they require is correspondingly vast.

Around the World in 80 Days, as noted above, has its own pachyderm. But obviously the small and medium sized theaters operating on tight budgets in Utah, Florida, New York, Ohio, and the many other venues where *Around the World in 80 Days* has played, are too poor and too small to put even a single life-sized elephant on stage, plastic or not. And the same is true of the Public Theatre here in Maine.

So what's a small theater on a tight budget to do about Fogg's elephant? Or, for that matter, what to do about the jungle Fogg rides through? Or the steamships, the railroad cars, the London club rooms, the dockside locations in Suez and Hong Kong, the opium dens, the storms at sea, the Hindu temples, and all the other scenes and events in the expansive universe that Jules Verne stuffs into the pages of his novel?

Putting a vast world on a small stage is not a new problem for the theater. Shakespeare tackles it head-on in his epic history play, *Henry V,* which tells the story of the English monarch's wars against the French. Henry's career as a soldier-king carried him across England and France, encompassing the siege of Harfleur, the battle of Agincourt, and the wooing of a princess in a medieval castle. How could the Lord Chamberlain's men—Shakespeare's acting company—squeeze all of that onto the stage of the Globe Theater? At the outset of this expansive adventure story, Shakespeare sends an actor—The Prologue— out onto the stage to address exactly that question:

> Can this cockpit hold
> The vastly fields of France? Or may we cram
> Within this wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?
> . . . . . .
> [L]et us . . . .
> On your imaginary forces work.
> Suppose within the girdle of these walls
> Are now confined two mighty monarchies . . . .
> Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts:
> Into a thousand parts divide one man
> And make imaginary puissance.
>
> (Seen from above, the Globe Theater was roughly circular in shape, hence the reference to "this wooden O.")

The Prologue's message boils down to a simple exhortation to the audience: use your imaginations! Don't expect the stage to show an exact facsimile of the world. Instead, work with the players to "piece out" what's missing; enjoy the power of the theater to suggest, to imply, to evoke—and don't go looking for "vastly fields"—or life-sized elephants. The theater is a place where absent reality is captured with a few imaginative gestures, not reproduced with photographic fidelity.

Or at least, that's the case with the oldest performance tradition in world-theater, the style often referred to as "presentationalism" or "theatricality." This tradition stretches from the beginnings of dramatic performance to the present, even though it has frequently been shouldered aside by the more recent conventions of pictorial realism. The presentational theater says to the audience: "Look, this is make-believe. The actors know it, and so do you. And you love this shared awareness. The actor delights you by *suggesting* the presence of what

is absent, not by putting it literally on stage. And by accepting that suggestion, you complete the circuit. It's open fakery with all the tricks of the trade on shameless display, a game that everybody is happy to be playing"

This is the approach Mark Brown takes in adapting Verne's novel, as he explains in the interview quoted above:

> Most productions have been fairly simple. This show really relies on the imagination of the artistic team and of the audience. If you were to see a Radio City production of this play, you'd see a real elephant but it would be really boring because you're not using your imagination. If the actors tell the story like eight-year-olds and bounce around, it's live as opposed to literal. It's like seeing my daughter pretending that "now I am in the castle," or "now I am underwater, save me daddy." It's fun to do that. We have all been to that place. With this play, it's "I'm on an elephant, now I am on a train." It's a really fun play, a fun night out at the theater.

So how does the dramatist deal with the elephant problem. The answer is simple: he doesn't. Or more precisely, he doesn't tell the director, designer, or actors what they're supposed to do to conjure up an elephant for the journey. Instead, here's what the script says:

> PHILEAS FOGG. We'd like to have a look at your elephant.
> ELEPHANT OWNER. Very good. Very good. Please this way. I am training him for war. Good money. (*The ELEPHANT OWNER strikes the elephant.*) Kiouni! Yah. Yah.

Over to you, director, designer, and actors: One elephant urgently required. But how are they supposed to meet that requirement? Will Kiouni be a cardboard cutout? Or an abstract assemblage of chairs and saw-horses? Maybe a big wooden bench on wheels with something like an elephant's head at one end? If director, designer, and actors are successful in evoking the beast, the audience will delight in their inventiveness, actually experiencing something like an elephant. It's even possible that spectators would take more pleasure in encountering this virtual creature than they would from seeing a real elephant on stage. After all, there's no magic involved in a literal elephant being an elephant (except for the magic of elephants existing at all). But it is a kind of miracle when something totally un-pachydermic, like a stack of chairs or a bench on wheels, becomes elephant-like right before your eyes because of the skills of theater artists. It's a kind of transubstantiation.

Scene after scene of the play reprises this process of conjuring up virtual realities out of the sparest of material resources: a few sticks of furniture, a splash of light, a hat or a scarf, a hand prop or two and, *voila*: the railroad car and its passengers, the storm at sea and the ship's captain, the London club and its members, the opium den and its denizens.

Paradoxically, the novel's fascination with the wonders of modern science and technology—those fruits of a relentless devotion to the facts of matter—has produced a play in which matters of fact are brushed aside by the power of imagination.

Amid this world of swirling transformations, there are two stable scenic elements stipulated by the playwright: "*an old-fashioned map of the world and an old-fashioned train schedule.*" The map gives geographically-challenged audience members a point of reference, enabling them to follow Phileas Fogg's travels. The train schedule becomes a kind of score-board, recording the stages of Fogg's journey, showing where he has been, where he is at present, and implicitly, how much further he must go: "*As each "leg" of the journey is announced, the city and the travel times flip on the board.*" As a result, this piece of scenery creates a visible sense of movement through time and space, the essence of the plot.

THE PLOT. As the play opens, an actor/narrator informs us that we are in Phileas Fogg's residence on Savile Row in London in the year 1872. Although best known today as the location of many elegant men's tailoring shops, Savile Row was originally inhabited by aristocrats and wealthy members of the upper middle class. So the fact that Fogg lives in this part of town identifies him immediately as a man of considerable means and social standing.

As we first encounter Fogg, he has just fired his valet, James Foster, for violating one of the many exacting requirements of his daily routine. As Foster notes, "I made the mistake of bringing him his shaving water at a temperature of 84 degrees Fahrenheit instead of 86 degrees Fahrenheit." Immediately we understand that Fogg is both demanding and rigid, an impression that grows even stronger as we hear Foster explain further details of Fogg's daily routine to his replacement, a Frenchman named Passepartout.

The master's day, Foster tells the new valet, unfolds according to an exact and unvarying timetable: Fogg rises at eight; takes toast at eight twenty-three, shaves at nine thirty-seven, arrives at his club for lunch at eleven-thirty . . . and so on, through a long roster of events, each scheduled precisely to the minute.

We learn that Passepartout has been an acrobat, a teacher of gymnastics, and fireman who has come to London in search of a quiet life. As he reviews the daily schedule, the scene moves to

the Reform Club, where Fogg takes lunch and dinner every day and plays whist obsessively. Before Fogg's arrival, conversation at the club dwells briefly on the various mysteries surrounding his identity: he's never to be seen in any of the London locations frequented by gentlemen, he has no apparent means of support despite his evident wealth, neither has he any relatives or friends. And he seems extraordinarily well traveled. In short, Fogg is a man of mystery, not the sort usually found within the conventional precincts of the Reform Club.

When Fogg arrives, the conversation morphs into a discussion of a recent spectacular bank robbery, perpetrated by a man described in a newspaper as "a well-dressed gentleman with polished manners." Another mystery man. Are the parallels between the robber and Fogg merely coincidental? Or have we perhaps gained an insight into the source of his substantial wealth? This juxtaposition of the two conversations—about Fogg's unknown background, and about the gentlemanly bank robber—introduces a note of suspicion about Fogg that will hang in the air until the play's end, proving to be very important as the plot unfolds.

As the gentlemen of the club play whist, they move on to consider other recent events in the news, specifically the completion of the Indian Peninsula Railway connecting Bombay on the west coast of India to Calcutta on the east coast. This rail line constitutes the final link in a transportation chain of steamships and railroads that make it possible for a traveler starting out in London to circle the globe in 80 days, a radically shorter journey than anything previously possible.

Of course, as the members point out, the 80-day figure is purely hypothetical, as it takes no account of delays, or missed connections between boats and trains caused by bad weather, mechanical failure, or human error. This line of discussion prompts Fogg to look up from his cards to make a wager: he bets 20,000 pounds that he can make that 80 day journey regardless of unpredictable obstacles:

> PHILEAS FOGG. The unforeseen does not exist. . . .
> JOHN SULLIVAN. But, in order to accomplish it, you must jump mathematically from the trains to the steamers, and from the steamers to the trains again.
> PHILEAS FOGG. I will jump . . . mathematically.
> ANDREW STUART. You're joking!
> PHILEAS FOGG. A true Englishman never jokes when he is talking about so serious a thing as a wager.

And so Fogg declares he will begin his journey that very evening, October 2, catching a train for Dover at 8:45, and assuring his fellow club mates that he will return to greet them exactly 80 days later, on December 21, at 8:55 in the evening.

Fogg returns to his Savile Row dwelling, instructs Passepartout to pack for the trip—only shirts and socks, other clothing to be purchased en-route—and together they set off for Charing Cross Station on the first leg of their global adventure.

Meanwhile, Fogg's grand wager makes the news, causing public speculation that, "GENTLEMAN BANK ROBBER MAY BE PHILEAS FOGG." This catches the eye of Detective Fix who is in charge of apprehending the robber. Fix decides that Fogg is his man, and spends the rest of the play in hot pursuit, repeatedly trying to arrest him. However, his authority is valid only on territory that is within the British Empire, and therefore subject to English law— places like Suez, Bombay, Calcutta, and Hong Kong, all of which are on Fogg's itinerary.

Fix makes his first contact in Suez, where Fogg stops to have his passport stamped to prove that he has indeed been traveling around the world. Meeting the loquacious Passepartout in the British Consul's office, Fix—keeping his true identity hidden— pumps him for information about his master, which the Frenchman eagerly supplies, unwittingly confirming all of Fix's suspicions about Fogg.

Unfortunately for Fix, the arrest warrant from England fails to arrive before Fogg's departure on the next leg of his journey, so the detective must take ship and accompany his quarry to Bombay. There, Fix's intention of arresting Fogg is thwarted once again by the warrant's failure to arrive.

Meanwhile Fogg has been passing through the world without showing the least curiosity about his surroundings, neither glancing out the window to take in the scenery, nor leaving his quarters to explore the cities of the East. His only interest is in making his travel connections on time in order to remain safely on his 80-day schedule.

Passepartout, by contrast, is as avid a tourist as he is a talker. His curiosity leads him to visit the pagoda at Malabar Hill, a sacred site in which the wearing of shoes is forbidden. Unfortunately Passepartout does not know about this prohibition, and so he blunders, fully shod, into the holy precincts, where a trio of enraged priests attack him, confiscating his shoes, his hat, and the supplementary clothing he has just purchased. Not only has Passepartout violated a religious prohibition, but he has also broken a British colonial edict that severely punishes any infraction of Indian religious law. Learning of this, Fix—still hiding his identity

from Passepartout and Fogg— decides he now has reason for arresting both master and man, who will therefore be detained in British territory until the warrant arrives. But for now, Fix must once again follow Fogg as he continues his journey on the Great Peninsula Railway.

On the train, Fogg meets a fellow Englishman, Sir Francis Cromarty, who will join him and Passepartout for the next few stages of their trip. Suddenly the train stops, and the conductor orders all passengers to disembark, informing them that the railroad is not in fact completely finished, there being a fifty-mile gap between them and the next section of the line at Allahabad. Unfazed, Fogg reaches into his sack of money, buys an elephant—Kiouni—at great expense, and hires a guide to take them through the jungle to the next section of rail.

On their way, they encounter a funeral procession of Brahmins who are preparing to burn the body of their deceased rajah along with his still-living wife—the princess Aouda—in an act of ritual sacrifice known as *suttee*. On learning this, the hitherto impassive Fogg suddenly proposes saving the woman, prompting Cromarty to exclaim, "Why, you are a man of heart!" To which Fogg replies, "When I have the time."

Despite the threat of torture and death if their mission fails, all the members of the group—except Passepartout, who seemingly has run off in horror— agree to the rescue attempt. As the moment of the ritual burning approaches the situation seems hopeless; then suddenly the dead rajah miraculously rises from his pyre and bolts from his own funeral carrying his princess in his arms. Everyone is speechless at this extraordinary event until the "dead" rajah turns to be Passepartout in disguise.

The rescued princess joins the others on the back of the elephant, and the party continues on to Allahabad, where they board the train and proceed to Calcutta. During the trip, Fogg falls into friendly conversation with the rescued princess, and learns that she has a cousin in Hong Kong who might shelter her now that she is a fugitive in her own country. Fogg immediately offers Aouda his protection, and invites her to accompany him to Hong Kong.

In Calcutta, Passepartout's blunder in the Malabar temple catches up with them thanks to Fix who has paid the outraged priests to bring charges of sacrilege against the Frenchman for entering the sacred precincts with his shoes on, a violation for which his master can also be held liable. The judge in the case imposes stiff fines on both and sentences them to time in prison. So it seems that Fix will have succeeded in detaining Fogg in one place long enough for the ever-tardy arrest warrant to catch up with him.

But once more, faced with a crisis, Fogg reaches into his deep bag of bank notes and produces bail —which frees him and Passepartout to catch the next boat for Hong Kong. Yet again, a thwarted Fix has no recourse but to keep chasing his prey.

Aboard ship, Fogg evinces a growing interest in Princess Aouda, while Passepartout begins to suspect that Fix, unfailingly on their trail, may be concealing his real intentions. Perhaps, the Frenchman thinks, Fix is an agent of the Reform Club sent to prevent Fogg from winning his bet. In the midst of these speculations, one of the ship's engines breaks down, thus—seemingly—assuring that Fogg will miss his next maritime connection between Hong Kong and Yokohama. But all is not lost. The Yokohama-bound ship has had its own mechanical problems, suffering its own delay, a stroke of good luck that should enable Fogg to keep to his 80-day timetable.

The now-desperate Fix realizes that Hong Kong is the last bit of British soil on which his long-anticipated arrest warrant will be valid. The next stop is Japan, and then across the Pacific to the United States. Surely, Fix reasons, the supposed bank robber will take flight somewhere along the way. Facing failure, Fix decides to attack Fogg once again through his valet. Passepartout, running errands for his master, learns that the boat they must catch will be leaving eight hours ahead of schedule. But Fix intercepts him before he can deliver this information to Fogg. He steers the Frenchman to an opium den, where, under the spell of drink and drugs, Passepartout loses all sense of time and responsibility, and fails to inform Fogg of the change in departure time.

Meanwhile, Fogg has become increasingly involved in Princess Aouda's affairs. Attempting to locate her Hong Kong cousin, Fogg and the Princess learn that the man has moved to Holland to grow tulips. Aouda is dashed, but Fogg encourages her to forge on to Europe, and invites her to join him on the rest of his journey.

Arriving at the dockside to board their ship, they find Passepartout missing, and they meet Fix, who sadistically informs them that the boat has made an early departure, stranding them in Hong Kong—on British soil—for a week. But Fogg refuses to accept this setback. He canvasses the harbor, and finds a ship that will transport him to Yokohama—for a hefty fee. Again, Fogg dips into his money bag and produces the necessary cash. He and the Princess will sail even without his missing servant. Once more frustrated in his attempts to pin Fogg down on British territory, but determined to keep his quarry in his sights, Fix invites himself along on the cruise to Japan.

As they sail toward Yokohama, Fogg becomes ever more fascinated by the princess, although taking care to conceal his interest from her behind a façade of scientific detachment. But to

himself he makes a startlingly passionate declaration: “Beneath the silken folds of her tunic she seems to have been modeled in pure gold by the hand of God himself.”

Fogg’s reveries, however are interrupted by a typhoon, which rages for days, abating only when they sight land in Japan. They arrive in time to board the steamer that will take them across the Pacific, and at the dock they meet Passepartout, who had caught the boat in Hong Kong that Fogg missed. Off they all go, headed for San Francisco, with Fix, as usual, tagging along. But now Fix finally has the arrest warrant. He will stay with Fogg until they are back on English soil and he can take his prisoner.

The trip across the Pacific is problem-free, they arrive in California, board a train to New York, and set out across the continent. That journey, however, is far from placid.

First, the train encounters a defective bridge, too weak to hold its weight. Rather than wait for repairs, the impatient passengers convince the conductor and engineer to have the train ramp up to maximum speed and jump the bridge. As the train gains momentum, one of its American passengers decides that a passing remark by Passepartout has offended the USA, and begins insulting him, at which point Fogg intervenes, and challenges the American to a duel. But before any shots can be exchanged, they are all distracted by the drama of the train actually jumping across the bridge. That climax having passed, they are about to resume their face-off when the train is attacked by Indians. A gunfight ensues, followed by the discovery that the Apaches have boarded the locomotive, effectively commandeering the train, which must be stopped before passing Fort Kearney and the cavalry—their only hope of rescue. After that, it’s all Indian country.

A suddenly valiant Passepartout volunteers to go on a dangerous mission:

> I will make use of my old acrobatic experience and with amazing agility work my way under the cars. Holding on to the chains, I will make my way to the front of the train. There, suspended by one hand, I will . . . detach the runaway locomotive from the rest of the train.

He dashes off, and apparently makes good on his heroic promise. The train slows down, the cavalry arrive, and the day is saved. The only problem is that Passepartout has disappeared, seemingly carried off by the Apaches. Fogg faces a moment of crisis: will he stay on the departing train, pushing on in pursuit of his 80-day goal, or will he stay behind, losing precious time while he searches for his servant? After a motionless moment of reflection, he decides to

rescue Passepartout. He rides off with a detachment of soldiers, leaving Aouda and Fix behind to await his return. The train leaves without them for Chicago.

After a long, agonizing wait, Fix and Aouda hear the sound of hoof beats, followed by the arrival of Fogg, and then Passepartout, who, it turns out, was carried off by the Indians because they were awestruck by his spectacular feat of derring-do in decoupling the engine from the train. In fact they were so impressed that they wanted to make him a chief. In the resulting onrush of good-feelings, Fogg was able to coax the Apaches into signing a peace treaty. So all has ended well, except for the gaping hole opened in Fogg's schedule by his missing the train. What to do?

As it turns out, they are stranded in the vicinity of a man named Mudge, who owns a literal prairie schooner: a sled rigged up with sails that cruise across the snowy plains like a ship on the ocean. The travelers board his exotic craft, which carries them to Omaha in time to catch up with their train.

The rest of the trip across the continent goes off uneventfully, but when they get to New York they discover that, once again, their trans-Atlantic steamer has left without them. And once again they must charter a boat of their own—*The Henrietta,* commanded by Captain Speedy—with Fogg, once again, reaching into his sack of bank notes to finance such emergency measures, and with Fix, once again, inviting himself along for the ride.

However all is not well between Captain Speedy and Fogg. The latter wants to go to Liverpool, while the former insists on sailing to Bordeaux. Fogg resolves the conflict by raising a mutiny, locking Speedy up in his cabin, and taking command of the vessel himself. But there is another problem: *The Henrietta* is only carrying enough coal to reach Bordeaux. Undeterred, Fogg decides to fuel the extra distance by burning the ship itself in the engine's boilers. Resorting again to his money bag, he buys the boat from its captain, and proceeds to dismantle everything flammable down to the waterline in order to get to Liverpool. These desperate measures succeed, and Fogg finally arrives back in England on December 21st, only nine hours before the time appointed for his appearance at the Reform Club to collect his winning wager.

But Fix intervenes one final time, arresting Fogg at long last when they set foot in England. Fogg has nine hours to get to London; the train trip from Liverpool takes six hours. But he is in police custody, so his chances look very slim. Then his luck takes yet another turn: we discover that the real bank robber has been apprehended three days earlier—so Fogg is free. But he has missed his train. One last time, he hires a special conveyance—a private locomotive— pays

dearly for it, and scrambles to make up for lost time. Fortune, however, deserts him. He arrives in London at nine p.m.—five minutes after the 8:55 deadline he had set 80 days earlier.

A dejected Fogg confers with Aouda, offering her what little money he has left after losing his wager. Aouda declares that he is a "man without compare" and volunteers to marry him. Overwhelmed, Fogg announces his love for Aouda, they embrace, and they plan their wedding for the next day. It is now after 8pm on Sunday, December 22nd. Or is it?

Passepartout goes to the house of Reverend Wilson to make arrangements for the wedding, and in the course of talking to the clergyman's servant learns that both he and Fogg have made a huge error in calculating their schedule: because they have crossed the international date-line, they have actually gained a day. So they arrived in London on December 20th, not the 21st. Consequently, Fogg still has fifteen minutes to get to the Reform Club and collect on his bet.

The scene shifts to the club, where the members, convinced that Fogg will miss the deadline, are counting down the seconds to 8:55. At the last possible moment, Fogg arrives in triumph to claim his prize.

Back on Savile Row, Fogg explains to his companions that he has essentially broken even on his bet: although he has gained 20, 000 pounds, he has drawn 19,000 pounds from that deep money bag to pay for the journey. So his profit is a mere thousand pounds, half of which he gives to Fix, "just to show there are no hard feelings," and the other half to Passepartout, as a reward for faithful service. "So," observes Fix, somewhat unkindly, "you've gained nothing for all of your troubles."

Fogg will have none of that pessimism: "Nothing, you say? Nothing but a charming woman who has made me the happiest of men. Truly I can think of no better reason to go around the world." And as he and Aouda kiss, the play comes to an end.

CHARACTER AND THEME. Jules Verne's novel has been a frequent subject of analysis by French artists and intellectuals. William Butcher cites a number of these comments in his 1995 edition of *Around the World in Eighty Days.*

Michel Tournier, winner of the *Prix Goncourt*, one of France's most prestigious literary awards, includes a discussion of the contrasting characters of Phileas Fogg and Passepartout in his novel, *Les Météores.*

> Phileas Fogg never traveled at all. . . . He was the archetype of the sedentary man, the stay-at-home. . . . He possesses knowledge of the whole of the Earth, but of a peculiar nature: from reading every continent's year-books, timetables, and almanacs, which he knows off by heart. . . . Phileas Fogg isn't a human being at all, he's a walking clock. His religion is precision. At the opposite extreme, his servant, Passepartout is an inveterate wanderer who has tried every occupation, including that of acrobat. His impersonations and exclamations stand in permanent contrast to Phileas Fogg's frozen phlegm. Fogg's bet is endangered by two sorts of delay: Passepartout's blunders and the changeability of the weather. But they are in fact one and the same: Passepartout equals meteorological man, thus constituting a foil to his master, who is chronological man.

Tournier captures a crucial distinction between these two characters, while also pinpointing an essential theme of the novel and the play: the conflict between human will, supported by reason and technology, and the waywardness and unpredictability of nature and blind chance. Fogg represents the former, Passepartout the latter.

The Marxist critic, Pierre Macherey, explores similar themes in *Pour une théorie de la production littéraire.* He calls the novel,

> . . . nothing but a long meditation, a reverie on the straight line—which represents the predication of nature on industry and industry on nature, and which is *recounted* as a tale of exploration. Title: the adventures of the straight line. . . . The train . . . cleaves through nature, jumps obstacles . . . and constitutes both the actual journey . . . and the perfect embodiment of human industry.

Unlike Tournier, Macherey doesn't account for the various episodes in the narrative when Passepartout's zigs and zags deflect Fogg from the straight line; moreover, neither analysis explains the moments in both the novel and the play when the tick-tock of Fogg, "the walking clock," is replaced by the human heartbeat of a man in love.

Ray Bradbury, the celebrated American science-fiction writer, takes a view of these characters—and the ideas they embody—that differs sharply from the French commentators. In his Introduction to the 1962 edition of the novel he writes,

> How come that today . . . we still find joy in reading our way through those eighty incredible days? . . . Why hold to Fogg and Passepartout?
>
> Because of their quality as human beings, and for no other reason.

> Phileas Fogg is your eccentric genius, your quiet man of taste, good-will, imagination, but above all man-of-action. Seeing that the world, in one way or another, needs tidying up, he proceeds to do just that to it, with astonishing efficiency and with astonishing calm. He is the quiet hero who makes loud things happen. . . .
>
> Passepartout? Passepartout is the rest of us, those who would like to be demon thinkers, quiet creators and actors like Fogg, but must be satisfied playing the imp in his shadow. . . . Fogg and Passepartout, general and private, an army of two, go out and conquer a world.

Bradbury makes Fogg sound like an English Gary Cooper, the strong, silent type who handles whatever comes his way, whether at high noon or at Vera Cruz. And he also gives pretty short shrift to Passepartout who rescues a princess and saves a runaway train with considerable flair.

Maybe the best approach to understanding these characters and themes is to view them through the lens of 19th-century national stereotypes. Why did Jules Verne make his protagonist an English gentleman? Because an English gentleman was understood to be imperturbable in the face of calamity. So he has endowed Fogg with what may be the stiffest upper-lip in literature. But because he is also gallant, an English gentleman's unflappability doesn't preclude a heart beating with love. Even Sherlock Holmes was smitten by a member of the fair sex.

And why is Passepartout French? Because there is no Gallic equivalent of the stiff upper lip. Instead, a Frenchman throbs with *joie de vivre.* He is moved by passion, he acts with verve, and he wears his heart on his sleeve. And he abducts a princess from a pyre, visits an opium den, and becomes an Indian chief.

As to Detective Fix: consider his name. *Fixe* in French means pretty much what "fixed" or even "fixated" mean in English. According to *Langenscheidt's Pocket Dictionary* the definition of the French word is, "steady, regular, set, permanent." That certainly describes a character who is so fanatically determined to arrest Fogg for bank robbery that he follows him around the world. Fix in many ways is Fogg's double or shadow, relentlessly pursuing a goal in spite of all obstacles. Fix, however, is chasing the wrong man, although his obsession nearly costs Fogg his wager.

But ultimately Fogg wins the bet, thanks—ironically— to a chronological miscalculation. Overlooking the fact that he has gained a day by crossing the International Date Line, Fogg, the

punctilious schedule-checker and clock-watcher, makes a near-fatal mistake which, combined with his love for Aouda, brings him down to our imperfect level of human confusion and vulnerability.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why does the completion of the rail line across India prompt Fogg to make his wager?
2. Fogg spends a lot of time and money on his trip, yet he hardly ever looks at the world he is passing through. What does this tell you about him?
3. What is the significance of the name given to the English detective: "Fix?"
4. Why does Fogg make his wager? What does he want? Money? Fame? Or something else?
5. What is the significance of Passepartout's name?