

AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY SPACES

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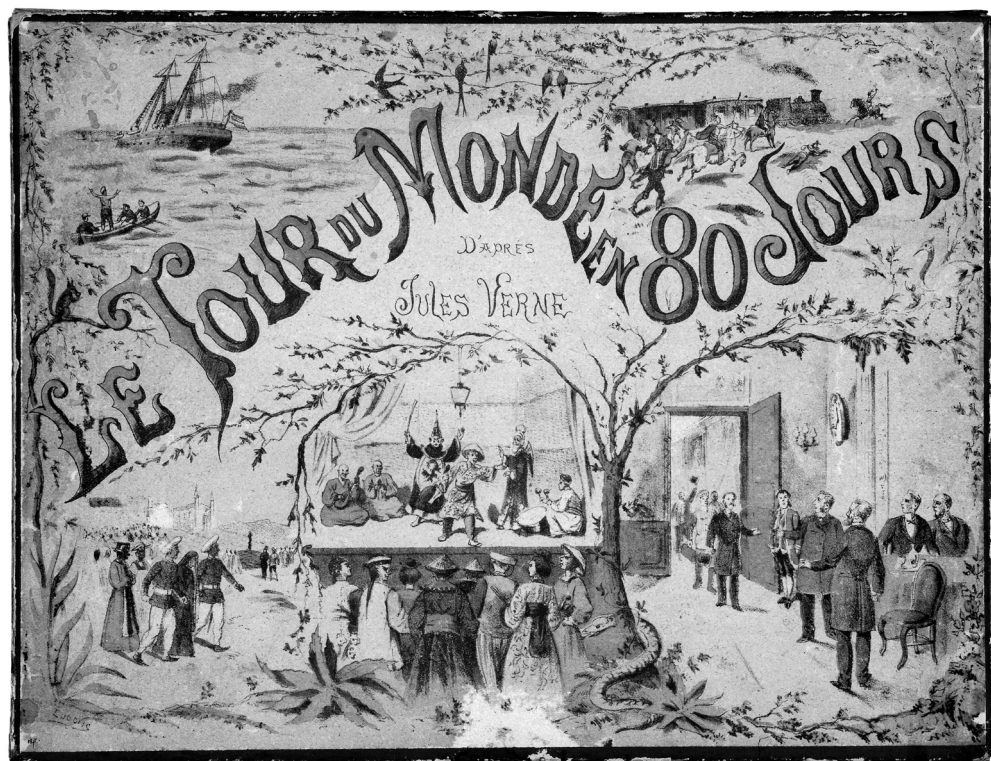
AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY SPACES

Around the World in Eighty Days, Jules Verne's 1873 novel, may well have been the first successful literary franchise of its time. As both a novel and a play,¹ the story of the fantastic bet that sent Phileas Fogg racing around the world launched a variety of products. Bernard Sinoquet, curator of the Jules Verne archives in Amiens, lists lotto sets, card games, stereoviews, decorated china, and more, produced in France, Germany, and Italy.² The most popular among the games, and indeed the best adapted to the novel, were the racing board games like the early twentieth-century one now in the Graphic Arts Collection of the Princeton University Library, with the board divided into eighty spaces and players' progress decided by the throw of one or two dice (fig. 1). These games were not a franchise in the modern sense of the term—neither publisher nor author benefited directly from the sales—but the success of the board games and their variety no doubt contributed to the numerous re-editions of Verne's undisputed bestseller.

We all know, under one form or another, the story of Phileas Fogg, the eccentric Englishman who bets half his fortune that he will be able to travel around the world in eighty days, taking advantage of recent progress in modes of transportation. Verne (1828–1905) would later state that the original idea for the novel came from a newspaper article

1. There is evidence that Jules Verne was working on the play before he started to write the novel. However the novel appeared first: it was serialized in *Le Temps* from November 6 to December 22, 1872. The first book version was published on January 20, 1873. The play was first performed on November 7, 1874, at the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin, with 414 performances between that date and January 24, 1875.

2. See Piero Gondolo della Riva, "Les Jeux et objets inspirés du *Tour du monde en quatre-vingt jours*," in *Revue des Lettres Modernes: Jules Verne 1* (Paris: Minard, 1976), 177–81.

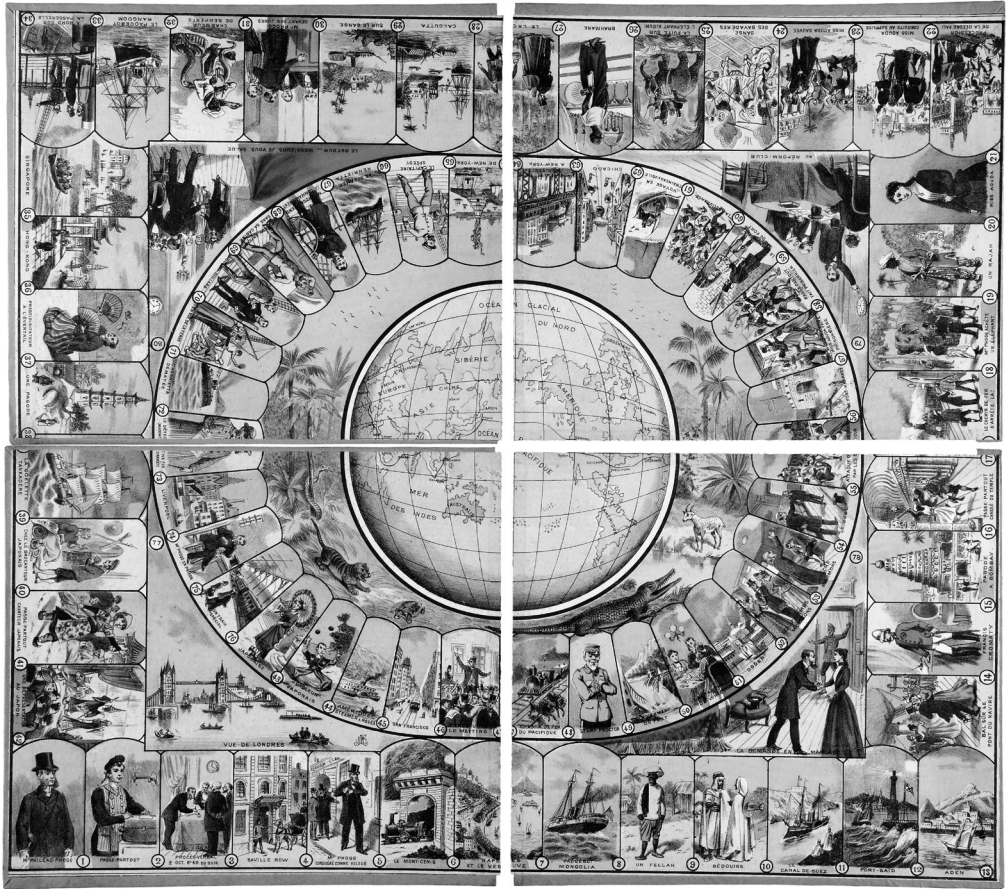


1. *Le Tour du monde en 80 jours* ([Paris, ca. 1915]). Cover (above) and folding chromolithographic playing board (opposite). Graphic Arts Collection, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

estimating that it was indeed possible to circumnavigate the earth in that length of time. The goal of the novel can be said to have been double: first to show more concretely how it could be done, thanks to the new railroads that crossed India and the North American continent and the recently opened Suez Canal (1869);³ second, and this is where Verne's talent shines, to demonstrate the multiple obstacles and adventures likely to derail such a race against time.

As presented in the novel's fictional *Morning Chronicle*, the itinerary is straightforward enough:

3. The first transcontinental American railroad was built between 1863 and 1869. It was officially opened on May 10, 1869. The Suez Canal, also named the Highway to India, opened on November 1, 1869. It was designed in great part by French engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps.



London to Suez (railways and ships)	7 days
Suez to Bombay by steamer	13
Bombay to Calcutta by rail	3
Calcutta to Hong Kong by steamer	13
Hong Kong to Yokohama by steamer	6
Yokohama to San Francisco by steamer	22
San Francisco to New York by rail	7
New York to London by steamer and rail	9
<i>Total:</i>	80 days

But from the beginning, as one of Fogg's whist partners reasonably points out, there is an important caveat to the schedule proposed by

the newspaper. The eighty days represent the minimum amount of time needed to go around the world: "In order not to exceed this time, one must jump mathematically from railroads to ships and from ships to railroads!" Phileas Fogg, a man of methods and precision, coldly answers: "I will jump mathematically."⁴

The play between mathematics and chance, scheduled transports and travel delays, mechanical performance and human disruption will transform Fogg's bet into the most extravagant adventure. Pursued by a detective who believes Fogg is the gentleman who robbed the Bank of England, delayed by thugs, storms, politics, and buffalo, distracted by the tragic fate awaiting Aouda, a young Indian widow, Fogg miraculously survives, even though he has jeopardized the success of his bet to save Aouda. But his sacrifice is amply rewarded: not only does he find love but, because he traveled from east to west, he has gained a day and can thus present himself, just three seconds before the deadline, at the Pall Mall Reform Club.

GAME PLAY

The first version of the *Tour du monde* game, actually an illustration rather than a game, was published, probably in 1873, in an advertisement for Pierre-Jules Hetzel's catalogue of books (fig. 2). The eighty spaces were decorated with engravings from the novel, and a map in the center showed Phileas Fogg's itinerary, with a simple set of game rules below. To use it, players would have to cut out the game and attach it to a piece of cardboard.

What was perhaps first thought of as an advertisement quickly became a true game, and a color version seems to have been published as early as 1875. It measured 42 × 55 cm and was simply entitled *Jeu du Tour du monde*.⁵ Illustrations of the four parts of the world decorated the corners. The game was played on sixty-three spaces, each corresponding to a stage in Fogg's travels and adventures. A portrait of Fogg was placed every ninth space, and players landing on these spaces by a throw of the dice would advance again by the same num-

4. *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingt jours* (Paris: Hetzel, 1873), chap. 3 (my translation; further citations will appear in the text). The first English translation appeared in 1873 with the literal title *Tour of the World in Eighty Days* (Boston: J. R. Osgood).

5. Henry-René d'Allemagne, *Le Noble Jeu de l'oie en France de 1640 à 1950* (Paris: Gründ, 1950), 86, and engraving between pages 100 and 101.

ber that had led them to the space. The unlucky players landing on space 12 would lose all their money to Detective Fix, those landing in Aden would rest there for two turns while other players advanced, and so on.

Le Jeu du Tour du monde was directly inspired by the traditional and remarkably popular game entitled *Noble Jeu de l'oie renouvelé des Grecs* (Noble game of the goose, renewed from the Greeks), a racing board game of mysterious origins, popular in Europe since the sixteenth century. The original *Game of the Goose* was played over sixty-three spaces, organized in a spiral and leading the winner to the goose garden placed in its center. The player's advance was decided by a throw of dice, every ninth space was decorated with a portrait of the goose, and players landing on these spaces had to move forward, whereas other spaces forced players to move back. The first player to reach the garden, landing precisely on the final space, won the game. Over the centuries, the game and its board decoration or theme underwent a remarkable number of adaptations, reflecting historical events, educational and moral beliefs, civic duties, and technological advances.⁶

LITERATURE AND TECHNOLOGY

Following the London Universal Exposition of 1851 and the Paris Expositions Universelles of 1855 and 1867, a fascination with technological progress spread over Europe, matched only by the passionate interest in geographical expeditions. Colonial expansion, Arctic exploration, and spectacular advancements in communications and travel captured readers everywhere and inspired Jules Verne's ambitious project entitled *Les Voyages extraordinaires*. Pierre-Jules Hetzel (1815–1886), Verne's publisher, defined the overall purpose of the oeuvre: "Its objective is to give a summary of all the *geographical, geological, astronomical, physical* knowledge gathered by modern science and to reproduce under its own attractive and picturesque style, the history of the universe."⁷

6. See Henry-René d'Allemagne's impressive study, the most complete to this day, *Le Noble Jeu de l'oie en France*. See also Adrian Seville and John Spear, "The Game of the Goose in England—A Tradition Lost," *The Ephemerist* 151 (2010), available online at <http://www.giochidelloca.it/storia/ephemera/pdf>.

7. Avertissement de l'éditeur, *Voyages et aventures du Capitaine Hatteras* (Paris: Hetzel, 1866).

Hetzl had published the greatest writers of nineteenth-century France, from Baudelaire to Balzac and Victor Hugo. He had given his full support to the Romantic movement, but he also wanted to promote a new genre of novels that would reflect the rapidly changing world and express confidence in human progress. Maxime du Camp, art critic, photographer, traveler, novelist, and Gustave Flaubert's close friend, had called for such a renewal as early as 1855:

What will be the role of literature in the future prepared by current events? According to us, it will be immense! Literature ... will have to free science from the thick clouds with which it complacently surrounds itself. Literature will have to direct industry, for—and I am sorry for the dreamers—this century belongs to planets and machines.⁸

Hetzl was determined to offer novels that would faithfully echo the great human accomplishments of the day, and he found in Jules Verne an ideal partner. In the first years of the contract that was to bind them for life, Verne took readers to the extreme ends of the world: up above the clouds (*Five Weeks in a Balloon*, 1863), down into a volcano's crater (*Voyage to the Center of the Earth*, 1864), to the moon (*From the Earth to the Moon*, 1865), to the North Pole (*Travels and Adventures of Captain Hatteras*, 1866), and to the depths of the ocean (*Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, 1870). In all these novels, explorers discover amazing wonders and inventors develop fabulous machines that enable a more intimate knowledge of the physical world.

But *Around the World in Eighty Days* starts from different premises. Verne's phlegmatic hero, Phileas Fogg, is not an explorer. He does not discover new lands, he covers distances. He does not even *see* the countries he crosses at great speed. Fogg belongs, Verne tells us, "to this sort of British who ask their servants to visit for them the countries they go through" (chap. 7). He is driven by a unique goal: returning home within eighty days in order to demonstrate that the feat can be accomplished and, accessorially, to win a bet. The novel itself is already a game, a bet decided during a game of whist, a race against time, the incredible journey of a man determined to defy the unpredictability of chance.

The idea for the novel was not entirely new: in 1870, a larger-than-life American businessman, George Francis Train (1829–1904), had

8. Maxime du Camp, *Les Chants modernes* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1855), 21.

completed a much-publicized trip around the world in eighty days.⁹ He always believed that his trip had inspired Verne, though the novelist never confirmed that boast. In addition, four variations on the *Jeu de l'oie*, published between 1855 and 1864, illustrated newly established tramway lines and railroad lines. Yet another game, published by Coqueret in 1860, was dedicated to a *Course autour du Monde* (Race around the world). It offered players various modes of locomotion, from bicycles to trains, hot-air balloons, and steamships.¹⁰ The public was ready for Jules Verne's novel, yet no one could have predicted its fabulous success in France, the United States, England, and European countries.

THE ULTIMATE BOARD GAME

The ca. 1915 game now at Princeton was produced by the Société Française des Jeux et Jouets, a conglomerate created in 1904 that brought together various companies that produced games, including Mauclair-Dacier, Simon-Curry, Wogue and Lévy, Perret, and Delhay Frères. This version with eighty spaces may well be the most elaborate adaptation of Verne's novel and stresses the monetary element of the work, at times forgotten by other versions, as seen in some of the rules:

The game is played with two dice, one with a red ace, and the other with a blue ace, other numbers being in conformity with usual dice numbers.

At the beginning, each player will throw the dice. The player with the highest score will *become* Philéas Fogg.¹¹ The player with the smallest result will *become* Passepartout. The other roles are divided according to the players' wishes.

Passepartout does not take part in the game. His task is to take care of the bank.

Since, in addition, he looks after the travelers' luggage, each player will pay him two tokens. In addition, his master, wishing to cover

9. George Francis Train, an eccentric and extraordinarily successful American entrepreneur, completed three trips around the world between 1870 and 1890. He was involved with the Union Pacific Railroad Company and founded the Credit Mobilier of America. He even ran for president in 1872, his only major defeat.

10. D'Allemagne, *Le Noble Jeu de l'oie en France*, 143, 219.

11. An accent on *Philéas* appears in most of the games, but not in the novel. The Excentric (*sic*) Club that replaces the Reform Club in the stage version of *Around the World in Eighty Days* is also present in most of the board games.

Passepartout's needs, gives him an advance of ten tokens before leaving. These tokens will be used for small purchases and expenses, and Passepartout will account for them when his master returns.

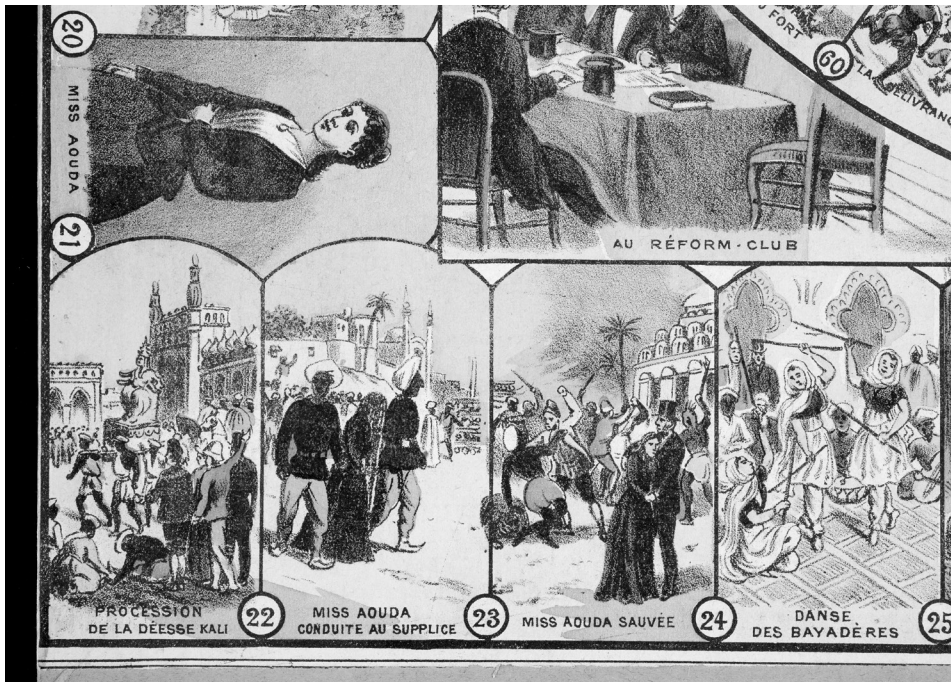
Before leaving, each traveler—except of course for Passepartout—gives six tokens to the bank, and Phileas Fogg gives the starting signal.

Since he is leaving first, he will advance by six spaces, in addition to the numbers resulting from his throw of dice. (*emphasis mine*)

The rules stating that two players would *become* a character of the novel are meant to distinguish Phileas Fogg and Passepartout from other players in a variety of ways. Fogg starts first, for example, and on his first move speeds ahead of the other travelers. The complications involving blue and red aces come up at the Suez Canal (space 11), a symbolic new beginning: Fogg has left the familiar European countries and is embarking on a more uncertain voyage. Here chance plays a bigger role. From the moment players pass the Suez Canal, they will double their score if they draw the red ace, thus advancing twice as fast. If they draw the blue ace, however, they will have to go back in the same proportion. Players throwing both the red and the blue aces will advance by three times their score (that is, six spaces). Fogg alone will not have to go back when drawing the blue ace. Moreover, he always receives twice the amount of money Passepartout gives away when players land on certain spaces.

The novel's most romantic and dramatic episode is not forgotten: Aouda, the young Indian widow condemned to perish on her husband's funeral pyre—and saved in the novel by Passepartout's ingenuity and Fogg's determination—approaches her doom on space 23 (fig. 3). The potential savior who lands there will have to wait for the help of a second player. Should no other player land on the space, "Passepartout will then enter the game, coming to the rescue and freeing Aouda with the other player." Passepartout, although absent from the race, thus intervenes punctually, not only in collecting and giving money but also in "passing for a Japanese singer" on space 41.

The game thus highlights the most vivid and exotic episodes of the novel. The daring rescue of Aouda (spaces 21–24) is followed by a series of curious encounters, such as a snake charmer (32), a run through the picturesque streets of Singapore (35), and an unscheduled visit to a pagoda (38). Events become more dangerous during the famous scene on the Pacific Railroad, when the train comes to a damaged bridge over a deep precipice (50). A game of chance takes

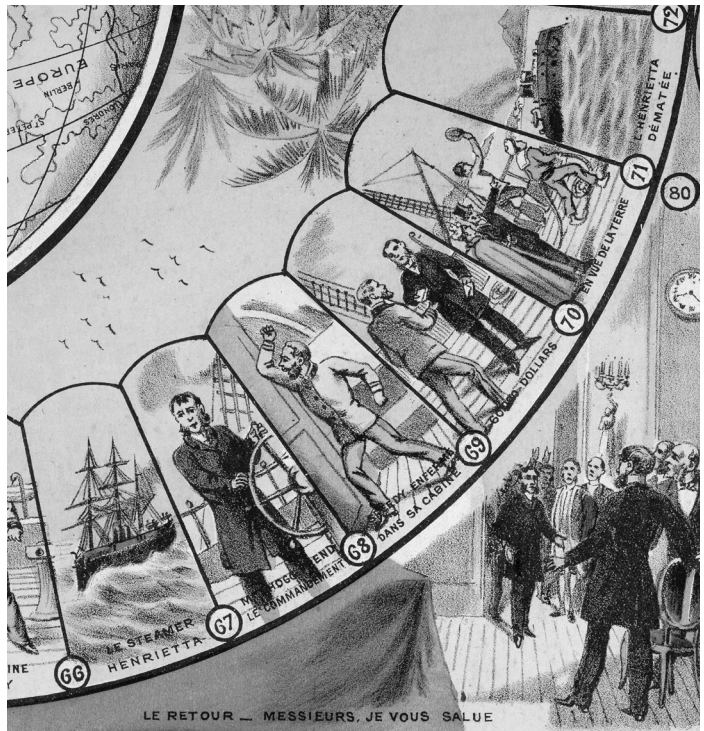
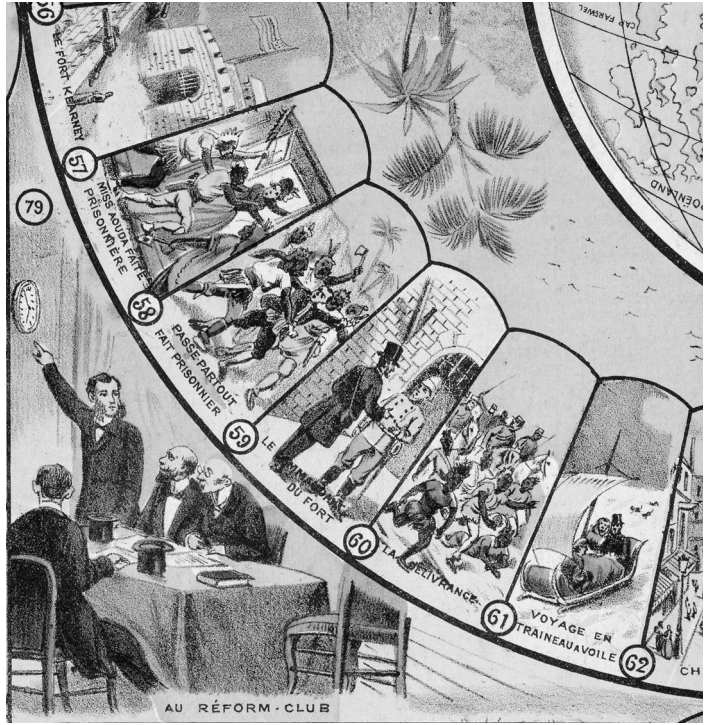


3. Rescuing Miss Aouda. Spaces 21–24 of *Le Tour du monde en 80 jours*.

place during the novel, namely, Fogg’s bet that the train, propelled by its maximum speed, will be able to cross the bridge. “Speed devoured gravity,” writes Verne of the train’s successful crossing as the bridge collapses (chap. 28). Another delay threatens the players if they are made prisoners by Indians (59); but if delivered by another player, they will reach New York and board the *Henrietta*. A violent storm will make them seasick (67), though they will ultimately reach England again.

The final suspense is contained within the last eight spaces. At 72, the players face Detective Fix, who is still looking for the robber of the Bank of England. The players flee back to 62, though they are allowed a second throw of dice. If landing on 75, players will be incarcerated in the Liverpool jail until delivered by other players. Space 77 is fatal: players reach London successfully and stay there; they are congratulated by other players and leave the game. The winning space is 79, the Reform Club. The first player to land there wins the game, moves to 80 (fig. 4), and collects the rest of the funds (giving

4. Returning to the Reform Club. Corner spaces 79 and 80 of *Le Tour du monde en 80 jours*.



one-quarter of the tokens to Passepartout for his services). Should a player land directly on 80, however, that player would be considered to have arrived five minutes late, having reached the Reform Club on December 21 at 8:50 p.m. instead of 8:45 p.m.

CHANCE AND THE NOVEL

The novel and the game thus run through a parallel itinerary, with the same goal but vastly different premises. Chance alone presides over the fate of the game players. By contrast, Fogg, who initially resembles the token players speeding across a map, slowly reveals that he is more than a creature whose moves are determined by schedules. When he proposes to save Aouda from the flames, he explains characteristically:

“I am still twelve hours ahead of schedule. I can dedicate my time to the task.”

“Ah! But you are a man with a heart!” said Sir Francis Cromarty.

“Sometimes,” Phileas Fogg replied with simplicity. “When I have time.” (chap. 12)

He never loses his cold demeanor, and his determination overcomes all the obstacles he encounters on his path. Closer to whist than to a board game, the novel artfully blends chance and skill, luck and strategy. At the end of his tour, however, Fogg has made no profit, having spent as much as he has gained from his bet; he does not come back richer or with a greater knowledge of the countries he has visited. So what is the final “score”? Verne himself, anticipating his readers’ question, gives the ultimate reply:

What had he gained from this trip? What had he brought back from this voyage?

Nothing, will you say? Nothing, indeed, except a charming wife, who—as unlikely as it may appear—made him the happiest man!

In truth, wouldn’t one go around the world for less than that? (chap. 37)

The numerous versions of the *Jeux de l’oie* adapted from *Le Tour du monde* may well have inspired Verne to write another novel, *Le Testament d’un excentrique*, in which the board game plays a central role. In this 1899 novel the main character, a Chicago millionaire, believing he is about to die, writes a will leaving his considerable fortune to the

winner among the six Chicagoans chosen by lottery to participate in a *jeu de l'oie* played across the United States. William J. Hyperbone, an assiduous member of the Excentric Club, has developed a passion for the game as it is traditionally played. His greatest pleasure in life is to indulge in

The Game of the Goose, the Noble Game more or less renewed from the Greeks.... He felt the highest emotions jumping from one space to another according to the luck of the dice, jumping from one goose to the other to reach the last host of the poultry-yard, walking along "the bridge," staying at "the inn," losing himself in "the labyrinth," walling himself in "the jail," facing "the skull," visiting the spaces dedicated to "the sailor, the fisherman, the harbor, the stag, the windmill, the snake, the sun, the helmet, the lion, the rabbit, the flower pot," etc.

It goes without saying that, among the opulent characters of the *Excentric Club*, the dues levied in accord to the rules of the game were not insubstantial; they reached thousands of dollars and the winner, rich as he may have been, felt the highest satisfaction in pocketing an important sum.¹²

No doubt the author took more than a childish pleasure in adapting the board game to a novel, with characters racing across the country, directed by the pure luck of the dice, motivated by greed or fantasy, adventure or sheer eccentricity. "Nowadays, without counting Alaska, located outside its territory," Hyperbone's will reads, "the Union counts fifty states.... Arranging them as squares, one after the other, and repeating fourteen times one of these states, I have obtained a map composed of sixty-three spaces, identical to that of the Noble Game of the Goose, now effectively transformed into the Noble Game of the United States" (chap. 5). The State of Illinois has been chosen to occupy the lucky space previously given to the goose. And the winner will be determined according to the traditional rules: "In the Noble Game of the Goose, as we know, the player who first reaches the sixty-third space is declared a winner. This space, however, can only be reached if the number of points decided by the dice lands the player precisely on the space. If the number is higher the player must go back by the additional number of points" (chap. 5).

In the novel, it is not quite enough for the players to race to the state decided by a throw of dice; they have to go to a specific location,

12. *Le Testament d'un excentrique* (Paris: Hetzel, 1899), chap. 2 (my translation; further references given in the text).

announced by telegram along with their next destination. *Around the World in Eighty Days* followed the most direct trajectory. By contrast, the Noble Game of the United States leads participants from one end of the country to the other without any geographical logic. As it turns out, Verne's fiction thoroughly betrays the rules of the game, if not its spirit: a seventh player mysteriously enters the race and wins. He is none other than Hypperbone himself, who has played "dead" (as in the game of whist so dear to Phileas Fogg). Discovering a medical misdiagnosis, he decides to honor the terms of his will and risk his fortune, participating in the game and subjecting himself to the same rules as the presumptive heirs. The parallels between *Around the World in Eighty Days* and the *Testament* are clear enough: two characters risk everything they have and end up where they started, but having found love in the course of the race.

"The Game," notes Claude Lévi-Strauss, "ends with the creation of a differential among players or teams which nothing in the beginning designated as unequal."¹³ There is a serious difference, however, between Phileas Fogg and William J. Hypperbone, the main characters, and all the other players. Fogg bets everything he has, £20,000, and his whist partners only £4,000 each. Hypperbone similarly puts his entire fortune at stake, while the other players are asked to contribute only a minimum amount to finance the game. Each hero's victory thus consists in recovering what he had risked at the beginning.

Le Testament d'un excentrique did not inspire game companies. *Around the World in Eighty Days* alone continued to seduce a vast number of players, who might have been disappointed to limit their experience to a single country.

NELLIE BLY'S JOURNEY AROUND THE WORLD

A real-life adventure inspired by *Around the World in Eighty Days* produced a board game in celebration of the heroine who, in 1889, beat Phileas Fogg's record. Nellie Bly (1864–1922), a twenty-five-year-old newspaper reporter for the *New York World*, persuaded her employer to let her challenge Verne's fictional hero. She recounted her journey in a book entitled *Around the World in Seventy-Two Days*, starting with her first discussion of the project with the newspaper's skeptical business manager.

13. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La Pensée sauvage* (Paris: Plon, 1962), 42.

“It is impossible for you to do it,” was the terrible verdict. “In the first place you are a woman and would need a protector, and even if it were possible for you to travel alone you would need to carry so much baggage that it would detain you in making rapid changes. Besides you speak nothing but English, so there is no use talking about it; no one but a man can do this.”

“Very well,” I said angrily, “Start the man, and I’ll start the same day for some other newspaper and beat him.”

“I believe you would,” he said slowly. I would not say that this had any influence on their decision, but I do know that before we parted I was made happy by the promise that if anyone was commissioned to make the trip, I should be that one.¹⁴

Her journey (with a single small suitcase) began on November 14, 1889. As Bly sent regular dispatches to her newspaper, readers around the world became passionately interested in the race between fiction and reality. Crossing France, she set aside a few hours to visit Jules Verne in Amiens and gave a charming account of her conversation with the famous author. One paragraph in particular sums up the singular nature of her project: “M. Verne got an idea,” she writes.

Taking up a candle and asking us to follow, he went out into the hall; stopping before a large map that hung there, holding up with one hand the candle, he pointed out to us several blue marks. Before his words were translated to me, I understood that on this map he had, with a blue pencil, traced out the course of his hero, Phileas Fogg, before he started him in fiction to travel around the world in eighty days. With a pencil he marked on the map, as we grouped about him, the places where my line of travel differed from that of Phileas Fogg. (chap. 5)

As she approached her goal, Bly’s admirers gathered along her itinerary. “The Americans turned out to do honor to an American girl who had been the first to make a record of a flying trip around the world, and I rejoiced with them that it was an American girl who had done it” (chap. 17). In Chicago she received a cable that had missed her arrival in San Francisco: “Mr. Verne wishes the following message to be handed to Nellie Bly the moment she touches American soil: M. and Mme. Jules Verne address their sincere felicitations to Miss Nellie Bly at the moment when that intrepid young lady sets foot on the soil of America” (chap. 17).

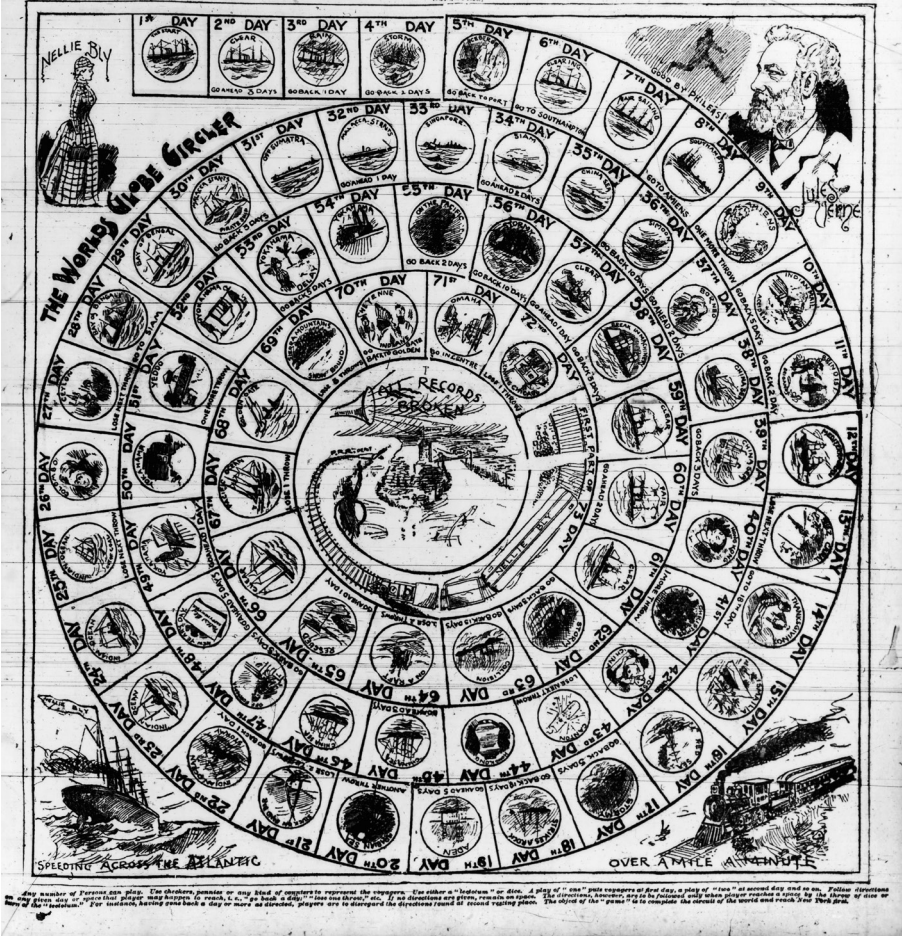
14. Nellie Bly, *Around the World in Seventy-Two Days* (New York: Pictorial Weeklies Companies, 1890), chap. 1 (further references appear in the text).



NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 1890.

ROUND THE WORLD WITH NELLIE BLY.

CUT OUT THIS GAME, PLACE IT ON A TABLE OR PASTE IT ON CARDBOARD AND PLAY ACCORDING TO SIMPLE DIRECTIONS BELOW.



5. "Round the World with Nellie Bly," *New York World*, January 26, 1890. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

The game of *Round the World with Nellie Bly, a Novel and Fascinating Game with Plenty of Excitement by Land and Sea* first appeared in the *World* on January 26, 1890, the day after Bly returned to New York (fig. 5). A chromolithographed version, featuring a portrait of Nellie Bly, "The World's Globe Circler," on its red cover was published



6. *Game of Round the World* (New York: McLoughlin Bros., ca. 1890). Top half of the chromolithographic playing board. Graphic Arts Collection, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

the same year by the innovative firm of McLoughlin Bros.¹⁵ Each of its seventy-two squares features an illustration of the places Bly had visited or the people she had met. Jules Verne appears twice: in the upper right corner opposite the journalist, with the caption “Good By [sic] Philéas!” under a thought-cloud of a running figure; and on day/square 9, where he is seen wishing good luck to the heroine (fig. 6).



Around the World in Eighty Days regularly inspires new games. Several video versions have been developed in the last ten years alone, some exceptionally faithful to Verne’s original adventure.¹⁶ They testify to the double seduction of beating the odds and obstacles that challenge all journeys, be they spiritual or geographical, and closing a complete circle that, disguised as a labyrinth, brings together the travelers and their childhood.

—MARIE-HÉLÈNE HUET

15. McLoughlin Bros., Inc. was a New York publishing firm founded in 1850 that developed color printing technologies in children’s books.

16. A new game by a group of faculty members at the University of Constanz consists of eighty squares but is played with cards instead of dice.