

A MARXIST ANALYSIS OF *AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY DAYS* BY JULES VERNE

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Abstract:

The research paper analyses Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days* using a Marxist lens. It focuses on class division, capitalism, economic privilege and imperialism. The research paper argues that the novel demonstrates nineteenth-century narrative structure, and global setting, while also examining how wealth structures mobility and success.

Keywords: Marxism, Capitalism, Class, Imperialism.

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Marxism was founded by Karl Marx as a critical framework for comprehending how economic systems influence human connections, society, and culture. Marxism's central claim is that class conflict, mainly between the bourgeoisie (owners of the means of production) and the proletariat (working class), is what drives history forward. It emphasizes ideas like commodity fetishism, capitalism, labor exploitation, and the unequal distribution of power and wealth. From a Marxist standpoint, literature is a result of material circumstances as well as artistic expression; it frequently reflects, upholds, or challenges the prevailing ideology of its epoch.

Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*

The novel *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873) written by Jules Verne is widely regarded as a thrilling adventure narrative which highlights technological progress & advancements. However, when inspected through Marxist literary theory, the novel presents a much deeper engagement with class hierarchy, capitalism, imperial expansion, and the unequal distribution of economic power. Rather than simply narrating a journey across continents, the text reflects a nineteenth-century world structured by wealth and privilege, where mobility, authority, and success are closely tied to financial resources. In this sense, the novel becomes a cultural document that mirrors the ideological and economic structures of its time.

Marxist Elements in *Around the World in Eighty Days*

Although Jules Verne's book is sometimes interpreted as an adventure story, it quietly exposes the 19th-century systems of imperial authority and global commerce.

The character Phileas Fogg is the protagonist of the novel. He symbolises the bourgeois class. He is introduced as "a man of fortune" whose life is defined by precision, order, and wealth (Verne 5). The decision of Phileas Fogg to travel the world in eighty days isn't guided by any obligation. It was simply by leisure and Fogg's confidence in his economic resources. Throughout the narrative, Fogg repeatedly overcomes obstacles through monetary means, whether by hiring special transport, bribing officials, or purchasing solutions to unexpected problems. Around the

World in 90 days presents a Marxist angle to the novel. It highlights the power of the bourgeoisie. They control wealth as well as the resources to manipulate circumstances in their favour. The success of Phileas Fogg is not a result of struggle but of privilege, demonstrating how economic capital shapes outcomes.

Conversely, Passepartout, who is Fogg's servant, represents the proletariat. He is energetic and emotional. He is consistently involved in physical and practical labour. The role of Passepartout is significant to the triumph of the journey. In spite of the same, he remains subordinate and dependent on his master. This relationship shows the Marxist concept of class division. The novel portrays the system where the aspirations and desires of the ruling class are supported by the working class. Although, the working class takes all pain and effort, they don't receive equal recognition or reward. The loyalty and effort of Passepartout signifies the imbalance between labour and capital. It reflects that his contributions are crucial but undervalued. The novel presents this class division as very common. It presents how dividing the classes was considered normal in a highly capitalistic society.

The novel offers a global setting. It further strengthens its Marxist implications. Phileas Fogg's journey stretches various regions such as Egypt, India, China, Japan, and the United States. The following places has connected through various networks of trade, transportation, and imperial expansion. The railway systems and steamships that enable his rapid movement are products of colonial enterprise and economic exploitation. As noted in the text, these transport networks allow for efficient global connectivity (Verne 45), demonstrating how imperial infrastructure serves the interests of the wealthy. From a Marxist viewpoint, this reveals how capitalism operates on a global scale, extending its influence across borders while relying on the resources and labour of colonized regions.

An interesting theme in the novel is the commercialization of time. The journey that Fogg undertakes is governed by strict schedules. Every moment of the journey is calculated with precision. Fogg treats time as a valuable resource. He believes that "time is everything" in achieving his goal (Verne 62). This presents the capitalist ideology that identifies time with productivity and profit. Any sort of delays is viewed as losses, while effectiveness and efficiency are rewarded. Such an emphasis mirrors the industrial context of the nineteenth century, where time became a regulated and economically significant entity. The novel focusses its structure on punctuality and deadlines. It highlights the transformation of time into a commodity within capitalist systems.

The character of Detective Fix in the novel introduces another perspective to the Marxist reading of the novel. He was a representative of law enforcement. Detective Fix represents the duty of the state in maintaining social order and harmony as well as protecting property. His relentless search of Fogg is based on suspicion of theft which demonstrates how legal institutions function to regulate individuals and safeguard economic interests. According to Marxist theory, the state often serves the ruling power by preserving the conditions necessary for capitalism to operate. Detective Fix's actions can be comprehended as an attempt to control and monitor individuals within this system. It is done in order to reinforce the connection between law and economic power.

The novel *Around the World in 90 days* represents the ideology of capitalism. The novel represents a linear and fast-paced structure. It highlights efficiency, discipline, and progress. The novel reflects the industrial mindset of production and consumption. Each episode in the journey presents a new challenge. The same must be tackled quickly which reflects the importance of movement and productivity. The novel presents a third-person narration. The novel maintains a sense of detachment which focusses on external actions rather than internal emotional depth. This portrays

the rational and calculated perspective of the bourgeoisie which reflects and prioritizes control and order over self-introspection.

Around the World in 80 days showcases various non-European cultures. It highlights colonial behaviour which support capitalist mindset. The various regions that Fogg visits are represented as exotic, unfamiliar, or underdeveloped, reinforcing a sense of Western superiority. Such kind of representations justify imperial dominance as it constructs a narrative in which colonized nations appear totally dependent on European intervention. From a Marxist perspective, these depictions serve to legitimize economic exploitation, as they frame imperialism as both necessary and beneficial. The novel thus participates in the ideological processes that sustain global capitalism. Another important aspect of the novel is its importance on individualism. Phileas Fogg is portrayed as a self-disciplined and rational individual. His success appears to stem from personal qualities such as determination and intelligence. However, when we look at it using a Marxist lens, it challenges this notion. It reveals that Fogg's achievements are mainly dependent on material conditions, particularly wealth and access to global networks. As Terry Eagleton argues, literature often reinforces dominant ideologies by presenting social structures as natural (Eagleton 12). In this scenario, the novel promotes the idea that success is the result of individual merit, while obscuring the structural advantages that enable it.

Although the novel presents these hidden dynamics, its narrative doesn't clearly criticize the capitalist system. On the contrary, it celebrates Phileas Fogg's success as a victory of logic and determination. In spite of that when the novel is viewed through a Marxist perspective, this attainment is inseparable from economic privileges and benefits. Fogg was able to navigate the world. He was also able to overcome obstacles, and ultimately win his wager. The same turned out to be possible mainly because of his financial resources and social position. This clearly suggests that the novel reinforces the values of capitalism, presenting them as natural and desirable rather than questioning their implications.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Jules Vern's *Around the World in Eighty Days* can be acknowledged as more than a simple adventure narrative novel. Through a Marxist perspective, the novel demonstrates the structures of class hierarchy, the power of wealth, and the global influence of capitalism and imperialism. The novel highlight how economic privilege shapes human experiences. It further highlights who has access to mobility, who performs strenuous labour, and who ultimately succeeds. Upon analyzing these elements, readers can gain a profound understanding of the ideological forces embedded within the text and the historical context in which it was produced. Ultimately, the novel exhibits that literature not only reflects reality but also plays an important role in reinforcing the social and economic systems of its time.

References

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