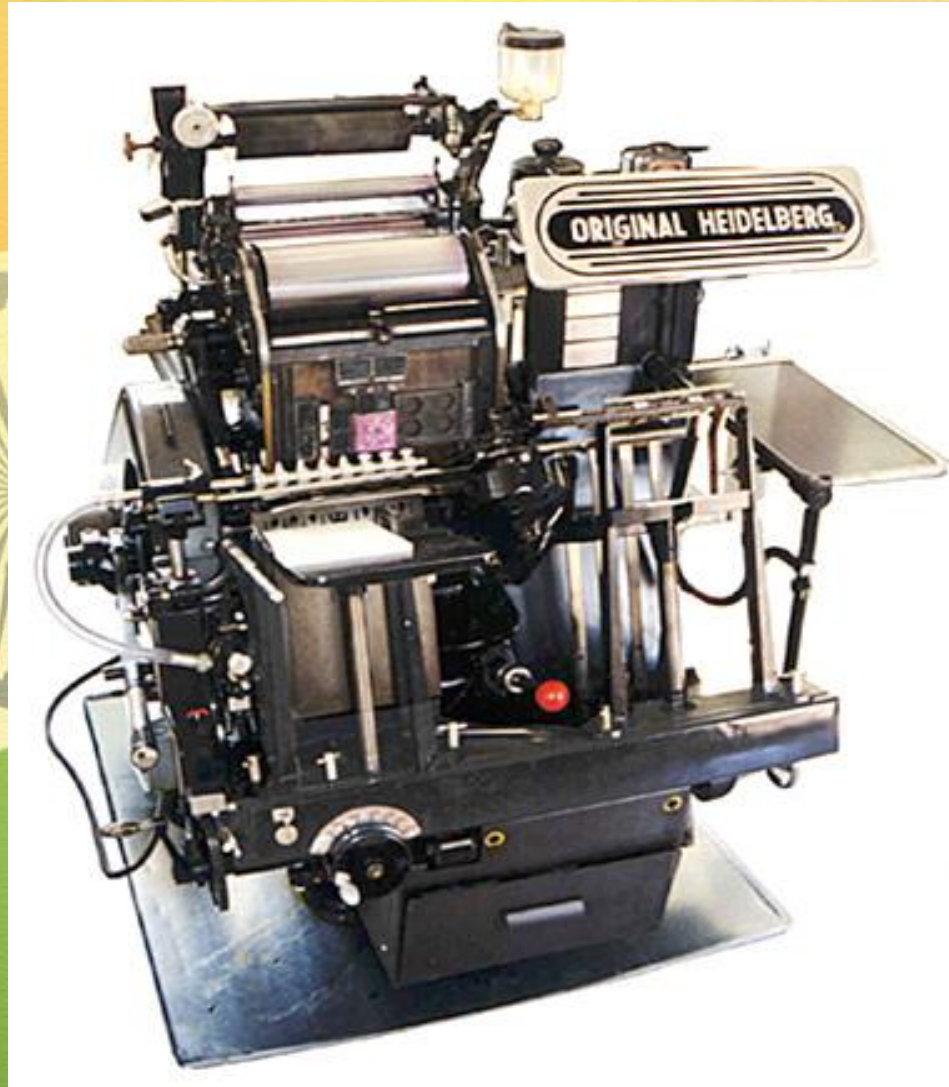
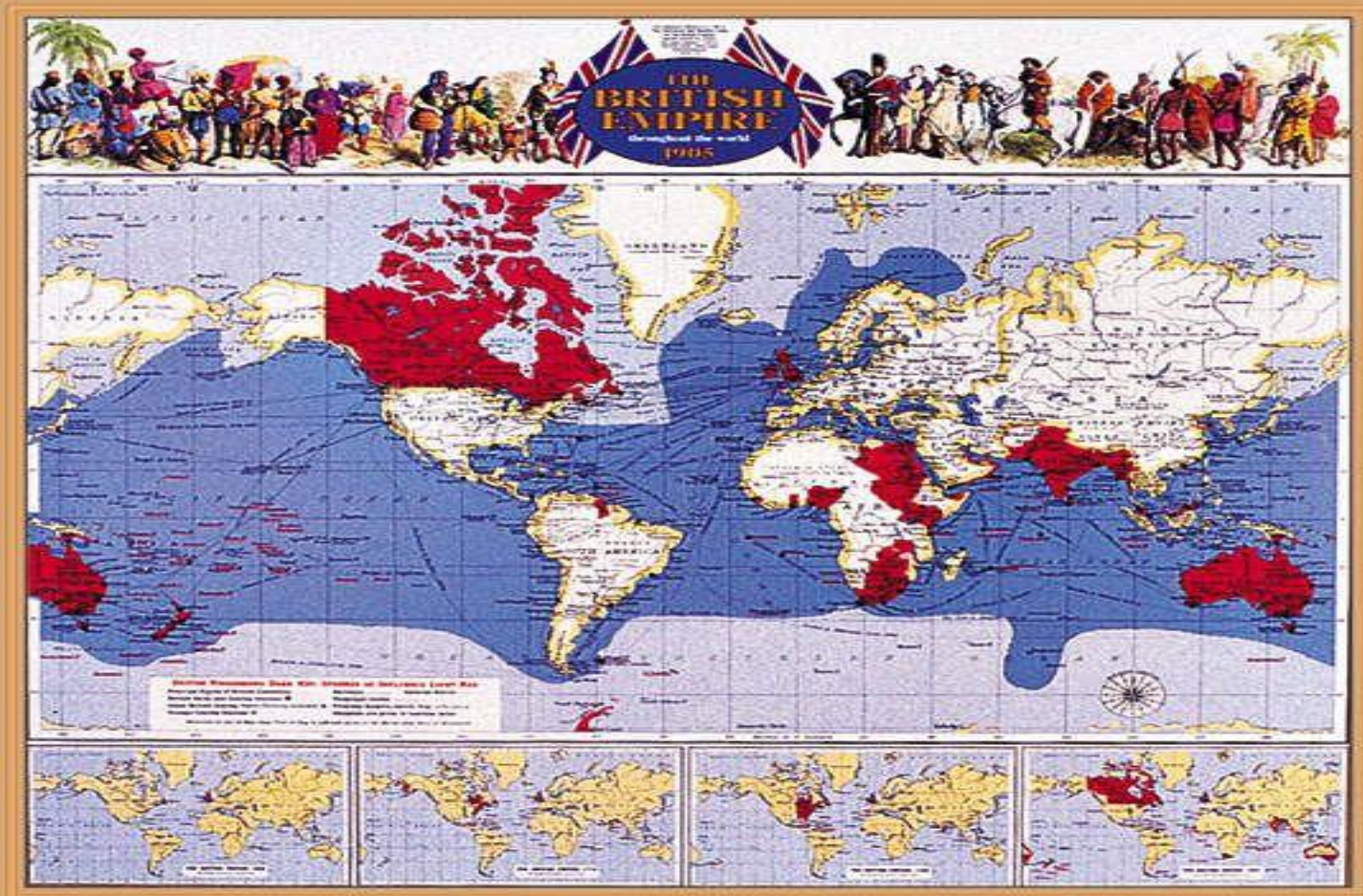


The Heidelberg



The British Empire in 1905



The Jewel in the Crown



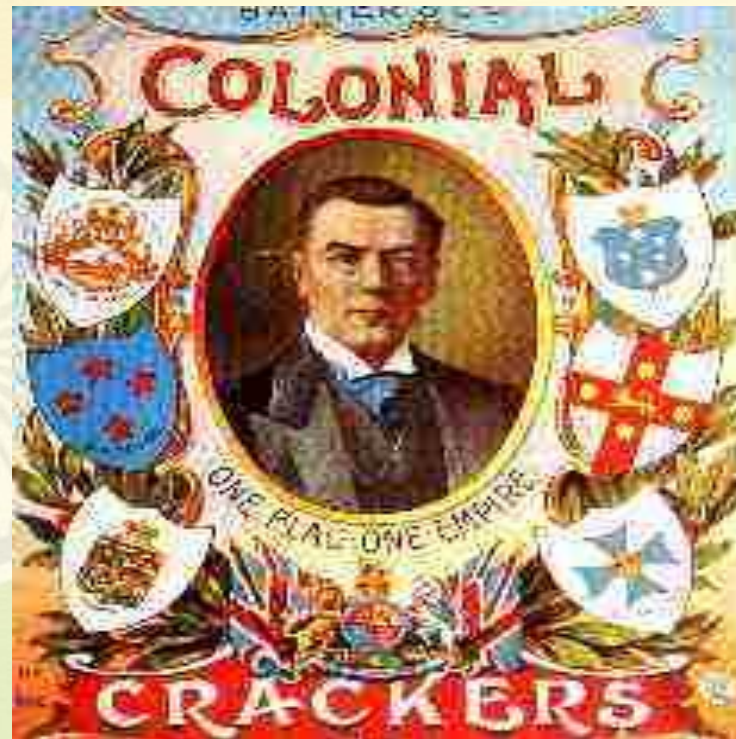
The British Arrive in India, 1612

The East India Tea Company is established in 1640

British meets first organized resistance in 1757



The British Empire and the Spread of the English Language and Culture



The Indian Display from The Great British Empire Exhibition, 1851



East Meets West for Tea



The Durbar: A Parade and Celebration of the Grandeur and Political Might of the British in India



First War of Independence - The Great Indian Mutiny 1857

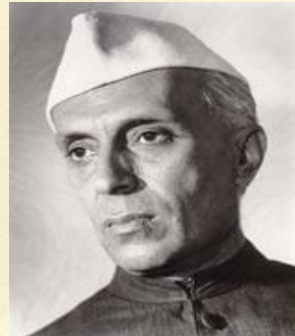


Gandhi helps negotiate independence through his “Quit India” campaign, asking the entire country to engage in civil disobedience by refusing to enter WWII, and to not retaliate if invaded.



Jawaharlal Nehru and his Five Year Plans that Nataraj and his friends are always discussing

- British educated lawyer from wealthy family
- Formed the first independent Indian government in 1947
- Prime Minister for 18 years
- Fascinated by Soviet Union's Five Year Plans
- Wanted Indian economy to be a mixture of capitalism and state-owned operations.
- Neutralism in Foreign Affairs—you shouldn't be a superpower to have a seat at the table
- The "Plans" focused on industrial self-reliance and agricultural efficiency



What does colonial history have to do with *The Man-eater of Malgudi*?

- Narayan is writing in English, a language that some considered the language of the oppressor and a betrayal of India. However, it is the language of the printing press, and Malgudians rely on Nataraj to make the best invitations, and so forth.
- As well, it is evident in the novel that the town of Malgudi is a cultural mixture of various influences, including English, Hindu, and Muslim ones.

What does colonial history have to do with *The Man-eater of Malgudi*?

- **Although Malgudi is a distinctly Indian town (albeit a fictional one), many of the conflicts parallel examples from colonial history.**

Vasu is the bullying, aggressive Westerner who kills for pleasure and exploits the resources of the country.

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Vasu represents the “new” postwar Indian, one that has forgotten his traditional values, forsaking them for capitalism and profit. He is an individual, with no ties or commitment to the community.

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The various occupants of the Queen Anne Chair reflect the changing hands of rule, yet, in the end, everything returns to its proper place. Order is restored.

India carries on, regardless of the circumstances and its invaders. It deals with them, absorbs some their influences (such as the chair), but maintains its distinctiveness and culture. "Vasus" come and go.

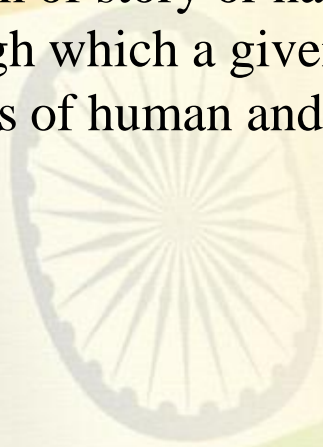
The Queen Anne Chair: Queen Anne ruled England from 1702-1714.



Other Ways to Approach the Novel

MYTH

- A form of story or narrative sequence, often traditional and anonymous, through which a given culture ratifies or changes its social customs for the origins of human and natural phenomena.



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- Today, modern myths are regarded as fictional stories containing deeper truths, expressing a society's collective attitudes towards fundamental matters of life, death, divinity, and existence.
- Myths are intended to translate the supposed abstract realities of the world in concrete story form.

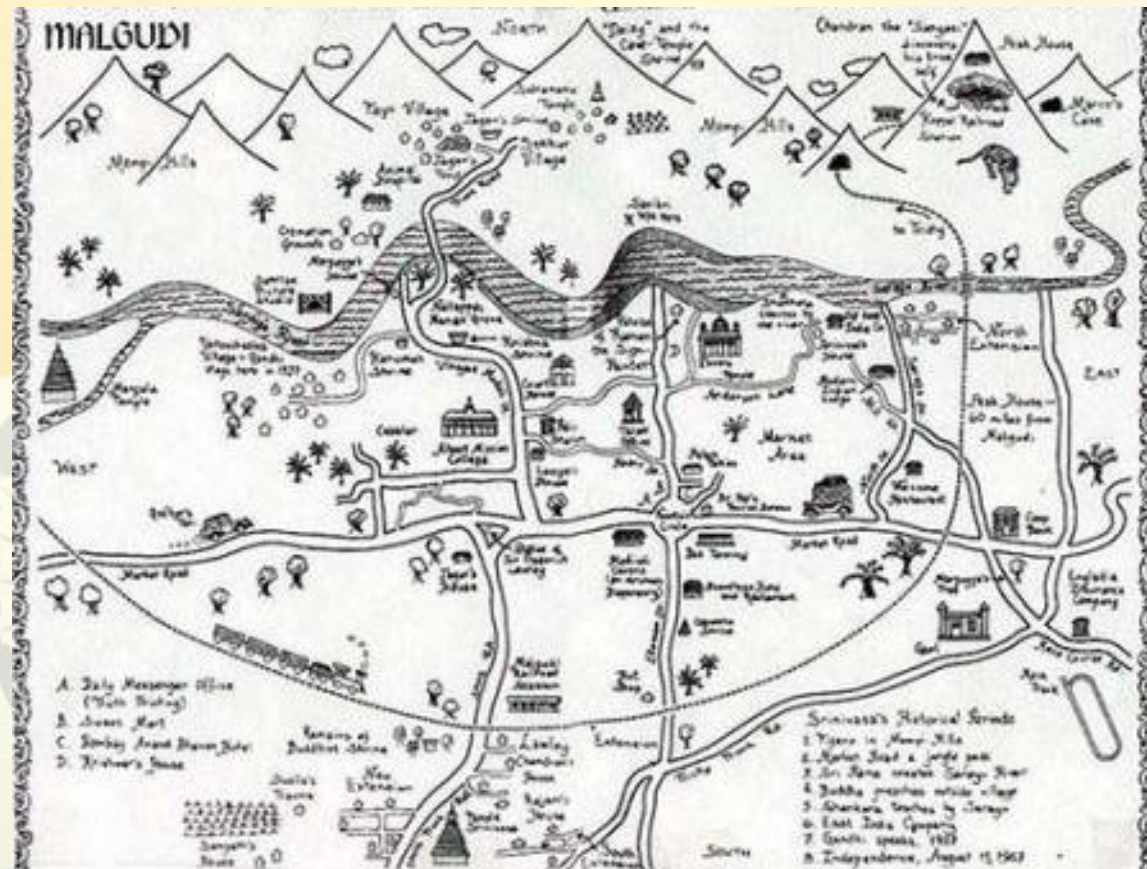
MYTH

- A form of story or narrative sequence, often traditional and anonymous, through which a given culture ratifies or changes its social customs for the origins of human and natural phenomena. It often involves supernatural beings.
- Today, modern myths are regarded as fictional stories containing deeper truths, expressing a society's collective attitudes towards fundamental matters of life, death, divinity, and existence.
- Myths are intended to translate the supposed abstract realities of the world in concrete story form.
- For example, the myth that natives in the new world were savages. This myth allowed colonists to either eradicate or displace them without remorse because they were lesser humans.
- Vampires are mythical, but their stories exist in numerous cultures. In some feudal societies, the blood-sucking vampire sucking was paralleled to greedy landowners “sucking dry” the hardworking peasant.
- Similarly, today, vampire stories reveal our concerns about tainted blood and death by diseases such as AIDS. Modern day vampires have regular girlfriends but don't “bite” them.

MYTH

Vasu can be seen as a modern variation of the mythical figure known as the rakshasa. In Hindu mythology, rakshasas are notorious for disrupting sacrifices and sacred rituals, and for making people's lives miserable. They are known to feed on rotting flesh, which is translated into taxidermy in the novel.





Malgudi can be read as a mythical town. Narayan has written over 10 novels with Malgudi as their centre. In many ways, Malgudi is a “character” in the novels. It is a mythical place where the various concerns of India—socially and politically—are played out.

A question to ponder:

Who and what is the man-eater of Malgudi?



A question to ponder: Who and what is the man-eater of Malgudi?

- Is it Vasu, the Raksasha of Hindu mythology? Has Narayan fused tradition with the modern to create a novel that is unique to India in a new world order, and how its citizens will survive in it?



Rakshasa

- A demon or evil spirit in Hinduism.
- Many Rakshasas were particularly wicked humans in previous incarnations.
- Rakshasas are notorious for disturbing sacrifices, desecrating graves, harassing priests, possessing human beings.
- They are shapechangers and magicians.

- Vasu is the most likely Rakshasa figure in the novel (85)
- But Rangi when she first speaks is presented as if she were too: remember she appears as an “animated hyena” (113) whispering from behind the bamboo curtain

Vasu/Rakshasa

- Shapeshifting; appearing and disappearing
- Larger than life
- Lust for human flesh
- Potentially desecrating animal life with guns, taxidermy
- Particularly wicked
- Disrupting ceremony

Questions to ask

- What are the cultural implications of introducing a Rakshasa figure? How does this *representation* affect the representation of other things/people? What does it mean to have the spiritual operating in the “real” world?
- How is this different from the way we see God in our Christian lives?

A question to ponder: Who and what is the man-eater of Malgudi?

- Is it Nataraj?
- In his own way, he rids Malgudi of Vasu.



A question to ponder: Who and what is the man-eater of Malgudi?

- Is it colonialism, and the profits to be made from India's resources?



A question to ponder: Who and what is the man-eater of Malgudi?

- Is it imperialism, or neo-colonialism?
- Is it the European market for Vasu's skins and stuffed animals, which violate the beliefs of the people?



A question to ponder: Who and what is the man-eater of Malgudi?

- Is it simply that India is entering the modern world, just like every country, and must learn to cope with these changes?
- The past becomes history, and once important figures fade and are replaced by new ones. Culture is an evolving process. To remain unchanged or unchangeable is to stagnate.

