

Explore the role of children in the novel 'The English Teacher'

Firstly, the role of children that Narayan creates in 'The English Teacher' is to link family together. The innocent tone of voice when Leela asks 'Are you fighting?' makes Krishna 'unhappy with this thrust' which suggests that she is making him realise that he shouldn't be fighting with his wife.

Comment [K1]: 'Straight in' intro, clearly related back to the question by using key words from the title

Comment [K2]: Good specific technique identified

Comment [K3]: This point is a little short and further examples of children being used to 'bring people together' would help make it more convincing

Comment [K4]: Connectives used to create a logical structure between paragraphs

Comment [K5]: Good use of square brackets to make the quotation fit the sentence it is embedded into

Narayan additionally creates the role of children as they give adults a point to live. Leela gives Krishna a point to live after Susila's death as before, Krishna thought that 'nothing will worry or interest [him] in life hereafter.' But he finds out that his new 'aim' is to take care of his daughter. For the Headmaster's children they give him 'a glimpse of some purpose in existence' as he loves children, he likes to teach them and they give his life a meaning.

Furthermore, the children are a symbol of freedom. They do what they want to do. They go to school on Sunday when normal people don't and when Krishna tells Leela that she doesn't have to go she still insists on going and argues back that 'you don't know our school.' This suggests that she has her own mind, doesn't follow what other people tell her to do and doesn't follow the rules, unlike Krishna. Moreover, the fact that the children learn at school through playing instead of studying implies freedom. They are not forced to cram or take notes but have free lives which contrast to Krishna's students who are 'made to pass exams.'

Comment [K6]: This is good as it moves away from the specific things that children do to considering the role in a more abstract, generalized, symbolic manner

Comment [K7]: Good explanation of exactly why this quotation is significant

Comment [K8]: Nice alternative structure here where the explanation comes first and the quotation is used to finish off the point nicely

Comment [K9]: Once again these 'higher level', more abstract, less obvious roles for children suggest a deeper reading of the text

Comment [K10]: Good smooth use of multiple quotations used to support points

Comment [K11]: However, this point definitely requires a quotation in support of it

In addition, Narayan creates the role of children as they are a symbol of innocence. 'The glittering alphabets' suggest the purity which is inside the children. They have no worries but are 'bundles of joy and play' who ask lots of questions. All of these are lacking in adults, especially Krishna who seems to have a lot of worries in his life as he is pessimistic about everything.

Comment [K12]: Good development of the point, the connective and opening sentence make it clear that this is a continuation of the earlier point

Comment [K13]: Again, quotation needed here

Moreover, the excitement that they have also emphasises the innocence and purity of children. Everything seems to be exciting for them as they ask the Headmaster about anything and everything. Also Leela is excited to go to school as she is 'dancing with joy' and 'full of descriptions of her school' which contrasts to the students in the college who just 'mug-up' for their exams.

Finally, the most important role of the children is that they can teach adults something. In the real world, adults are the ones who teach children how to live their lives or how to do well in exams. However, in this novel Narayan shows that children can teach adults to be honest which the Headmaster has already learnt from them as he refuses Krishna's food telling him that he 'would sooner swallow poison than eat brinjal.' Additionally, Krishna has learnt from Leela as truly cares about Leela as he finds that working in the college and taking care of Leela is a 'noble and exciting occupation' for him, which contrasts to before when he didn't care much about her. One of the messages of the novel seems to be that these human connections are essential for as we cannot live by ourselves but need someone to love and care about us.

Comment [K14]: Good sense of conclusion created here and this probably is the most important role of children in the novel

Comment [K15]: Good development of this point / extrapolation out to a more general comment on life / the human condition