

Explore the role that different teachers have in the novel 'The English Teacher'

In the novel 'The English Teacher', the first of Krishna's teachers we encounter is Brown and his college. Brown's teachings, which are derived from the Western way of life, teach Krishna to be very regimented and live a routine life. They teach him to do everything 'walking, talking, etc – all done to perfection' and that there is only one way to think and that there is very little freedom to deviate from this. This is apparent to Krishna when he says 'but not in the halls. They are usually only put up in bathrooms'. Krishna is depicted as one who is just a 'sturdy idiot' doing whatever he is told.

Comment [K1]: Good 'straight in' start

Comment [K2]: Good like to the colonial issues raised in the novel

Later on, toward the end of the novel, Brown and the college serve to show what Krishna no longer wants to be. He no longer wants to 'mug up and repeat' and he 'hardly calls this work'. Brown and the college at the end also show the contrast between the initial Krishna and him at the end. The contrast shows how much he has developed as a person and become more individual.

Comment [K3]: It needs to be made clear where / when this quotation is so that the examiner knows what you are talking about and can understand your point better

Comment [K4]: Very nice, smoothly included quotation

Comment [K5]: A little too informal. Subsequently would be a better connective.

Comment [K6]: It needs to be made clear what he is like at the end

Comment [K7]: A little too informal

Comment [K8]: Good reference to the text, although this is not a quotation exactly it is possible to get away with this sometimes as long as there are quotations in the rest of your essay

Comment [K9]: Good development of ideas

The second major teaching figure introduced is Susila. As Krishna's wife, she along with their daughter Leela, creates a reason for Krishna to become a more caring, loving, family man. Susila waiting for his return from work every day creates a familial atmosphere in Krishna's home. Moreover, we see that Krishna has an extraordinary infatuation for Susila 'standing beside her, I felt like calling her Jasmine'. Susila's presence alone changes Krishna and makes him less 'clerk-like', it makes him feel more emotion. Additionally, Susila teaches Krishna to start becoming his own person. She teaches him that he shouldn't believe too much in what everyone else thinks is the correct thing to say or do, for example in the Bombay Ananda Hotel. Susila's indifferent to where 'bathroom tiles should be' when she says 'people who like them for bathrooms may have them there, others if they want them elsewhere.' Shows how she does not care for other people's opinions and Krishna learns to be more independent as a result of this.

Comment [K10]: Clear opening sentence that makes it clear what this paragraph is going to be about

Comment [K11]: Quotations to support this would help

The Medium, another major teacher, allows him to become a much more spiritual person. Krishna is able to see how much faith the medium has when he simply 'sent the letter as a test with the boy'. Krishna's previous pessimism and irreverence towards spirituality is changed after several sessions with the Medium. Although Krishna doubts this at first, he later on relies heavily on connecting with Susila to stay happy and content. The Medium's role is as a very important bridge that connects Krishna with his wife as later on she constantly gives him advice and guidance on how to become a more self-fulfilled person and how to communicate better with her.

Comment [K12]: Very nice, original and creative point which should have been developed more

The river, although not an actual character, is, in my opinion. One of the most important teachers in the novel, the river '[flowing] on against the night' represents continuity and not giving up despite the many obstacles that may be in the way. The river also represents new beginnings, for example, when Krishna feels 'he has a new lease on life' after bathing in the river and it suggests that one must constantly live and change like the river in order to live a happy life.

However, the most influential teacher in the novel, the Headmaster, teaches Krishna about self-fulfilment: 'no more of this wife and children for me', simply because they do not please him or bring him any joy. He also teaches Krishna about the value of children and how their 'original' vision makes them 'the real gods on Earth.' He shows Krishna how he followed his own dreams and desires and did what he wanted to do. However, abandoning his responsibilities shows how there can be no perfect teacher in the world and that Krishna should not simply try to mould himself on another person. He must see and learn from other people's positive traits and use them to help him mould himself into a more mature and developed person that will 'please [his] innermost self'.

Comment [K13]: Good ending on a most important / effective / influential point

Comment [K14]: The context of this needs to be explained a little more

Comment [K15]: When? This also needs to be made clear

Comment [K16]: Good final summing up in the conclusion, this is one of the key points of the novel. Nice ending on the quotation