Preliminary English Study Guide

Cultural Identity

Li Cunxin’s (pronounced Lee Schwin Sing)

Mao’s Last Dancer

Figure 1 http://www.penguin.com.au/covers-jpg/067004024X.jpg
Study Overview

Li Cunxin’s (pronounced Lee Schwin Sing) autobiography, *Mao’s Last Dancer* is written from his own unique cultural context.

The history of China, Li Cunxin’s place in his family as sixth son and his selection and development into one of the world’s most prominent male lead ballet dancers presents a range of cultures and subcultures for the student to explore.

Li, a Chinese born peasant boy, grew up during the Cultural Revolution, a true believer until the age of 18 of Maoist Cultural Revolutionary policies. His ‘religion’ was Communism; his values were embedded in the principles of family and honour. This study guide will focus on the period prior to Li Cunxin’s defection to America, however, will include the effects of his personal cultural contexts in adjusting to life beyond China.

This study guide will provide students with the opportunity to deconstruct the text for its cultural and literary value. The study guide has an accompanying website to assist students to develop the cultural knowledge necessary to deconstruct, understand and value the text.

Students will have the opportunity to study the themes, issues and ideas raised in the text. Students will then deconstruct the narrative for its social, cultural, political, historical, religious, gender and intellectual contexts. The study will then move on to the author’s purpose and audience reception, examining the literal, metaphorical, metaphysical and philosophical questions relating to the study of cultural identity in texts.
# Biographical Details of the composer

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## Notes

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Names and naming as a cultural phenomena

Locate the context of names of the characters in the text and write a brief explanation of each in terms of how the composer relates them to the cultural phenomena of his upbringing (clue: the religious, dialectical or historical significance).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Character and meaning in terms of Cultural significance</th>
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<td>Niang</td>
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<td>Cunsang</td>
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<td>Cungui/Jing Tring</td>
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<td>Sien Yu</td>
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<td>Cunfar</td>
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<td>Big Uncle</td>
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<td>Cunmao</td>
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<td>Cuncia/Big Brother</td>
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<td>Second Brother/</td>
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<td>Cunyuan</td>
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<td>Fourth Brother/Cunsang</td>
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<td>Song Ciayang</td>
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<td>Chairman Mao</td>
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<td>Vice Chairman Lin Biao</td>
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<td>Yang Ping</td>
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<td>Chiang Kaishek</td>
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Cultural Markers
Create a list of cultural markers that are used to present cultural knowledge in the text. Provide a quotation for each marker and suggest how it challenges or provides insight into understanding notions of cultural identity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural marker</th>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>How does this marker provide insight into cultural identity?</th>
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<td>Marriage rituals</td>
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<td>Gender expectations: women</td>
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<td>Gender expectations: daughters in law</td>
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<td>Gender expectations – societal – bound feet</td>
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<td>Gender Expectations: men</td>
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<td>Religious/spiritual dimensions</td>
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<td>Food/rituals</td>
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<td>Food/everyday</td>
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<td>Clothing/rituals</td>
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<td>Clothing/everyday</td>
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<td>Clothing/political or social class</td>
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<td>Family hierarchy</td>
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<td>Locality/place</td>
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<td>Housing/accommodation</td>
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<td>Historical context</td>
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<td>Grandparents role in upbringing of children</td>
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<td>Cooking/food preparation</td>
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<td>Political context: Great Leap Forward</td>
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<td>Political context: Chairman Mao</td>
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<td>Political context: Little Red Book</td>
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<td>Political context: Red Guard</td>
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<td>Mao’s Cultural Revolution</td>
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<td>Communism in China</td>
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<td>Birth rituals</td>
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<td>Celebrations/Ritual: Chinese New Year</td>
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<td>Medicines/health</td>
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<td>Economic constraints/ peasants</td>
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<td>Work – nature of work – agrarian culture</td>
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<td>Family relations and responsibilities</td>
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<td>Values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference to specific culturally significant native flowers and plants</td>
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<td>Superstitions</td>
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<td>Names and naming/ cultural practices for identifying siblings</td>
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<td>Barefoot doctor – political context/health/peasantry/economic identities</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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Chapter Questions

A Wedding: Qingdao, 1946 (pages ix to xv)

1. How does Cunxin denote time, place and setting in his use of language in the opening lines of the text?

2. How old is Li Cunxin’s Mother when she sets out for her wedding? Why does Cunxin use the modifying adverb ‘only’?

3. What abstract nouns are used to convey the bride’s emotions?

4. What does Cunxin’s exploration of the cultural concept of ‘marriage introducers’ and his exploration of some of the consequences of arranged unions suggest about marriage in Chinese culture?

5. How does the use of language impact on the reader through the prayers of the bride?

6. Anadiplosis (the repetition of one word or phrase at the end of a sentence that is repeated as the opening word or phrase of the next sentence) is used to highlight the cultural marker of ‘bound feet’ in Chinese culture. What cultural inferences and explanations are provided by Cunxin that provides reasons why the bride be would be worried about this aspect of her physical appearance?

7. How old is her groom?

8. How many strong young men are needed to carry the sedan chairs?

9. How does Cunxin use setting - in terms of time of day and time spent traveling - to suggest implications for the impending marriage?

10. The text provides a list of cultural elements that create insight into the significance of specific symbolism surrounding cultural practices such as weddings. Research a Chinese wedding and determine why these symbols are used and how they present cultural insight.
11. What points of the compass are mentioned and what does the symbolism suggest?

12. What do the family glue on the walls and what is the purpose of the symbolic gesture?

13. What state is the bride in when the groom arrives?

14. What is served to the groom and his entourage?

15. What does the bride do while they eat?

16. What is the ‘news from heaven’ the bride receives from her second brother?

17. How many mouthfuls of rice does the bride have to eat and what does she have to do with the last mouthful?

18. What do the carriers shout out at the halfway point?

19. What is a ‘doo’?

20. What adjectives and abstract nouns are used to describe the husband from the wife’s perspective?

21. What cultural markers are present in this section and how do they present culture as integral to the formation or acknowledgement of identity?
Part One: ‘My Childhood’

Chapter 1: ‘Home’

1. What verbs are used by Li Cunxin to suggest cultural identity is related to family hierarchy? (page 3)
2. Why does Li Cunxin denote the gender differentiation in paragraph 2?
3. What were the roles of women and men in China during the period Li Cunxin is referring to?
4. How does the introduction of family names challenge or exclude the reader from the cultural knowledge innate to Li Cunxin’s experience?

Complete the following sentences. You must make reference to specific cultural markers and refer to how the text creates notions of cultural identity.

(a) Li Cunxin’s purpose in defining gender roles of men and women is to highlight….
(b) The adjectives ‘meticulous’ and ‘efficient’ are used to create [psychological, physical/emotional/ethical, personal] insight into….
(c) The effectiveness of Li Cunxin’s descriptive language lies in his ability to….
(d) The reference to the cultural practice of ‘bound feet’ presents opportunities for the reader to…
(e) The discussion of ancestors presents insight into familial respect as integral to cultural identity. Li Cunxin highlights the complex roles of daughters-in-law as opposed to sons to…
(f) The introduction of ‘Mao’s official revolutionary doctrines’ into the text informs the reader of…
(g) The significance of the parentage of sons presents opportunities to develop an understanding of…
(h) Li Cunxin’s sizing of the property using the hyphenated adjectives ‘eight-foot square’ and ‘ten-foot-square’ denote the limitations of…
(i) References to cooking implements including [---------] and [---------] present opportunities to understand the concept of food as a marker of cultural identity. Li Cunxin effectively presents the reader with…
(j) The concept of living in a ‘village’ presents identity as…
(k) The reference to the ‘shit-man’ creates an opportunity to understand the concept of cultural identity as bound in…
(l) Li Cunxin’s descriptive commentary [---------] uses the concept of the ‘commune’ to highlight and sustain…
(m) Explicit reference to ‘Chinese custom’ in relation to childbirth develops insight into….
(n) Reference to cultural celebrations such as ‘Chinese New Year’ allows readers to…
(o) The nomenclature ‘dia’ and ‘niang’ creates verisimilitude and presents readers with…
(p) Cultural markers including medicines and forms of medical treatment are used by Li Cunxin to…
(q) Li Cunxin’s revelations about ‘dried yams’ presents opportunities to understand the hardship of growing up as a peasant boy. Li further develops his anecdotal narrative structure when he presents the story of searching for peanuts. The use of the punctuation [-----] and [----] creates….
(r) The use of the adverbs ‘casually’ and ‘innocently’ creates a [-----] highlighting the sacrifices Li’s parents made for their children in China.
(s) Using the repetition of ‘zhi, zhi, zhi’ Li Cunxin suggests the importance of language to his identity. His memoir is effectively highlighting….
(t) The use of the adjective ‘ecstatic’ to describe Li’s ‘niang’ when she shops for pork suggests…
(u) Li’s descriptive writing about the ‘delicious fragrance’ of ‘sizzling pork’ establishes…
(v) Social class and hierarchy is established in Li Cunxin’s reference to ‘government officials and their ability to eat out in the ‘one restaurant in our area…’ . The mention in his memoir is used to contrast ….
(w) Li Cunxin ends this chapter by establishing his family values of [------------]. [-------------] and [-----------]. Family name is presented through the verb [----------] and suggests the significance of naming to [----------------] [-------------]. Li effectively creates.…
(x) Li Cunxin’s niang’s emphatic declaration ‘The gods in heaven won’t hear us…’ develops an opportunity to examine religion and superstition as notions integral to cultural identity. The use of the adjective ‘hopeless’ accompanying the abstract noun ‘fate’ establishes…
(y) The use of capitalisation in Li Cunxin’s relating of the memory of his father’s emphasis on family ‘PRIDE’ is integral to his notions of identity, both ethical and cultural. Li Cunxin insightfully presents the reader with the opportunity to…
(z) The first chapter has been effective in presenting notions of cultural identity by challenging the reader to…

Study focus: Narrative Techniques

1. List the first sentence used at the beginning of each chapter and provide an analysis as to why the composer has chosen the specific language and sentence structure to engage the responder.

2. Identify any immediate cultural limitations placed on the responder that needs to be identified and overcome before engaging fully with the narrative.

3. Identify, provide examples and explain the effectiveness of a range of narrative devices (language forms, features and structures of texts) the composer has used to present you with opportunities to recognise the cultural context of the text.

4. Select five different techniques that you have found to be personally challenging and effective in exposing the cultural context of this text.

5. Identify any philosophical concerns raised in your initial reading that may impact on your reception of this text in its cultural context.
Part One: ‘My Childhood’

Chapter 2: ‘My Niang and Dia’

This chapter focuses on the characterisation of Li Cunxin’s mother and father, his ‘Niang’ and ‘Dia’.

1. Make a list of the adjectives, verbs, adverbs and abstract nouns used to describe Li Cunxin’s parents, himself or his brothers. Make a table to list each language device.
2. Make a list of figurative language features (allusion, allegory, alliteration, irony, satire, metaphor, simile etc) used to describe Li Cunxin’s parents, himself or his brothers. Make a table to list each language device.
3. Make a list of any narrative elements present in this chapter (see below for list of narrative elements) that provide opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of Li Cunxin’s memoir as a narrative of his life.

Narrative Elements:

- Setting
- Characterisation
- Plot
- Flashback
- Foreshadowing
- Tense
- Style
- Perspective
- Tone
- Symbolism

Read through the following websites:
http://www.hollyhocklife.org/elements-of-memoir-writing/

After reading through and discussing the concept of memoir draw up a list of characteristics that you can identify in your reading of Chapter 2 of Mao’s Last Dancer.

Place the characteristics in a table similar to that presented below and provide evidence from your text as to where these elements appear. Keep in mind you are always looking for evidence that links to the concept of Cultural Identity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Evidence from <em>Mao’s Last Dancer</em></th>
<th>Specific links to ‘Cultural Identity’ concept.</th>
<th>Language analysis of evidence</th>
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**Part One: ‘My Childhood’**

**Chapter 3: ‘A Commune Childhood’**

1. Identify two references Li Cunxin’s presents as evidence to demonstrate how poverty pervades his memories of childhood in the commune?
2. Identify aspects of the descriptions of landscape that present innate cultural knowledge?
3. On page 40 Li Cunxin refers to his memories as ‘vivid’. What does he mean and do you agree that his use of language is ‘vivid’?
4. This chapter explores ideas about medicines and ways of curing infections and warts including presenting rationales as to how and why they are used. How are these explanations evidence of Li Cunxin’s ‘cultural identity’?
5. On page 44 Li Cunxin relates his memories of Chinese New Year. List all the features of food and rituals presented in the text and why these were significant in developing his understanding of his life and growing up in China.
6. What descriptive language does Li Cunxin use to describe his experiences in this chapter? Considering your learning from the previous chapter about the use of language in memoir, how effective is Li Cunxin in drawing you into his world?
7. What references are made in this chapter to gods and ancestors? Why are these cultural markers?

8. What rituals exist around the notion of ancestors? How do the ancestors establish and sustain personal identity in Chinese families?

9. How does Li Cunxin relate his memories of extended family in this chapter? What names are they given? Why has he made these references and how do they add to our understanding of his sense of personal identity?

10. Li Cunxin relates a specific reference to his father and kite making. Reread this section and suggest what is being said in terms of the significance of family relationships within a distinctly cultural context.

11. This chapter contains an intertextual fable, the ‘Frog in the Well’ story (pp 52-53). How does the use of allegory and symbolism presented in the tale sustain the cultural context of Li Cunxin’s text?

12. At the end of this chapter Li Cunxin steps out of his chronological memoir and provides an analysis of the impact his father and childhood had in shaping his identity as an adult. What metaphors does he present and what life lessons does he learn?

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**Part One: ‘My Childhood’**

**Chapter 4 ‘The Seven of Us’**

1. How does the opening sentence present the context of this chapter?

2. How is the relational aspect of childhood and identity presented as one that drifts across generations?

3. How do you feel as a reader when you read the sentence ‘out of love and compassion my parents agreed to let them [fourth uncle and aunt] adopt their “[Li Cunxin’s dia and niang] third son”’?

4. How could this action be seen as cultural?

5. What are the implications for Cunmao’s identity?

6. If this relating of events is memoir, then it is assumed it is part of the experiences of Li Cunxin. How old was Li Cunxin when this event happened? How could his relating of the conversations of this event be questioned in terms of the veracity of the memoir?

7. List each of the brother’s names and write out the quotes that present their individual characteristics. How do these characteristics compare and contrast the identities of each brother?

8. The use of tense is specific in this chapter. Identify a range of verbs that identify the tense.

9. What objects or actions presented in this chapter would be deemed intrinsically Chinese?

10. An allusion is made in this chapter to ‘Chairman Mao’s Red Book’. The actual title was *Quotations from Mao Tse Tung*

11. Research the contents of this text online @


12. When was the text written?

13. What was the texts’ purpose?
14. What language – verbs, adverbs and adjectives – surround the references to the text throughout this chapter and in later chapters?
15. What is the significance of this text in forming Li Cunxin’s early sense of political identity?
16. On pages 63-66, a range of cultural markers are referred to: Kung Fu, bean curd, dragonflies, crickets, Mao, the Red Guards and communism and others. List these references into a table and analyse how the language used to present each suggests Li Cunxin’s opinions and conveys their importance to his identity.
17. This chapter introduces the political context that impacts significantly on Li Cunxin’s childhood and growing up. Identify how and what Li Cunxin engages with in terms of political context and explain its impact on his sense of personal identity?
18. How does the final sentence of the chapter present Li Cunxin’s final analysis of Maos’ regime on his recognition of self and community?

Part One: ‘My Childhood’

Chapter 5 ‘NA-NA’

1. Read the opening sentence of the chapter and suggest how it hooks the reader in, linking the last chapter and presents a new aspect of cultural identity.
2. What commentary is being made here about poverty, the role of grandparents, necessity, childhood responsibility, familial love and responsibility and how each evokes aspects of cultural identity?
3. Discuss the ritual (and obstacles surrounding them) of Na-Na’s burial. How do the insights presented by Li Cunxin reveal the importance of tradition and ceremony to a sense of personal identity? In your response identify the aspects of ritual that are distinctly cultural.
4. Identify specific language used by Li Cunxin that reveals emotional, psychological and spiritual notions relating to identity and or culture.
5. Read the final paragraph: how does Li Cunxin relate his adult feelings and emotions?

Part One: ‘My Childhood’

Chapter 7 ‘Chairman Mao’s Classroom’

1. How do the opening sentences introduce the reader to the context of this chapter?
2. How old was Li Cunxin when he started ‘compulsory’ schooling?
3. How do the descriptions of clothing link to the concept of cultural identity?
4. What values are imparted by Li Cunxin’s niang?
5. Locate evidence of the size of the school, the descriptions of the building and surrounds and suggest why Li Cunxin has shared these aspects of his childhood.
6. How does the teacher’s introductory speech and Li Cunxin’s relating of her discussion of the political aspects of education present notions of the embedding of cultural identity through education?

7. What adjectives, verbs and adverbs suggest the propaganda Li Cunxin is highlighting was significant in his education. How does the language suggest a commentary on the forcing of identity on Chinese children in the 1970s?

8. What symbolism is used in depictions of Chairman Mao?

9. Research a range of propaganda posters of Chairman Mao and examine the visual symbols used that support Li Cunxin’s inferred commentary on the way posters were used to shape identity.

10. Read the ‘tale’ that Li Cunxin’s dia had told him. (pages 89-90)

11. What is the purpose of using the intertextuality of the fables?

12. What morals are presented in the fable?

13. How does the use of the fable in this chapter contrast with Li Cunxin’s experiences of education?

14. List any specific cultural references made in this chapter and list evidence in your cultural markers table.

Part One: ‘My Childhood’

Chapter 8 ‘Leaving Home’
1. How is Li Cunxin’s personal context established in the opening sentences of this chapter?
2. How are the structural elements of memoir and narrative being established in the opening paragraph?
3. How is the concept of fear established here?
4. What commentary is Li Cunxin making about Chairman Mao and his influence on education and personal identity?
5. What aspects of poverty and pride are sustained from earlier chapters that are clearly suggesting their impact on Li Cunxin’s awareness of himself and his identity?
6. What understandings of ballet did Li Cunxin have previously to his audition? What cultural aspects are suggested by this reference?
7. How is punctuation and emotive language used to convey Li Cunxin’s experience in the second audition?
8. The text introduces Beijing into the narrative. This city becomes a significant setting throughout the remainder of the text. Research Beijing and in particular, the Madame Mao’s influence on Chinese ballet and opera. Research Madame Mao and her influence on China’s cultural landscape during the Cultural Revolution @ http://www.imow.org/wpp/stories/viewStory?storyId=934 and http://www.iisg.nl/landsberger/jq.html
9. Identify the references to social class (page 108) and suggest why Li Cunxin has referenced these aspects of his understanding of the significance of Mao to cultural identity and knowledge.
10. Read the passage about Li Cunxin’s final meal before leaving his family for Beijing on page 112. What cultural markers are presented?
11. What gift do Li Cunxin’s classmates provide him with on his departure? How does this gift reinforce the significance of politics in determining and shaping cultural identity in Mao’s China?
12. Read the passages about Li Cunxin’s train journey. What does he see and experience?
13. Identify three grammatical and three figurative language features used by Li Cunxin on pages 118 and 119 to contrast his new experiences with his old life in Qingdao?
14. Read the final paragraph on page 119 and the final passage on page 120. To what extent is this section of the narrative effective in forming a conclusion to the opening section?

Part Two: ‘Beijing’

Chapter 8 ‘Feather in a Whirlwind’

1. Create a table that presents the contrasts between the descriptions of Beijing with those of Laoshan County.
2. Identify the descriptive writing about the clothing Li Cunxin saw when he went to Beijing. What is inferred about cultural identity in Li Cunxin’s reference to ‘Mao-style jackets’?
3. Research and develop a collage of the landmarks Li Cunxin is taken to when he arrives in Beijing: Tiananmen Square; The Gate of Heavenly Peace and The Peoples’ Congress.
4. How does the taking of these students to these landmarks suggest geography and landmarks as integral to developing a national cultural identity?
5. When Li Cunxin uses the phrase ‘made my spine shiver’ he is inferring what about his experience?
6. Li Cunxin provides historical context in this chapter. What is the context? (page 124)
7. Li Cunxin uses the verb ‘etched’ to describe the way the date is inscribed into children’s memories. What imagery is presented and what is inferred about national identity?
8. How and why does Li Cunxin reveal his ‘sense of insecurity’?
9. How does the use of rhetorical questions suggest veracity – or a lack of – in his recalling of events?
10. Where was the ballet school?
11. Why does Li Cunxin refer to the concept of ‘Mao’s philosophy’ as significant in determining his understanding of experience?
12. What tone is established through the language such as ‘compound…officials…overpowering unfamiliar’?
13. In terms of personal identity, how does Li Cunxin reflect on his new found independence?
14. What personal belongings did Li Cunxin bring to the ballet school? How do these objects affirm his identity?
15. How long does Li Cunxin have to study at the academy?
16. In the introductory speech the students are told that they are ‘lucky…privileged…proud’. How does this language present cultural aspects in terms of expectations and identity?
17. What other training would students receive whilst at the academy? Why are each of these areas of study essential to developing a national cultural identity?
18. How is the propaganda of the experience highlighted?
19. Language such as ‘glorious’ is used, in italics and with an exclamation mark. Why does the author want you, the reader, to understand the way language was used to embed cultural identity?
20. What is the purpose in Li Cunxin’s revelation of language surrounding his entrance into the academy? Provide an analysis of each of the following terms as ways of locating self, community, family, and national identity: ‘repetition of ‘a billion’; ‘dedicated…crusade’…faithful servant…expectation is enormous’.
21. What cultural expectations are suggested and reinforced in references to ‘a billion eyes’ and ‘a billion other people’?
22. What commentary is Li Cunxin making when he refers to dialect and its impact on identity, belonging and familiarity?
23. Why did Li Cunxin have no appetite?
24. Discuss the following language in terms of whether the memories are accurate recordings of the past or reflective memories reconstructed from an adult perspective:
   - ‘cast a sadness’
   - ‘distant moon’
   - ‘unfamiliar darkness’
25. What does Li Cunxin mean in the phrase ‘fear and growing loneliness’?
26. Explain the effectiveness of the extended metaphor established in language including ‘adrift…life-saving rope…ocean of sadness’.
27. What aspects of identity are highlighted in terms of family and home?
28. What tone is established in the descriptors ‘military-style’?
29. Read the descriptions and recount of dialogue of Chiu Ho. What verbs are used that establish tone and context about her character?
30. Who was Chen Lueng? Why does he become such a significant figure in Li Cunxin’s life?

31. Read the description of the studio and Li Cunxin’s first experiences in the ballet school on page 135 – 137. Analyse how these descriptions and the use of language reflect either the voice of a child or the voice of an adult.
Part Two: ‘Beijing’

Chapter 9 ‘The Caged Bird’

1. What metaphor is suggested by the title of the chapter?
2. What cultural markers are presented in the opening paragraphs of the chapter? Provide a detailed discussion of the objects and aspects of culture and an explanation of why Li Cunxin provides such a detailed description for his audience.
3. Research the ‘Gang of Four’ and the influence on Li Cunxin’s experience.
4. Who was Confucius and why did he conflict with Mao’s cause?
5. How does Li Cunxin present the political context of his experience and the influence his teachers had on forming the identity of students?
6. What emotive language is provided on page 142 that challenges audiences to evaluate if the memories are those of a child or of an adult’s perspective of childhood?
7. Read Li Cunxin’s ‘self criticism’ on page 144. How does this writing reflect the influence of politics on Li Cunxin’s identity?
8. Read pages 146-148. What historical context is presented and how does the discussion provide insight into culture and its influences on the shaping of identity?
9. Read the information about newspapers and propaganda on page 152. What commentary is Li Cunxin making about those aspects of identity that were inculcated into the lives of children in China?
10. How does this chapter reflect the metaphor presented by the title?

Part Two: ‘Beijing’

Chapter 10 ‘That First Lonely Year’

1. What simile is presented in paragraph 1?
2. What metaphor is presented in paragraph 2?
3. What repetition is used in paragraph 3?
4. What cultural marker is present in the discussion of sickness on page 155?
5. What evocative and physical reaction is caused by the reference to bodily emissions on page 155?
6. What punctuation is used for emphasis and effect on page 156?
7. What adverbs are used to express nervousness on page 156?
8. Discuss the effectiveness of the alliteration in ‘luxury of luxuries’.
9. What political allusions are evident on page 157?
10. What historical and political allusions are evident on page 158?
11. What is ‘euphoria’?
12. Identify the tone and its effectiveness in expressing ideas relating to cultural identity in the phrase ‘We became nothing more than Chairman Mao’s political puppets’?
13. How does the propaganda of being ‘uniquely Chinese’ provide insight into the construction of a cultural identity?
14. What tone and inference is established in the phrase ‘His golden words…’? (page 159)
15. What do the ‘Learning Three Classes sessions’ infer about individual and cultural identity under Chairman Mao?
16. What ‘parallels’ are made between Chairman Mao and Hitler?
17. What is a laggard? (page 164)
18. Discuss the effectiveness of the language and punctuation used by Li Cunxin to describe the Great Wall.
19. What commentary is Li Cunxin making about the role of examinations in determining identity?
20. Read the final paragraph of the chapter. How does Li Cunxin feel? How has his identity been influenced by his grades?
21. Evaluate this chapter overall for its use of language and reference to cultural markers. How effective is Li Cunxin in evoking a sense of his childhood and how his personal and cultural identity was formed?

Part Two: ‘Beijing’

Chapter 11 ‘The Pen’

1. How does reference to economy and currency suggest cultural context?
2. What emotive and descriptive language is used by Li Cunxin to describe his feelings and emotions about going home?
3. What aspects of culture and identity are intertwined on page 169?
4. What image does Li Cunxin refer to that will remain with him always? What is inferred by relating this memory?
5. What is inferred in the phrase ‘You don’t want my life and my destiny.’ on page 171.
6. What is suggested about the strength and endurance of family relationships and how they establish and sustain a sense of personal identity?
7. What cultural markers are references or alluded to that place Li Cunxin’s return home in a specific cultural context?
8. How did the villagers response to Li Cunxin on his return home? Why has the author included this material in his text?
9. How do the final paragraphs present insight into the purpose of the title? What is the author’s purpose in relating this material?
10. What words will echo in Li Cunxin’s mind and why is this important in establishing his personal and cultural sense of self?
Part Two: ‘Beijing’

Chapter 12 ‘My Own Voice’

1. What do the opening paragraphs suggest about the power and significance of language to identity?
2. What is ‘indomitable authority’?
3. What were ‘double flying legs’ and the ‘butterfly’?
4. Who was the ‘Bandit’? What is his purpose in the narrative of this chapter?
5. What traditions are referred to on page 182 and how could these influence Li Cunxin’s sense of identity?
6. What evocative language is used to describe Li Cunxin’s experience of becoming a ‘blood brother’?
7. What purpose is behind Li Cunxin’s intertextual use of the fable on pages 184-185? How does the use of fables in the text suggest the intrinsic nature of narrative in forming cultural identity?
8. What commentary is Li Cunxin making about America on page 186? Do you think the thoughts were his actual reflections at the time or ones made in hindsight?
9. What continued references to the manipulation and construction of identity are made on pages 186-187?
10. What cultural markers are presented on page 190? How do they extend your understanding of culture and its influence on identity?
11. Reflect on the dialogue on page 193. Argue whether this is actual, accurate, remembered dialogue or a construction of dialogue that may have taken place. In your argument refer to ideas about the way memoir is both truth and narrative.
12. What was the source of conflict between Li Cunxin and his brother? What was the substance of their ‘talk’? Why is the concern cultural and about identity?
13. How has this chapter challenged your understanding of family in a Chinese context?
14. How could Li Cunxin’s revelation of family conflict align with your own personal experiences?
15. Would your own experiences have the same cultural resonance?
16. Reflecting back on the title of the chapter, what ‘voice’ is Li Cunxin expressing?
Part Two: ‘Beijing’

Chapter 13 ‘Teacher Xiao’s Words’

1. When is this chapter set?
2. What cultural references are established from the outset that present Li Cunxin’s sense of personal and cultural identity?
3. Why was Li Cunxin’s trip ‘beyond his wildest dreams’?
4. How does the commentary provide insight into the success of the propaganda that had become intrinsic to his personality?
5. Why does Li Cunxin experience ‘a sense of shame’? What does this commentary infer about identity?
6. What is the impact of the narrative surrounding the ‘nationwide publicised demonstration’ in terms of cultural identity?
7. What is inferred by the language ‘seducing us’?
8. What lessons are the dancers to learn from the ‘peasants’?
9. What is the consistent adjective used by Li Cunxin to describe Mao? What is inferred by this repetition throughout the text?
10. What is Li Cunxin suggesting in his statement ‘This had been my political destiny since birth’?
11. Who was Deng Xiaoping?
12. What political statements are being made in the references to the changes to the Chinese ballet?
13. This text is often referred to as ‘inspiring’. What aspects of the writing on page 208 suggest Li Cunxin’s narrative could be inspirational?
14. What causes Li Cunxin’s outburst on page 210?
15. What is the purpose of teacher Xiao’s story?
16. What metaphors are presented?
17. What aspects of the tale are cultural?
18. What influence is this tale meant to have on developing Li Cunxin’s identity?
19. What simile ‘like winning battles in war’ is used to present what insight into identity?
20. Discuss the language surrounding the references to ‘Beijing Dust’. What is poetic about the language and why would Li Cunxin use such poetic language to present memories?
21. What cultural markers are presented on page 217?
22. Discuss Li Cunxin’s references to the discussion between Teacher Xiao and himself and his family? How does the use of punctuation present emphasis to the language used?
23. What is the significance of Teacher Xiao to Li Cunxin’s experiences and his developing personal and cultural identity?
Part Two: ‘Beijing’

Chapter 14 ‘Turning Points’

1. What is the pun presented by the title?
2. What is about to change in Cunxin’s relationship with Teacher Xiao?
3. What is teacher Xiao’s challenge?
4. How does the challenge present opportunities for Li Cunxin’s identity as an exceptional ballet dancer to form?
5. What is inferred in Li Cunxin’s description of the ballet *The Red Detachment of Women*?
6. What does Li Cunxin’s discussion of the ballet suggest has developed in terms of his beginnings as a student at the academy and his role as a fourth year student?
7. Examine the images presented in the center of the text. Select five images and locate references in the text that would elucidate their context and how they present aspects of Li Cunxin’s identity, both personal and cultural.
8. What new language is introduced into the text on page 225?
9. What is inferred about cultural identity rather than individual identity in the phrase ‘Individualism was firmly discouraged’?
10. How does the language of the text suggest Li Cunxin’s concept of the political context surrounding ballet beginning to change for one of artistic appreciation?
11. What political and cultural information is provided on page 227? Why does the author include this material in his narrative?
12. What is symbolic about the ‘tree’ in the ballet described on page 228? Why is this ballet important for Li Cunxin?
13. What cultural is the political reference to the Communist party and Communist Youth? Do these references reflect childhood memories or a reflective stance from the position of adulthood?
14. What is the impact of Mao’s death on Li Cunxin and his classmates? What views and opinions are expressed?
15. What is the author suggesting about the influence of Mao on the identities of his generation?
16. What language features are used to express the political influences and indoctrination that surrounds the training of the students at the ballet school?
17. What does the final sentence suggest about the development of identity and the way ballet has become integral to Li Cunxin’s experience?
Part Two: ‘Beijing’

Chapter 15 ‘The Mango’

1. What cultural marker is presented in paragraph 2?
2. What political events are occurring at this point in the memoir?
3. What is the metaphor being presented about the mango?
4. What ‘bad Western influences’ might students be exposed to?
5. What does this propaganda and indoctrination suggest about the formation of identity?
6. What punctuation and language is used to inculcate a sense of fear of Western society onto students?
7. How do the videos of Baryshnikov impact on Li Cunxin?
8. How does the simile ‘fly like the beautiful birds and dragonflies’ suggest cultural context?
9. What political references are made in this chapter? How do the political ‘pressures wane’ at this point in Li Cunxin’s narrative?
10. What changes were made in the ballet school after the new policies of Deng Xiaoping were introduced?

Part Two: ‘Beijing’

Chapter 16 ‘Change’

1. What is the time setting of the chapter?
2. What was the ‘Ministry of Culture’?
3. What is inferred in the sentence ‘Years of isolation from Western … had found their outlet.’?
4. What was Li Cunxin’s reaction to Western movies?
5. How does the reflection of ‘lack of discipline’ infer identity?
6. What was the impact of the ‘London festival Ballet’ coming to visit China?
7. What cultural differences of a physical nature are expressed on page 251?
8. What had happened to all the records on Western Ballets throughout the Cultural Revolution? What is suggested about the long term impact of the Cultural Revolution on individuals and groups?
9. What cultural identity aspects are being explored in Li Cunxin’s rhetorical question: ‘But how could a Chinese peasant boy understand a Western prince’s arrogance, his passion and his love?’
10. Identify the way language is used to introduce an individual who will have a significant impact on Li Cunxin’s life and identity beyond China?
11. How does the content of this chapter link to the title of ‘Change’?
Part Two: ‘Beijing’

Chapter 17 ‘On the Way to the West’

1. How many students were selected to attend Ben Stevenson’s classes?
2. What does the verb ‘exhilarated’ mean? How does the verb compare with the adjective ‘restricted’ used to describe Li Cunxin’s training?
3. What emotive language does Li Cunxin use to describe Stevenson and his teaching? What does this language suggest about change?
4. What adjective does the author use, accompanied by punctuation, to express his emotions about the scholarship opportunities?
5. How could these opportunities become a challenge to Li Cunxin’s sense of identity?
6. What rhetorical questions suggest tone in the text? What tone is demonstrated?
7. What does the phrase ‘powerful friends’ mean in the political context of this text?
8. What is a ‘balletomane’?
9. How does the concept of names evoke ideas and issues surrounding identity?
10. What is ‘pinyin’?
11. What do the references to birth days and Chinese calendar suggest about cultural identity?
12. How does the discussion surrounding birth date explore social class and identity?
13. What is ‘Chinglish’?
14. What cultural stereotypes are highlighted on page 260?
15. Read the discussion surrounding Cocoa Cola. What does the author imply by his referencing of this specific cultural icon?
16. How does the simile ‘feeling like a tiny insect’ relate to personal identity?
17. How does the Bandit’s note provide a link to cultural identity?
18. Li Cunxin has made several references throughout his memoir to ‘ninth heaven. Research the number nine in the Chinese context and suggest the significance of the euphemism.
19. What changes and transitions between cultures are inferred in this chapter?
20. How do these changes pose a threat to existing ideas about culture and identity?
Part Two: ‘Beijing’

Chapter 18 ‘The Filthy Capitalist America’

1. What does the adjective ‘filthy’ mean in the context of Li Cunxin’s experience?
2. What is capitalism?
3. What is the conflict in ideology between capitalism and communism?
4. What is a ‘Paper Tiger’? How does this phrase suggest cultural identity and in particular, China’s view of America?
5. What aspects of landscape does Li Cunxin recall in his memoir and how does the landscape contrast with the landscape of China?
6. Why were the boys ‘suspicious’ about the ‘gifts’ they were offered? How does their suspicion reflect the indoctrination received in China?
7. How is identity and ‘political standing’ connected?
8. What ‘hidden agendas’ did the dancers fear?
9. What political commentary is being made in the discussion of climate?
10. What insights does Li Cunxin present that reflect his self realization about the propaganda he has been taught in China? Do you think he had this realization at the time or does he feel more confident to make this analysis in hindsight? If in hindsight, what does the discussion suggest about the effectiveness of memoir?
11. What lies have the students been told?
12. What humour is used in the rhetorical questions on page 269. What serious connotations are evoked by the humour?
13. How does the cultural knowledge of Chinese Opera conflict with the description of the waitress on page 269?
14. What is inferred by the phrase ‘class enemies’?
15. What cultural differences in terms of food are evident on page 270? What economic and political aspects are being referenced here?
16. Why does Li Cunxin use the simile ‘like a criminal’?
17. Why does the author place the word ‘masses’ in italics?
18. Li Cunxin makes a number of references to currency and economic exchange in this chapter. Why?
19. What does Li Cunxin fear about his meeting with Barbara Bush? How does his discussion present ideas about cultural identity?
20. What is the difference in ideologies expressed in the discussion of politicians on page 277?
21. Why is Li Cunxin disappointed when he goes to the White House? What cultural and political information is being presented here?
22. What realisations does Li Cunxin express about his time in America? How could these realisations challenge his understanding about his personal and cultural identity?
23. What is the significance of the phrase ‘I had now tasted freedom…’?
Part Two: ‘Beijing’

Chapter 19 ‘Goodbye China’

1. What aspects of his American experience does Li Cunxin decide to share with his Chinese teachers and fellow students?
2. What aspects does Li Cunxin make the decision not to discuss? Why?
3. How does Li Cunxin suggest about individual rights and the impact on his sense of personal and cultural identity?
4. What simile does Li Cunxin use to describe his reaction against the constraints in China? How does the simile present concerns about identity?
5. Why does Li Cunxin feel the need to write about ‘rotten capitalist influences’? What does this discussion suggest about his self realisation? Does his newfound knowledge suggest challenges to his sense of identity?
6. What is Zhang’s reaction and how does it differ from Li Cunxin’s view of himself and what he is being asked to do?
7. What does the verb ‘relinquish’ infer?
8. Why is Li Cunxin refused in his request for a passport to return to America?
9. What tone is present in his response?
10. Read the final paragraph on page 287. The author uses a range of language features, both grammatical and figurative to present his feelings and contrasts between expecttions and reality. What is effective about the writing?
11. How has Li Cunxin’s attitude changed when he states: “America was real”?
12. What inferences can be drawn from the statement ‘Hugging still wasn’t a communist thing to do’?
13. On page 290, the author states: ‘my self-doubt resurfaced and I lost all my mental strength and will.’ How does this statement reflect the intricacies of identity?
14. Explain the effectiveness of the simile used in the sentence: Like a flea trying to overpower an elephant.
15. On page 295, Li Cunxin develops a discussion on equality and the irony of communism and its principles. How have his attitudes presented him with courage to challenge the origins of his cultural identity?
16. Teacher Xiao returns to his metaphor of the mango. Why?
17. How does poetic language used on page 298 conflict with the structural elements of memoir?
18. How do the final lines of this chapter suggest reflection as an adult rather than continuing the chronological structure of the memoir?
Part Three: ‘The West’

Chapter 20 ‘Return to the Land of Freedom’

1. What type of exhausting is being inferred by the opening sentence? How does the sentence hook the reader into the chapter?
2. What was Li Cunxin afraid of?
3. What emotive language is used to express his emotional state?
4. How do the opening two paragraphs suggest a shift in terms of cultural identity?
5. What comparisons are made between Houston and Beijing? Why does the author make these comparisons and do they have metaphorical as well as literal meaning?
6. What meaning and insight is created in the sentences: ‘I took a deep breath. My spirit felt free.’
7. How had Li Cunxin’s ‘belief’s been altered? How could a shift in understanding impact on ideas about identity? Discuss the alliteration used to provide a strong sense of change in his understanding of self and of China.
8. What does the adjectival phrase ‘relentless pursuit’ suggest about a new identity for Li Cunxin?
9. How do the references to language acquisition suggest a shift in cultural identity?
10. How does the discussion of Christmas on page 305 contrast culturally with Li Cunxin’s Chinese understanding of holidays? How does he rationalize Christmas within his own cultural framework?
11. How does the discussion of economics (page 306) present cultural knowledge and a shift in understandings of wealth and poverty?
12. How do the descriptions of the Christmas feast present challenges to existing cultural rituals?
13. Read the things that Li Cunxin states he has to remember on page 309. How does this passage infer the innate cultural context he has been taught ballet under?
14. How does the popular culture reference to Bruce lee suggest a lack of understanding between American and Chinese culture?
15. How does Li Cunxin try to impress his date on page 311? What cultural identity ideas are presented here?
16. How does the language in the final sentence suggest structural concept relating to memoir?
Part Three: ‘The West’

Chapter 21 ‘Elizabeth’

1. The cover of this memoir states: ‘From bitter poverty to the stardom of the West – this is the extraordinary true story of one boy’s great courage and determination.’ How does the memory of Teacher Xiao’s ‘mangoes’ reflect the cover statement?

2. What issues relating to cultural identity are raised on page 316? Why is Li Cunxin relating this information to his reader?

3. On page 317, Li Cunxin makes a specific cultural reference to communist China. What is he suggesting about his cultural positioning and why is this issue significant to understanding the innate concerns relating to cultural identity?

4. On page 318, Li Cunxin makes the reference ‘Duty towards my motherland…’ How does this statement and the accompanying text provide insight into the conflict of cultural identity when presented with new opportunities?

5. What are the potential issues raised when Li Cunxin marries Elizabeth?

6. On page 322, Ben makes the comment: ‘China is where you belong. You are Chinese.’ How have the italics been used to present emphasis and meaning?

7. Read pages 323 and 324 closely. What cultural inferences are made and how does the language reveal the conflict and concerns of the protagonist?

8. Read the final sentence of the chapter. How has Li Cunxin’s attitude towards China changed?
Part Three: ‘The West’

Chapter 22 ‘Defection’

1. Identify the significant verbs, adverbs, adjectives and abstract nouns used to develop emotional connections between the reader and the protagonist of the text.
2. On page 327, the statement ‘the atmosphere changed’ is made. Why?
3. How significant is the fear embedded from childhood propaganda presented on page 328?
4. Explain how the conversation: ‘Do you think a foreigner could really love a Chinese?’ presents issues relating to cultural identity?
5. What does the statement ‘You don’t decide what you’re going to do with your life, the Communist Party does! You are a Chinese citizen.’ suggest about cultural identity and how it can be a barrier to engaging with new ideas and opportunities?
6. Read page 330. What inferences are being made in relation to Li Cunxin’s family?
7. Why, on page 331, do the Chinese officials attempt to accuse Ben and others of having a ‘political agenda’? What fears are being revealed here by the Chinese?
8. What was the impact of the interrogation, physically, emotionally and psychologically on Li Cunxin? How did this interrogation make him feel about his identity?
9. What are Sino/Us relations?
10. How could Li Cunxin’s defection affect these relations?
11. How does the statement ‘you are now a man without a country and a people’ impact on Li Cunxin’s sense of self and identity?
Part Three: ‘The West’

Chapter 23 ‘My New Life’

1. How does Li Cunxin’s statement to the press provide insight into the real source of his personal identity?
2. What are the inferred implications of having to be protected by the FBI?
3. How does the discussion of food on page 342 highlight the enduring qualities of cultural knowledge?
4. How do Li Cunxin’s memories of his mother on page 3433 suggest the importance of family to developing and sustaining identity?
5. Why does Li Cunxin feel such ‘sorrow and guilt’?
6. How does Li Cunxin explain the failure of his marriage?
7. How does the failure of the marriage highlight even further the notion of home to having an identity?
8. What were Li Cunxin’s first thoughts about London?
9. Li Cunxin makes the assertion that the ‘Chinese government would probably have lied’ about England. Why is it important at this point in the narrative that he continues to highlight the propaganda he has been subjected to in his youth?
10. Read the final paragraph. What language is used to present insights into home, family, culture and identity?
Part Three: ‘The West’

Chapter 24 ‘A Millet Dream Come True’

1. What is the metaphor suggested by the title?
2. How does the reflection on holidays and traditional celebrations suggest shifts in Li Cunxin’s understanding of his cultural identity?
3. What is the ‘huge price’ Li Cunxin has had to pay for his freedom?
4. What does the reflection on not wanting to be like ‘most of the Chinese people living in Houston’ suggest about changing ideas about identity?
5. What metaphor is presented in the term ‘communist cell’?
6. How do aspects of popular culture impact on Li Cunxin? Provide specific references from the text.
7. How does the term ‘Chinese defector’ present insight into Li Cunxin’s understanding of his identity?
8. How does the statement ‘I had realised the capitalist dream’ contrast with earlier ideas about America?
9. How does Barbara Bush’s conversation with Ben and Li Cunxin provide insight into the issues of defection and identity?
10. How does the ‘glory to the Chinese people’ comment by Wang Zicheng contrast with Li Cunxin’s earlier experience at the Chinese consulate?
11. What hopes did Li Cunxin have for seeing his family again?
12. How does Li Cunxin react when he gets his news that his parents are given permission to visit him in America?
Part Three: ‘The West’

Chapter 25 ‘No more nightmares’

1. How do the opening lines of this chapter challenge the genre of memoir?
2. How does the second sentence challenge your reaction to the first sentence?
3. What is the purpose of the contradiction?
4. How effectively does Li Cunxin use language to convey his joy at talking to his family?
5. What aspects of cultural identity are presented when his Niang asks: ‘Is it really you, my sixth son…?’
6. What cultural aspects of Japan does Li Cunxin notice and compare with his life in China and America?
7. How does Li Cunxin present his gifts for his parents as comparisons and reminders of his life in China?
8. What were the ‘firsts’ Li Cunxin’s parents experience in the first hour of their arrival in America? Why is Li Cunxin concerned for them?
9. How long has it been since Li Cunxin had seen his parents?
10. How did Li Cunxin’s parents react to his home? Why? What contrasts are inferred?
11. What cultural markers are present on page 374 and how do they effectively present the context of the text to your Area of Study?
12. How were Li Cunxin’s parents informed of his defection? What is inferred in this section of the memoir?
13. How did his Niang react? How does her comment present insight into the actions of the Chinese and the reactions of the peasants and their ability to control their lives?
14. What metaphors are suggested in Niang’s dream?
15. How does the final sentence link to the title of the chapter?
Part Three: ‘The West’

Chapter 26 ‘Russia’

1. What is the purpose of inserting a letter into the memoir?
2. Why were Li Cunxin’s parents in ‘constant shock’ whilst staying in America?
3. What is inferred by the statement ‘fear of reprisal’?
4. How did Li Cunxin react to Russia?
5. How does Li Cunxin’s injury impact on his ballet?
6. How does this chapter add to the narrative of the memoir?

Part Three: ‘The West’

Chapter 27 ‘Mary’

1. What cultural reference is made on page 392 that demonstrates the ways cultural knowledge and history is intrinsic to identity?
2. What cultural implications are suggested in the phrase ‘failed the test for a perfect Chinese wife’? What tone is this phrase stated in?
3. What cultural information about Chinese marriage suggests the respect Li Cunxin has for his culture?
4. What do the comments by Li Cunxin’s Niang about Li Cunxin having a Chinese wife suggest about culture and identity?
5. What cultural boundaries is Li Cunxin concerned about and how does this discussion raise issues about cultural identity?
6. How does Li Cunxin’s reference to the ‘Mao jacket’ continue the idea of cultural influence on the present?
7. How does the discussion on religion reveal the idea of Communism as a religion and how does Mary’s Catholicism present the notion of religion as integral to identity?
8. What is the significance of the links between Li Cunxin’s marriage to Mary and the opening prologue of the memoir?
9. How important was it for Li Cunxin to have the opportunity to return to China? What language expresses the emotions Li Cunxin experiences at his good news?
10. What is the significance of ‘home’ to cultural identity?
Part Three: ‘The West’

Chapter 29 ‘Going Home’

1. What aspects of Chinese tradition are referred to in the opening paragraphs of this chapter?
2. What cultural correctness did Li Cunxin have to adhere to when he arrived at Beijing airport?
3. Why were officials waiting to speak to Li Cunxin on his return to China? What tone is established here and how could the appearance of these individuals present fear for Li Cunxin?
4. How do the modes of transport used by Mary and Li Cunxin provide insight into culture?
5. What is suggested in the phrase ‘the grim shadow of the Cultural Revolution’? What metaphor is used and why is it effective?
6. What was a ‘slogan’ used in China? Research the idea of propaganda slogans on the Hotlinks website and determine the reason why image was used to inculcate morals and reforms in China?
7. What is Li Cunxin’s reaction to meeting with his teachers again?
8. What memories are evoked?
9. What would the statement: ‘You have done Chinese ballet proud’? suggest about cultural identity?
10. What does the metaphor in the final sentence suggest about identity, culture and opportunity?

Part Three: ‘The West’

Chapter 29 ‘Back in My Village’

1. How do the rhetorical questions that open this chapter express the concerns of loss of culture and identity?
2. How do names and naming remind you, the reader, of Li Cunxin’s cultural identity?
3. What is the impact of olfactory presences in reminding Li Cunxin of his childhood?
4. What differences are presented in relation to the commune from the descriptions provided earlier in the text?
5. What government intervention takes place in China that to control the population? What is suggested about control and authority of individuals by this reference?
6. What commentary is made about girl children in China?
7. How does the ‘frog in the well story’ relate to Cunyuan’s life?
8. What cultural references and traditions are highlighted when Li Cunxin honours his nana’s burial place?
9. How has Cunmao adapted as an adult to his adoption? What ideas about identity are inferred here?
10. Read page 430. What cultural references are provided and how does the language and punctuation suggest a tone?
Part Three: ‘The West’

Chapter 30 ‘Another Wedding’

1. List all the cultural markers that surround the traditions and aspects of Jing Tring’s wedding. How do these rituals and symbols express cultural identity?
2. How does Li Cunxin compare the ceremony with that of his parents?
3. What ‘lucky words’ are used and what do they infer?
4. What commentary is made about the loss of ‘old traditions’?
5. What does the gift of the quilt symbolize?
6. How has language been used to demonstrate Mary’s acceptance into the cultural world of the Li family?
7. What paradox is presented in the sentences: ‘I was going home. But I was leaving home too.”?
8. What reflections does Li Cunxin make that demonstrate the intrinsic nature of his growing up Chinese?
9. What values are presented that demonstrate the intrinsic nature of his growing up Chinese?
### Themes, Issues and Ideas

This section of your study will explore the themes, issues and ideas conveyed in the text. Use the worksheets to develop a clear outline of the themes, issues and ideas and the cultural contexts they convey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Explication in a cultural context</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the theme and provide textual evidence to support your understanding of its purpose in the study of literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does the theme relate to the cultural context in which the text was written?</td>
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<td>How has the composer highlighted this theme?</td>
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<td>What does the theme expose about your understanding of the cultural context in which the text was produced?</td>
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<td>Issue</td>
<td>Explication in a cultural context</td>
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<td>Identify the issue and provide textual evidence to support your understanding of its purpose in the study of literature</td>
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<td>How does the issue relate to the cultural context in which the text was written?</td>
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<td>How has the composer highlighted this issue?</td>
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<td>What does the issue expose about your understanding of the cultural context in which the text was produced?</td>
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<td>Idea</td>
<td>Explication in a cultural context</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify the idea and provide textual evidence to support your</td>
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<tr>
<td>understanding of its purpose in the study of literature</td>
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<td>How does the idea relate to the cultural context in which the text was written?</td>
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<td>How has the composer highlighted this idea?</td>
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<td>What does the idea expose about your understanding of the cultural context in which the text was produced?</td>
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<td>Idea</td>
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<td>Identify the idea and provide textual evidence to support your understanding of its purpose in the study of literature</td>
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<td>How does the idea relate to the cultural context in which the text was written?</td>
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<td>How has the composer highlighted this idea?</td>
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<td>What does the idea expose about your understanding of the cultural context in which the text was produced?</td>
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</table>
# Social Context Notes Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the composer’s social context? (Level of education attained; type of work; family relationships and friendships - professional or personal; mode of home; transport experienced etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does the composer’s social context impact on the text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the composer’s social context conflict with any of the events or characters in the text? How? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does your social context affect your response to the text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What specific language features or structures of the text convey the social context?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy out any quotes (and their provenance) that you may need to use in your final work that suggest or provide evidence of social context?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Cultural Context Notes Worksheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the composer’s specific cultural context?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the text explore any subcultures within the overarching cultural context?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the composer’s cultural context conflict with any of the events or characters in the text? How? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does your cultural context affect your response to the text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What specific language features or structures of the text convey the cultural context?</td>
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<td>Copy out any quotes (and their provenance) that you may need to use in your final work that suggest or provide evidence of cultural context?</td>
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### Political Context Notes Worksheet

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the composer’s political context?</td>
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<td>Does the composer’s political context change? If so how and why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the composer’s political context conflict with any of the events or characters in the text? How? Why?</td>
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<td>How does your political context affect your response to the text?</td>
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<td>What specific language features or structures of the text convey the political context?</td>
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<td>Copy out any quotes (and their provenance) that you may need to use in your final work that suggest or provide evidence of political context?</td>
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</table>
### Historical Context Notes Worksheet

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the composer’s specific historical context?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does the composer’s historical context impact on his/her writing of the text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the composer’s historical context conflict with any of the events or characters in the text? How? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does your historical context affect your response to the text?</td>
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<td>What specific language feature or structures of the text convey the historical context?</td>
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<td>Copy out any quotes (and their provenance) that you may need to use in your final work that suggest or provide evidence of historical context?</td>
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</table>
### Gender Context Notes Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the composer’s gender context?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does the composer’s gender context impact on the text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the composer’s gender context conflict with any of the events or characters in the text? How? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does your gender context affect your response to the text?</td>
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<td>What specific language features or structures of the text convey the gender context?</td>
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<td>Copy out any quotes (and their provenance) that you may need to use in your final work that suggest or provide evidence of gender context?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the composer’s religious context?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does the composer’s religious context impact on the text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the composer’s religious context conflict with any of the events or characters in the text? How? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does your religious context affect your response to the text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What specific language features or structures of the text convey the religious context?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copy out any quotes (and their provenance) that you may need to use in your final work that suggest or provide evidence of religious context?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Intellectual Context Notes Worksheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the composer’s intellectual context?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does the composer’s intellectual context impact on the text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the composer’s intellectual context conflict with any of the events or characters in the text? How? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does your intellectual context affect your response to the text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What specific language features or structures of the text convey the intellectual context?</td>
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<td>Copy out any quotes (and their provenance) that you may need to use in your final work that suggest or provide evidence of intellectual context?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Conceptual Worksheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literal: What is literally obvious about the text – what does the composer want you to understand about his/her cultural context?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metaphorical: What are the metaphorical meanings behind the text? Are there any allegories or allusions present? What meaning does the composer want you to gain from the events, characters, themes, issues or ideas conveyed in the text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphysical:</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>What meaning is implicit – what deeper level meaning- how does this text affect you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a message for humanity in the text? How do the events, character settings etc impact on the human spirit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What impact does the text have on you?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophical:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What questions does this text raise? How does the text suggest knowledge is constructed? Who is constructing the knowledge?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What purpose does the creation of the text have for the audience?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Values

Values are the ideas we have about what is good and what is bad, and how things should be. We have values about family relationships (regarding, for instance, the role of the husband with respect to the wife), about work relationships (regarding, for instance, how employers should treat employees) and about other personal and relationships issues (regarding, for example, how children should behave towards adults, or how people should follow particular religious beliefs).

www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/glossary.htm

The dimensions or objectives we choose with which to measure the system and those variables we attempt to optimise in deriving fitness. Due to neural associations, the dualism between 'fact' and 'value' is invalid, thus values can form a part of our scientific worldview.

www.calresco.org/glossary.htm

Set of beliefs or standards that the organization (i.e., organizational values) and its stakeholders (i.e., personal values) believe in and operate from. Organizational values are utilized to guide the day-to-day operations, serving as a linkage between Mission (i.e., present operations) and Vision (i.e., intended direction). Personal values are utilized to allow organizational members to understand how their own beliefs fit into the organizational values and its intended operations and direction.

www.eglin.af.mil/46tw/StrategicPlan/glossary.htm

Filters we use to evaluate the content of incoming information about ourselves and the world in general, sorting our perceptions into good and bad, worthwhile and worthless, and so on. Our values are usually closely related to our beliefs.

www3.mistral.co.uk/bradburyac/gloss3.html

http://www.nyfolklore.org/resource/what.html

Use the lists over the page to assist you with identifying values in texts.
List of Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accomplishment</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Act on things</th>
<th>Adventure</th>
<th>All for One; One for All</th>
<th>Athletics/Sports, Competitive</th>
<th>Attitude, Right</th>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Behavior, Proper-</th>
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<td>Behavior, Proper-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concern for Others</td>
<td>Harmony, Unity, Oneness</td>
<td>Philosophy, a certain Pioneer Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Health &amp; Well-Being</td>
<td>Pleasure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consensus</td>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>Popular Will (deferring to)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumer Rights</td>
<td>Hero-worship</td>
<td>Power</td>
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<td>Content Over Form</td>
<td>Heroism</td>
<td>Practicality</td>
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<td>Continuity (from past)</td>
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<td>Preservation</td>
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<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
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<td>Privacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Honor</td>
<td>Progress, Improvement</td>
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<td>Coordination, Integration</td>
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<td>Prosperity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Protection (of law, etc.)</td>
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<td>Courtesy</td>
<td>Human Rights</td>
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<td>Culture (art, etc.)</td>
<td>Inner Directedness</td>
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<td>Decisiveness</td>
<td>Informed, Being-</td>
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<td>Democracy (representative government)</td>
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<td>Diplomacy (over confrontation)</td>
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<td>Direction, Purposefulness</td>
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<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Integration of People Types</td>
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Purpose

What is the composer’s purpose in creating this text?

To identify -
To challenge -
To highlight -
To entertain -
To expose -
To determine -
To illuminate -
To create –
To convey –
To inform –
To provoke –
To educate-

Select three of the above and provide a paragraph on authorial purpose in terms of the cultural context of your text.

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Fable Analysis Worksheets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fable</th>
<th>Language forms and features used and how each shapes meaning for the responder</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metaphor:</td>
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<td>Simile:</td>
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<td>Alteration:</td>
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<td>Assonance:</td>
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<td>Allegory:</td>
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<td>Allusion:</td>
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<td>Onomatopoeia:</td>
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<td>Repetition:</td>
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<td>Rhythm:</td>
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<td>Rhyme:</td>
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<td>Metonymy:</td>
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<td>Symbolism:</td>
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<td>Imagery:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Why has the composer used fables in his text?

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What impact do the fables have on the composer?

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How effectively do the fables add to the narrative?

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Do the fables have distinct cultural contexts or are they universal?

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