

mao's last dancer essay sample

[Politics](#), [Communism](#)



1. Identify your text and author

Non-fiction text, autobiography: Mao's Last Dancer written by Li Cunxin

2. What is this text about? Summarise the story or the premise of the text.

The text is about a young, peasant boy called Li Cunxin who lives in a poor village in north-east China. The text is set around the rule of the communist party led by Chairman Mao. One day, Li is visited by Madame Mao's cultural delegates at his school. They are searching for young children to be guards for Chairman Mao and Li becomes one of them. The text conveys a physical and inner journey as Li leaves his small village and dances for some of the most exceptional ballet companies in the world.

3. Identify three aspects of the journey that the text explores and explain each of these. The text explores:

Journeys offer opportunities for travellers to extend themselves- Li Cunxin has the opportunity to broaden his view of the world in contrast to his small village in China. Journeys may have difficulties and challenges- Li faces many challenges as he embarks on his journey to find a new solution to his previous destitute life. Journeys offer hope for a better tomorrow- Li ventures out from his village life, seeking a solution to improve his situation and to find meaning for himself.

4. How does this text explore the concept of the journey? What techniques of the text type help you understand the message of the journey? For example, you will need to analyse the film techniques of a film or the poetic techniques of a poem. Journeys offer opportunities for travellers to extend themselves- Li travels to America and is amazed at all the opportunities

America has to offer, “ Instead I saw high-rise buildings, wide-clean streets, a green and orderly environment... Someone had lied to us about America being the poorest nation in the world and China being the richest nation. It seemed to be the opposite.” The use of imagery emphasises Li’s astonishment of the life America has to offer. In contrast to his life in China, America seems like paradise for Li.

Journeys may have difficulties and challenges- Li describes his audition to become a guard for Chairman Mao as, “ One teacher lifted one of my legs upwards, two others held my other leg steady and straight. They kept asking me if it hurt. Of course it hurt: it was excruciating! But I was determined to be chosen... I did bear the pain, but the hardest thing was pretending to walk normally afterwards. They had torn both my hamstrings.” Li is determined to pass his audition and uses this motivation to overcome this challenge.

Journeys offer hope for a better tomorrow- Li embarks on his journey in search for a solution to his previous destitute life. When Li lived in his poor village in China he wrote, “ I made my secret wish. I daydreamed about all the beautiful things in life that were not mine. I begged them for more food for my family.” This is juxtaposed when Li explores his new house in America, “ I couldn’t help myself from being constantly shocked. Everything was new... It even had its own bathroom with a human-sized bathtub! I had never used a bathtub before.” This displays the reason for Li to venture out from his small village in China to the city in America, to find something that gives him happiness from his previous life of hardship and poverty.

5. What aspects of the journey in your chosen text relate to *The Kite Runner*?

Explain your answer. When Amir and Baba travel to America from their previous life of struggle from political war, they are in search for a better tomorrow and to extend themselves. This is similar to when Li Cunxin ventures to America from his impoverished life in China in order to seek for something that makes his situation improve and to widen his understanding of the world. This is because of the strict communist government Li used to live under whom which controlled all aspects of Li's knowledge of other nations. Amir and Baba also faced many difficulties and challenges along their journey such as the differences of languages and cultural aspects. Similarly, Li was faced with the difficulty of physical struggle as he ventured into the new ballet world.