

## Prologue

*I remember knocking on the door of David's office tucked away at the far end of one of the corridors of the University of North London and waiting patiently for a while. It was the beginning of the second term of the MA Leisure Studies and I was still struggling with studies in English. A meeting with the professor? I was getting too nervous to even remember why I was there. I kept memorising the questions but I wasn't sure if they were academic enough to impress him. When the door finally opened there stood a gentle and intelligent looking English man - yes, he was an English man who perfectly epitomises my idea of English gentleman - who welcomed me with a big smile. 'Hello, come in!'*

## 1. Critical approaches to heritage and tourism

### 1.1 Challenging Western discourses of culture and heritage

There exists a prevalent emphasis on Western discourses of culture, heritage and tourism in the existing literature (Smith, 2006; Bauer, 2007; Harrison, 2021). Western ideas of heritage have been dominant in both academic and practical contexts across the globe. World Heritage Sites (WHS) are the prime examples of this dominance. Meskell (2002) argues that the concept of World Heritage privileges a Western idea of heritage, with greater emphasis on material culture that is distinctively European in origin. According to Salazar (2010: 135):

the very concept of universal heritage is increasingly contested. After all, it privileges an idea originating in the West and requires an attitude towards culture that is also distinctively European in origin.

Harrison (2005) makes a significant contribution to challenging the Western idea of heritage, particularly with regard to tourism development in World Heritage Sites in a co-edited book with Michael Hitchcock. They brought the fore the contested and complex nature of WHS and listing procedures. They challenge a 'global hierarchy of value' (Herzfeld, 2004) inherent in the narratives of World Heritage and argue that its application on a global scale needs to be questioned and reassessed. Heritage is unmistakably related to politics and its selection, interpretation and negotiation is a continuous struggle among the stakeholders concerned. In this book Harrison and Hitchcock pave the way for developing more critical and systematic analysis of WHS, leading to offering a comprehensive understanding of heritage, globalisation and tourism (Keough, 2011; Labadi and Long, 2011; Park, 2014)

As a dominant Western discourse of heritage, 'Authorised Heritage Discourse' (AHD) is based on the 'power/knowledge claims of technical and aesthetic experts, and institutionalized in state cultural agencies and amenity societies' (Smith, 2006: 11). The key principles of AHD have been clearly implicated in UNESCO's operation and management methods and strategies. According to Smith (2006: 99):

This imbalance is not simply caused by disproportionate nomination by European countries, but by the AHD that frames and legitimizes the assumptions made in the listing criteria, World Heritage List itself is a process of meaning making - it is a list that not only identifies, but also defines, which heritage places are globally important. The listing process creates or recreates sites as universally important and meaningful.

The significance of a Western idea of culture and heritage and its academic contributions as a general guideline has widely been incorporated in heritage policies and practices in non-European countries including Asia (Fauveaud and Esposito, 2021). However, the guidelines need to be critically assessed in relation to local circumstances, sensitivities and values. The problem is exacerbated when non-European countries only try to emulate the contributions made by Western scholars and practitioners without employing a critical approach grounded in local heritage interpretations and conditions.

The focus on universal and consensual values and qualities of heritage has been incorporated in the national heritage listing and management of non-European countries (Park, 2014). The values of heritage have mainly been regarded as being inherent and fixed in objects, places and practices (Smith, 2006). Critical focus and emphasis has also been placed on the spiritual and sublime values of heritage (Park, 2010). Led by state-based, authoritative and official approaches, heritage interpretation often serves to a 'profession of faith in a past tailored to present-day purposes' (Lowenthal, 1997: x). In this light, Harrison (2005: 5) raises these questions where heritage is involved: 'Why was something considered worth 'handing on', who or what is the 'significant group', who does the selecting?'

Harrison eagerly advocates local participation in heritage planning and management. Drawing on the example of WH listing of Levuka, on the small island of Ovalau, Fiji, Harrison (2004) demonstrate that the local initiatives of representing their past requires wider support both within Fiji and international communities. He emphasises that listing for WHS is a complex political process. He also argues that existing discussions about Levuka's heritage exclude its residents, only resorting to government officials and overseas experts:

Clearly, Levuka has no *intrinsic* significance in Fiji. Rather, its role in history and the present is contested, and viewed through lenses which owe much to ethnic group affiliation and material and political interest... It is to suggest, though, that such attempts should be accompanied by open reflection and discussion about whose 'heritage' Levuka represents, and that the nomination process must be supported by all stakeholders, especially those who live in Levuka and more widely, in Ovalau (Harrison, 2004: 365-366, original emphasis added).

Critical Heritage Studies (CHS) has recently contributed to establishing heritage as an area of critical enquiry (Harrison, 2012; Joy, 2020; Gustavsson, 2021). CHS puts greater emphasis on heritage as social processes and alternative and multiple narratives of history and place, open to differing interpretations and re-interpretations. It is not an exaggeration to state that Harrison made a pioneering impact on this critical understanding of heritage long before CHS was established as a serious academic enquiry. Harrison (2005) denies the understanding of history and heritage as a fixed entity, rather adhering to the belief that these concepts are rather relative, contextual and perspective-based. His challenges of system of beliefs and standards in the academic practices have resonance with his own struggle as a teenager to challenge and finally break away from the fundamentalist Christianity of his family. His courage to take a critical attitude to imposed religion and finally move away from Christian beliefs led to a devotion to continuing his engagement with critical and different approaches to arguments and theories in sociology and anthropology.

During my period of study at the University of North London, David led the module, entitled Sustainable Tourism Planning (Feb-May, 1999). In addition to language difficulties, his sessions presented me with a burden which I had never experienced before. He emphasised the significance of questioning and challenging existing beliefs and paradigms that are widely acknowledged as norms and standards in society. As a person who had been educated in South Korea in the 1980s and early 90s at a time when the main focus of education was on recognising and reinforcing official and authoritative norms and beliefs, this approach to learning came as a bit of shock at first. I was not really used to developing a critique of what had already been argued and discussed, particularly in academia. In a way I was scared of challenging others' views and ideas. I genuinely believed there existed absolute truths and real knowledge even in a world of social sciences. David's persistent questioning regarding my views and opinions on existing arguments including his own was so intense that I was rather scared to attend his sessions. It took a while but his efforts finally came to fruition and I experienced a turning point in my learning approaches. I soon found myself enjoying intense and vehement discussions with him in the tutorials and all the way through my PhD programme.

My doctoral research contributes to further develop and challenge the existing paradigms relating to the dialectical role of heritage tourism in the enhancement of national consciousness in South Korea. Critical focus is placed on examining the ways in which national identities are reproduced and recontextualised by individual articulations and subjective interpretations rather than official and hegemonic discourses of heritage. Originally, I was supposed to evaluate the policy-making

procedures in heritage management and tourism development in South Korea. But David's academic guidance as a supervisor encouraged me to change the trajectory and focus of my research. I became interested in eliciting the contrasting and comparative narratives of heritage during tourism experiences. I was fascinated by the idea of exploring the politics of the past and the relationship between heritage and other pressing political and social issues. In general, my research on the theme of heritage tourism aims to broaden and enhance the social science based understanding of the conceptual and symbolic interrelationships between heritage tourism, social memory and identity, both national and individual, and to further the development of existing paradigms relating to heritage representation and interpretation.

One of the main theoretical contributions I have made is that heritage tourism can act as a neutral and safe ground for mediating political contentions (Park, 2011; 2016). In the existing literature of heritage and tourism studies, there has been sustained emphasis on the dissonant nature of heritage as a political tool in varying national and regional contexts. Heritage creates and reinforces the conflicts and tensions between different nations and groups. However, visits to difficult heritage can provide tourists with valuable opportunities to reflexively engage with shameful past, thereby achieving more meaningful and resilient understanding of heritage, memory and identity (Park, 2016). Therefore, tourism creates a 'safe area in which oppositional, flexible and alternative reading of national memory and belonging are facilitated' (ibid: 21). For example, Park (2011) emphasises a shared national memory, intangible heritage of tangible heritage, as an important medium through which cultural connections and emotional attachments in the two Koreas can be sustained. Through this work I was able to make a timely contribution to the ways in which heritage tourism experiences of South Korean nationals reaffirm their innate and intimate cultural affinity with North Korea at a critical time of increasing political tensions. I have recently worked on various difficult heritage sites including Nanjing Memorial Hall in China, with greater emphasis on tourists' emotional and reflexive engagement with a sensitive past. Instead of reinforcing the existing understanding of dissonant heritage I am keen on uncovering the ways in which a traumatic and contentious past can be reinterpreted, negotiated and reassessed during heritage tourism experiences.

My current research project is mainly concerned with critically examining the discursive relationship between heritage, tourism and everyday life during and after the COVID-19. Although increasing attention has been paid to recognising and protecting the sites and practices of the public associated with the mundane realms

of everyday life, heritage is still largely understood as a symbolic manifestation of official and hegemonic rhetoric, particularly in Asian contexts (Park, 2010; Fauveaud and Esposito, 2021). Limited academic focus has thus been placed on examining the varying scopes and contexts of everyday heritage and the everyday values and meanings of official heritage have not fully taken into consideration. Furthermore, the pandemic provides a unique opportunity to examine how people redefine the meaning of being at 'home' (everyday life) and 'away' (tourism) and how the conventional binary distinction between tourism and everyday life can be challenged and negotiated on an individual level. It is hoped that this research can contribute to recognising and re-emphasising tourism as an effective medium and reflexive practice in exploring some of the key themes of CHS including ethics, urban heritage and heritage politics and policies. Critical focus on multiple, informal and mundane aspects of official heritage in everyday settings will inspire heritage and tourism researchers and practitioners in South Korea to assess and reassess the power dynamics and political and cultural implications of various heritage settings and experiences, thereby enriching the applications of CHS in both academic and practical arenas.

### *1.2 Commodification of culture and heritage*

MacCannell's (1976) seminal work acknowledges tourism as the product of modernity. Tourism as a modern phenomenon is opposed to the notion of tradition, heritage and culture, which is rather primordial, unchanging and authentic. Tourism has mainly been criticised as a main culprit of modifying and distorting the authenticity of heritage and culture. Tourism development has increased the market orientation of heritage and culture and tradition has been reconstructed and packaged to appeal to tourists. Greenwood's study of tourism development, in the mid 70s, in the Spanish town of Fuenterrabia made a pioneering impact on the academic discussions of tourism and commodification of culture and heritage. The initial argument put forward was that tourism development led to the commodification of an old festival (The Alarde), causing the loss of its authenticity. Harrison widely quoted Greenwood in his various publications as an insightful example of tourism commodification which shows exploiting the past for commercial purposes. Heritage is altered into a product of tourism and its prior cultural values are replaced by commercial value, exploiting the past for economic motivations (Greenwood, 1976; Hewison, 1987; Baillie et al, 2010).

But subsequent research on the Alarde, including Greenwood's own reflection on his findings published in the Epilogue of the 1989 edition of Smith's *Hosts and Guests*,

proves to the contrary that the process of commodification has revived the old festival, thereby turning it into a source of both community and tourism development (Greenwood, 1989; Wilson, 1993). Insightfully, Boissevain (1996) highlights that commodification can benefit peripheral communities and protect the back regions and privacy of local residents while keeping tourists in commodified front regions. Further to this new line of enquiry, Harrison highlights the ability of local people to adapt and change. Harrison (2001, 2021) endeavoured to illustrate that some destinations have managed to cope with tourism development with efforts to minimise the associated negative impacts on their culture and identity. He rejects the essentialist perspectives of culture and heritage as a fixed entity. Consequently, what is regarded as tradition and authenticity in each society is not fixed. In explicating how the relationship between tourism and tradition has been perceived, he makes an interesting explanation regarding sociologists' overall approaches to modern tourism development:

Many sociologists are ideologically opposed to capitalism and feel guilty, especially when dealing with less developed societies, about their association with it. Unless this is a result of a genetics programme peculiar to sociologists, it is because of our cultural backgrounds, which tends to be middle class, and because of our education and social networks, which are rooted in an academic and 'liberal' establishment (Harrison, 2021: 14)

While explicating the general academic positions and tendencies of the sociology of tourism, he subtly criticises how sociologists see themselves in relation to tourism issues and concerns. Drawing attention to the privileged position of sociologists or anthropologists in discussions of tourism, he argues that:

however, it may be that the cultural background of many sociologists, especially those who place a high value on "tradition" and a correspondingly low one on capitalism, predisposes them to hold an inherently unfavorable view of working tourists- package tourists- in particular... Ironies abound in such circumstances; supporting 'quality tourism' (high spenders) against 'mass tourism' (working class) and favouring small-scale, locally-owned hotels (local capital- the petty bourgeoisie) over the large-scale conglomerates (international capital), we effectively reject our proletariat in favour of foreign capitalists (ibid: 14).

This honest critical observation has made a lasting impact on me as a tourism researcher in my academic journey. It has made me become constantly aware of my background, positionality and biases, without imposing my previously-held beliefs and values on the research settings, themes and participants. Harrison challenges the binary oppositions; traditional vs modern and authenticity vs inauthenticity. He brings attention to mass tourism as an area of serious academic investigation, which

is mainly criticised for negative socio-cultural and environmental impacts on destinations (Harrison, 1992; 2001, Harrison and Sharpley, 2017).

More importantly, his balanced position further helps to demonstrate that commodification is not necessarily a negative force to the culture and heritage of destinations. There raises important questions: is our past genuine and can culture remain unchanging and unspoilt? An essentialist understanding of culture and heritage has become replaced by more constructive and discursive approach to culture and heritage. Most of traditional culture cannot completely evade the modern force of development even without tourism. Here, Appadurai's (1986) claim can be applied in the tourism use of culture and heritage that commodification is not a singular or irrevocable process. The commodity status of objects can only be certain stages of their wider social lives. Cultural objects or events that were once regarded as a commodity may not necessarily be regarded as a commodity at other stages of its social life. Commodified culture and heritage can develop new and different appeals and uses, thereby achieving constructive authenticity over time. Commodification of culture and heritage needs to be, therefore, understood as a social process (Samuel, 1994; Medina, 2003; Park, 2014). Interactions with different cultural forces and influences do not necessarily lead to distorting and destroying the authenticity of culture and heritage. Commodification can become a positive force. The process of commodification can facilitate the constructive-based recreation and re-appropriation of culture and heritage in relation to tourism development in destinations (Park, 2014). Thus, commodification of culture and heritage is not necessarily negative and it is important not to solely accuse tourism as an agent for undesirable and negative sociocultural change and adaptation, particularly in less-developed countries.

## **2. Critical pedagogy in tourism studies**

Harrison showed a keen interest in the studies of the less-privileged and less powerful cultural and national groups including indigenous people. He has undertaken research on tourism in Swaziland, Bulgaria, Laos, Fiji and many islands in the Caribbean (Harrison 1992; 1995; 2001; 2004; 2007b). He also brings to the fore the significance of studying mass tourism often neglected by tourism academics (Harrison and Sharpley, 2017). He persistently draws attention to issues of governmental policy-making, institutional systems and structures, global inequality immanent in international tourism development. This led me to critical pedagogy and its application in tourism contexts for both research and teaching. The central premise of critical pedagogy refers to transformation of society in the direction of

social justice, encouraging students to question what is taken for granted and to disrupt of the status quo through a critique of varying practices that reproduce inequality and oppression (Freire, 1970; Hytten, 2006; McLean, 2006). David's approach to learning was, I believe, underpinned by critical pedagogy which is very similar to his overall approach to academic issues and concerns. Tourism development in 'less-developed' and poor countries has been conditioned by issues of power imbalance, both locally and globally.

Initially, a majority of students who start the tourism degrees tend to have idealised views of tourism (Ayikoru and Park, 2019). Largely influenced by how tourism is portrayed in the media students often perceive tourism studies as a business and marketing oriented subject with greater emphasis on vocational and practical implications. It is thus often the case from my experience of teaching that introducing the social science understanding of tourism can be a challenging task. Such inherent and consistent issues as inequality and exploitation in tourism development and the sociocultural impacts of tourism come as a real shock to them. The main tenet of my teaching, largely influenced by David, is thus to harness the multiple and situated voices of the students and to develop a critique of the deeply inherent problems and challenges intricately linked with tourism development in various contexts. In particular, critical focus is placed on unraveling the ways in which tourism is regarded as a new form of colonialism in poor countries. Tourism development in former colonies can sometimes reinforce the stereotypical images of the colonised as 'exotic' and 'primitive' constructions of an 'other', which appeals to the tourists from developed countries (see Pritchard and Morgan, 2000; Franklin and Cragg, 2001; Mowforth and Munt, 2015). The 'Subaltern' voices of local people are either suppressed or under-represented in tourism development and interaction (Spivak, 1995).

Then how can these critical issues and relating theories be effectively delivered to students? As an effective tool of critical pedagogy the use of films is expected to enhance the criticality in tourism studies as films can help to create and sustain conditions within which active and meaningful learning can take place (Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015). Both documentary and commercial films such as 'The Beach' (2000) and 'Eat Pray Love' (2010) have actively been incorporated in my teaching in order to facilitate students' critical thinking and reflection on the issues including tourism impacts on local culture, sustainable development of culture and heritage and the role of tourism as a transformative force:

Films provide students with an opportunity to connect the theoretical discourses learnt in classes with a range of social and cultural issues



represented therein. The issues of hierarchy, power and control inherent in tourism development, such as post-colonial relations can better be understood when struggles in real contexts can be experienced via watching films. Through this pedagogical practice students can reflect on their own prejudices and stereotypes and renegotiate their own identities as both tourists and future tourism workers (Ayikoru and Park, 2019: 32).

The use of films prove to be effective in raising the critical issues and attracting the students' attention to them rather than text-based learning material, while evoking students' emotion which also facilitates their reflective and reflexive learning. Films are effective in facilitating students' own voices in the construction of meaning and knowledge from a critical pedagogic point of view.

### **3. Research methods in tourism studies**

#### ***3.1 Ethnographic approaches in cultural and heritage tourism***

Ethnography studies culture as an entirety in itself. Ethnographic study is expected to contribute to a rather lucid understanding of the beliefs, motivations and behaviour patterns of the subjects being investigated (Hammersley, 1992). Ethnography aims to provide 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973: 5) through the active engagement of the researcher in the setting under investigation. It develops a descriptive account of the way of life of particular society or group of people and/or selected aspects of that society. This descriptive approach of ethnography analytically interprets people's perceptions, opinions and feelings including possible inconsistencies and conflicts of viewpoints. Ethnographic research is based on qualitative methods of investigation: interviews/ friendly conversations/unstructured and informal interviews/participatory techniques developed through active involvement in the research settings/ observations.

Tourism studies have mainly focused on the development and expansion of tourism in economic terms, without due concern over important social and cultural issues (Rojek and Urry, 1997). There exists a tendency to produce a range of statistics and variations based on the quantification of the research data in tourism studies. This can be attributed to the dominance of policy led and industry sponsored research and the lack of specialist skills to analyse and theorise the complex cultural and social processes that tourism entails (Franklin and Crang, 2001). The disciplinary origins of tourism researchers have often failed to analyse the complex cultural and social processes immanent in tourism experiences and interactions. Harrison was at the forefront of suggesting the significance of engaging more with people involved in the practice of tourism, whether tourists, residents or providers of services, and the

effectiveness of ethnography as a research method for this kind of tourism research. As evidenced in his research from the Caribbean to Africa, he contributes to diversifying the research methods as well as emphasising the significance of ethnographic approaches, thereby calling for more ethnographic work in tourism studies. Ethnography in tourism has enriched the understanding of tourists' multiple motivations and varying in different tourism locations and experiences (Palmer, 1998; Andrews, 2005; Park, 2010; 2016) and locals' differing attitudes and reactions to tourism development (Tucker, 2003; Javier, 2016) in different tourism locations and experiences.

The systematic application of ethnography to an institutional heritage setting had not yet been widely employed in tourism and heritage studies when I undertook my PhD research in early 2000s. There were scarce attempts to conduct ethnographic research in the Korean tourism studies where quantitative methods were dominant. One of the great lessons gained from David in working as an ethnographer was to recognise the subjective and reflexive nature of ethnographic studies. Social data are primarily subjectively based, arising from the viewpoints of the researched and the interpretations of the researcher (Thomas, 1993). 'Is it always the case?', 'How do you ensure that this represents a whole story?', 'So, what is your view on it?' Harrison asked these questions almost incessantly during the numerous supervisory meetings when I analysed a great wealth of ethnographic data for my PhD thesis. His insightful questioning certainly made me more aware of the reflexive role of the researcher in ethnographic research processes, thereby constantly deconstructing and reconstructing the ethnographic self – the researcher's positionality during the processes of research projects.

The main aim of employing ethnographic approaches in my studies lies in gaining a deeper insight into others' points of view and the social setting itself, especially to produce an inter-contextual and nuanced understanding of heritage perceptions and interpretations in relation to tourism, rather than identifying causality or objective truth. Harrison (2007) calls for longitudinal and comparative ethnographic studies in tourism. Single ethnographic studies had been criticised as being too subjective and a-theoretical (van den Berghe and Ochoa, 2000). Therefore, his insightful and timely call has certainly inspired me to develop long-term ethnographic approaches to heritage sites and places. While I have continuously been working on the Changdeok Palace, the research site of my PhD programme, for examining a range of divergent themes and emergent issues, I have also undertaken long-term ethnography in other research projects including heritage settings (royal palaces in Seoul) and urban

neighbourhoods (Bukchon- traditional Hanok village, Ikseondong in Seoul/ Dalston in London).

### *3.2 Conceptual and methodological frameworks for cultural and heritage tourism*

Tourism studies are generally grounded in a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach. In spite of numerous valuable research based on different disciplines over the last three decades, Harrison (2021) painfully acknowledges the lack of a clear understanding of the sociocultural impacts of tourism on destinations in both developing and developed countries. He highlights that:

it is also because, across the social sciences, there is no generally accepted framework in which to incorporate the various types of tourism studies. Instead, refuge is taken in describing tourism studies as 'interdisciplinary' or 'multidisciplinary' when, in fact, they too frequently lack disciplinary rigour of any kind (ibid: 208).

He further argues that a conceptual framework for analysing tourism's sociocultural role in society must be based on existing social theories. There exists an abundance of empirical research without a clear conceptual framework in tourism studies. The tendency of relying solely on data based research has been prevalent in tourism studies. Investigating such concepts as commodification, demonstration effect, staged/existential authenticity and the representation and consumption of place and heritage needs both theoretical and methodological rigour. He emphasises that these concepts are not paradigms and the cultural processes they describe need to be based on and analysed from a coherent conceptual framework.

The academic weaknesses of tourism studies can be attributed to this lack of a conceptual framework, along with too much reliance on acquiring empirical data. Incorporating the wide range of contribution to the literature of tourism into a coherent framework is critical in enhancing the academic values of tourism studies. This does not necessarily mean, however, that we as tourism researchers need to develop a commonly agreed single paradigm, theory or perspective as a framework for evaluation as Harrison also admits. Culture, heritage and tourism evolve over time and change in varying contexts. It is critical to develop a constructive approach to understanding the complex and nuanced dynamics between tourism, culture and heritage, thereby enhancing the social science based understanding of their symbolic and discursive relationships. Developing comparative perspectives is also essential in broadening the understanding of culture and heritage for touristic production and consumption.

Harrison's theoretical underpinning in tourism is firmly grounded in a range of social science perspectives pertaining to sociology, social anthropology, political economy. He discusses ways in which tourism acts as a symbolic mechanism through which different sets of knowledge can be produced and reproduced. Yelvington (2021: 76), a former PhD student of Harrison now a professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of South Florida, captures the gist of Harrison's academic approach;

Harrison was a vector for produced knowledge in these disciplinary contexts but also became involved in the reproduction of knowledge through his own teaching and publications. These processes were part of a political economy of knowledge production, knowledge institutionalisation, and knowledge reproduction dialectically interacting with the politics of the reception of knowledge. These knowledge politics entailed Harrison's sharp critiques of the easy championing of tourism as the solution to problems of underdevelopment but also of the forces of globalized neoliberal capitalism and state-enforced upward redistribution from his own kind of no-nonsense approach rooted in empirical research leading to realistic theoretical models.

Harrison develops and deploys theoretical models relevant to tourism studies throughout his long and successful career. His theoretical influences on tourism studies as a social anthropologist and sociologist help to enhance the academic qualities of tourism research and suggest discursive approaches to exploring important connections between culture, heritage and tourism.

## Epilogue



*After unexpected lockdowns brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic we finally met in person for a catch-up in early November 2020. As a loyal member of Kew Gardens Rotary Club David always liked taking his guests there for a little stroll. I was relieved to see him in better shape than before and after a little walk we sat down on the bench under the trees which had turned into different colours. I confessed to him, ' I think I am going through a mid-life crisis and not sure what I*

*need to aim at in my career and life'. After a short pause he answered with his usual assertive tone, ' Well... you just have to live your every day and do what you can do, enjoy today whether you work or play and that is it, you've done well and you will, believe it'. And then he added, ' I would not recommend you getting older'. We both laughed and promised to go and see an art exhibition soon. He could not walk all the way to the river with me so we exchanged a good bye in front of the Conservatory without ever realising that was the last good bye in this life. I saw him walking briskly on a long lane leading back to the entrance. With a walking stick I thought he looked more like an English gentleman and I stood there until he completely disappeared out of my eyesight. I think this image will stay in my heart for a long time. Bye for now, my dear professor!*

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