

RIGHT: Gaspé Peninsula, Quebec, Canada (1946)
OPPOSITE PAGE: French actress Michèle Morgan and Italian actor Gabriele Ferzetti admiring the Mediterranean sea (1961)



Photo: Genevieve Naylor/Corbis

Don't forget...

Michael Brein, travel psychologist

- Become more conscious: often, travellers are cocooned in psychological cotton wool.
- Experiment a little – get out of your shell.
- Be open to other people.
- Be a local: get to know the area where you are staying.
- Sit at cafés. This is not a waste of time.

▶▶ oneness is pursued and often found in alien cultures, or in nature, in those “perfect moments” that raconteur Spalding Gray once claimed all travellers are seeking. As travel writer Jan Morris memorably put it: “Whole cities are mine, because I have loved them so.” Travel can make a place a part of us, through a kind of ecstatic symbiosis.

But such rewards inevitably come at the price of many challenges, making travel the most paradoxical of experiences. “We travel, initially, to lose ourselves; and we travel, next, to find ourselves,” says Pico Iyer. Or as his fellow travel writer, Jeff Greenwald puts it: “Travel is a luminous practise of its own, a doorway into worlds both alien and achingly familiar.” In travelling, he says, we leave our comfort zones, making new insights and fresh thoughts possible. As George Santayana wrote in *The Philosophy of Travel*, “We need sometimes to escape into open solitudes, into aimlessness, into the moral holiday of running some pure hazard, in order to sharpen the edge of life, to taste hardship,

and to be compelled to work desperately for a moment at no matter what.”

But travel has a less exalted function. The sector currently represents over 10% of global GDP, and forecasts indicate that the industry may double in size over the next couple of decades. As a pillar of the “experience economy”, first described in 1998 by James Gilmore in the *Harvard Business Review*, travel is one of the intangibles that we now prefer to use instead of material objects like sports cars and jewellery to signal our status. Travel has to be memorable and special: beach-hopping by kayak in Brazil, hiking in the wilderness of Greenland, working on a conservation project in the Peruvian rainforest. A recent poll by a UK travel insurance company indicated that holidaymakers were even prepared to lie about their trips in order to impress other people, and 12% admitted to envying the travel escapades of friends.

According to travel psychologist Michael Brein, tourists are often motivated by issues of self-esteem. “The majority of people tend to live very