

Photo: Paul Guillelmo/Apiis/Sygma/Corbis



mundane lives," he says. "Anything they can do to enhance their own image of themselves in the eyes of others elevates their sense of self-worth. We all want to feel better about ourselves." Travel can boost our image and our ego. Anyone who has spent time in the company of 'travel snobs', with their obsessive interest in the relative luxuries of hotels and restaurants, and lack of curiosity about the world outside them, knows that travel can be a mainly material pursuit.

But still there's nothing like travel, even in a shrinking, globalised world, to

imagination, and what the traveller brings back is – and has to be – an ineffable compound of himself and the place, what's really there and what's only in him."

"When people travel well, when they make a leap of faith into the world – they find themselves indelibly changed. We are better people than we were before, with a larger, more satisfying world view. It feels good to evolve that way," says Jeff Greenwald. He believes the best journeys have an unconscious motivation, which the journey then

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transform our interior landscape. If, like Alain de Botton, we can't quite escape ourselves when journeying, at least we can transform our inner reality by enlarging our experience of life. "Travel," says Pico Iyer, "is a voyage into that famously subjective zone, the

reveals. "People travel for a million different reasons," he says, "but the motivation always comes from some place mysterious: an unanswered question hiding within themselves." Ultimately, perhaps, we travel to find out why it is we are travelling. ◀◀

## Unfamiliar sights

Alain de Botton,  
philosopher and writer

"I've always had a problem with holidays as most people conceive them. I get nervous on beaches and bored in museums. My real interest lies in the infrastructure of modern society. I'm a fan of motorway service stations. I adore airports and train stations late at night. I like finding out about unusual bits of technology and recently followed a line of electricity pylons that carries two thirds of London's electricity from Dungeness nuclear power station to an unknown substation in Dalston. I have plans to do a comparable journey tracing the single fat data cable that, unknown to most of us, carries the Internet from Europe to America via Iceland.

"Unfortunately, this sort of holiday making doesn't get much support. So, after years of joking about this, some friends and I have finally taken the fateful step of starting a holiday company, one dedicated to taking travellers around some neglected but fascinating aspects of the modern world. We now have a full programme lined up. For example, the master photographer Martin Parr is going to teach us how to look at the world through his eyes and will be leading a group around the oft-derided aspects of the British seaside. And the travel writer Edward Platt is taking a group up the M1, pointing out the history of bridge and service station architecture along the way." See [www.theschooloflife.com](http://www.theschooloflife.com) or call: + 44 207 7833 1010.