

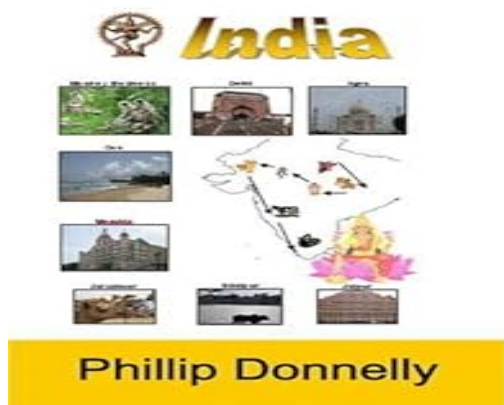
## India--All the Parts Other Travel Books Leave Out By Phillip Donnelly

Read interview by Cat Connor at [{site\\_link}](#) [{site\\_link}](#) I first went to India more than 20 years ago and I've been back many times since for holidays and for business trips. I have lots of guidebooks and I'm always looking for insights into the country that I love but perhaps I should have been a bit more sceptical about 'India--All the parts other travel books leave out' by Phillip Donnelly. I read the first few pages which were available via Amazon's 'Click to look inside' and was mildly amused by the author's thoughts on how other people should behave on planes.

Let's have a bit of consideration. Donnelly starts in Delhi and checks out one of my favourite museums claiming he "never really could summon up much interest in bits of old broken pottery" Philistine! He spent his entire trip looking for a Starbucks (I could have told him not to bother - probably some of the guidebooks would have pointed out that he was wasting his time too). After a taxi driver takes him on a bit of a wild goose chase he declares "From that moment on.

He says that India is the 'lost populous country on Earth (I think that was most). From the moment he lands until the moment he leaves.

Travelling through a country he has always dreamed of visiting the author is confused and perplexed by India; a land he does not understand and one that does not conform to the rules of any society or culture he has yet encountered. Join him on his journey through the enigma that is India and see what happens when a cynical neurotic western rationalist is confronted by the spiritualism poverty and anarchy of India. India--All the Parts Other Travel Books Leave Out



After completing a psychology degree Ministry Fox realised that he was profoundly misanthropic and set about travelling the world looking for aliens to take him to another planet. Unable to speak any foreign languages and almost incapable of holding a conversation in his own he decided to teach English as a foreign language because this was the only job that would allow him to travel widely without any marketable skills or noticeable intelligence. He has unsuccessfully searched for life from outer space in classrooms in the following countries: Spain China Russia Thailand Hong Kong the UAE Sri Lanka Lebanon Vietnam Oman France Hong Kong and Korea. He currently lives in an undisclosed location with his patient and long suffering w After completing a psychology degree Ministry Fox realised that he was profoundly misanthropic and set about travelling the world looking for aliens to take him to another planet. Unable to speak any foreign languages and almost incapable of holding a conversation in his own he decided to teach English as a foreign language because this was the only job that would allow him to travel widely without any marketable skills or noticeable intelligence. He has unsuccessfully searched for life from outer space in classrooms in the following countries: Spain China Russia Thailand Hong Kong the UAE Sri Lanka Lebanon Vietnam Oman France Hong Kong and Korea. He plans to continue his search for alien life forms and would be most obliged if any aliens reading this would spirit him off to an altogether exotic planet in an altogether harmonious dimension. What has he written?He has written two novels ('The Screen' and 'Letters

from the Ministry') a novella ('The Inaction Man') a book of short stories ('Boots') and three books on travel writing on India China and Vietnam and he has just finished a vampire novel Kev. You will also find links to about 25 pieces of writing that have appeared online mainly travel writing and short stories; and one of them The Interactive Classroom won a Bewildering Stories Mariner Award in 2010. I should have spotted that anyone who can't put up with a couple of hundred fellow passengers on a flight is going to have tolerance problems with over a billion people living in India. If I had known that Donnelly and his wife had only been to India once had stayed for less than a month had made absolutely no plans before they went and so ended up with a package tour put together by a local tourism company I would definitely have questioned his qualifications to be writing a book of advice for fellow travellers. There's a very good reason why most people go between October and April - the summer is a shocker especially in the desert region of Rajasthan and the humidity is off the scale in Mumbai and Goa. Had Donnelly done even a little bit of homework before flying willy-nilly into the world's largest democracy he might have thought to head for the mountains or put his trip off to a more suitable time of year. It's true that people don't have change in India but the reason is that it's only idiot tourists who expect a guy selling stuff on the side of the road for a few rupees will have change of a 500 rupee note. If you want to give advice that they won't find in the guidebooks it should be to prepare yourself by saving up as many small notes as you can and using the big notes in places where there's a lot more money passing through. He says those same people don't have the same problem with the locals? True - that's because the locals have more sense than to attempt to expect change for an amount that could take someone a week to earn. I've seen traders go to extreme lengths to send someone all over the town trying to get change so they don't lose a sale - so please I trusted no-one I believed nothing and I never spoke to strangers". "NEVER set foot in a shop in India - you just never escape without buying something you don't really want" I've had some lovely afternoons sitting in shops drinking tea talking rubbish about cricket discussing the troubles in Kashmir and getting educated on handicrafts and then walked out again with nothing more than a warm glow and the email address of the owner's cousin-brother in Srinagar who'd love to help us arrange a holiday. At one of the churches in Old Goa he says they have the undecomposed body of St Francis of Assisi - it's actually the body of St Francis Xavier the inquisitor not the guy who could charm the birds out of the trees. He tries to 'relieve the pressure' when his head hurts a tout tries to sell him 'an arithmetic message' (I think that was arthritic massage) he's worrying about dirty public telephones getting ripped off by everyone and generally getting scared of the entire local population. From 'Tout Theory' to the 'Taj Mahal Cost Index' to 'In-Flight Commandments' one is left wondering why Mr Donnelly travelled to India in the first place rather than just staying at home and flicking through old copies of the Economist! V. I've been all over the place but I still wouldn't claim that I 'know' India because it's an unknowable mess of contradictions and conundrums: I had been browsing the Kindle lists for books about India and picked this one up for just 77 pence, One of my favourite UNESCO World Heritage sites in India is the ghost town of Fatehpur Sikri. He's disappointed - wanted it to be more like Angkor Wat. That's like going to Rome and complaining that the Coliseum wasn't as much like the Eiffel Tower as you'd hoped: He tells us that the 'pink city' of Jaipur isn't named after its homosexual community - ouch, In one city he decides not to go to a Hindu temple because "I'd already seen one Jain temple that day". That's like "I decided not to go to the synagogue because I'd been to the mosque": "India makes you Paranoid" India only makes you paranoid if you're a closed-minded person who isn't willing to see the good in other people and find humour in the absurd. Whether you will love or hate India is not about India - it's about YOU and your attitude: Undoubtedly many people go to India and they don't like it or they hide in their rooms and attempt to avoid talking to anyone or undergoing any interaction with the locals. They eat cheese on toast and get flustered by the attention of people trying to make a few pennies out of them. That's their choice and it's as valid as anyone else's experience but it doesn't qualify them to give much advice. The Amazon blurb claims that India was a country that Irishman Donnelly really wanted to visit but there's not much evidence of that in his book, This book is the story of his attempt to make sense of it all: From the teeming masses of Delhi

and Mumbai to the deserts and forts of Rajasthan and the beaches of Goa the author gives his unique perspective on all of it: He currently lives in an undisclosed location with his patient and long suffering wife. How way we know his words?Links to his books can be found on this website and purchased for a nominal sum, Have there been any visual sightings?Videos of the fox's peregrinations may also be found on his website. What does the future hold?The Ministry Fox has just signed to Rebel Epublishers and Letters from the Ministry will be released in early 2013, How may we communicate with Ministry Fox?Via comments of through [ministryfox@gmail.com](mailto:ministryfox@gmail.com)Has he been interviewed?Yes thinking he was clearly quite bigoted but might be funny. One thing that the travel books wouldn't leave out is that August is undoubtedly the most stupid time of year to go on the itinerary that they followed. They start in Delhi head to Agra Fatehpur Sikri Jaipur Pushkar Jodhpur Jaisalmer Udaipur Mumbai Goa and back to Delhi, I've been to Mumbai in August for work and it's like a sauna - I wouldn't recommend anyone to go there for fun. This isn't a book of advice; it's a book of moans and whinges and prejudiced observations, He believed the only way to survive was to avoid over a billion people. I'm sure they didn't feel they missed out on his company but I can't help thinking he learned nothing by attempting to seal himself in a hermetically sealed bubble, He eats bananas toast and cheese toasties and then wonders if he's the only person ever to go to India and get constipation: He's probably also the only person to go to India in August with just one pair of trousers too - yuk: Not one rupee has left my pocket and there's been no hard sell: I've also spent a fortune on beautiful things that give me pleasure every time I see them. I can honestly say I've never bought anything I didn't want at least on some level and I've never paid more than I really wanted to, PLEASE don't dismiss the wonderful experience of shopping in India just because you're crap at it: Donnelly gets frustrated that no taxi driver will ever take him to a shopping mall: There's a very good reason for that - in the places he went to there aren't any, So if the driver tries to take him somewhere else does that make him or the driver the moron?Errors and TyposThe book is full of errors and mistakes: When visiting the Gandhi memorial in Delhi I got the distinct impression he thought Mahatma Gandhi and Mrs Ghandi were related, St FX's body is actually in the basilica of Bom Jesus an entirely different building from the Church of St Francis of Assisi. He writes about rioting in Ahmenabad which was presumably supposed to be Ahmedabad. This 'book' needed a critical read by someone who knew what they were reading about and not a quick glance from a handful of the writer's friends. I would be embarrassed to show myself up with the prejudices and ignorance displayed in this book: 120 For some reason I'm fascinated with India--always have been. Great travel book about him and his wife's trip there for a month, 120 Continually distracted by the petty details of everyday life the author seems to spend more time struggling with his own neurosis than anything else. At times India seems little more than a backdrop to the wars raging inside the Mr Donnelly's own head, As readers we are brought along for the ride; wishing we had a better driver and hoping that better views lie just round the corner: Few writers have come to India and so completely missed the point. All are available on his website.Their visit took place in 2008 in August. Here are a few examples. He refers to the god Shiva as 'her'.Typos are rife. A. Ego. Outraged 120.