

The Darjeeling Limited (2007)

Rated R. Our ratings: V-2 ; L-4 ; S/N-5. Running time: 1 hour 32 min.

*The Lord looks down from heaven on humankind
to see if there are any who are wise,
who seek after God.*

Psalms 14:2

*Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in
unity!*

Psalms 133:1 (RSV)

This is a silly sweet film. The chief steward is about fed combining the fish-out-of-water up with the antics of the motif with that of family three brothers.

reconciliation and bonding. (c) 2007 Fox Searchlight Francis (Owen Wilson) calls his Pictures

two brothers, Peter (Adrien Brody) and Jack (Jason Schwartzman), together in India for what he calls a "spiritual quest." Francis, his head swathed in bandages and still showing a few scars, has survived a near fatal auto wreck, and now hopes to overcome the breach that has kept them from communicating with each other for the past year. However, we quickly see why they have distanced themselves from him: he is the same domineering older brother that had tried to order their lives according to his viewpoint ever since they

could remember.

Francis has not only booked them passage on a train that will take through the heart of India, but he gives them each a detailed itinerary mapping out almost every moment of the days ahead—much of it to be spent visiting Indian shrines and holy sites along the way. His plan is to wind up visiting their reclusive mother, who has had little contact with them for a number of years—Patricia (Anjelica Huston). She has joined a convent of nuns working among the poor.

The trip aboard the train is a tad different from the one in *Dr. Zaiago*, or for that matter from the ones that Gandhi took in *Gandhi*. There is a romance between Peter and one of the female train employees, leading to the brothers getting put off the train. Trudging through the countryside with their stack of luggage, they come upon three boys trying to cross a small but torrential stream by a boat and rope system. The story abruptly turns serious as the current proves too powerful for the boys so that their boat tips over, dumping them into the raging stream. The three adults dive into the river, but only two are successful in their rescue attempt. Even though we do not know the drowned boy, it is a heart-wrenching scene as the brothers and survivors enter the village and hand over the body of the dead boy to his grieving father. Although the India of most of the film is a brightly colored concoction of the filmmakers, this touching episode seems authentic.

When they arrive at last at the convent, their mother is surprised and upset because they had ignored her expressed wish that they not visit her. She turns out to be quite a piece of work, no doubt a far cry from Mother Teresa. The last scenes of the brothers are warm and satisfying, though again unconventional. Wes Anderson's film (he co-wrote as well as directed it) is not exactly profound, but it is a lot of fun, and filled with beautiful color.

For Reflection/Discussion

1) At the beginning and end we see Bill Murray as “The Businessman.” What significance do you see in this?

2) How is Francis’ “spiritual quest” similar to that of so many in the west (remember the Beatles and the Sixties scene)? Why do you think that they cannot find what they are seeking in the Christianity of their culture but must seek it in some far off exotic land? Have the many expressions of the Christian faith available in every city and town become too tame or familiar? Do you think that those who go off elsewhere seeking spirituality have much of an understanding of Christianity and its history of spirituality?

3) What do you think that the various Asian religions have to contribute to Christianity? Do you think that Christianity today has stressed rationality so much that it has lost its sense of mystery?

4) How do you think that Patricia came to be a nun? What must have been the status of her relationship with the brothers’ father? What do you think she is gaining from her vocation (at least from what little we learn of it)?

5) Do you find your spirit fed by your church? How—in the music and singing; praying; sharing and service projects; reading and preaching of the word—or in private reading and devotions? How must the people and leaders of the church constantly strive to seek the presence of the Spirit?