

TRINH: As with all great work, there are many ways to enter his narrative: through the eye not only of a child but also of a wise man and a multitalented artist, geologist, and agronomist, whose song is indelibly marked by the death of his young sister. What inspired me most in Miyazawa's *Milky Way Railroad*, also translated as *Night Train to the Stars*, was the unusual space of happenings it opened, at once magical and scientific. As readers, we are happily invited, through his poignant story event, to see into the empty core of existence.

The journey leading us from wonder to wonder is also one in which death shapes our daily truths. As with my previous works, *Night Passage* is a film event that turns around on itself and looks at itself in its production activity — or in the very act of coming into being and “dissolving” (so to speak) into nothing. Such an infinite movement of reflexive performativity, which is intensified by digital imaging, throws the making and viewing self into an abyss. It enables us both to work with our specific limits (including film's limits) as we address our mortality and to expand our mind as the ripples, once set in motion, continue to multiply indefinitely.

The more vibrant the “forms” in *Night Passage*, the more fully the film event thrives on the void. To be able to feel this Void at the core of every reality — human, animal, vegetal, mineral, or digital — radically shifts our outlook on life. When one works with something as impossible to represent as death, and the experience of near-death, one is bound to take a leap to pass from one language to another, from the rigor of rational precision to the rigor of casual imprecision, or else of another kind of precision: sensual, emotional, virtual (but not necessarily mental), and spiritual.

Conceived as a multivoice, multitableaux, and multi-art event, *Night Passage* can be said to unfold through a series of filmic gestures, each defined by a specific location or setting, and distinct choreography of camera and body movements, as well as by precise lighting, colors, sound, silence, and resonances. The “multicellular” aspect of the work turns the space of narrative film into a multiplicity of interrelated but self-contained scenes. One can enter the event, for example, through the door of verbal interactions or of bodily imagination and spiritual aspiration.

As you have probably noticed, the multiplicity in appearances (related, among others, to gender, ethnicity, and cultural differences) comes with a multiplicity in languages and utterances. The words of wisdom that the two young

women protagonists, Kyra and Nabi, receive during their night journey come from many places: storytellers, or the Men of the Night; the sick father; the crazy linguist and researcher Aunt Wolf; the Man of Wisdom on the street; artists, musicians, and dancers; but also scholars, scientists, and tech people. The verbal dimension is thus conveyed through a rich tapestry of ways of telling: street talk, storytelling, verse singing, crazy rhapsodies, introspective musings, as well as fatherly advice and teacherly, scientific-like excursus.

There are many ways to come to my films: through the dated categories of the spiritual, the plastic, the discursive, the technological, the social and political, for example, or obliquely, through any hybrid combination of all of these. The multiplicity of performing spaces, across time and location, as related to the young women's longings and desires in this film event is a bit like that of the Russian *matryoshka*, or nesting dolls. Inside every big "Mother" some five to ten smaller ones are found. What delights and captivates our attention is not only the gesture of duplicating ad infinitum with women figurines but also the "unbeatable" character of these figurines, which sometimes come with rounded bottom and thus, when struck down, never fail to bounce back up.

More than with my other films, *Night Passage* can spatially be edited as an installation, so the scenes can be simultaneously shown on several screens in a location. There is something for every viewer, and those who enter my films fresh, without much baggage, or sensually in now-time, without trying always to make sense, usually get a lot out of the event. This is an ability that has little to do with any knowledge of film traditions or digital media.