

“The train scene in *Spirited Away* is often considered to define the film... Indeed by this point it hardly seems strange, but the natural continuation of a journey that has already taken us far past the mundane. Many Japanese viewers, including children (unlike most Westerners), would spot that the scene seemingly alludes to an older fantasy, the novella *Night on the Galactic Railroad* (first published posthumously in 1934) by Kenji Miyazawa. In Miyazawa’s Buddhist story, the central image is of a steam train bearing the souls of the dead down the banks of the shining river of the Milky Way.... Both Miyazawa and Miyazaki use the train to illustrate metaphysical mysteries, but in Miyazawa the image is integral to a moral and spiritual framework. The purpose of the train in his story is to convey characters who’ve learned the value of existence (their own and everything else’s) to their final destination.” Andrew Osmond for the British Film Institute, *Spirited Away*, 15 – 16.