

Modern Indian Writing and Translation
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Lecture 05
Week 2 Lecture 1: The Blue Light (Part - 1)

Length: 37:59

Hello and welcome to the session on Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's the blue light. The agenda for this session is to do a bit of close reading of this very interesting supernatural story. So, what I will do is I will invite one of my MA students to introduce Basheer very briefly. So, he will read out a biography and then students will take turns to summarize the first section of this story and then we will move on to reading the story and discussing it. So, I beg your patience for this session and stay tuned.

Student: Hi, so I will be giving a short biography of Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, Vaikom Muhammad Basheer was born in 1908 in Thalayolaparambu, Kottayam district Kerala. While he was in school, he got a chance to meet Mahatma Gandhi while during one of his visits to Kerala, and after that he got inspired by the ideas of the independence movement, especially the ideas of non-violence and Satyagraha. He left his school after 5th form and joined the Indian struggle for independence. And for that he shifted to the Malabar region where the struggle for independence was more prominent.

So he was jailed due to his participation in the Vaikom Satyagraha in 1930. After being released in 1933, he began editing a revolutionary magazine called Ujjevanam, which means revitalization. An arrest warrant was issued against him because of this, for which he went to exile on a long journey across India and even to parts of Asia and Africa. He did a lot of odd and menial jobs during the journey, which includes that of a cook, a fortune teller, a bank accountant, a watchman of a Sufi sage, a Hindu sage, etc.

He came back to Kerala and published his first story Ente Thankam, which means 'My Darling' in a Malayalam magazine called J. Kerala. It was a path breaker in romantic fiction, as a heroine of the story, breaking all conventions was a dark-complexioned hunch back. Two of its seminal works Premalekhanam and Balyakalasakhi, Premalekhanam means 'Love Letter' and Balyakalasakhi is 'Childhood' were written during his second jail sentence in 1943, 1944 and published in 1944 after his release.

He married Fatima, whom he fondly called Fabi in 1958, and settled in Beypore Kozhikode district Kerala. He was later fondly called by the people in Kerala as 'Beypore Sultan'. He has received many awards, including Padmashree, Sahitya Akademi award, A Sahitya Akademi fellowship, and also he has got the Kerala government Film Awards for the best story, for his for Mathilukal which is an adaptation of his own short story by the same name. He was also made a fellow of the Sahitya Akademi.

He has written a host of short stories, novels, essays, and one play called Kathaabeejam, which means 'The Seed of a Story'. In Kerala and across the world he is known for his unconventional literary style. He never stuck to grammar or any other conventional literary tropes. His style was humorous and satirical. His works despite being light reads, reflected a lot on social issues. He was humanitarian and a nature lover, and he believed in the ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutambakam. His works were popular in Kerala and were translated to many languages. He died on 5 July 1994. Thank you.

Student: Hello all, my name is Suma. I am a fourth year MA student in English, IIT Madras and I will be summarizing the first section of the story The Blue Light by Vaikom Muhammad Basheer. Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's short story was originally published in 1952 as Neela Velicham. It was translated into English as The Blue Light by Malayali poet and novelist O. V. Usha.

So I am going to start off the first section of the story. So we are going to talk about— the narrator is starting off the section of the story by narrating to us an interesting part or a miraculous part in his life. So, as we read it along, we will understand what the miracle was about. The narrator is basically, in the initial section talking about how he finds it difficult to rent a house. So in the initial section of the story, we get to understand that he is very picky about the choice of hou— house that he can take.

So he goes to this place and he, you know, he comments on a lot of places he goes to a hotel and he finds hundred flaws in that hotel. And we can also see that he complains about how the prices of the places that he is going to rent are really high. And so like that, we see that he has a very, this two paragraphs in this particular text really indicate that he has a difficulty in finding the house. So from here, we should understand that the place he is going to rent is going to be special.

And then we come to the central part of the story, the setting that is he chances to visit upon a place, it is called Bhargavi Nilayam. And it is he falls in love with the place instantly. And we can see that he describes the place to be quite far away from the town, it is near the municipality border, it is a two storied house. And the entire description of the house seems quite normal. You can see that there are two rooms and an open veranda upstairs, four rooms downstairs and the building has a bathroom, kitchen and a pipe with running water and also it has a well. And you can see that the public road runs right in front of the building.

So what I am trying to say is that the description is showing us that the place is quite normal and it is convenient for a person to live in. Then the narrator wonders why it has been laying empty for so long, it is there, is a board plate in front of the place telling that it is available for rent and it looks apparently very convenient and very easy to live in. And yet we see that there is no one living here. Why?

And we get a particular paragraph within the, you know reading, where we understand how much he is entranced by the house, and the description goes like this, “I was surprised and delighted, why had no one snapped up this place, house yet. A lady of great beauty she was ahh, she should not be seen by anyone, should hide her behind parda, such unusual thoughts and feelings that old house evoked in me. I was in a happy daze, I was entranced.” So we get a sense that he falls in love with the house quite easily and also there is a small portion where he talks about how the house appears strange to be in the first glance, but we do not get any insight further.

So he, as I have already told you, he falls in love with the place and he borrows money from his friends and pays two months rent in advance. And he moves into Bhargavi Nilayam. He cleans and sweeps the place himself. And so he is quite happy with the place he finds himself sitting on the wall of the ancient well, inside the walled compound of the house, and he is happily thinking about how to settle down here. He talks about having a garden in the front yard, bed of roses and jasmine flowers, and he thinks about hiring a cook and he thinks about how to arrange a lunch and dinner for him.

So apart from all of this, he finds this walled compound to be a place where he can be in solitude. This was actually important for him because he was a writer, and he wanted to write in complete freedom. So we can see that he, he is quite happy with this place and it is entirely normal. So this is how the first section of the story The Blue Light talks about, we get to know that the author has a difficulty in renting the house and we see that he falls in love with

Bhargavi Nilayam. Until now the place is quite normal and quite you know convenient, but we will see what happens later. Now I will hand over to Mrudula.

Student: **So now the writer is happy with the house that he has found out. And he is trying to, he is trying to get go again. I am sorry, can I start can we can we start it again?** Okay. So now the writer is happily, very happy with what he has found out. And he goes to the hotel, so that he can just settle down the accounts, and he meets the housekeeper, so that he has to talk the terms and conditions about the house. You have to keep in mind that he is a writer. So he has a collection of gramophones, records and he has boxes, papers, armchair, shells and everything, which is very much necessary for him when he writes.

So, so, he has kept everything in order moving back to Bhargavi Nilayam, and at the break of the dawn, he decides to go to Bhargavi Nilayam. He, he gets a help from two or three men and he keep, he puts all his luggage in a pushcart and he goes to that place. After reaching there, the men are actually very scared to enter inside the house, they leave all his luggage right outside the gate. Although it is strange on their part, the writer is highly unperturbed and he decides to, he decides to not give much significance to it.

So he, arriving at the new residence, he takes all his possessions inside. And what he does is that he just roams around, he closes the door and he just goes out and on his way outside, he thinks about what kind of song that he can play as a sense of inauguration, like he wanted to inaugurate the house with a song. So he thinks of the records that he has in possession and he says that he has got English, Arabic, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Bengali, and then he suddenly bursts out saying that he has got nothing in Malayalam, it's highly strange that he does not have any and he cites us the reason.

He says that, it is because there are no good music directors in Malayalam at that time, although you have great singers, and he finds fault with the editing. And then he changes his mind and he says that, okay, there are a lot of upcoming singers who are really good and he thinks he and he says that he must really think of purchasing such records. Then as he walks by he thinks of, he was thinking about who whose song that he must play first?

So he has a list of some 20 name, 20 singers, and starting with Pankaj Mullick, Dilip Kumar and it ends with M.S. Subbalaxmi, and then he decides that he want, he wants to play this song called Door Desh Ka Rehne Wala Aaya, which means someone from a distant land is here. From this we can understand that, we can find a kind of semblance with this song with

the character of the writer. He is also someone who has come from a distant place which is not really where he belongs to, but he has decided to recite them and he thinks who has sung that song, whether it is a male or female, and then he thinks 'Okay, fine, let me find that out once I go home.'

Then on his way, he meets the postman, and he tells the postman about the change of address and the postman, postman when he (said), when he hears the writer saying that he has moved to Bhargavi Nilayam, the postman is kind of shocked. And the postman blurts out abruptly saying, 'Ayyo sir, there was an unnatural death in that house, that is why it is been lying empty for so long, no one will stay there'. The writer is shocked to hear by this sudden revelation and he asks, what a natural death?

Then the postman gives him a bit of the story of the ghost, he says a resident of that house, actually committed suicide by jumping into the well that was in the backyard, and the ghost apparently haunts the house. There were many tenants earlier who wanted to stay in that house, but the ghost did not allow the tenants to stay by scaring them. Because at night, they could hear the doors banging shut on their own, taps opening by themselves and the ghost even tried to choke the anyone inside who was sleeping at night.

So the writer is kind of concerned now, he is very much scared and shocked to listen to all these unnatural things. And he thinks of, he had actually noticed that the taps were sealed inside the bathroom. And when he asked the house owner about this, the house owner replied that the travellers scaled the compound wall and bathed at the taps and that is why they were locked.

Although it is, although the house owner's version was not completely believable, he did not question it mainly because he totally loved the house and did not want to find any flaws in it and he was kind of, he was blindfolded. He was totally in love with that house and he wanted to get, get that he wanted to reside in that house at any rate. So, and then he thinks of, he is now scared and he thinks of whether he can get out of the house but he has already paid two months' rent and he thinks fine, okay, I have no money left so I have to stay there.

So he puts a strong face outside although he is really scared inside and he, he tells the (post) he tells the postman that okay whatever it is bring the letters to my house. And then he goes to the hotel because he wanted to, the lunch and the dinner to be arranged. So he goes there he tells him that he want, he want the food to be delivered to the, to his to Bhargavi Nilayam

and the hotel owner is at first he agrees, but when he hears that it is Bhargavi Nilayam to, it is to Bhargavi Nilayam that they have to deliver the food, the hotel owner tells him that at daytime he can deliver the food, but at night, the boy, but at night they are very highly inconvenient because the boys are really scared to come to that house, because a woman has apparently killed herself by jumping into the old well, and she still hangs around that place.

The moment when the writer realizes that the ghost is a woman, half of the fear that was built up in his with with, that was inside his mind melts away. And he says to, he says to the man, “Oh, nothing to all that, moreover, there is a mantra.” With that I will stop with the session and the next session will be handled by Sanchar.

Student: So, in course of the story, when we are moving forward, we see that the fascination and the continual inclination of the author for the Bhargavi Nilayam house, it turns from an expectation of something which he thought to be a lovely solitude into something which he is thinking to be a kind of a an experience where he will be confronting an unholy presence. So, gradually, what happens that he loses his interest and his basic inclination which brought him close to Bhargavi Nilayam.

So, slowly and slowly, in course of the story, he enters his house, his consolation that ‘I have a mantra which can um, can, which can help me counter the presence of a ghost, which will render the actions of the ghost, futile towards me,’ is kind of having a challenging question right now. So when he enters the house, he kind of in a more comic sense as a reader, which I feel so, if not, in a comic sense, much more in a sense of an eerie expectation, he starts to have a conversation with the ghost, with the ghost of Bhargavi.

And he starts by saying what his nature is, how a person he is, which seems as a reader for us, it may seem like it is a little bit of overstatement in any case, but he is trying to be more natural and more honest with what he thinks about himself. And he goes on speaking to Bhargavi about his celibacy, about how good a person he is, and how he is trying to make sure that he stays safe in the house.

So he gets to know about the fact that Bhargavi committed suicide by jumping into the well, because of her past experiences of an infidelity where the person she loved gets to marry a different girl. So in the beginning of the story, the writer himself casually threw a pebble inside the well, which now becomes kind of a big issue for him, which apparently seemed like it was nothing that time.

So he gets to the conversation, and he says that he would expect to stay in a much more easy way in the house where he does not want any kind of problems, because he does not intend to create any problem for the ghost of Bhargavi. So he is more or less trying to satisfy, trying to entertain Bhargavi's existence and also he tries to make sure that during his stay when he is facing a writer's block, where he expected to write things to create good narratives, he wants that the place remains unharmed, and so that his stay is not at all confronted with much difficulties in course of time. And so I expect we will work on this one in the next session.

Professor: Thank you Suma, for your comprehensive summary of a part of the first section of the story. I just want to bring the reader's attention to the setting, the house, as you mentioned, it looks normal to reader at a first read, it looks alright, but if you look closer at the way it is said, things are off, you know, this house is not set in the hustle and bustle of the town. If it had been set, the story would have spread already, and this person who was looking for a house would have known about it.

So this is not in the middle of things, the house is pushed to the outskirts, it is more or less in the margins. So that that I think should interest yes, because of its gothic narrative, it is a supernatural story and the settings in supernatural stories have a particular character. They are set in particular places. So let us go back to the section of the story, which says, which says, for rent, he finds this place, which has a decrepit board, all dilapidated, broken down, things associated with such ghastly, ghostly setting.

And he says, I like the place instantly, it was an old house, not new, old house and the well is also old, ancient, word ancient is repeated time and again. And he says there was something strange about it even at first glance. So the house is strange looking. So when we read, we usually kind of not notice it at first read, so I would advise you to reread the story several times, so that we pick up on all these details. And he says it did not matter, it was perfect for me. Two rooms and an open veranda upstairs, four rooms downstairs and it has no electricity and he says it does not matter, I will take it.

So there is an air of strangeness about the house, which we should recognize and this house is known as Bhargavi Nilayam to those people who kind of mingle about in the town. And as one of our students have already told us, this guy is a loner, he is a loner, and probably a stranger from other parts. So he does not know the narrative behind this particular house. And we also need to remember that this house is not called The Blue Light, that part is the mystery which is going to come at the end of the story.

And we also need to remember this title is not Bhargavi Nilayam. The title is not Bhargavi Nilayam, it is the Blue Light and we want to wonder, why this, this kind of you know, disjuncture is there? Why not name this story Bhargavi Nilayam itself like the house. So we need to come back to this question, and we will at some point. And we have other issues of erasure going on. There is a very, very strong narrative of erasure, which is a, the subtext to this particular story, right. Thank you.

Thank you for your summary as well Mrudula. I want to pick up on a particular passage and then go back to a point about the narrator. So this is from page 71 in my collection, “Whose song should I play first? I wondered Pankaj Mullick, Dilip Kumar Roy, Siegel, Bing Crosby, Paul Robson, Abdul Karim Khan, Chanan Devi, Kumari Manju Dasgupta, Khurshid, Joytika Roy, M.S. Subbalaxmi, some 20 names passed through my mind.

Finally, I decided there is a song which says that someone from a distant land is here. It begins with Door Desh Ke Rehne Wala Aaya, whose voice was it male or female? I could not remember I would find it when I got back home.” So, this is the statement in this story which makes us wonder about the origins of the narrator, this writer figure. So, what are the other aspects that come to your mind from what you have summarized in the story?

Student: Ma’am, the very fact that he has got such a huge number, collect the kind of collection that he has, says that he is highly cosmopolitan in nature, because, and like from being a Malayali it is expected of him that at least he must have some one or two records of Malayalam. But he, I think he is very critical in nature and he is and he is very, he is definitely a lover of songs, that is why he has this vast array of collection.

And, but he is very appreciative. And I think, in his sense, I think he is very encouraging as well, because although he finds fault with Malayalam records, he thinks that he must, he understands the fact that there is a lot of singers who are, who are, who has, who has got a lot of talent in them. He is trying to encourage them by purchasing their records.

Professor: But one thing that strikes me particularly is the fact that he is at least familiar with these various languages in which all these songs have come about. We do not know where exactly he has travelled, from the story, but we know that he has travelled to all these musical landscapes, be it M.S. Subbalaxmi or to those singers from the north or even outside of the country, right? So he has travelled musically and the other thing I noticed is that there is a lot of ambiguity and lack of specificity in this story.

For one thing, what is the name of the narrator? We do not know. We do not know his name. He says I have lived 20 years, but is that the precise age, I mean it is kind of left open. And then he has no family, so we cannot pin him down to a particular lineage. He seems to belong to any place in every place, there is universality to him. Which is why if you look at the opening of the story, he says no need for the date, no need for the month, no need for the year, you know, this could happen at any strange spot in any landscape, be it India or elsewhere. So that universal theme is struck, but we will try to kind of pin him down one way or the other in this story as we discuss it. Thank you Mrudula.

Professor: Many thanks for your summary too Sanchar. The two things that struck me in your summary of this section of the story is this idea of the mantra, right, he says that ‘Oh, I know this place is haunted, but I will deal with it, I will use the mantra.’ He mentions it a couple of times, but we do not actually see him apply it, do you have any thoughts on that?

Student: It is like, it apparently seems that maybe he is bluffing in the face of all kinds of questions which is facing right now. Like, he does not want to look out handed that he has rented a place in advance for two months. And the things which he has expected from this place the house, the lovely solitude, which he says, he does not want to let it go like, in front of the criticisms of his friends and the people who are actually concerned about him.

So that is why in the initial stage of the story until we read the entire narrative, we will never know that whether he is bluffing about the mantra or whether there is actually a mantra which he is possessing to counter the ghost’s effect. And more necessarily, I think that the trope which is using, like the conversation with the ghost in course of the story, like when he is going on, it seems like that okay, it is it is signaturally a ghost story in the initial say, but when it goes on, gradually moves forward, it seems like it has more of a comic rendition like the way he is trying to talk on to the ghost, I think there are many movies many stories around the regional cultures and literatures where we have seen that, the encountering of the ghost or how the narrator of the protagonist is approaching the ghost is much more in a more easy comic way.

Professor: That, that is a very, very interesting point, I will come back to it. But I want to come back to the earlier point that I made about the mantra and the appeasement of the ghost that is going on in the story. If you notice that for this writer, for this narrator for this young chap of 20 years if he is actually 20 years of age, appeasing the ghost is the mantra, that is what he does in the story. In a way, it’s a kind of a romantic, friendly appeasement, he talks

to the ghost, he kind of plays music to the ghost, he tells stories to the ghost, so he is appeasing and that becomes, in a way kind of mantra, not the traditional one that society offers not the ritual mantra that the society offers, he does not go down that route, but he goes into a different kind of, you know, track so that is very interesting, I think.

And I come back to your point about the comic trope. Yeah, it is very, very interesting, this is 1950's India and this kind of take on the ghost is also very unusual in order to treat the supernatural in such a flippant in way, is something that we don't expect, in some senses in literature this the horror element there is the terror element. So what Basheer is essentially trying to do is kind of pull the blanket off our feet and kind of make us look at things in a different way.

Student: Yeah, absolutely.

Professor: Thank you for your talk. Now I have a student with me called Gurudarshana who is going to read from the second half of the story. Would you please start?

Student: "Bhargavikutti he said, "You did not have done what you did. Do not think I am blaming you. The man you are fond of did not love you enough. He loved another woman more. Life turned bitter for you. That much is true. However, all of life is not full of bitterness. Forget about it. And for you now history will not repeat itself. Bhargavikutti, do not think for a moment I am blaming you. Was it really for love that you died? Love is only the golden dawn of eternal life. Silly girl. You didn't know a thing about it. That is what you are hatred of men tropes, consider what you knew just one man.

Also, let us accept for argument's sake, that he wronged you grievously. But is it right to view all men through the tinted glass of that one experience? How do you live instead of killing yourself? You would have known through experience that your extreme reaction was not right. There would have been someone to love you, to adore you, to call you my goddess. Now did not I say for you, history will not repeat itself, Bhargavi Kutti, how can I get to know you? How can I get to know your whole life story? Whatever it is, don't harm me, I beg you. No one will question you if you were to choke me to death tonight. Not that it is anyone's business to question you. All I mean, is that there is no one to do it. You know why? I have no one."

Professor: Thank you. Shweta, what are your thoughts on this narrative of this writer, his kind of essentially talking to the ghost or the idea of the ghost. So what do you make of this kind of talk?

Student: I mean, at first reading, it seems a little bit funny. And then it seems like he is thinking out loud to himself. And then it seems a little bit placatory as well, it seems to hold the promise of something, because he says things like, 'And for you now history will not repeat itself.' as though he somehow has it in his power to be able to ensure that. You'd expect the story to go down a different track, but it really doesn't.

Professor: So let me just pick on your thoughts, pick up some of the ideas that you have mentioned, it is comic we need to remember that. I mean, we are trying to kind of dissect this story, deconstruct the story, but, you know, at its heart, it is a comic story as well. So we need to remember that. It is placatory, yes, he is trying to appease the ghost, he does not want the ghost to harm him, so he says all men are not like that, do not attack everybody blindly. You just knew one man. So that is all that is fine.

What is jarring to me in my reading is this part. "Love is only the golden dawn of eternal life", that statement is a bit jarring. He says that love is the golden dawn, if love is the golden dawn for this poor girl, it has been a failure, right? The romantic trajectory breaks up for her, and it does not take off at all. What are your thoughts on that?

Student: I agree. But I mean, it is also a little bit ironic, because he is the same age as she was when she killed herself so well.

Professor: Yes, yes. Absolutely. That is a fantastic point Shweta, right yeah, yeah, very good. And that brings us to the issue of gender complications, he is twenty, she was 21 when she killed herself for, the Bhargavikutti, she was 21 right when she killed herself. So here we have a man who is celibate, who is kind of outside that realm of sexuality and romance, he is staying outside of it and he says, I am celibate, you know, you would not harm me. I have not entered this realm. And the other thing is, for him romance is not the only track in his life. Not to this girl who was a graduate, she was you know a B. A graduate and yet despite her education, despite being well read in the 1950s, despite all this kind of, you know, setup, she commits suicide, because she was betrayed. So that is a very, very, you know, ironic and tragic part to her story.

Student: How can he say that, she knows nothing about it, when he knows nothing about it as well?

Professor: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, Correct. Correct. And he is not into this kind of relationships at all, so we cannot take him as the authority on things romance.

Student: And yet he is assuring that, 'You know nothing about this.'

Professor: Yeah, yeah. Half the time, we also realize that what he is offering is a set of clichés as well, that element is there. And he says that, you know, "there would have been someone to love you, to adore you, to call you my goddess, if you had not killed yourself, you would have gotten all these things." And my question is, is the ultimate goal of a woman of that period, a graduate to add, is that ultimate goal to be called the goddess?

Is that what she is kind of living for? So that question inevitably crops up, right? So all these complications are there, simmering under the surface, while this comic monologue is going on in the story. So we need to be a little bit conscious of that kind of chatter as well. Thank you, Gurudarshana, thank you Shweta.

I have now Mahima with me, who is going to continue the reading.

Student: "Now you know how things stand. We, you and I are living here, that is I mean to live here having paid rent legally, the house well and everything else is mine. But let that be. You use the well and the four rooms downstairs. We share the kitchen and the bathroom equally. What do you say? Do you like my idea? Night fell, I came back with a tea-filled thermos almost after having eaten dinner at the hotel.

By the light of my electric torch, I lit the hurricane lamp. The room was flooded in yellow light. I went downstairs with a torch. I stood still in pitch darkness for some time. My intention was to turn the taps off tightly. I opened all the windows wide. I approached the kitchen near the well.

Suddenly I had the strong feeling that I must not tighten the taps. I close the doors, climbed the stairs and had some tea. After that I lit a bidi and sat in my armchair. I was just beginning to write when, I was just beginning to write when I had the feeling that Bhargavi was behind my chair. I said uneasily. 'I do not like anyone watching while I write.' I turned my head. No one there. I am not sure why, but I did not want to write anymore. I drew up another chair in front of mine, 'Sit down in this, Bhargavikutti.'

The chair stayed empty. I got up and began strolling through the two rooms, no breeze, the leaves of the trees outside did not stir. I looked down through the window, a light, blue, red or yellow. I could not tell it was gone in a second. Just my imagination. I told myself, I cannot swear that I saw the light. Still, how could one think one sees without actually seeing? Was it a glow worm perhaps?

Professor: Okay, thank you. What do you think is significant about this particular passage?

Student: I think it is beginning to of setting up the story's end and which is the title of the book, so I think just as how the title gives us a frame to put the story in. I think this is the part which connects with the title to setup the story.

Professor: I would call it the foreshadowing of things to come and a foreshadowing of the closure. There are references to different kinds of light, yellow light, and there is another reference where he cannot exactly make out what is the color blue, red, yellow, I could not tell. Again, the idea of ambiguity is lack of specificity, he is not absolutely sure what exactly is going on.

And then I want to kind of jump ahead and ask you to think about what exactly is the meaning of this particular story? What are we going to draw on? What are you going to take away from the story? What is his point, if there is a point to the story? If you read the story very, very carefully, you will know at several points, he just mentioned things and says, I do not know what to make of this, right?

I do not know what to make of that particular incident, I have travelled to so many places, but I do not know what the meaning of those travels are. So that refusal to pin down and kind of reflect on those experiences is very interesting, something that we need to think about, and what about the sharing of the house? Do you want to say something about it?

Student: So, in the beginning of that section, he actually assumes that the Bhargavi would like to use the kitchen and the bathroom and that is really.

Professor: Yeah, yeah. So what he does is he shares things he almost evenly, so which is, almost gives an egalitarian picture to the setup. He is sharing things he equally with the ghost. So that, that is very interesting and he goes down to tighten the taps and he does not. So he just lets the ghost be if there is a ghost, let the ghost have its kind of play if it wants to.

So that kind of tolerance is pretty interesting and modern, perhaps for that period. You know, where things supernatural and spiritual are frowned upon as you know, evil or bad omen or negative spirits. So he kind of allows space to this ghostly creature and that is again, very interesting. But the other side of that toleration is this identity the virtual presence of a female who is completely erased.

We have this disembodied idea of a woman wandering through the house, and she doesn't even get a voice. Whatever she gets is that blue light. I am kind of, you know, jumping ahead and giving you the answer to the story, the finale to the story, so she is completely disembodied. So the least the narrator could do is kind of give her her share of the space of her house, Bhargavi Nilayam. So these are some of the interesting nuances to the story which we need to be conscious of, when we read.

Thank you for participating in the discussion. We'll continue in the next session.