

## The Blue Light (1932) Leni Riefenstahl (1902-2003)

### OVERVIEW

*Auteur:* Helene Bertha Amalie 'Leni' Riefenstahl was a German film director, producer, screenwriter, photographer, actress, dancer, and author. She became interested in dancing during her childhood, took lessons, and performed across Europe. Later, she moved into acting. Between 1925 and 1929, she starred in five motion pictures. In 1932, she decided to try directing her own film, *The Blue Light (Das Blaue Licht)*. In the 1930s, her directing the Nazi propaganda films *Triumph of the Will* (1935) and *Olympia* (1938) resulted in worldwide attention. Adolf Hitler collaborated with Riefenstahl during the production of three significant Nazi films. Following the war, she was arrested and identified as a Nazi sympathizer, although she was not charged with war crimes. Throughout the rest of her life, Riefenstahl denied knowing about the Holocaust. Her other renowned films include *The Victory of Faith* (1933), *Tiefland* (1954), and *Impressions Under Water* (2002). She died at the age of 101.

*Film:* *The Blue Light (German: Das blaue Licht)* is a black-and-white 1932 film directed by Leni Riefenstahl. The screenplay is written by Béla Balázs and by Carl Mayer (uncredited). The film stars Leni Riefenstahl, Beni Fuehrer, Max Holzboer, Mathias Wieman, Franz Maldacea. Cinematography is by Hans Schneeberger and Heinz von Jaworsky. Music is by Dr. Giuseppe Becce. Filming locations included the Brenta Dolomites, in Ticino, Switzerland, and Sarntal, South Tirol. *The Blue Light* achieved both commercial and critical success. It performed well in much of Europe and the UK, although it faced criticism in Germany. Left-wing news publications expressed reservations about the film, while it received praise from the right-wing press.

*Historical background:* The plot of Gustav Renker's novel *Bergkristall* (1930) is very similar to the plot of *Das blaue Licht* and thus may have been used by Balázs and Riefenstahl without attribution. Gustav Renker (1889–1967) was an Austrian and Swiss journalist and novelist. Renker has published over sixty novels. Some of his novels have been made into films. *The Blue Light* was named one of the top five foreign films of the year at the 1934 National Board of Review Awards. The New York Sun described the film as "one of the most pictorially beautiful films of the year. Leni Riefenstahl [...] is an expert climber as well as handsome woman." The film's aesthetic/visual quality is also said to have captured Adolf Hitler's attention, influencing his later decision to appoint Riefenstahl to make propaganda films for him.

### CHARACTERS

*Junta:* A girl living in the mountains, a free spirit who loves climbing the mountains  
*Vigo:* A German painter who comes to visit the town of Santa Maria and becomes friends with Junta  
*Hotel Manager:* The hotel manager of Santa Maria, believes Junta to be a witch  
*Guzzi:* A young shepherd living in a cabin in the mountains, Junta's best friend  
*Visitor (man):* A man who visits Santa Maria in modern times and listens to Junta's story  
*Visitor (woman):* A woman who visits Santa Maria in modern times and listens to Junta's story  
*Villagers:* Villagers of Santa Maria who are devout Christians and have prejudices toward Junta

### SYNOPSIS

*The Blue Light* consists of a frame and a main story. The frame story begins with a couple arriving in an automobile at an inn in a mountain village called Santa Maria. They see a photo of a woman and ask the innkeeper who she is. The innkeeper tells a young boy to bring the book that contains Junta's story. Then the innkeeper opens a very large book. After this, the main story begins.

Junta is a young woman who lives apart from other villagers and climbs over the steep terrains of the local mountains. Vigo, a painter from the city, arrives at Santa Maria. Upon seeing Junta being harassed in the village square, he saves her from the villagers. The townsfolk think she is a witch responsible for the deaths of the young men of the village because she can climb the local mountain unharmed, while the young men fall to their deaths attempting to climb it. Junta lives in the company of Guzzi, a young shepherd boy. Vigo follows Junta to the cabin she shares with Guzzi, and decides to stay with them. On the full moon night, Vigo sees Junta climbing the mountain. He follows her and reaches the grotto, where he finds her in a state of trance among the crystals. Vigo perceives the crystals as a potential source of wealth for both Junta and the villagers. So, he informs the townsfolk and tells them how to safely reach the grotto. The greedy villagers take all the crystals and leave the grotto empty. The next day, Junta finds some crystals and tools on her path to the village. She rushes up to the grotto but finds it empty of crystals. Meanwhile, the villagers and Vigo are celebrating. Junta is devastated at this violation of the grotto and willingly falls to her death. Vigo finds her among the mountain flowers and grieves.

The main story ends. We return to the frame story with a shot of the last page of the book, in which Junta's memory is celebrated.

## SCENES

**The village of Santa Maria is an idyllic place** The film begins with an idyllic scene of the mountains and the village of Santa Maria. White clouds fill the skies. Children of the village play and spend their time with animals.



**The couple enters the inn** Soon, a couple arrives in an automobile and the children run to gather around them. One child gives the couple a photo of a young woman saying that her name is Junta. Then the couple enters an inn. As soon as they enter, they encounter an intriguing photo of the same young woman. There are also crystals being exhibited, surrounded and protected by a glass frame.



**The innkeeper shows the couple a book about Junta** The innkeeper comes and says: 'Good morning' to them. The man asks whether they could spend the night at the inn. Tomorrow, they wish to go to Monte Christallo. Later on, the woman asks who Junta is. The innkeeper asks a young boy to bring in the book about Junta. The boy brings a very large book. The innkeeper says that: 'It is the right time to read about the Blue Light on the mountain'. The name of the book is '*Historia della Junta: 1866*'. The woman asks whether Junta really lived. Then the scene changes and the main story begins.



**Junta is a girl of nature** We see beautiful crystals shimmering in the light. Junta takes into her hands one of these shining crystals and looks at it in a state of transcendence. We see a great waterfall up in the mountain, flowing constantly. Junta looks at the road from where she is standing.



**Vigo arrives at Santa Maria** A carriage drawn by horses comes into the village. The carriage driver plays a bugle. A German man (Vigo) comes off the carriage. He asks in German whether the road leads to Santa Maria. The carriage driver doesn't answer the man's question. As soon as the man takes out his baggage, the carriage leaves.



**Vigo sees the sculptures of the young villagers** The hotel manager of Santa Maria appears. The man is happy that finally there is someone who understands German. As they walk toward the hotel, they come upon bizarre sculptures of men. The hotel manager says to the man that these are the boys from the village who fell off the mountain while trying to climb it. Later, the man looks upon the peaceful mountain village from atop a cliff. Then, they pass through a wooden bridge.



**The villagers judge Junta** Junta descends from the mountains and comes to the village. The village folk look at her attentively and questioningly. As devout Christians about to enter a church, they seem to judge her wild, natural character and behavior. The hotel manager tells Vigo that Junta is a witch. Vigo asks the hotel manager why they are so against that girl. The hotel manager says that she is not a normal girl: 'How can she climb towards the blue light on the steep side of the mountain while the young boys fall down every time? This Junta, she is the damned devil's witch.'



**The hotel manager explains to Vigo about the Blue Light and the curse on their village** The man and the hotel manager sit in an open area where the other villagers are also gathered. Nobody speaks and everybody has a strange, silent expression on their faces. When Vigo comments on the lack of joy, the hotel manager says: 'It's a full moon, a bad day for Santa Maria.' Vigo asks what the Moon has to do with their mood. The hotel manager says that this is a curse on their village: 'When there is a full moon, there is a blue light shining on the rock. Each time the young boys want to go up and each time...and each time one cross more. I planted a cross for my youngest son.'



**A man tries to take one of Junta's crystals** All of a sudden, Junta appears before the villagers. One of the children causes her basket to fall to the ground. Among the things scattered to the ground, there is a shining crystal. The villagers get up from their sitting places to see the crystal. A man tries to get the crystal from Junta's hands which results in an ensuing struggle between the two. Junta hits on the man's hand, gets her crystal, and runs away. Junta runs away from the villagers. As Junta tries to get away from the village, a man attacks her. She runs away into the woods. She goes to hide in a cabin in the mountains. It is full moon's night and all the villagers close their shutters. The hotel manager says to the man that his son was the fourth victim this year.



**Young men of the village look at the Moon in a state of hypnosis** We see the Moon rising and young men looking at the Moon in a state of hypnosis. A brightly shining light is seen on the mountain.



**Silvio goes to climb the mountain to reach the Blue Light** A young man named Silvio goes after the Blue Light. His wife runs through the streets shouting his name and searching for the lost man. Vigo hears the screaming of the woman and opens the windows. He is astonished at the beauty of the Blue Light. Later on, It is day, once again. White clouds are in the sky. Men of the village carry the dead body of Silvio. Villagers gather around it.

**Junta is mesmerized by the Blue Light** Junta looks at the Blue Light on the mountain. She seems to be mesmerized by its beauty. Junta seems to be in the same state of hypnosis that the young men of the village are.



**The villagers attack Junta, and Vigo tries to help her** While the villagers are grieving the death of Silvio, Junta appears with her basket. The grieving wife points angrily at Junta: 'There she is, the devil's witch. Damn you! It's all her fault. It's her fault.' All the villagers start running after her and attack her. Junta runs as fast as she can but she cannot escape the villagers who are wildly running after her. Vigo sees what is going on and climbs out of his room to stop the villagers. Junta runs through the bridge while she is being attacked with stones. She runs into the woods and disappears.



**Vigo follows Junta** Vigo decides to follow Junta. He goes into the woods. Vigo climbs the steep rocks to reach where Junta is. Vigo's curiosity about Junta's way of living and his courage to explore the unknown is presented in this scene.



**Junta meets the shepherd Guzzi** Junta climbs the steep rocks and calls Guzzi, a shepherd who tends to the goats and sheep. Later on, Junta cries in the cabin where they both live. Guzzi asks her to eat something. Junta keeps on crying.



**Junta tells Guzzi about what happened that morning** Junta tells Guzzi that she was on the street early in the morning: *'All of a sudden I saw a crowd in front of Maria's house. I heard Maria who shouted: 'Junta, Junta!'. I was afraid and ran away...then I saw the threatening crowd. They ran after me with sticks...they threatened me with their fists and they shouted...They threw stones at me...I was running but they came nearer and nearer...Then a man jumped from a window...He stood there with his arm and shouted: 'Stop!'*' All of a sudden, the dog starts barking. Junta and Guzzi go out.



**Vigo reaches the cabin where Junta and Guzzi live** Junta eats an apple and looks from atop a hill at Vigo who is slowly trying to walk up the mountain. Junta's apple falls to the ground where Vigo is. He picks the apple up and looks up to see who there is. He sees Junta on the reflection of the water and soon reaches the cabin where she lives. As Vigo is resting in the cabin, Junta appears. Guzzi also arrives. Junta asks him to give some milk to Vigo. Unwillingly, Guzzi does as Junta tells him. Junta offers Vigo the milk in a bowl. Vigo says in German that he'd like to stay.



**Vigo leaves** Vigo says he must leave before it gets dark. He tells Junta that he will come back again tomorrow. He shakes Junta's hand and leaves the cabin.



**Villagers work in the field with the help of animals** We see villagers working the field with their horses and cows. A woman gives fruits to her husband who is working in the field.



**Vigo comes to live in the cabin with Junta and Guzzi** It is evening and the villagers are dancing accompanied by music. Vigo is sitting with a happy and dreamy look on his face. He tells the innkeeper that tomorrow he'll go back to the mountains. He says that he might stay over there for a few days. He tells him not to get worried. The next day, Vigo comes and calls out to Junta. Junta runs into the cabin and prepares milk for him. Vigo comes into the cabin. He says he brought bread as a contribution to their small community. He speaks in German whereas Junta speaks in Italian, so their communication is limited. Vigo asks about where he can sleep. Junta shows him a place among the straws.



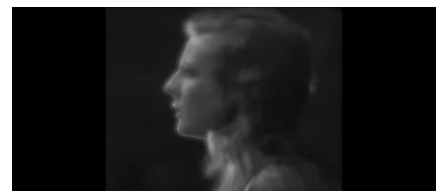
**A peaceful morning** It is morning and Junta is sitting on a cliff looking at the view of the village and the waterfall. Guzzi sleeps next to her. The sheep are peacefully eating grass.



**Junta is mesmerized by the crystals, and Vigo is slowly falling in love with her** Junta is sitting on the grass in front of the cabin while Vigo is painting. Vigo says to himself that Junta makes him behave like a fool: 'If only we could speak with each other, it would be perfect. I have been here for many weeks now and I'm afraid...I'll not go back ever...back to the people.' Meanwhile, Junta looks at the crystal in her hands in a mesmerized state. Vigo notices this and goes near Junta to ask what is happening with her. He hugs her and tries to kiss her. Junta goes away from him. We see her up on the hills with a worried look on her face.



**Junta is mesmerized by nature** It is a full moon's night. Junta looks at the cloudy skies and the moonlight in a state of trance. She is captivated by their beauty and magnificence.



**The villagers look at the moonlight in a state of captivation** The villagers close their windows and doors so as not to see the moonlight which casts a spell on the young men of the village. Men of the village look at the moon in a state of captivation. Soon, the full moon's light illuminates the grotto on the mountain.

**Another villager falls off the mountain** Meanwhile, a man from the village also tries to reach the Blue Light. However, he, as many others before him, cannot succeed and falls off from the mountains.

**Junta goes to the source of the Blue Light** Junta is sleeping under the moonlight. Vigo is watching her. Soon, she opens her eyes. Vigo goes to sit outside the cabin. Then Junta comes out of the cabin. She starts walking toward the Blue Light on the mountain. Vigo notices soon that Junta is climbing the steep mountain to reach the Blue Light. He decides to follow her up to the mountain.



**Junta is deeply disturbed by Vigo's arrival at the grotto** Vigo reaches the grotto after having much difficulty with climbing. He enters the illuminated grotto and sees Junta sitting in a state of trance. Vigo is mesmerized by the shining crystals. When Junta notices that Vigo has arrived, she is deeply disturbed.



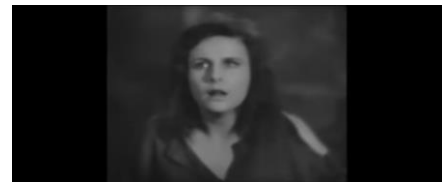
**Vigo thinks crystals could be a great source of wealth for the villagers** It is a new morning. Vigo and Junta are back in the cabin. Vigo prepares to go into town. He believes that the crystals at the top of the mountain could be a blessing for Junta and the whole village. He plans to tell the peasants about the crystals. He says to Junta that she will never have to run around in rag clothes anymore.



**Greedy villagers take all the crystals for themselves** Vigo goes into town and tells the townsfolk how to reach the grotto. The townsmen reach the grotto and take all the crystals for themselves. At night, Vigo and the townspeople celebrate their achievements.



**Junta cannot accept the violation of the grotto** The next morning, Junta finds crystals and tools on the ground while she is walking. She decides to go up the mountain to see the grotto. When she finally reaches the grotto, she finds that all the crystals have been taken away. She is devastated at this violation of the sacred grotto. Deeply hurt, she lets herself fall off the mountain. Vigo comes to see Junta and calls her name. He finds her lying lifeless among the mountain flowers. We can see that he understands that he indirectly caused her death by letting the grotto be violated. He grieves for her.



**End of the story** The main story ends here. We transition to the frame story with the photo of Junta. On the last page of the book, it is written: *'That's how the poor Junta of Santa Maria died. But her memory lives on in the village, the people who persecuted her so much, they got rich with the stones of the Monte Christallo.'*



## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### Junta

Junta is the protagonist of *The Blue Light*. She is a natural character. She lives in the mountains with the shepherd boy Guzzi. Because she can climb the steep mountains unharmed and reach the grotto filled with crystals while the young men of the village fall to their deaths attempting to climb it; she is considered to be a witch by the superstitious villagers.

*Natural:* Junta is a natural and almost wild young woman. She lives naturally up in the mountains with her shepherd companion Guzzi. She has a talent for climbing steep terrains which shows us her natural bodily and athletic talent. Her naturalness builds a contrast to the relatively more civilized state of the villagers who are marked by being devout Christians.

*Courageous:* Junta is a courageous young woman. She is neither afraid of living in the wild, nor is she afraid when she climbs the terrains in the mountains. When it is a full moon's night, she willingly climbs the steep mountain to reach the crystal-filled grotto. Her fearlessness and wild nature cause the villagers to perceive her as a quasi-supernatural threat.

*Shy:* Despite being a fearless young woman, Junta is quite shy when it comes to her relationships with the villagers and Vigo. She shies away from the villagers as she is aware of the fact that they judge her because of her divergent behavior. We also witness her shy temperament when Vigo first visits her in the cabin where she lives.

*Hospitable:* Junta shows hospitality toward Vigo. When he visits her in her cabin, she offers him a bowl of milk. Because she is an innocent character, she doesn't think for a second that someone visiting her place out of the blue may have other interests that might harm her. She opens her home and heart generously to everyone approaching her in a friendly manner.

### Vigo

Vigo is the second main character of the film. He is a painter from the city and comes to visit the town of Santa Maria for what seems to be adventurous purposes. He stays in a hotel in Santa Maria. Soon, he gets to know Junta and becomes a friend of hers. However, Vigo is also the person who brings Junta's downfall.

*Curious:* Vigo is an inherently curious character. He is a city man but comes to visit Santa Maria because he is curious about the village life. Likewise, he also becomes curious about Junta and her life later on in the film and decides to stay with her up in the mountains. Thus, he explores both the way of life of the villagers and that of Junta.

*Friendly:* Vigo is kind, pleasant, and friendly. We witness his friendly temperament the most when he becomes acquainted with Junta. First of all, he protects her from the attack of the villagers. Secondly, he goes to visit her in the cabin where she lives and soon they build a friendly relationship. We can say that Vigo also has romantic feelings for Junta as he tries to kiss her at some point in the film. Nevertheless, their relationship is better described as a form of friendship.

*Courageous:* Vigo's courageousness comes to the forefront first of all when he protects Junta from the angry townsfolk. He climbs out of this room onto the street to stop the wildly running crowds from harming Junta. His act of protection impresses Junta. Another instance of Vigo's courage is displayed when he decides to follow Junta while she is climbing the steep mountain to reach the grotto. That he is determined to climb the mountain and even risk his life shows us how courageous he is.

*Greedy:* Vigo's flaw is that he does not understand the sacredness of the grotto filled with crystals. In particular, he does not understand the significance of this place for Junta. He is not affected by the beauty of the crystals the way Junta is. He sees them as a source of wealth for both the villagers and Junta.

Therefore, he violates this sacred space when he informs the village folk about how to climb the mountain safely.

## **Guzzi**

Guzzi is a young shepherd boy who lives in a cabin together with Junta. Both he and Junta speak Italian, in comparison to Vigo who speaks German. Guzzi is Junta's friend. Throughout the film, we do not get to know much about his character except that he seems to enjoy his work as a shepherd and likes tending to the sheep and goats.

*Friendly:* As a young boy, Guzzi is a friendly character. We see his friendly nature when he interacts with Junta. Junta and Guzzi do not speak much with each other but they understand each other very well. When Vigo first comes to visit them in the cabin, Guzzi does not want to offer milk to Vigo. But after several weeks, he also becomes habituated to Vigo's presence. Nevertheless, we can see that Junta has always a more special place in his heart as his friend.

## **Villagers**

Villagers consist of many hundreds of people but based on their behavior and attitude, we can consider them as a monolith which is a social structure that is resistant to change. The villagers of Santa Maria are, in general, devout Christians. Thus, they are religious. But they are also superstitious and judgmental toward those they consider different from themselves. We also witness their greed at the end of the film.

*Superstitious:* Villagers are superstitious people, that is, they have excessively credulous belief in and reverence for the supernatural. They believe that Junta is a witch because she can easily climb the steep mountain whereas the young men of the village cannot and fall to their deaths while attempting to climb the same mountain. This superstitious belief causes them to have a hostile attitude toward Junta and exclude her from their society.

*Narrow-minded:* Narrow-minded refers to a state of intolerance toward those who differ from one in minor or major ways. Villagers are narrow-minded and prejudiced people, in particular in their behavior toward Junta. Junta is a natural and wild young woman who lives freely up in the mountains, on her own and independently. The villagers, as relatively more civilized and devout Christians, cannot accept these characteristics of hers.

*Religious:* Villagers are Christians and deeply religious. We see their devotion to Christianity in multiple scenes of the film where we see the church and people attending the ceremonies of the church with reverence and obedience. On the other hand, Junta does not seem to be a Christian, or rather represents a pagan view of the world which makes the villagers hostile toward her way of living.

*Judgmental:* Combined superstitiousness and narrow-mindedness result in the villagers being judgmental toward those they consider to be 'other' or 'different'. Junta is exactly 'the other' or 'the different' as she does not conform to the norms of the village and lives as a wild and free spirit in the most natural way possible. This uncivilized character of Junta causes her to be misunderstood and judged harshly by the villagers.

*Greedy:* The greedy nature of the villagers comes to the forefront at the end of the film. When Vigo informs them about how to safely reach the grotto, they violate this space which is viewed as sacred by Junta and take away all the crystals of the grotto. Their greed makes them rich. However, it is also their greed that causes Junta's intentional suicide.



## THEMES

### SOCIETY

**Gender** Gender roles are not a major theme of the film. However, one cannot overlook or ignore the fact that Junta's being an outcast by the society of the village also has to do with her being a young woman. All villagers are devout Christians. As religious people, they judge Junta more harshly because she is a woman. Generally, a woman is expected to conform to social norms, be obedient, and do housework. However, Junta defies all these preconceptions. She lives in a wild state in nature. She spends most of her time outside and she climbs steep terrains which is usually something that men are *supposed or expected* to do. So, her nonconforming and free spirit makes her a threat to the established order of the Christian/Abrahamic society. Therefore, she becomes a target for everyone in the village and is seen as *the other/different/outsider/outcast*. Only after her death is she forgiven and become exonerated in the memories of the villagers. Thus, we see that she had to pay with her life in order to become absolved from her perceived quasi-crimes.

**Religion** The villagers represent a Christian, or in general, an Abrahamic conception of the world whereas Junta and Guzzi represent a pre-Christian era, or in general, a pagan-naturalistic conception of the world. According to Christianity and the civilized society, there are certain norms and traditions that have to be followed by the members of the society. Moreover, there are expected gender roles to be conformed. Virtues such as obedience are upheld. In contrast to the Christian view of the world, Junta represents wilderness, nature, freedom, creative spirits, and spontaneity. She does not fit into the molds the society expects her to fit into. She is neither obedient nor is she a housewife. She lives in the most natural state with her friend, the shepherd boy Guzzi. She climbs to the steep terrains of the mountains which is an unexpected and inappropriate thing for a woman to do. Thus, in *The Blue Light*, we see the clashing of the Christian and pagan worldviews and values. By the sharp contrast of these two worldviews, the viewers of the film are also encouraged to reflect upon their own conceptions of the world and their values.

**Language** Two languages are heard in the film. One of these languages is German, the other is Italian. Junta and Guzzi speak Italian whereas Vigo speaks German. Junta and Vigo do not understand each other's languages, so their communication with each other is limited. They need to communicate using body language, gestures, and mimics. We can say that the lack of language indicates a lower phase of civilization or even a state of wilderness which fits perfectly into the already natural state of Junta. However, this lack of communication also results in a fatal occurrence, namely Junta's death. Because Vigo only speaks German, when he talks to Junta about how the grotto is a real treasure, Junta does not understand what he says. Therefore, she cannot raise any objections to his plan. If Junta and Vigo had had a common language, the course of events may have been different, in the sense that Junta may have prevented Vigo from informing the villagers about how to reach the grotto, and thus the grotto would never have been violated in the first place. Thereby, Junta would not have committed suicide and died. Considering all this, we can say that lack of (verbal) communication plays a vital role in the shaping of the events in the film.

**Myth** Myth is a traditional story, explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events. The myth that we encounter in *The Blue Light* is that of the moon and Junta. On full moon nights, young men of the village of Santa Maria find themselves in a state of hypnosis. They are all attracted to the beauty of the moon and the Blue Light that shines from the top of a mountain. The blue light draws all the young men to itself. However, it is more like an enticing trap as it leads to the death of those who attempt to climb it. The only person who is able to climb the steep mountain and reach the source of the blue light is Junta who is therefore considered to be a witch by the townsfolk. This myth causes the townsfolk to have a hostile attitude toward Junta as they almost blame her for the ongoing deaths of the young men of the village. However, we see at the end of the film that Junta is not to blame for any of the deaths at all. The mountains also become her graveyard after she willingly lets herself off from the top of the mountain after she sees that the sacred grotto has been disrespectfully violated by the villagers.

## PSYCHOLOGY

**Sadness** There are various scenes in the film where we encounter sadness. One of these is when the hotel manager explains to Vigo about the curse on the village and how the young men of the village fall to their deaths while attempting to climb the steep mountain with the blue light. The hotel manager talks about how he planted a cross for his youngest son. Even though the hotel manager does not show outwardly his feelings of grief, we can infer from the context of the scene that he has grieved for his son and that the memory of his son is still fresh on his mind. Another scene of sadness is when a man called Silvio tries to attempt to climb the steep mountain on a full moon night but fails to reach the source of the blue light and falls to his death. His wife and the villagers grieve for him when his dead body is brought to the door of his house. A third scene of sadness and hurt is when Junta discovers that the sacred grotto has been violated by the villagers and all the crystals have been taken away from the grotto. She is shocked, deeply disappointed, and sad such that she lets herself fall from the top of the mountain and thus commits suicide. A fourth scene of sadness and grief is when Vigo finds Junta's dead body among the mountain flowers. We can infer from the scene that he understands that he indirectly caused Junta's death and grieves for her.

**Regret** Vigo possibly regrets at the end of the film that he informed the townsfolk about how to reach the grotto. Even though we cannot assert this statement with certainty because we do not get to learn about Vigo's thoughts or what he did after he found Junta's lifeless body, we can make a probability statement that he possibly regretted his actions. The reason for this is that he seems to understand that he indirectly caused her death by letting the grotto be violated by the villagers. Therefore, he regrets that he took action regarding the grotto without properly consulting Junta about it and without letting her know about his plans. Here, the lack of a common language between the two characters also plays a vital role in Vigo's taking action without properly explaining to Junta what he plans to do and why.

**Anger** We see anger displayed by the villagers of Santa Maria. In particular, the scene where Silvio's dead body is brought to the front of his door shows us the hostility of the villagers toward Junta. In this scene, while the villagers are grieving the death of Silvio, Junta appears with her basket. *The grieving wife points angrily at Junta: 'There she is, the devil's witch. Damn you! It's all her fault. It's her fault.'* All the villagers start running after her and attack her. Junta runs as fast as she can but she cannot escape the villagers who are wildly running after her. Junta runs through the bridge while she is being attacked with stones. As we can see from the description of this scene, all the villagers see Junta as a supernatural witch and blame her for the ongoing deaths of the young men of the village. So, they are filled with anger, bitterness, and resentment toward Junta.

**Isolation** Junta leads a relatively isolated lifestyle. She is an outsider and her only friend is the shepherd boy Guzzi. She is not accepted by the villagers of Santa Maria. Even though she frequently visits the village, she knows that she does not belong there. Her real home is the heart of nature where her free and wild spirit is accepted. She is at home among nature, animals, and other living beings. So, we can assert that even though she is isolated from the relatively civilized world and society, she is fully integrated into nature and a natural way of living. Moreover, Junta's isolation from civilized society does not seem to cause her any worries or sadness as she feels her best when she can be up in the mountains.

**Fear** We see Junta exhibiting fear and anxiety in several scenes. She is particularly anxious and guarded when she has to see the villagers because she is well aware that the villagers judge her and behave harshly toward her. The scene where the villagers grieve Silvio's death and afterward attack Junta is one of the scenes where she feels a lot of anxiety and fear. She runs as fast as she can from the village into the woods as she is being attacked with stones. After she reaches her cabin, she starts crying uncontrollably which Guzzi cannot understand the reason of. Her uncontrollable crying shows how much scared she must have felt during the whole encounter with the villagers. Another scene where we witness her being fearful and anxious is when Vigo discovers her secret, sacred space in the grotto as she is surrounded by crystals in a state of trance. When she notices that Vigo has found her, she is deeply disturbed, anxious, and fearful; because she knows that her sacred and private space does not solely belong to her anymore.

**Otherness** Junta, the protagonist of the film, is also 'the other'. She is different from the rest of the villagers. She is a wild and natural spirit in comparison to the relatively more civilized villagers. She can be said to live in a pre-Christian or pagan world, surrounded by natural elements, animals, and her only friend, the young shepherd Guzzi. Because she is not like the others in her appearance, behavior, or way of life; she is harshly judged by the majority. She is seen as an evil threat or the enemy. Therefore, she becomes subject to judgmental gazes and the villagers' attacks. She is only absolved from her wrongdoings after she dies. Junta's otherness shows us the struggles of being a minority when one is surrounded by a narrow-minded and bigoted majority.

**Loss** Many losses are experienced throughout the film. The young men of the village die one by one while attempting to climb the steep mountain to reach the blue light. We find out how the hotel manager lost his youngest son. Later on, we see Silvio's death and how he is grieved by his wife and the villagers. Approaching the end of the film, another villager also falls off from the mountains while trying to climb it. At the very end, Junta willingly lets herself fall off the mountain after seeing the violated grotto. So, the steep mountain becomes the graveyard for many in the film and the cause of grievance. All in all, many physical losses and deaths are experienced which justifies why the villagers think there is a curse upon their village of Santa Maria.

**Boredom** Were it not for the full moon and the blue light, the village of Santa Maria might be said to be an idyllic town. Were it not for the curse upon the village, Junta and Guzzi might have led completely normal lives. We see several scenes of nature and the animals peacefully grazing throughout the film which show the serenity, peace, and calmness that nature offers to its inhabitants. One scene where we witness a quasi-boredom moment is when during a peaceful morning Junta is sitting on a cliff looking at the view of the village and the waterfall. Guzzi sleeps next to her. The sheep are eating grass. In this scene, everything looks idyllic and peaceful. The conflict-freeness of the scene, the vast landscape, and the time that both Junta and Guzzi have in their hands almost create a sense of inertia and boredom.

## FLAWS

**Greed** The quality that causes the downfall or death of Junta is the greed of both Vigo and the villagers. Vigo does not understand what the crystal-filled grotto means for Junta. He does not see how precious and sacred it is for her. Where Junta sees magnificence and beauty, Vigo only sees a source of wealth and money. Therefore, he informs the townsfolk about how to safely reach the grotto. The townsfolk consist of people greedy for wealth and money. So, they take away all the crystals and exploit the area without showing it respect or reverence. This greedy exploitation of the grotto causes immense suffering in Junta. She cannot accept the violation of her sacred space and therefore willingly commits suicide. What exactly the grotto represents for Junta is debatable. Nevertheless, no matter what it represents, whether it be purity, beauty, magnificence, silence, a quasi-meditative space, or more; these crystals are of utmost significance for Junta. Therefore, she cannot bear the fact that they have been exploited by outsiders who cannot even come to understand their beauty and preciousness. Thus, we see that the tragic death of the protagonist is caused by this flaw of the village people.

## QUEST

**Exploring** Both Vigo and Junta can be designated as explorers of their surroundings or environment. Vigo, as a painter, comes from the city. So, he is already acquainted with city life. Because of his inner curiosity, he also wishes to explore the village of Santa Maria and he does so. He becomes acquainted with the hotel manager and learns about Junta, and how she is attacked by the villagers. Then he goes up into the mountains to live a natural lifestyle with both Junta and Guzzi. We see that he is driven by a childish sense of curiosity in his adventures and explorations. His sense of wonder even leads him to follow Junta up into the sacred grotto. However, he does not realize how significant this sacred place is for Junta and therefore indirectly violates it by informing the townsfolk about how to reach the grotto. Junta is also an explorer. She makes frequent visits to the village and experiences how life is in the village. Even though she is frequently met with hostility, she keeps on visiting the village which shows us

her willingness to experience and explore lifestyles other than her own natural one. She also becomes a friend of Vigo, a city man. Thereby, she indirectly connects to the outer world and the rest of humanity.

## RELATIONSHIP

**Friendship** Friendship plays an important role in the film. Junta is rejected by almost everyone in the village. She is only accepted by the shepherd boy Guzzi with whom she lives in a cabin. They are good friends who are loyal to each other and respect each other. Junta feels comfortable enough to tell him all about how she has been attacked by the villagers. Moreover, Guzzi respects her sacred space. He never goes up into the grotto to see what Junta is doing. This shows us that Guzzi, either consciously or subconsciously, knows how precious and sacred the grotto is for Junta and never wishes to disturb her when she is in her sacred space. On the other hand, Vigo, who also becomes a friend of Junta later on in the film, does not respect her sacred space. Because of his extreme curiosity, he follows her up into the grotto. We witness how disturbed Junta is when she notices that Vigo has come to the grotto as well. Her facial expressions show us how uncomfortable she feels when Vigo violates her sacred space. Therefore, Vigo and Junta's friendship is not as strong as the bond between Junta and Guzzi. Because Vigo does not truly understand what matters to Junta and why. Ultimately, his lack of understanding combined with his greed and quasi-savior complex cause Junta's suicide.

**Loyalty/Betrayal** Loyalty and betrayal are terms that are intertwined with the concept of friendship. Guzzi is a loyal friend of Junta. He is always by her side and never disrespects her. Moreover, he also does not climb to the sacred grotto where Junta spends the full moon nights. This means he respects her sacred space. Their friendship is thus marked by loyalty and respect for one another. On the other hand, Vigo does not show respect for Junta's sacred space. He follows Junta into the grotto and later informs the townsfolk about how to reach the grotto. He sees crystals merely as a source of wealth and does not understand the significance they hold for Junta. In this way, he might be said to be disloyal to Junta's friendship, even if we cannot definitively assert that he betrays her *intentionally*. His intentions may have been pure but the indirect consequences of his actions are fatal for Junta. Vigo might be defended by some on the grounds that he could not have known the importance of the grotto for Junta because he does not understand the language Junta speaks, which is Italian. As a counter-argument to this claim, one might assert that as a painter, and thus an artist, he should have been considerate and sensitive enough to talk to Junta about how she feels about the grotto and whether she agrees with what he plans to do with the crystals of the grotto. Because he is ultimately inconsiderate and insensitive, his actions become nothing more than the signifiers of his disloyalty.

**Caring** Caring, in the sense of displaying kindness and concern for others, is seen in several scenes of the film, and displayed by such characters as Junta, Guzzi, and Vigo. First of all, Vigo protects Junta from the wild attacks of the townsfolk. He jumps out of this room onto the street and stops the men running after Junta. He shows courage and proves that he cares for Junta in that he does not accept her being mistreated by the crowds. Secondly, Guzzi also cares deeply for Junta. He is her one and only friend. When he sees for crying in the cabin after the event of being attacked by the crowds, he does not know what to do, but innocently offers her something to eat so she can feel better. This small, kind act underlines how much he cares about Junta. Thirdly, Junta cares for Vigo. When he comes to visit her in her cabin, she acts hospitably toward him and offers him a bowl of milk. She also prepares milk for him when he comes for the second time to visit the cabin. These small acts of kindness and hospitality show us the friendly and caring nature of Junta.

## PAST

**Transience** Transience which is the state or fact of lasting only for a short time can be observed to be a theme of *The Blue Light* concerning two aspects of the entirety of the film. The first aspect is that the film consists of a frame and a main story. In the frame story, we find ourselves in a modern setting with automobiles. The couple asks about Junta and so, the innkeeper makes a little boy bring a large book which contains the story of Junta. The date in the title of the book is 1866. So, we know that Junta's story goes back several decades before. Thus, from the perspective of the frame story, Junta and the adventures she had, are already past events. So, the frame story underlines the transitoriness and

impermanence of the events in the main story. A second aspect underlining transience is the fact that in the main story, on each full moon night, the young men find themselves in a state of hypnosis and try to climb the mountain to reach its luminous source. However, as emphasized in the film, these young men fall to their deaths, one by one, while trying to climb the mountain. Thus, the natural cycles of the moon become related to the deaths of the young men. Death, as an important theme, is intimately connected with the transience of the material world and the people living in the world. All in all, we can conclude that both the relation between the frame and the main story; and the frequent deaths occurring on full moon nights emphasize the transitoriness of all phenomena.