

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
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## PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE / Trikal (1985)

Shyam Benegal

### OVERVIEW

*Auteur* Shyam Benegal developed an interest in film and photography through his father, a professional photographer. In all his films, he aims to portray the fine lines of everyday lives in South Asia. Therefore, Benegal's films pay close attention to gender, caste, religion, politics, and other sociocultural factors that shape people and society. He has received many awards nationally and internationally for his films addressing social injustice in South Asia.

*Film* The film closely examines the passage of time and its impact on families and individuals. Shyam Benegal won the National Film Award for Best Direction in 1986 for *Past, Present, Future*. The film's costume designer Saba Zaidi also won the National Film Award for Best Costume Design for her work in the film. Costumes and décor in the film are nuanced and highly specialized in order to capture the interwoven cultural fabric of Portuguese and South Asian influences in the Suarez family and their visitors.

*Background* Set in Goa in 1961, just before the liberation of the colony by the Indian army, the film addresses the colonial past and focuses on the era of the anti-colonial struggle to overthrow colonial oppression, specifically the Portuguese colonization of Goa. It approaches decolonization from the perspective of a family that takes pride in its colonial heritage and values social mobility. However, with looming political uncertainty and regime change, the family has to reorient themselves to a different future. Benegal also addresses other concerns in this film, including differences in socioeconomic class, religious piety, and familial bonds.

### MAIN CHARACTERS

Dona Maria	The matriarch of the Suarez family, Senor Ernesto's wife
Sylvia	Dona Maria and Ernesto's eldest daughter; married to Lucio
Lucio	Sylvia's husband
Aurora	Sylvia's eldest daughter; Francis' love interest
Ana	Sylvia's second daughter engaged to Erasmo; a local beauty
Erasmo	Ana's fiancé; son of Dona Amelia and Senor Renato
Leon	A resistance fighter; Ana's secret lover
Mela Grinye	Ernesto's illegitimate daughter; a maidservant caring for Dona Maria
Dr. Pereira	The family doctor and dear family friend
Ruiz Pereira	Dr. Pereira's nephew, who is in love with Ana

### SYNOPSIS

As the title suggests, the plot moves back and forth in time, focusing on the Suarez family. They trace their ancestors to Portuguese colonizers who settled in Goa in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Because of their Portuguese connections, the family anxiously watches the developments in the Indian struggle for independence. When the patriarch, Senor Ernesto Suarez, passes away suddenly, chaos ensues. Donna Maria refuses to accept that her husband is no more. She illicitly conducts séances to communicate with her husband's ghost. Meanwhile, marriage-aged youngsters at home are restless and indulge in romantic affairs to defy familial and social expectations to marry eligible suitors. When old and new family secrets surface, they are too dark and too vicious to be pushed back under. They demolish the Suarez family's social standing in their community. The eventual decline of the Suarez family legacy runs parallel to the Indian Army's defeat of the Portuguese Goa. Like the colony absorbed into the republic of India, the Suarez family members suffer misfortunes and fall out from the public eye. A decade later, a family friend, Ruiz Pereira, visits the Suarez family manor and learns the full extent of loss and damage. He attempts to make sense of the historic family and their decline by philosophizing on life.

## PLOT

### PRESENT

**Ruiz Pereira's return** After 24 years, Ruiz Pereira, once a local of Lothari town, returns to a famed family manor and reflects on the events that catalyzed his exit from his family and society.



### PAST

**Senor Ernesto's death** Senor Ernesto is the patriarch of the Suarez family and a person of importance in the Portuguese community. Ruiz's recollection of the events from the past begins at Senor Ernesto's death and funeral services.



**The Funeral Service** While the family members and servants grieve his death, his wife, Dona Maria, refuses to accept his death, claiming that he is pretending to be dead while being very much alive. After the funeral service and burial, Dona Maria finally reconciles with the truth and cries bitterly about her husband's death. Her servant, Mela Grinye, comforts her. Although Mela Grinye is Senor Ernesto's illegitimate daughter, Dona Maria gracefully accepts her into the family.



**The servants' gossip** The servants gossip about the Suarez family members' quirks. One of the servants describes the strong gale at the graveyard, which caused Sylvia's husband, Lucio's, false teeth to fall out. The servants laugh at their masters. They call Dona Maria a hypocrite because she always quarreled with her husband when he was alive. Furthermore, they discuss the ongoing political tensions and their implications for simple folk like themselves. They conclude by saying, 'The masters keep changing. We always stay here.'



**A summoning ritual** Dona Maria misses her husband. She performs a séance to speak to Senor Ernesto's ghost. Mela Grinye is the medium through whom Dona Maria attempts to connect with the spirit world. However, she summons Vijay Singh Rane's ghost by mistake. He informs Dona Maria that he was a previous owner of the house, whom Dona Maria's grandfather unjustly beheaded.



**A Theft** Dona Aurelia, Ana's future mother-in-law, discovers that her jewelry box is missing. Instead of calling the police to investigate the crime, Dona Maria says she must talk to her dead husband and discuss solving the problem. Furthermore, she insists they follow the traditional custom of holding a candle vigil and praying to discover the thief and recover the jewels.



## ANA FALLS IN LOVE

**A fugitive** When Leon, a family friend and revolutionary, on the run from the authorities, arrives at the Suarez manor, Dona Maria sympathizes with his cause. She grants his request for refuge and promises him a temporary haven. She orders Mela Grinye to keep Leon in the basement, a secret from other family members. Unfortunately, Ana learns about Leon's presence from watching Mela Grinye's trips to the basement. Ana and Leon are former lovers. Soon, they rekindle their romance and have a secret affair.



**The Manhunt** Captain Ribeiro, a Portuguese police officer, arrives at the Suarez manor following a tip that Leon is hiding there. The entire household is assembled for questioning. Dona Maria, Mela Grinye, and Ana help hide Leon under the officers' noses. After the police officers leave, Dona Maria orders Leon to leave immediately. She believes that it is unsafe to harbor him any longer.



**Lovers' tryst** Amidst the candlelit prayer ritual to find the thief, two lovers' trysts occur on the manor grounds. Ruiz and Mela Grinye take a lovers' moonlight stroll, and Ana and Leon embrace in the gardens. Nevertheless, the night's events succeed because Dona Amalia's jewels are found.



## ANA GETS MARRIED

**Ana's engagement** Ana's beauty draws suitors from near and far. The family chooses Erasmo and his family because of their wealth and prestige. They came all way from Portugal just to court Ana. Erasmo is aware that theirs is not a love match. So, he attempts to have an honest conversation with Ana and proposes they build a relationship based on mutual care and respect.



**A betrothal** Dona Maria pauses the mourning period to hold Ana's betrothal. However, Ana looks subdued and less than happy at her own betrothal ceremony.



**Ana's pregnancy** Suddenly, Ana feels faint and swoons in the middle of dancing. Dr. Pereira diagnoses and confirms her pregnancy. When he informs her parents and Erasmo's parents, they trade accusations. Erasmo's parents accuse Ana of being immoral and flirty. Ana's parents accuse Erasmo of being too libertarian and sullyng Ana. Both mothers go into hysterics.



**A forced confession**

Dr. Pereira suspects Ruiz to be the real culprit. Accordingly, he chastises Ruiz to make him confess that he is responsible for Ana's pregnancy. In the priest's presence at church, Ruiz insists he did not cause Ana's pregnancy. But he gives in to the pressure and confesses that he is responsible for Mela Grinye's pregnancy. Dr. Pereira sends Ruiz to finish his studies in Bombay and advises him to focus on his studies and avoid girls.

**The accusation**

After Sylvia and Lucio learn about Leon's secretive presence at the manor and his romantic affair with Ana, they accuse Dona Maria of causing Ana's shame. Although Dona Maria remains calm, she reflects on the nature of shame foisted upon the girl by society.

**The lovers escape**

Leon sneaks back to the Suarez manor to convince Ana to run away with him. When the family discovers Ana missing, they panic and worry about her safety and well-being with a wanted man like Leon.



**Dona Maria's reflection** Dona Maria philosophizes about her life and the lessons she has learned. Then, she enters a waking dream state and sees a Chinese opera singer. In a song, the opera singer reminds Dona Maria that Ernesto is present in all four elements (earth, wind, air, fire) and will continue to protect her. Soon after, Ana and Mela Grinye give birth. Dona Maria rejoices at the new lives.



## PRESENT AGAIN

**Closing reflection** Ruiz learns about the manor changing hands after Dona Maria's death. He also discovers that Mela Grinye married an older man and moved to a foreign land. Ruiz asks after Mela Grinye's son, his illegitimate child. Like Dona Maria, he also believes in the power of the four elements of the natural world. He believes that the memories of the past will find consolation in living on in the present through those elements.



## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### **Dona Maria**     (*Unstable, Anxious, Fearful*)

*Character*     Dona Maria is the matriarch of the Suarez family. She comes from a powerful lineage of Portuguese officers who ruled Goa when it was a Portuguese colony. While she cares about loyalty, she also cares deeply about the family's prestige and social image.

*Unstable*       When Dona Maria's husband, Senor Ernesto, suddenly passes away, she is lost and unstable. She initially refuses to accept Senor Ernesto's death and claims he is only pretending to have died. Consequently, she delays the funeral and burial services. Following her husband's death, she institutes an indefinite mourning period in the family. Despite knowing the impact of the delay on her granddaughter's wedding, she refuses to compromise on the mourning period. Her instability causes her to procrastinate over vital decisions to secure the family's future.

*Anxious*        When Dona Maria performs the summoning rituals to revive her husband, Senor Ernesto's ghost, she meets Vijay Singh Rane's ghost. He haunts the Suarez mansion because Donna Maria's grandfather had unjustly killed him and his wife. She meets Rane's ghost at subsequent summoning rituals and learns more about the colonial injustices perpetrated on the natives. His accusations make her feel anxious and uneasy. Her anxiety extends to worries about the future amidst the uncertainties caused by the anti-colonial struggle to evict the Portuguese colonizers from Goa.

*Fearful*        Dona Maria greatly fears the future because she does not have her husband to rely on. Therefore, she sticks to the social and cultural rules and strives not to break them. When Dr. Pereira brings his nephew's marriage proposal to Ana, Dona Maria rejects it saying that a match between people from different castes would not be socially and culturally appropriate. She fears going against social and cultural norms in society.

### **Sylvia**        (*Unhappy*)

*Character*     Sylvia is Dona Maria's and Senor Ernesto's eldest daughter. She is married to Lucio and has four children: two daughters and two sons. Since her entire family resides at the Suarez manor, Sylvia has never left her natal home. Moreover, she considers her husband, Lucio, unreliable and incapable of providing for their family. Since she does not have any other choice, she bitterly tolerates her mother's unstable emotions and continues living in the Suarez manor.

*Unhappy*        Sylvia experiences unhappiness because she never accomplished the plans that she made for herself. Therefore, she often takes to complaining about other people to vent her regrets and unhappiness. When Dona Maria declares a period of mourning, it disrupts the timeline for her daughter Ana's wedding. Feeling the pressure imposed by the prospective in-laws, Sylvia complains about her mother and how she does not care about the family's future. When both families discover Ana's illegitimate pregnancy, Sylvia complains that Erasmo, the prospective son-in-law, took liberties with Ana. When Leon is revealed to be the father, Sylvia complains that her mother's leniency in allowing Leon to shelter at the Suarez mansion led to Ana's pregnancy. She exhausts herself by acting the victim and complaining about others' inconsiderate actions.

### **Aurora**        (*Passive, Dissatisfied*)

*Character*     Aurora is Sylvia and Lucio's eldest daughter. She is a pious girl who feels divided because her plans to become a nun clash with her love for Francis, her beau. She faces Francis' mother's anger and irritation because her son, Francis, fixates on Aurora, whom she considers inappropriate and unworthy.



**Passive** Aurora appears passive in contrast to her sister, Ana's extroverted and dramatic self. Of the two sisters, Ana is believed to be the prettier one. As a result, Aurora suffers from an inferiority complex. She chooses to appear passive and pious, the opposite of everything Ana represents.

**Dissatisfied** Although Aurora appears passive and calm on the surface, the film has scenes where she breaks down and cries. She expresses her dissatisfaction with life in these vulnerable moments. Although she enjoys Francis' attention, she also experiences dissatisfaction because she tends to get drunk and act silly at social gatherings. Aurora's dissatisfaction can be traced to grandmother Dona Maria's anxiety and mother Sylvia's incessant complaints.

### **Ana** (*Loyal*)

**Character** Ana is Sylvia and Lucio's second daughter. She is the darling of the family and is considered a local beauty. Consequently, she attracts the attention of many beaux, including Ruiz Pereira, her betrothed Erasmo, and the revolutionary fighter Leon. Ana's illegitimate pregnancy blemishes the family's honor and social standing. It becomes an irrecoverable blow to the united family front presented by Dona Maria.

**Loyal** Although Ana catches the attention of many eligible boys in her own town and others from far away shores, such as Erasmo, she is always loyal to her one true love, Leon. She does not care about the danger involved in Leon's daily life. Despite knowing her family's disapproval of Leon, Ana stands steadfast in her love for him. Ultimately, she runs away with Leon to live out their dream future together.

### **Erasm** (*Calm, Kindness*)

Erasmo is a well-educated young man from an upper-class Portuguese family. He is Dona Amelia's and Senor Renato's son. He is decidedly different from his parents and is a calm, reflective, and graceful young man.

**Calm** In sharp contrast to many characters in *Past, Present, Future*, Erasmo practices a relentless calm to overcome political excitement and family drama. When distressing news from the outside about the Indian Army's advancement reaches the Suarez family, Erasmo does not panic. When Ana's illegitimate pregnancy is revealed, he calmly ponders the situation instead of throwing accusations like his parents and in-laws. Unlike the impetuous Leon, Erasmo values reason over heady passion and relentless action.

**Kindness** Erasmo is fully aware of the nature of his arranged marriage with Ana. Despite knowing Ana is not in love with him, Erasmo is kind enough to overlook their loveless match. Instead, he proposes they become friends through their marriage. Despite the fallout and bitterness between the two families from Ana's illegitimate pregnancy, Erasmo chooses kindness and sympathy toward Ana. Accordingly, he wishes her well and departs in peace from Goa.

### **Leon** (*Jealous, Determined*)

**Character** Leon is a revolutionary freedom fighter on the run from the Portuguese colonial police force. He is Ana's true lover. He flirts with Mela Grinye before winning Ana's affection. After Ana accepts his advances, he abandons Mela Grinye. Dona Maria and many others in the community secretly admire and support him because of his cause.

**Jealous** Although Leon knows that Ana truly loves him, he often suffers doubts because Ana attracts many eligible young men's proposals. Therefore, Ana frequently steals away to reassure him of her love. He suspects Erasmo most of all because Erasmo could offer Ana a much better life than he himself could.

**Determined** Despite being a wanted man on the run, Leon cares deeply about his love, Ana. He is determined to keep his promise to her. When Ana suffers from the fallout caused by her illegitimate pregnancy, he swoops in, rescuing her and taking her away with him to a comfortable life.

**Mela Grinye** (*Helpful, Generous*)

**Character** Mela Grinye is Senor Ernesto's illegitimate daughter, born to a maidservant who worked at the Suarez manor. Despite her sketchy origins, she is accepted at the Suarez family manor because of Dona Maria's charity. As the legitimate wife, Dona Maria shares a seemingly contentious relationship with Mela Grinye, the illegitimate daughter. However, the two women make it work. They love and support each other in their own ways. After Senor Ernesto's death, Mela Grinye becomes Dona Maria's helper and companion.

**Helpful** Mela Grinye's willingness to help everyone in need is a distinct character trait consistent throughout the film. Mela Grinye's status in the Suarez household is ambiguous. She moves with ease between the masters' and servants' circles. Although she receives orders from members of the Suarez family, primarily Dona Maria, she does not feel slighted. She helps everyone in whatever way she can. Despite suffering fatigue from acting as a medium in Dona Maria's summoning rituals, she never complains and continues to perform the summoning rituals to help Dona Maria communicate with Ernesto's ghost.

**Generous** Mela Grinye falls in love with Ruiz Pereira, despite knowing he is in love with Ana and wishes to marry her. She knowingly engages in an affair with Ruiz. She generously gives him her time and affection and comforts him when Ana rejects his love and breaks his heart. Consequently, when she gets pregnant by Ruiz, she does not expect Ruiz to marry her. She bears no ill feelings and raises her son on her own.

**Ruiz Pereira** (*Playful, Irresponsible, Sensitive*) Ruiz Pereira is Dr. Pereira's nephew. He is the viewers' entry point into the film's plot and narrates the plot's opening and closing scenes. The film shows Ruiz from the past as a flirty, brash young man and the present-day, older Ruiz as a mature, world-weary middle-aged man.

**Playful** As a young man, Ruiz fancies himself in love with Ana. He does not consider his lack of resources and education an impediment to pursuing Ana. When Ana does not reciprocate, he diverts his attention to Mela Grinye. Ruiz gets accused of causing Ana's illegitimate pregnancy because he is known for his playful tendencies.

**Irresponsible** As a result of Ruiz's and Mela Grinye's affair, she becomes pregnant. However, when Ruiz learns about her pregnancy, he refuses to take responsibility for his actions. He reasons that she is only a servant. When his uncle offers the option to leave the town and go to the big city, he takes the easy way out and escapes.

**Sensitive** As a middle-aged returnee to his hometown and the Suarez manor, Ruiz displays a deep sense of empathy that he lacked as a brash young man. He carefully considers the family members' life paths, especially Dona Maria, and concludes that life is complex with no rights and wrongs. He finally makes peace with his past at the Suarez manor and is ready to move on.

**Dr. Pereira** (*Stable, Responsible*)

**Character** Dr. Simon Pereira is a doctor by profession and enjoys the trust of the Suarez family members. During the period of uncertainty caused by Senor Ernesto's death, Dr. Pereira becomes a source of support to the family, helping them handle important matters, such as Senor Ernesto's will and Ana's betrothal.

**Stable** Members of the Suarez family and their guests cave to the pressures of political instability and suffer nervous breakdowns. However, Dr. Pereira never loses sight of himself and his role

during trying times. Despite the growing tensions and uncertainty over the future, he continues to help sick people and be a source of moral support within the community. The Suarez family members find security in Dr. Pereira's stability and confidence during trying times.

**Responsible** Dr. Pereira takes his responsibilities to others very seriously. He takes a genuine interest in Ruiz, who is placed under Dr. Pereira's care. At several crucial moments, he displays empathy and understanding when talking to Ruiz and advising him. However, when Ruiz fails to shape up, Dr. Pereira does not hesitate to be firm. When Ana's illegitimate pregnancy is revealed, he suspects Ruiz's role and confronts him directly instead of attempting to protect him.

## THEMES

### **SOCIETY** (Religion, Caste, Class)

**Religion** The Suarez family members are staunch and pious Catholics. They are respected members of the local community. Many scenes in the film show them attending church masses, listening to sermons, and keenly observing Catholic rituals. The church's Father is considered a respected elder in the family. His words carry significance in the family's decisions because of his spiritual leadership. Furthermore, the Father presides over special occasions, such as betrothal, marriage, death and burial. When Dona Maria's secretive summoning rituals reach the Father's ears, he expresses concern for the family's spirituality and well-being. Accordingly, the Father visits and counsels Dona Maria to help her grieve and move on from her husband's death. Furthermore, he recommends and performs a Catholic purifying ritual to cleanse the manor and rid it of lingering evil presence.

**Caste** The Portuguese Goan society observes a caste hierarchy, where every individual knows their place. No one is allowed to overstep their position in the hierarchy. As a mixed Portuguese-Indian family with a proud Portuguese lineage, the Suarez family claims a high position in the caste hierarchy. Accordingly, they claim an upper caste status among other colonized Indians in Goa. Consequently, they frown on mingling with those belonging to lower castes. Therefore, when Dr. Pereira brings Ruiz's marriage proposal for Ana, Dona Maria rejects it, citing their caste differences. Even after Ana becomes disgraced, she refuses to allow her to marry Ruiz because of his lower caste status.

**Class** The class difference between the family members and their servants is evident within the Suarez manor. There is a contrast in the two groups' living quarters. However, Mela Grinye moves between the two classes because of her ambiguous status as Senor Ernesto's illegitimate daughter. Nonetheless, Mela Grinye is treated as a glorified servant on most occasions. For example, when Mela Grinye falls pregnant by Ruiz Pereira, no one demands justice for her. Ruiz escapes taking responsibility for his illegitimate child with Mela Grinye because he is from the upper class and sees her as a mere servant. Although the two classes lead separate social lives, the conversations and concerns of the masters trickle down to the servants. The servants discuss their masters' affectations mirthfully. When they realize their masters' fear of the future after the fall of Portuguese rule in Goa, they decide that it does not concern them. They remark, "The masters keep changing. We always stay here." They believe they would continue to serve the new masters of the house should the Suarez family be turned out.

### **RELATIONSHIP** (Marriage, Love)

**Marriage** Marriage is an essential theme in the film for two reasons. Firstly, there are many marriable young people in the Suarez family and their social community, including Aurora, Ana, Mela Grinye, Leon, Erasmo, Ruiz, and Francis. Secondly, marriages were public affairs designed to showcase the union of two families and the resulting benefits to both sides. Accordingly, the matchmaking and fixing of marriages occur in multiple steps involving both family members on both sides and a representative of the local Catholic church, the Father. Although the film does not show the growing connection between Ana's and Erasmo's families, it highlights the importance of a timely and somber church-centered betrothal ceremony, followed by a festive celebration at the bride's family house with friends and family. Like Ana and Erasmo, a potential match emerges between Francis and Aurora, Ana's older sister. The film sheds light on the friction between their two families leading to a strained marital match. While the

Suarez family looks down on Francis for his inability to hold his liquor at social gatherings, Francis' mother considers Aurora too frigid and unloving toward her son. These two matches convey the multitude of meanings marriages carry as symbolic rituals tying together two distinct families.

**Love** Despite the significance of marriage in society, young people rebel against its rigid customs by having covert love affairs. Although Leon, Ruiz, and Erasmo court Ana, their courtships differ vastly. While Erasmo's public courtship is socially and culturally appropriate, Leon's and Ruiz's courtships are not. Although Ruiz's romantic pursuit of Ana is public and dramatic, he is discouraged by community elders because of the differences in their family statuses. Leon pursues Ana in secret, and Ana takes him as her lover. Their affair results in an illegitimate pregnancy that breaks Ana's and Erasmo's betrothal. Although Ruiz claims to be in love with Ana and woos her with grand romantic gestures, he grows disheartened by Ana's lack of interest. He finds comfort with Mela Grinye. Their affair results in an illegitimate child that Ruiz refuses to accept as his own. Francis attempts to get close to Aurora but fails because of her piety and his inability to remain sober for long. With both social weddings and covert romantic affairs, the film captures two kinds of relationships.

### **PSYCHOLOGY** (Fear)

**Fear** There is political instability in Goa because independent India's army is at the colony's borders, fighting to oust the Portuguese and embrace Goa in the Republic of India. Since the Suarez family and their guests have Portuguese affiliations, they worry about their security in postcolonial India. Dona Maria feels lost and fears the future because she does not have her husband to help and support her in making difficult decisions concerning the family's future. She fears making a mistake that might adversely affect the family's social standing in their local community. After meeting Vijay Rane and learning her ancestor's deeds of colonial oppression meted out to the natives, Dona Maria fears being charged and tried for her ancestors' crimes. This fear causes her to rescind her promise to offer sanctuary to the fugitive and family friend, Leon. Like Donna Maria, other members of the Suarez family fear Goa's inevitable fall into the Indian army's hands because of their Portuguese ancestry and its consequences for people like them.

### **APPEARANCE vs. REALITY** (Secrets)

**Secrets** Secrets are an integral part of the film and a fixture within the Suarez family. The family members hold many grave secrets despite their close-knit structure and gossipy servants. For example, Dona Maria learns about her great-grandfather's cruelty towards Indians through Vijay Singh Rane's ghost, an innocent man who was murdered. Furthermore, she realizes that the Suarez manor was built on lands forcibly taken from natives. Despite repudiating Rane's charges and claiming she is not responsible for her ancestors' actions, she privately condemns herself and accepts her guilt. Dona Maria also keeps Leon a secret. When Leon seeks sanctuary at the manor to escape the manhunt, Dona Maria sympathizes with him and offers him refuge. Unfortunately, Ana discovers the secret, which leads to Ana's and Leon's affair and her pregnancy, which, in turn, causes the family to lose connection with Erasmo and his family. When Sylvia realizes that Dona Maria granted Leon refuge secretly, she accuses her mother of causing Ana's shame.

### **QUEST** (Introspection)

**Introspection** Introspection is a recurring theme in the film, as many characters frequently reflect on their own lives. The film begins and ends with an older Ruiz Pereira, who recounts the Suarez family's legacy. As a young man, he was hot-headed and impetuous. However, he learns to control his impulses and be more rational through his life experiences and mistakes committed as a young man. When he revisits the Suarez manor and sees the dilapidation, he feels sorry about the decline of an old family. However, he consoles himself with the knowledge that the past continues into the present as a lingering shadow. Reflecting on Mela Grinye's hard life at the manor and how all used her as a commodity, he feels bad and regrets his inaction towards her. Learning that Mela Grinye found love after all, he makes peace with his past regrets and decides to remember them as bittersweet memories. As a widowed woman, Dona Maria greatly misses her husband. When recollecting the past and her days as a young bride, she remembers the adage about the four elements (earth, wind, air, fire) that make up the world.

After she fails to summon her husband's ghost, she consoles herself by saying he continues living in the four elements that make up the world.

**PAST** (Memories)

**Memories** The film switches back and forth between the past and present. The opening and ending scenes show present-day Ruiz Pereira. The bulk of the film's plot between these scenes is situated in the past, in colonial Goa. Present-day Ruiz becomes an invisible narrator in some scenes. The film also shows Dona Maria's memories from her early years as a newly married young woman. In her memories, Dona Maria is a vivacious and hopeful young woman, excitedly looking forward to her married life with Senor Ernesto. The younger and older selves of Dona Maria and Ruiz Pereira offer contrasts that enable them (and us) to observe time's impact on individual lives.