

DEATH IN VENICE

Italy, 1971, Director Luchino Visconti, 130 Minutes

VIEWING GUIDE

1. At the beginning of the film one hears music (by Gustav Mahler), but one sees nothing for some time. What is the effect of this phenomenon? Does Mahler's music (the 3rd and 5th Symphonies) fit with the film?
2. What do you think of the casting in the film, especially Björn Andresen as Tadzio and Dirk Bogarde as Gustav von Aschenbach? Are they true to the types in Mann's *Death in Venice*? What do you think of details such as his stiff gait, trembling hands, etc. that are not present in the novella? On the other hand, in the novella, the eyes and visual communication (Augensprache) are very important; how are these represented in the film?
3. Is Tadzio's role in the film more active than in the novella? For example, in the scene on the beach when Aschenbach follows him Tadzio swings provocatively around the pillars and flirts with Aschenbach.
4. Visconti introduced flashbacks in the film. Are they well integrated? What do they add? How do they alter Mann's novella?
5. What roles are played by water and the city of Venice in the novella and in the film?
6. What do you think of the scene, in which Aschenbach visits the prostitute, a scene that does not exist in the novella?
7. In the film Aschenbach is shown several times with photographs of his wife and child; he even kisses the picture of his wife. What is the effect of this?
8. Aschenbach's "discussions" with Phaidros in the novella are turned into conversations with his friend Alfred in the film. What changes does this cause?
9. Does silence play a larger role in the film than in the original novella?
10. In the film version of *Death in Venice*, Aschenbach laughs during his collapse; what effect does the laughter have?
11. At the end of the film one hears a Russian song in the background. Is this appropriate to the story and to Aschenbach's death?