**Death recapitulates life in Greenaway's search for symmetry**

**A ZED AND TWO NOUGHTS**

Written directed by Peter Greenaway. Starring Jean-Hugues Anglade, Brian Deacon, Eric Deacon, and Frances Barber. At the Nickelodeon.

BY JULIAN WEST

Ontogeny, phylogeny. Onto- eneplasticity, visual symmetry.

We are not quite certain about any of these words, or go, and look them up now. Then come back and read this. I am writing my copy of a book of Vermeer out of the library and look up the word you are about then — go "A Zed and Two Noughts," the new film by quietly director Peter Greenaway.

You should by now have some idea what you are up against with this movie. If you have seen Greenaway's previous output, the low-budget marvel "The Draughtsman's Contract," you are well prepared for the shock. "A Zed and Two Noughts" is a very different sort of film — although it does have a separate plot, it is largely epic in nature. The story is told by the weight of evidence rather than by any dramatic device. The characters are in an increasingly complex and serious ways.

Two independently wealthy and eccentric brothers, Alva and Bill (Jean-Hugues Anglade, Brian Deacon) working at the Regent's Park Zoo are struck one day by a multiple catastrophe. One contents himself with poring over videotapes of "Life on Earth" while the other decides to turn a garage into a studio. A car collides with a minivan, the rear, killing both their women, Alva and Bill. One of the car's occupants, the woman who loses a leg. The woman driver (Amanda Redgrave) is convinced that he is a forger of Vermeer's. This same imperative pushes the two brothers to solve the problem posed by their solitude. As they progress toward death, the two younger ones, together, re- treating towards the surprising symmetry they shared in the womb and which has been suppressed in an attempt to forget two individuals.

Thus one possible answer to the question of death is that the individual re-creates the process of creation in an elaborate pattern of destruction. If so it is a truth which the brothers discover through ontology, through greater dialectic. At the end they are no longer examining their en-"