

# The Secret Passion of the Cinephile

## Greenaway's *A Zed and Two Noughts* and Ditvoorst's *De Witte Waan*

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"Besides, what film is truly definitive?"

Peter Greenaway<sup>1</sup>

During the 1986 International Rotterdam Film Festival I attended the Dutch premiere of *A ZED AND TWO NOUGHTS* (UK/Netherlands: Peter Greenaway, 1985).<sup>2</sup> As history records it, the film left behind a bewildered and amazed audience.<sup>3</sup> The opening credit scene gives so much visual and auditory information that the spectator is unable to "enter" the film. That may explain why many spectators talk about the film in spatial metaphors: the film was "beyond" them, or they felt "left out." Often mentioned in reviews of the film – and something Peter Greenaway seems to be proud of – is that watching the film is like seeing three films at once.<sup>4</sup> But that is not the only peculiarity of the film I noticed upon seeing the work. What really struck me was that the film resembled the Dutch film *DE WITTE WAAN / THE WHITE MADNESS / THE WHITE DELUSION* (Netherlands: Adriaan Ditvoorst, 1984).<sup>5</sup> Noticing this resemblance kept my attention focused on the screen.

In this article I intend to describe this film experience as a key to understanding the secret passion of the cinephile. It is not my intention to prove that Peter Greenaway was really influenced by *DE WITTE WAAN*. Actually I think it is, for reasons to be revealed later, even better that this remains ambiguous. The only "fact" this chapter takes as a starting point, is that the films share similarities, for everyone to notice. In both films an older woman is involved in a car accident, partly recovers, lives on but is fully committed to dying anyway. Without any apparent reason, both women almost seem to welcome death. The woman (played by Pim Lambeau) in *DE WITTE WAAN* confuses her own life with that of the roles she played as an actress in Tsjechow's plays (*The Cherry Orchard* in particular). Alba Bewick (Andréa Ferréol) in *A ZOO* confuses her own life with that of a woman in a Vermeer painting, and is even persuaded to have her legs amputated, so she looks more like her.

There are striking resemblances with the other characters as well. In *DE WITTE WAAN*, two brother actors, Jules and Hans Croiset, play the father, the friend, and the driver of the car that caused the accident. That they look alike (and even play a double role) is a reason for the main character to be confused about their identity. The two twin brothers Oswald and Oliver (Brian and Eric Deacon) in *A ZOO* cause similar confusion to the other characters. Visually, the films share the eye-catching use of color. Each scene is based on one dominant color, reminiscent of the early cinema use of tinting and toning. Also, both films feature actors acting in a strange, detached, matter-of-fact way. Although they do react emotionally to certain events, most events hardly seem to affect them. Furthermore, both films are obsessed with animals, and the main argument made about them is their connection to death. In *DE WITTE WAAN* animals are shown on television (a seal pup beaten to death), as non-diegetic inserts, in paintings, as stuffed animals; and despite the fact that in the zoo, animals naturally are alive, the film *A ZOO*, too, stresses their connection to death. To me as a spectator, noticing this resemblance created a special film experience. Upon first noticing some of these similarities with *DE WITTE WAAN*, I started looking for more, and was rewarded with even more findings. At that time, it gave me a special feeling. Although this feeling is difficult to define, I recognized it from earlier film experiences. In fact, it is the possibility of the recurrence of this feeling that is a major reason for me to go see a next film. The search for this feeling is what defines me as a cinephile. And although it is, not important to elaborate on the nature of this feeling, it is necessary to take a closer examine how this discovery of similarities affected the film experience. The most important effect was that it fully engaged me with a film some other spectators could not engage with at all. To begin understanding the cinephile film experience, I will start by theorizing it along with theories that explain the relationship between spectator and film.

The best-known theory is Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "temporary and willing suspension of disbelief." This means that the spectator tends to take the fiction for granted, voluntarily accepting that real life laws do not necessarily apply. Noël Carroll has many reasons for introducing an alternative theory: "entertaining the thought."<sup>6</sup> According to Carroll a spectator can never forget that the fiction is just fiction. What the spectator actually does, according to Carroll, is entertain the thought that the fiction could be real. Kendall L. Walton posits a similar theory. Walton proposes in his book *Mimesis as Make Believe* that in fiction spectators play certain games of make believe.<sup>7</sup> Within a game of make believe all events are fictionally true. Without any disrespect to the other two theories, I find Walton's suggestion of engaging with fiction as if they were games particularly helpful, because it brings with it the concept of "rules of the game." The spectator can play the game following the rules set out by the

author of the game, but is also free to change or add rules to the game. And since Walton shows that playing games is central to human life, it is not a necessity that the game of make believe is played within the film. It can also be played with the film as a prop in a different game of make believe, for example the one of comparing it to other films. Thus, applying Walton's theory to *A ZOO*, the following games are the key ones:

- the game of being in the world of *A ZOO*, and understanding its logic and characters;
- the game of understanding the film as typically “Greenaway”;
- the game of understanding the film as typically postmodern;
- the cinephile game of understanding the film as resembling *DE WITTE WAAN*.

All four games can be played at will, simultaneously or alternately. However it is important to notice that they are separate games, and must remain (at least theoretically) separate. At first sight, it may seem like the resemblance with *DE WITTE WAAN* either fits the Greenaway game of quoting, or the postmodern game of quoting (both assuming that he did see the film). But to understand the fourth game as a typical cinephile game, it is necessary to distinguish it from the others. This will become clear after first showing how, respectively, the “Greenaway game” and the “postmodern game” engage the spectator with *A ZOO*. Playing the cinephile game will then be positioned in relation to the other games and distinguished in particular from the postmodern game.

### **Playing the *A ZOO* Game**

The spectator tries to understand the characters and the events that befall them. The car accident has a huge impact on the lives of the two brothers Oswald and Oliver and also on Alba. The film shows their incapability of dealing with death, and that explains the strange choices they make, finally resulting in their deaths. The animals and many other aspects of the *mise-en-scène* look like important props necessary to play this game of make believe, but to the spectator the exact functions of those props remain unclear. This does not need to be a problem for the spectator, because it is obvious that at least the characters know how to use them. For example, Oliver eating the shattered glass of the car is not what the spectator would have done, but since the characters do seem to understand that the eating of glass is inevitable, spectators can try to understand their reasons for doing it.

### **Playing the Peter Greenaway Game**

All the aspects that are difficult to understand when playing the A ZOO game are well understood by playing the Greenaway game. From his familiarity with other Greenaway films, the spectator recognizes all of the props as being parts of catalogues. Catalogues of animals, of black-and-white objects (Is the zebra a white horse with black stripes, or a black horse with white stripes?), and of the alphabet (A-Z). And of course the film shows Greenaway's fascination for symmetry, decay, and Vermeer paintings. Within this game, it is no surprise that all these Greenaway motifs somehow coalesce, and construct the logic of the story. The logic of the motifs in Greenaway's films is a far stronger logic than the characters' motivations. Within the Greenaway game it is crystal clear that there is a doctor called Van Meegeren, who wants people to pose as if in the Vermeer paintings. The female character Alba Bewick looks very similar to one of the women in a painting by Vermeer. Unfortunately, the woman in the painting is shown without legs, and that makes Van Meegeren convince Alba of the necessity for the amputation of her legs.

Within the A ZOO game, the spectator can take this for granted without really understanding Alba's motivation for having her legs amputated. But in the Greenaway game the spectator is absolutely sure this was the only possible outcome, because they know how to explain the narrative turn with Greenaway's fascination for symmetry. In a similar vein, the spectator understands the two brothers. Oswald and Oliver (Brian and Eric Deacon) both lose their wives during a car accident, and throughout the rest of the film they try to understand the meaning of this loss. As biologists in the Zoo, they are just as interested in living creatures as they are in the decay of animals. They photograph the process of decay, which results in stop-motion films of rotting flesh, all shown within the film A ZOO. Then they finally come to the notion that the time of decay is just as long as the time of pregnancy. And to prove themselves right, they have to conduct the ultimate experiment. That is, at the end of the film they commit suicide, to be automatically photographed for a stop-motion film showing their own decay and decomposition. For the Greenaway connoisseur this unusual behavior alludes to the familiar theme of decay in Greenaway's oeuvre.

### **Playing the Postmodern Game**

In Greenaway's films, every shot, every part of the *mise-en-scène* is full of signs, there is a bombardment of signs and of quotes. Even the style of the film is a "quote" of a painting; the camera is always frontal to the set, so there is hardly any perception of depth. Most of the actors are shown in a fixed position, and

when they walk, the camera tracks sideways with them. One can understand Baudrillard's pessimistic view that with all these extra meanings, in the end, there remains no meaning at all. From the moment the spectator learns that the swan that causes the car accident is called Leda, extra meanings begin to proliferate. Within the film *A ZOO* the characters find extra meanings in the events that befall them, because they have a resemblance to other events; it is the quest of the scientists Oswald and Oliver. Faced with the tragic death of their wives, they start looking for the meaning of *death*, which in fact, becomes the meaning of their *lives*. Finding meaning in death, stillness, and rigor mortis, brings dead objects back to life. *A ZOO* substantiates this reading by showing the stop-motion films of decay.

The rotting of flesh filmed through stop-motion in a certain way brings the animals back to life, just like the twins want to bring their wives back to life by deconstructing the accident that killed them. But there is no end to their analysis: via Leda, and her pregnancy, they become fixated on the origins of life, which means watching David Attenborough's nature documentaries. But they find a no-less profound meaning in the shattered glass pieces, or they applaud the logic of putting flies in the same cage with spiders because they have the same color. Through its abundance of signs, *A ZOO* exemplifies that one sign leads to another, and yet another. Within the postmodern game it is significant that there is a character called Venus de Milo. It alludes to the statue of the Venus de Milo, whose best-known feature is that she has no arms. This makes the spectator better understand the motif of the amputation of legs.<sup>8</sup>

### Positioning the Cinephile Game

Of course, noticing the resemblance with *DE WITTE WAAN* could be part of the postmodern game. If we define the cinephile as someone who especially likes recognizing similarities and quotes, this sensation is common and available to all spectators. But is a spectator who notices some aspect of a film to be quotes from, or allusions to, another film, always a cinephile? When a spectator of *A ZOO* looks at the character Venus de Milo, is there anyone not thinking about the statue with the same name? The only effect this recognition of the allusion to another art object will have on spectators is that it makes them smile; postmodern quotes tend to have an ironic or parodic effect. But that is not what defines the cinephile experience.

Although the resemblance to *DE WITTE WAAN* can fit the postmodern game, and can result in a new reading of *A ZOO*, there is a difference in the feeling it causes the spectator to experience. What constitutes the difference is that in the postmodern game any cultured viewer can notice some of the quotes, citations, and tributes. What is usually problematic in the postmodern game, however, is

that spectators become aware of the fact that they also *miss* many quotes shown in the film. This sensation of not coping, not being *art* literate enough to get all the meanings, can give the spectator a feeling of frustration and defeat. The cinephile game is the exact antithesis of the postmodern game. The spectator finds a quote that was possibly not deliberately put there, cannot be observed by other spectators, and thus exemplifies the mastery of the cinephile as a film expert. The cinephile experience is thus best defined as pride. This is what the cinephile is looking for; the true pleasure is finding connections between films that are not known to anyone, connections that only exist by virtue of the film catalogue (a collection of moving image memories) in the cinephile's mind. So the "Holy Grail" of knowledge for the cinephile is finding a novel connection. The cinephile wants to be absolutely sure that his/her found connection was never noticed before. The cinephile wants his find to remain utterly private. The cinephile is extremely proud, proud of his findings. A good example of this attitude can be found in the documentary *CINEMANIA* (Germany/USA: Angela Christlieb and Steven Kijak, 2002). The film follows five film buffs living in New York. Their world revolves around movies and they may see up to five films per day and 2,000 per year. Some have given up their jobs to dedicate their full attention to the cinema. Although the people portrayed in the film seem to exemplify society's low opinion of cinephiles as shameful characters – who for example feel that movie-going is a worthy substitute for an active sex life – they nevertheless consider themselves champions, and are full of pride.

This strange co-existence of pride and shame that characterizes the extremist film buff can be explained via social psychology. For example, Fischer and Tangney argue, that the antecedents of pride are desirable actions; pride results in "displaying, engaging and feeling worthwhile."<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, they also note that when displaying too much pride, or making it too public, pride can become shameful. With this perspective, the New York *cinemaniacs* can be understood as victims of their overly developed and expressed passion rather than as social misfits at heart who find shelter in the dream world of the silver screen. This partly explains why more normal cinephiles are modest about their expertise – the other reason being that communication with non-cinephiles is notoriously difficult, because there is no common ground of understanding and no shared knowledge of film trivia. Instead of displaying their knowledge at random in public, cinephiles tend to carefully select and form social groups; they meet in theatres, internet communities, and at film festivals. Here the personal discoveries are shared and discussed in a public setting that contributes to the individual cinephile engagement. This negotiation between personal revelations and the public discourse has been central to the cinephile experience since the earliest issues of *Cahiers de Cinéma*. The *Cahiers* critics "discovered" the auteur,

especially in studio system films, and transformed this personal discovery into a “politique des auteurs.”

In this light, Paul Willemen’s thoughts about the cinephile are particularly relevant.<sup>10</sup> He traces the origin of cinephilia, “the privileged, pleasure-giving, fascinating moment,” to the 1920s French discourse on *photogénie*, and Roland Barthes’ *obtuse meaning*. For Barthes, the obtuse meaning “has something to do with disguise.”<sup>11</sup> The concept of obtuse meaning is carefully distinguished from the *obvious* meaning. Cinephilia revolves around obtuse meanings; something unknown, not obvious, is revealed to the spectator. The question is whether these revelations can maintain their value as privileged moments for the cinephile when they become the subject of public discourse. I want to argue that the *Cahiers* critics’ discussion of their findings in public, and even transformation of these findings into a “politique” did not affect their cinephile experience, because every film they watched continued to be open to new, personal interpretations, such as authorial signatures. Cinephile interpretations are by definition personal and cannot spoil the cinephile’s experience when put down in words since the experience already belongs to the past. At most, making cinephile experiences public could influence how future cinemagoers experience this “privileged moment.” This notion of spoiling strongly influences discussions about films; sometimes it even surfaces in film reviews and advertisements, consider for example the warning not to reveal the gender surprise in Neil Jordan’s *THE CRYING GAME* ( ).

### Conditions for Playing the Cinephile Game

From the moment a spectator starts playing the cinephile game, a sub-game begins to simultaneously be played. For the cinephile game to be as enjoyable as possible, the spectator has to be absolutely sure that the found connection is fully private, and not a fact the filmmaker was aware of. This sub-game never ends. Although the spectator can be temporarily soothed by the thought that his findings are totally private, every new spectacular resemblance to *DE WITTE WAAN* will raise new doubts in the mind of the spectator.

One of the first questions that come to a spectator’s mind is whether this resemblance is a fact. That is, does the resemblance merely exist in the spectator’s mind, or is it because Peter Greenaway has seen *DE WITTE WAAN*? Certainly at the International Rotterdam Film Festival, a spectator may have been aware of the fact that Greenaway had been a special guest at the festival a few years earlier in 1983. In the sub-game, the spectator might reconstruct the following scenario: In 1984 *DE WITTE WAAN* premiered at the IFFR, where Peter Greenaway saw the film. He must have, because there were many rumors circulating around the premiere and the film received a lot of attention in the press. More-

over, the film *A ZOO* is proof of Greenaway's detailed knowledge of the Netherlands (such as the Rotterdam Zoo Blijdorp where the film is partially shot, or such details as the work of architect Van Ravensteijn, and the painters Vermeer and Van Meegeren) and with all these direct references to Dutch culture it is simply unlikely that the references to the Dutch feature *DE WITTE WAAN* are coincidental. Although I may not be able to definitively conclude that Greenaway saw the film, all the evidence does support my observation that the two films are too much alike to have been conceived of completely separately from one another.<sup>12</sup>

The same sub-game can be played with different arguments. One is the institutional game in which the spectator assumes that Greenaway did indeed see the film, but had to remain quiet about it. The argument would go something like this: Within the discourse of the problematic relationship between Hollywood and Europe, the similarity between the two films simply does not make sense. In (European) auteur films, imitating a recent film is not an accepted practice. What is accepted, however, is the use of other artforms and finding inspiration in old films. Indeed, Greenaway's oeuvre is often discussed in relation to its quotations of various other artforms, especially painting, and in light of Greenaway's acknowledgment of being influenced by certain films. He often mentions Alain Resnais; this admiration resulted in securing Resnais' cameraman Sacha Vierny as his own cameraman. Whereas these quotations are emphasized and used to position Greenaway as a typical European art cinema director, he had to remain quiet about the importance of *DE WITTE WAAN* to *A ZOO*, because it would diminish his creative mastery over his own film.

The denial that *A ZOO* is a copy of a recent film shows how strong the reigning concepts are: European auteur cinema can be understood as appropriating other arts, quoting earlier films and deconstructing American films, but it cannot be understood in terms of quoting other recent auteur films.<sup>13</sup> Counterexamples probably exist, and need to be stressed in order to test this "folk-theory"; but this concept continues to reign, certainly in the film spectator's own mind. Being secretive about the influence of *DE WITTE WAAN* would certainly help Greenaway maintain his reputation as an innovator, claiming that film is dead, and "now" is the time to make a difference. In keeping with this concept of an artist, Greenaway does not hesitate to inflict (light) damage on the reputations of others, like David Cronenberg. On the recent DVD release of *A ZOO*, he explains how Cronenberg told him that *DEAD RINGERS* (Canada/USA: David Cronenberg, 1988) was created as a copy of *A ZOO*. This is exactly the sort of information Greenaway (consciously or unconsciously) prevents from becoming known about his own films.



### Playing the Cinephile Game

For the enthusiastic cinephile, the game of finding similarities between the two films resembles a series of rewarding riddles that only he/she – as an informed cinephile – can solve:

1. In *DE WITTE WAAN*, there is a subplot about a man who wants to perform an ultimate experiment with sound. He wants to produce a sound louder than the Big Bang, which will echo throughout the entire universe and make everything silent again. In the end, the experiment is started, but it fails because the rats have gnawed through the electric wires. And the researcher is unable to repeat the experiment, because he dies.  
This is, by the way, exactly the same experiment as the two brothers perform in *A ZOO*. Oswald and Oliver commit suicide, in order to have their decay filmed in stop motion, to prove that their decay will take nine months, the same duration as that of a human pregnancy. Their experiment fails because the garden is full of snails, which causes a short circuit to the camera.<sup>14</sup>  
The sound experiment of *DE WITTE WAAN* is performed in order to conquer death by reversing maximum sound to create silence.<sup>15</sup> The visual experiment of *A ZOO* wants to reverse pregnancy and decay to create moving images that show what normally is understood as immobility and death. Even though one film makes its statement in terms of sound, and the other in terms of visual images, the spectator begins to comprehend how the two films relate to one another. They are not copies; but they are two sides of the same coin. Or, to use one of the narratives from *A ZOO*, they are like the brothers Oswald and Oliver. First they deny each other's existence, then they admit they are brothers, then we learn that they are twins, then that they are actually separated conjoined twins, and in the end, the once-joined twins can hardly wait to be reunited. This is also what happens to the two films as well: First they are separate, then they begin to bear a vague resemblance, and finally both films are forever related to each other.
2. Both films insist that human endeavor ends with animals reigning again. The David Attenborough documentary emphasizes this: First there were animals, then came human beings, then there were only animals again. It is perfect moment when at the end, all the animals are liberated from the Zoo.
3. The strange character Van Meegeren also begins to make much more sense. He is the Vermeer forger – in the film and in history.<sup>16</sup> The resemblance of Andréa Ferréol to the woman in a particular Vermeer painting inspires Van Meegeren to portray her as a replica of a Vermeer subject, and to make this resemblance perfect, she has to have her legs amputated. That may seem like a sick joke for Peter Greenaway, but it is keeping with what the brothers tell

us about their desire to be reunited: "it feels incomplete." In other words, having a twin makes one truly alive. Alba Bewick becomes the twin of the lady in Vermeer's painting. And Vermeer's paintings come to life because Van Meegeren copies them.

4. The other theme, that of black and white as opposites is also resolved: the black-and-white dog is run over in a *zebra* crosswalk, and thus finds its twin. The inherent opposition in the dog (is it white with black spots, or black with white spots) is resolved in it being perfectly akin to the zebra crossing.

A ZOO was disliked by many viewers because of its allusions to other arts and non-arts, which ultimately gave it a very non-narrative quality. But, compared to DE WITTE WAAN, the film actually looks like a well-told narrative. However, in contrast, the narrative (but not well-told) film DE WITTE WAAN impresses the spectator, in retrospect, as being a beautiful non-narrative. In this case, it even ultimately helps us to understand the strange title – A ZED AND TWO NOUGHTS. Greenaway himself offered several interpretations: for example the first two letters are A and Z, so it encompasses the whole alphabet. And the two O's are for Oswald and Oliver. But why didn't he just call it A ZOO instead of A ZED AND Two NOUGHTS? The strange explanation of the title stresses the notion that the two Os should perhaps be read as zeros. And if they are zeros, you don't need them (that is why the brothers die, also for the sake of symmetry). We are left with just the letter "Z". Z and DE WITTE WAAN produces De Witte Zwaan (the white swan). That same white swan, Leda, who caused the accident (on a metaphorical level), emphasizes the fact that the two films can never be totally untangled. They are, like the conjoined twins, finally reunited.

## Notes

1. Greenaway, Peter. *A Zed # Two Noughts*. London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1986. p. 9, Author's Note: "Besides, what film is truly definitive? By the time you see the film it may very well be sub-titled, re-edited, shortened, even censored, and every film is viewed at the discretion of the projectionist, the cinema manager, the architect of the cinema, the comfort of your seat and the attention of your neighbour." My argument will be about other ways in which the film will never reach its definitive state.
2. As a shortcut, I will from here on use the short, albeit incorrect, title A ZOO.
3. *Variety* vol. CCCXXI no. 6 (4 Dec. 1985) "In the end, it remains the work of a highly talented British eccentric who hasn't yet managed to thresh out his private fantasies and obscurantist intellectual preoccupations to connect with major concerns or touch the emotions." p. 26
4. DVD *A Zed and two Noughts*, BFI, 2004.

5. Adriaan Ditvoorst was a very talented Dutch director, daring and unconventional. His film *DE WITTE WAAN* had a similar reception as *A ZOO* in that the audience and the critics had high hopes for it, but ultimately found the film too experimental to be understood in a single viewing. The producer even ordered a re-edit: "Disappointingly, pic met with a mixed reception from press and public, due to its willfully baffling aspects which even wellwishers found hard to stomach." *Variety* vol. CCCXV no. 4 (23 May 1984): p. 32. Compare this quote with note three. Nevertheless, ever since Ditvoorst committed suicide in 1987, his films, and especially his last film *DE WITTE WAAN*, are considered highlights of Dutch film history.
6. Carroll, Noël. *The Philosophy of Horror: Or Paradoxes of the Heart*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
7. Walton, Kendall L. *Mimesis as Make believe. On the Foundations of Representational Arts*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990.
8. For further postmodern readings, see Woods, Alan. *Being Naked Playing Dead: The Art of Peter Greenaway*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996; Stalpaert, Cristel (ed.). *Peter Greenaway's Prospero's Books: Critical Essays*. Gent: Academia Press, 2000; Pascoe, David. *Peter Greenaway: Museums and Moving Images*. London: Reaktion Books, 1997; and Schuster, Michael. *Malerei im Film. Peter Greenaway*. Hildesheim, Georg Olms Verlag, 1998.
9. Fischer, Kurt W., Tangney, June Price. "Self-Conscious Emotions and the Affect Revolution: Framework and Overview." Tangney, June Price and Fischer, Kurt W. (ed.) *Self-Conscious Emotions: The Psychology of Shame, Guilt, Embarrassment, and Pride*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1995: p.10.
10. Willemen, Paul. *Looks and Frictions: Essays in Cultural Studies and Film Theory*. London: BFI, 1994: pp. 223-257.
11. Barthes, Roland. "The third meaning" reprinted in: Barthes, Roland (translation Stephen Heath). *Image, Music, Text*. London: Fontana Press, 1977: p. 58.
12. The facts do not prove it, but it remains a possibility. At the International Rotterdam Film Festival (IFFR) 1983, where a retrospective of his Greenaway's films was shown, he met producer Kees Kasander, who suggested the making of a new film. There is no doubt that in the course of 1984, Greenaway wrote the script for *A ZED AND TWO NOUGHTS*, after the premiere of *DE WITTE WAAN*. In 1985, Peter Greenaway appeared at the Rotterdam festival with his film *AMERICAN COMPOSERS* (UK: Peter Greenaway, 1983). In spring 1985, he began filming *A ZED AND TWO NOUGHTS* in the Netherlands. The film premiered in November 1985 at the London Film Festival, and was shown as the opening film at the IFFR in 1986. Other circumstantial evidence is the fact that during the IFFR, when *DE WITTE WAAN* was shown, Peter Greenaway made the deal for *A ZOO* at the Cinemart. This Cinemart "was fitted out for the occasion by Ben van Os and Jan Roelfs, two rising art directors." (Heijs, Jan, Westra, Frans. *Que Le Tigre Danse. Huub Bals a biography*. Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinckel, 1996: p. 159). They were to eventually become the art directors on *A ZOO* and they were probably influenced by *DE WITTE WAAN*.
13. Post-classical films, on the other hand, can be understood as quoting or mimicking other American films, even very recent ones, or as remaking European films like *WINGS OF DESIRE* (Germany/France: Wim Wenders, 1987) as *CITY OF ANGELS* (USA: Brad Silberling, 1998), but not as European remakes of Hollywood films.

14. These scenes share even more similarities: the body of the researcher in *DE WITTE WAAN* is covered with snails, just like the bodies in *A ZOO*. And there are the same blinking of lights.
15. The character says: "Creating a sound that will destroy the echo of the Big Bang with unnatural speed. The subsequent explosion will be incredibly big, and will reverberate against the walls of infinity, thus destroying everything in its path. Nothing will remain, nothing but silence. Finally, everything will be silent." (my translation).
16. The film also mentions this, and explains that this Van Meegeren is *like* the historical figure Van Meegeren, but not one and the same.