

***SLEEP* BY JON FOSSE. A PLAY WHERE THE EXPERIENCE OF TIME AND SPACE IS PUT UNDER THE SCOPE**

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*Abstract: “Sleep” is one of the controversial plays of the Norwegian playwright, Jon Fosse. Fosse touches on the issue of reality in his plays, where time and space are a challenge and the Fosse’an characters are always in search of something. All these build the context of the reality in the play, as the play leads us to the fields of philosophy and science. The play shifts from one moment in time to the other, but which in the end reveals the logic of the sequences. Whether it is a play about the history of a place, actions and lives that come to life only because we make the place subject of interest, it is hard to say; it all relies on the interaction of the receiver with the text. The thematic pattern characteristic to Fosse’an dramaturgy is present in this play as well, as the relationships between a man and a woman and the fact that they cannot communicate set the background of the issues in the play.*

*Keywords: theatre, time, relationships, communication, quantum mechanics.*

*Sleep* was written in 2005, but translated by May-Brit Akerholt and published in 2011 by Oberon. The major themes of the play are love, family, space (a common place) and time (in time the memories and experiences come together). As it is a rule with Jon Fosse, the structure of the play is simple, there are no acts and scenes, the play has only one part that encompasses the action of the play. As it is a well known fact, all his characters are nameless, but are determined by words like: young/middle aged/old, woman/man, first/second, son. There is no description of the characters, we are not reading a play about a character, but we are building and getting to know a character/s through language and the experiences that we are experiencing at the same time as the characters.

My main focus is the spatio-temporality of the Fosse’an<sup>1</sup> plays and how the plays build up the intensity of life, when there seems to be no life. Jon Fosse, whose works are expected to add up to a single and precise meaning, does not use much words to express his goal, but one can notice a pattern in the experiences that he chose to explore, like incapability of communication, emptiness, entanglement (becoming aware of the fact that one is in a link/in a context), vulnerability, nearness, change, suffering, fear, fear of commitment, relationships, dialogue, memories, loneliness, waiting and on the top of all of them, love. The theme of love has been explored by literature, theatre, psychology etc. and seems to still be a challenge for writers as much as for the readers and the people generally. The need for love and relationships, as it results from Fosse’s plays, is as big as the need for loneliness and privacy (with oneself). All the characters seem to be the same, and yet very different. Fosse touches on the issue of reality in his plays, as time and space become a challenge. Moreover

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<sup>1</sup>The term “Fosse’an” as used by Gunnar Foss in his book *I skriftas lys og teater salens mørke. En antologi av Ibsen og Fosse* will be used in this study as it serves to the purpose of referring to the particularity of Jon Fosse’s literary work.

the Fosse's characters are always in search of something and all these build the context of the reality in the play.

On the basis of these introductory remarks I shall start discussing the title that is extremely suggestive in preparing the reader for what follows. *Sleep* is a controversial play that shifts from one moment in time to the other, but which in the end reveals the logic of the sequences and makes the reader understand the real present. Whether it is a play about the history of a place, actions and lives that come to life only because we make the place subject of interest, it is hard to say. Fosse here finds himself in a moment in his work where “dream” is a key word. Plays like *Svevn (Sleep)*, *Sov du vesle barnet mitt (Sleep My Baby, Sleep)*, *Ein sommars dag (A Summer's Day)*, *Draum om hausten (Dream.Autumn)*, etc., they all insinuate that we are dealing with a dream like setting of our plays and it also refers to the structure and atmosphere of “day dreaming” in the plays.

“...in this meditation, we are not “cast into the world”, since we open the world, as it were, by transcending the world seen as it is, or as it was, before we started dreaming. And even if we are aware of our paltry selves – through the effects of harsh dialectics – we are aware of the grandeur. We then return to the natural activity of our magnifying being.

Immensity is within ourselves. It is attached to a sort of expansion of being that life curbs and caution arrests, but which starts again when we are alone. As soon as we become motionless, we are elsewhere; we are dreaming in a world that is immense. Indeed, immensity is the movement of motionless man. It is one of the dynamic characteristics of quiet daydreaming.”<sup>2</sup>

Most of Jon Fosse's characters are motionless, as the space and time of the plays. The plays, all reveal the reality within each character, reality in which the reader sinks, as it reaches its immensity. Here space and time lose their natural value, although they are not dimensions of a dream, but of a reality. The play begins with a couple, DEN FØRSTE UNGE KVINNA<sup>3</sup> and DEN FØRSTE UNGE MANNEN<sup>4</sup>. Who enter somewhere, a place that we later figure out to be an apartment for their new life together. Later DEN ANDRE UNGE MANNEN<sup>5</sup> and DEN ANDRE UNGE KVINNA<sup>6</sup>, pass the first couple and pursue with their analysis of the new home. This is the first moment when one gets the feeling that there is something bad going to happen. THE SECOND YOUNG MAN appears to have doubts, but they are interrupted by the first couple that seems to be really happy to have found it. After THE SECOND YOUNG WOMAN gives a kiss to THE SECOND YOUNG MAN and she

<sup>2</sup> Gaston Bachelard. *The Poetics of Space*. Trans. by Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994 Edition, p. 184.

<sup>3</sup> DEN FØRSTE UNGE KVINNA - THE FIRST YOUNG WOMAN – 3<sup>rd</sup> person articulated. Although my analysis on the play was made with the original text in Norwegian, for the sake of fluency, I will be using the English translation when naming the characters.

<sup>4</sup> DEN FØRSTE UNGE MANNEN – THE FIRST YOUNG MAN – Although my analysis on the play was made with the original text in Norwegian, for the sake of fluency, I will be using the English translation when naming the characters.

<sup>5</sup> DEN ANDRE UNGE MANNEN – THE SECOND YOUNG MAN - Although my analysis on the play was made with the original text in Norwegian, for the sake of fluency, I will be using the English translation when naming the characters.

<sup>6</sup> DEN ANDRE UNGE KVINNA – THE SECOND YOUNG WOMAN - Although my analysis on the play was made with the original text in Norwegian, for the sake of fluency, I will be using the English translation when naming the characters.

promises him to receive a longer one later, his answer is: "I don't think so"<sup>7</sup>. At this answer, one necessarily pulls an alarm signal; doubting the possibility of such future also announces the eventual status of their relationship.

*"The second young man leaves and The second young woman goes a little bit around, she looks towards The first young woman and then she looks around again."*<sup>8</sup>

Here the playwright indicates the fact that they are all at the same time, in the same room, in the same place, but that does not mean that they can actually see each other, but the scenic indications say that she looks at her. That is typically ambiguous for Jon Fosse.

Regarding space, Jon Fosse uses the adverb "here" so many times, that we are led to believe that he does that in order to confirm the existence of a place. (i.e. THE MIDDLEAGED MAN says:

"I am always here/ I will always be here"). The place exists because the characters walk around in that space. This place is an apartment as deducted from the scenic information and the dialogue ("now we should go around and look at the rooms"), but everything that happens is on the length of three generations, plus the SON's generation and it all happens in one day only. There is no indication of time passing, everything is "now" and this "now" ( nå'et) is eternity.

In our play, the discussion on having children follows, discussion to which the first couple seem to share the almost the same wishes. The second young man brings a buggy that he had bought before meeting her here. He wants her to touch it and maybe even pull it around, but she rejects the whole idea. Their dialogue leads to him understanding that they might never have children at all. However, the reason behind the THE SECOND YOUNG WOMAN's message is unknown. We are not given any precise information, so it is either that she cannot have children or she doesn't want to. Or maybe she is not ready. THE SECOND YOUNG WOMAN leaves and THE SECOND YOUNG MAN looks at the first couple, when these two come alive and the same action takes place, THE FIRST YOUNG MAN goes and brings a buggy, surprise to which THE FIRST YOUNG WOMAN reacts positively and then they start pushing it around, together. The fact that they do not afford it, does not matter, because they will afford it in a few months.

All of a sudden the first couple exits the room and the second couple enters, but we find out that a few years have passed away now and that they have been there for quite some time now. Their discussion is about making a change, change that she wants, while he is satisfied with the life they are living now. The context, the conversation and the language used is so genuine and familiar, however we are led to believe that the bottom problem is that of not having children, as something is missing from their life. THE MIDDLEAGED MAN comes in, he hugs THE SECOND YOUNG MAN, who was just living, and the first couple appear in the scene talking about their two children who have just gone to sleep.

<sup>7</sup> Jon Fosse. "Svevn". *Teaterstykke 4*. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, p. 254.

"Trur eg ikkje". My own translation

<sup>8</sup> *Op.cit.*, p. 255

"Den andre unge menn går ut og den andre unge kvinne går litt omkring, ho ser mot Den første unge kvinne og ser seg så omkring igjen." My own translation.

THE OLD WOMAN comes in, THE FIRST YOUNG WOMAN sees her and they look at each other, so they hug. THE OLD WOMAN starts talking to THE MIDDLEAGED MAN. Among the rest of the relationships in the play, this is the most controversial one. The main subject of their discussion is that THE MIDDLEAGED MAN does not recognize THE OLD WOMAN, while she claims that he knows her and that she has been there since forever. When she tells him of a certain day that she got sick, he seems to know details about ‘that day’ although he claims that he has never met her before. Immediately after that she falls and THE OLD MAN comes in and tries to help her, moment when we are also led to learn that he is her partner. They behave like a normal couple, where the partners are sensitive towards one another and resemble the first couple.

All the characters tell the same story that they live there, only THE MIDDLEAGED MAN confesses that they have lived there for many years, but they don’t anymore. This particular character seems to be the future image of THE SECOND YOUNG MAN and MANNEN<sup>9</sup> is the man THE SECOND YOUNG WOMAN, now THE MIDDLEAGED WOMAN will move out with. Therefore from the isolated and disjointed discourse we finally understand that the first couple is identical to the old couple, while the second couple is identical to the middle aged couple. Here Jon Fosse plays with the accuracy of time and infiltrates sequences from the future and challenges the chaos and order of reality, consciousness and memory.

THE MIDDLEAGED MAN is obviously suffering and longing for that time when they were together, spring, summer, autumn and winter, together, in this place, their (first) place/home. The enumerating of seasons is firstly done by the THE SECOND YOUNG WOMAN for THE SECOND YOUNG MAN, clue that leads to understand that she is THE MIDDLE AGED WOMAN later for whom THE MIDDLE AGED MAN is enumerating the seasons in order to remind her how long they have been together in the same place. The act of enumerating also gives the sense of passing time and broadens the universe of the play. Analyzing the two dialogs, one can notice a sort of burden that they bring to the play:

#### **THE SECOND YOUNG WOMEN**

But something must happen  
 something can happen  
 not everything is just like that  
 something must change  
 become a different winter  
 spring  
 summer  
 autumn  
 and winter  
 spring

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<sup>9</sup> MANNEN – is in English third person, articulated masculine noun THE MAN. Although my analysis on the play was made with the original text in Norwegian, for the sake of fluency, I will be using the English translation when naming the characters.

**THE SECOND YOUNG MAN**

summer autumn  
 spring is not good as it is  
 it can be different<sup>10</sup>

The passing of the years does not function as a nearing factor for the couple, but the opposite of it. Time hasn't brought any change upon them and the distance between the two of them that can be felt in the beginning actually leads to the breaking of the relationship. The weakness of the characters does not change; it remains unaltered as understood from the pace in the dialogue. Both characters remain alone in the end, one being "here" and the other one "there". The game played by Jon Fosse in placing the characters "here" or "there" is more serious than the position of an actor on the stage. The play creates the sensation one might feel in a dream/nightmare, where language plays the role of mirror-like representation of a real world. The place in this dream is ambiguous, although it seems to be material. It is a space of being(s). It is the being that has the emphasis and not the place. "In this ambiguous space, the mind has lost its geometrical homeland and the spirit is drifting."<sup>11</sup> as Gaston Bachelard writes in *The Poetics of Space*.

The first moment we encounter THE MIDDLEAGED MAN and THE MIDDLEAGED WOMAN coming together, we can predict their break up. A moment worth mentioning is when THE OLD MAN brings THE OLD WOMAN an invalid chair to help her move much easier and he pushes the chair around. This sends to the moments in the first part of the story, when THE FIRST YOUNG MAN and THE FIRST YOUNG WOMAN push a buggy around. I would say that it is a symmetrical cyclical form of the play and of the life of the two characters together.

Afterwards we find out that THE MIDDLEAGED WOMAN has left THE MIDDLEAGED MAN to be with MANNEN, whom when he receives the news, does not want to say what he is thinking about and leaves to go for a walk and be alone. THE MIDDLEAGED WOMAN visits THE MIDDLEAGED MAN and they have a casual conversation, but when he opens the discussion about that time when he brought the buggy, she stops him and leaves. Their relationship is really a message for the readers, love and

<sup>10</sup> Jon Fosse. "Sjev". *Teaterstykke 4*. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 2009, pp. 266-267.

**"DEN ANDRE UNGE KVINNA**

Men noko må skje  
 noko jan skje  
 alt kan ikkje berre vere slik  
 noko må forandre seg  
 bli til nokko anna vinter  
 vår  
 sommar  
 haust  
 og vinter  
 vår

**DEN ANDRE UNGE MANNEN**

sommar haust  
 vår er det ikkje bra som det er  
 kan det vere annleis" My own translation.

<sup>11</sup> Gaston Bachelard. *The Poetics of Space*. Trans. by Maria Gilson. New York: The Orion Press, 1964, p. 218.

communication is hard to find, as the target of any partner is to crush the wall built by the other one and reach the humanity (that is veiled by love) inside.

The last pages of the play are concentrated on the visit of THE SON to his parents, THE OLD WOMAN and THE OLD MAN. They talk about THE OLD WOMAN's break down and how THE OLD MAN that is his father was much scarred that she would not wake up again. The linearity of the dialogue is interrupted by THE MIDDLEAGED MAN, who tells us that she will never come back again, and that she is away. THE SON has a monologue where he actually explains two of the generations and announces the death of THE OLD WOMAN and THE OLD MAN. The end of the play is constructed from the intercalations of replicas between THE MIDDLEAGED MAN, who presents his state, THE SON, who is leaving and THE OLD MAN. THE OLD WOMAN dies and THE MIDDLEAGED MAN helps THE OLD MAN carry her.

As much as we would be used to Fosse's way of writing, it is a challenge every time we come in contact with his plays. *Suffering* is the key element for provoking openness in expressing feelings, in starting a conversation and framing a relationship between a woman and a man, as well as between parents and children. If *children* was not a central theme in the former play we have looked at, in the next ones, it is. This, however, does not change his style and time is still a challenge, for we are dealing with a "stream of experiences" rather than a stream of consciousness, stream which would limit the analysis to a psychological perspective over life and literature.

Looking in the zone of quantum physics, one learns that the energy and the dynamic of the play emerges from the interactions of the subsystems distributed throughout the larger system, but what is peculiar about it is that there is no hierarchy in the organization of it. There seems to be an entanglement not only between the inner systems, but between outer ones as well. THE OLD MAN talks of an interaction between them and the other ones that live(d) in that place, fact which suggests a perpetual reflection of the existence of the other characters. He refers to them as "the young people", who he says live in another place, but yet interact with them.

"THE OLD MAN

No that is how it is/ that/ we live here/ and them/ the young ones/ yes they live in other places/  
*Rather short pause/* But lovely to see you"<sup>12</sup>

This is one of the Fosse's marks, without these intentional affirmations that are supposed to make the reader ponder, Fosse's plays would not be the same. Why does THE OLD MAN feel the need to specify the fact that it is them who live there now, and that the young ones live in another place? It is not the information that THE SON has asked for, but at this stage in the play, his affirmation helps the reader identify the temporality specific for the moment of the action. It is the time of the old couple; this is the present and the real time of

<sup>12</sup> Jon Fosse. "Svevn". *Teaterstykke 4*. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 2009, p. 318.

"DEN ELDRE MANNEN

Nei det blir jo slik/det/ her bur vi/ og de/ de ungane/ ja de bur jo andre stader/ Ganske kort pause/ Men så kjekt å sjå deg". My own translation.

the action. Situation that actually raises the question: Who is THE OLD MAN referring to, which couple and why?

One variant would be that he is referring to the young, now old couple, another one to the second/ or middle aged couple and thirdly to the third couple, THE MAN and THE MIDDLE AGED WOMAN. THE OLD MAN is likely to be referring to either of them, taking into consideration that the old couple is the present. Accepting this theory, than the “dream” play theory is very much veritable and verifiable. However, the dynamic and intensity does resemble a “dream” play, but looking at the other play that we have analyzed, where the same dynamic and intensity can be identified, this is not the only option. The issues of temporality, locality and entanglement represent the highlights of this study in order to explain the universe inside Jon Fosse’s dramaturgy, as these reflect the Zeitgeist. Hans Bertens in “The Postmodern as a New Social Formation” chapter in *The Idea of the Postmodern* cites David Harvey who argues that one of the sensibilities of postmodernism was sometime at the beginning of this century when “the sense of time-space compression was also peculiarly strong”.<sup>13</sup>

In the Fosse’san plays, the space-time<sup>14</sup> is the space-time of an ambiguous being. When one of the characters has a longer replica, the “I” (“eg”) encloses itself into the interconnections and the transformations that send not only to it but to the whole. Thus the limitlessness of time and space unfolds the existence of that “I”, individuality that reaches the depth of the individual.

“the paradox of the subjectivity itself: self-alienation in reflections, reification of the self through self-contemplation, the sudden transformation of energized subjectivity into the objective. It is quite clear in psychoanalytic terminology that the conscious *I* (that is, the *I* as it becomes aware of itself) views the unconscious as a stranger. The unconscious appears as the id [it]. Thus, the isolated individual fleeing from the world into himself, is confronted once again by someone unknown.”<sup>15</sup>

This unknown is the being, the core of that person’s existence. “Being does not see itself. Perhaps it listens to itself. It does not stand out, it is not *bordered* by nothingness: one is never sure of finding it solid, when one approaches the center of being.”<sup>16</sup> This fact is important because it sends us even further to one of Bachelard’s contemporaries Jean-Paul Sartre who discusses the relationship being-nothingness, understanding that is reflected in Jon Fosse’s work as well: “There exists on the other hand numerous attitudes of “human reality” which imply a “comprehension” of nothingness: hate, prohibitions, regret, etc. For “Dasein” there is even a permanent possibility of finding oneself “face to face” with nothingness and discovering it as a phenomenon: this possibility is anguish.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Hans Bertens. *The Idea of Postmodern. A History*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 227.

<sup>14</sup> I chose the form of the concept “space-time” and not “time-space” the one used by Bertens, as spacetime represents the mathematical model in quantum physics that combines space and time in a continuum.

<sup>15</sup> *Op.cit.*, p.27.

<sup>16</sup> Gaston Bachelard. *The Ppoetics of Space*. Trans. by Maria Gilson, New York: The Orion Press, 1964, p.215.

<sup>17</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre. *Being and Nothingness*. London: Methuen & CO LTD, 1976, p. 17.

Fosse confessed to Cecilie Seiness that he experiences himself as part of a context, but also that the human being is essentially lonely and at the same time in a correlation. He exposes the weakness of the individual. For example, in the play under discussion we encounter two types of weakness: solitude, fear of being alone and oldness. THE OLD WOMAN is helpless and THE SECOND YOUNG MAN/THE MIDDLE AGED MAN is jilted, rejected and abandoned. These are two instances in which an individual would feel weak and helpless.

And these connections are expressed with the help of the layout of time in the plays. The sort of absence of time confirms the presence of the characters and discloses the entanglement. Sartre in his explanation of temporality states the following:

“...we say today that it *is*; we say also of the man of forty and of the adolescent in their time that they *are*; today they form a part of the past, and the past itself *is* in the sense that at present it is the past of Paul and Erlebnis. Thus the particular tenses of the perfect indicate beings who all really exist although in diverse modes of being, but of which the one *is* and at the same time *was* the other.

[...] *of whom* is this past Pierre past? It cannot be in relation to an universal Present which is a pure affirmation of being; it is then the past of *my* actuality. And in fact Pierre has been for-me, and I have been for-him. As we shall see, Pierre’s existence has touched my inmost depths; it formed a part of present “in-the-world, for-me and for-others” which was *my* present during Pierre’s lifetime – a present which I have been.”<sup>18</sup>

The same philosophical line we can follow in the work of Jon Fosse. At its depth, there is an entanglement between past, present and future reflected in the relationships and communication between characters. Another characteristic is that each character feels like a *stranger* in the given context and somehow it feels that the characters are isolated, at least that is the feeling sent by the atmosphere and the dialogue. The situations presented by the Fosse’san plays seem to be isolated cases, but they touch upon so common and universal issues. They feel emptied of feelings and life, but at the same time the Fosse’san plays develop an entire catharsis. And most importantly, loneliness at Fosse is a peopled loneliness.

These particular characteristics of his plays that I have mentioned above remind us of Strindberg’s “station drama”. Peter Szondi in his *Theory of the Modern Drama* explains the expressionism dramaturgy, a tentative solution to the drama in crisis. Although it does not have the whole package of characteristics, as they are mingled with “subjective drama” as well,

“subjective theatre also leads to the replacement of the unity of action by the unity of the self. The station technique accounts for this change by replacing continuity of action with a series of scenes. These individual scenes stand in no causal relationship and do not, as in the Drama, generate one another.”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre. *Being and Nothingness*. London: Methuen & CO LTD, 1976, p. 112.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Szondi. *Theory of the Modern Drama*. Trans. by Michael Hays. Cambridge: Polity, p. 26



But which, however are related to each other. Regarding the space in this particular play, it is a common space that we are led to conclude it is an apartment; and it is in one room only that it all happens. Nonetheless the Fosse's time and space, actually correspond to a certain state of being, which is the focus of the play and not the rest. "They find themselves in a no-space, and the place can thus be referred to as a situation/context"<sup>20</sup> and Jon Fosse, as according to Arnold Nyhus, calls it <<Ikkje-staden>> (no-place).

Kjell Arnold Nyhus a few pages further considers that this concept of "ikkje-staden" resembles incredibly to Meister Eckhart's "adskiltheten" (separateness), which he defines as being "a form for distance that makes nearness possible in eternity" ("er en form for distanse som muliggjør nærvær i nå'et"), fact which leads to that *tilstand* (state) that is so peculiar to the Fosse's plays. In Norwegian this word covers three entries: situasjon (situation), forhold (circumstance, relation, relationship), beskaffenhet (character, nature). However, the word has its origin in Danish where situation is not part of the explanation. The words are related, but are not the same thing. The main idea that one gets from the meanings is that it has to do with a state of being that is influenced by outer circumstances.

In the case of *Sleep*, most of the times, the only relevant relation between two characters is *love*. Out of this relation, no matter what kind of love, between lovers or between parents and children, it is always the essence and context from which the world of the Fosse's plays is born.

The concept of time is closely connected to "love" as love is possible in time, so space takes a secondary place. As the relationships between the characters are determined by love, so is the relevance of the experience in the dialogue by time. However in Gaston Bachelard's *The Dialectic of Duration* one is led to understand that to accept the existence of two types of time is as accepting two different realities. Experience is experienced with the whole being:

"Do not forget that we are dealing with *proofs* of being, or better with proofs of the real connection of being to itself; it is Being, objective being as well as subjective being, it is your being and your whole reason that you are engaging in this discussion.

But is it perhaps in solitude that you pursue your thoughts, your affirmations seeming to you full and tranquil, strong and fundamental?"(33)

Looking at the Fosse's characters, how aware are they of their implication? Most often it is the most subjective time that they are aware of, which as Bachelard already stated, makes the reality be divided into two.

Sarah Bryant-Bertail states in the introduction "Spatio-temporality as Sign in Epic Theater" in her book *Space and Time in Epic Theater. The Brechtian Legacy* that after nearly a century since the revelations of quantum physics and Einstein's relativity, container time and space still pervade our thinking (here she refers to de Certeau's concept of *dialogic* and to Foucault's *panoptic* concept), although medieval Europeans thought of time as being cyclical and simultaneous, rather than linear and sequential, and space noncontiguous. Thus according to Brecht who

<sup>20</sup> Kjell Arnold Nyhus. *U Alminnelig. Jon Fosse og mystikken*. Føllesse: Efreml Forlag, 2009, p.172  
 "De befinner seg på et ikke-sted, og stedet kan derfor best benevnes som en tilstand." My own translation.

“recognized the difficulty of conceiving of space and time in unfamiliar ways; but far from feeling uneasy about these human limitations, he found pleasure in their confirmation:

philosophers get irritated by Heisenberg’s proposition, according to which points in space and time cannot be coordinated[...] i like the world of the physicists. [people] change it, and then it looks astonishing. we can appear as the gamblers we are, with our approximations, ...our dependence on the others, on the unknown, on things complete in themselves. so once again a variety of things can lead to success, more than just one path is open. oddly enough i feel more free in this world than in the old one.”<sup>21</sup>

Therefore after a century Jon Fosse meets the new reality of the society and that of physicians. One of explaining what the whole quantum reality is, would be by comparing it to a vast sea of potential and that is the newness of the quantum realm. As Werner Heisenberg explains in his book *Physics and Beyond*, quantum mechanics is that sea of potential, where alternatives become the basic form from which more complicated forms are created by repetition.

According to Hans Bertens in *The Idea of Postmodern. A History* the postmodern literature

“It confronts us, either thematically or formally (by way of reflexivity, for instance), with the radical temporality that is our inevitable fate after the breakdown of metaphysics. Because of his insistence on Heideggerian historicity and temporality, Spanos rejects not only the ‘early modern imagination’ but also a whole range of contemporary art that, following Hassan, he is willing to call ‘postmodern’ (his quotation marks), but that, from his perspective, still ‘spatializes’ time. Such art repeats modernist gestures and strategies in that it ultimately tries to escape from temporality in its attempt to create an autonomous realm of transcendent timelessness.”<sup>22</sup>

Consequently these only pave the way to a deeper but also broaden understanding of the Fosse’s universe. Like in the quantum field, the Fosse’s field is a sea of potential as it resonates internationally and it is able to let each reader create its own reality. There is a flow, an energy that interconnects the people in this humankind existence; there is something that people have in common and it is this that something that one can identify in the plays that Jon Fosse writes.

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<sup>21</sup> Sarah Bryant-Bertail. *Space and Time in Epic Theater. The Brechtian Legacy*. Rochester: Camden House, 2000, p. 13.

<sup>22</sup> Hans Bertens. *The Idea of Postmodern. A History*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p.48.

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