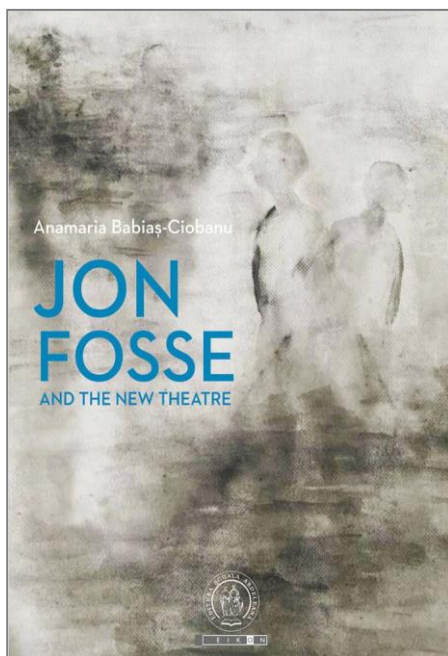


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**Anamaria Babiaș-Ciobanu, *Jon Fosse and the New Theatre*,  
Cluj Napoca: Școala Ardeleană, 2020, 330 p.**

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*Jon Fosse and the New Theatre* is the title of an ample research on the Norwegian author, done by PhD student Anamaria Babiaș-Ciobanu (b. 1987). She held her public defence in Philology in 2018, under the supervision of Professor Sanda Tomescu Baciu, at the Faculty of Letters, Babeș-Bolyai University, followed by the publication of the present volume, based on the PhD thesis with the same title. Prior to this she also translated Jon Fosse's *Shadows* (*Skuggar*) into Romanian, under the title *Umbre* (Casa Cărții de Știință, 2015). Furthermore, Babiaș-Ciobanu has published several corresponding articles in the academic journal *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai Philologia*: "A Short Example of Jon Fosse's Dramaturgy. Play *Sov du vesle barnet mitt*" (vol.



59, no. 1, pp. 87-99, 214) or "From Ibsen to Beckett: Aspects of the Human Condition" (vol. 60, no.1, pp. 133-147, 2015). Her MA thesis tackles the theme of the latter article and her BA thesis was focused on Norwegian dramaturgy as well: "Løgn og sannhet i Ibsens *Vildanden*" (The Concepts of Lie and Truth in Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*). Thus, Babiaș-Ciobanu has displayed a continuous interest in this field and has extensively contributed to

spreading the Fosse'an universe on Romanian soil.

*Jon Fosse and the New Theatre* analyses the issue of time and space in his dramatic texts and how entanglement links the characters with these two scientific instruments: space and time, into a single four-dimensional space, i.e., spacetime.

Thus, concepts related to the field of science are correlated to the Fosse'an universe, via a selected close-reading of his plays. Unlike previous research, focused on a traditional perspective on space and time, here they are perceived holistically, "as they form a continuum in Fosse's distinctive story line ('now' and 'here'), but also the spacetime dimension as described in the philosophy and theory of Quantum Mechanics". (pp. 10-13)

The volume has the following structure:

The introductory part, *Jon Fosse*, aims at familiarizing the reader with the oeuvre and the style of the author, by also providing biographical data. Even though Fosse's plays touch on traditional themes like love, death, communication, relationships, betrayal, regret, suffering, remembering or childhood, the author states that the Fosse'an perspective shines a new light on them, because it focuses on our individual experience of these themes.

The first chapter overviews previous research and proposes a new one, updated to the understanding of space and time in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It encompasses standpoints belonging to Amir D. Aczel, Mikhail Bakhtin, Jacques Derrida, Stephen Hawking, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Thies Lehmann, Hans Meyerhoff, Roger Penrose, Merleau Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre and many others. The author makes use of several principles and concepts from modern physics when analyzing the texts: the theory of quanta, the Quantum Entanglement and non-locality principles, Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. (pp. 14-15)

The second chapter, *Aspects of the Fosse'an Dramatic Text*, outlines peculiarities of the Fosse'an text: repetitions, silences, and what Babiaș-Ciobanu calls *the Fosse'an "figures"* (because they are not exactly conventional characters, but rather

depictions of someone or something). That is why the volume also makes an incursion into Postdramatic theatre – one might say that Fosse reinvents drama. Babiaș-Ciobanu claims that the existence of the figures, their interaction and the entire atmosphere is shaped by the influence of spacetime. (pp. 17-19) Hence, her research opens an alternative path, since she outlines the originality through repetitions and silences, through monologues and dialogues within spacetime (i.e. communication occurs despite spatial and temporal distance). The relationship between the figures is thus eased via entanglement. Time gets a timeless dimension because all characters share the same space and time. For example, the readers only encounter indications towards the past via the characters' names or adverbs like *now, then, always, never* etc.

*Close reading – The Plays* is the title of the final chapter, comprising five parts, corresponding to the five plays under analysis: *And We'll Never be Parted (Og aldri skal vi skjiliast)*, *Sleep My Baby Sleep (Sov du vesle barnet mitt)*, *Sleep (Svevn)*, *Shadows (Skuggar)* and *Sea (Hav)*. A detailed analysis is done for the last three plays mentioned, because they outline different creation phases. The literary examination of the plays follows a similar path, divided in four subsections tackling the figures, the repetitions, the Fosse'an dramatic process, or the connection between space and time, to name just a few, and ends with a close reading of the play. The underlying argument for the other two plays *And We'll Never be Parted (Og aldri skal vi skjiliast)* and *Sleep (Svevn)* is to demonstrate that these are not just isolated creations throughout Fosse's oeuvre. (pp. 20-21)

This book is followed by *Appendix 1*, which lists all Fosse's plays translated

into English and Romanian at that time and *Appendix 2*, which offers a transcript of the interview with Jon Fosse that Babiaș-Ciobanu took in 2015, in Oslo.

To conclude, *Jon Fosse and the New Theatre* is the first study which sheds a different light on the Norwegian playwright's literary universe in Romania. This interdisciplinary approach, combining physics and philosophy in order to analyse postmodern drama, could also be linked and/or compared to Christian theology, wherein Divinity – God the Father and God the Son, whose attributes are atemporality, omnipresence and omniscience, govern the interaction between the celestial beings in the eternal life. In my opinion, the possible penetration into the mysteries of divine revelation might suggest and lead to an even deeper perspective on the plays in future research. *Jon Fosse and the New Theatre* is a challenging reading that intertwines with humanity's

ancient longing, and initiates from the spiritual field of searching the secrets of life and the laws that govern cosmic matter. As known, in quantum physics, the particle behaves either as electromagnetic wave or as cosmic matter, which exceeds the understanding of mechanical physics and somehow explains the mysteries described in the Bible. The work of Anamaria Babiaș-Ciobanu highlights the subtlety of Jon Fosse's message. Together, these introspections stand as a solid argument in favour of starting to read Jon Fosse. This book represents the most appropriate companion in deciphering the Fosse'an universe.

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