

# Interactive Narrative Strategies of Space and Soundscape in Jon Fosse's Plays

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**Abstract**—Jon Fosse, recipient of the 2023 Nobel Prize in Literature, stands among the world's most prolific playwrights. Amidst a theatrical landscape that increasingly emphasizes visual cues, Fosse's works usher in a resurgence of auditory expression. By simplifying stage settings and curtailing characters' actions, his plays dampen visual associations, thereby foregrounding auditory elements. This resurgence, however, does not manifest in a celebration of sonic diversity but rather in an emphasis on soundscapes of silence, cultivating a distinctive acoustic milieu where "stillness" harbors "motion." The methodologies employed to construct auditory imagination within the scripts and the overarching soundscape characteristics reflect Fosse's unique interpretation of playwriting and an embodiment of Norwegian idiosyncrasies. Consequently, the auditory narratives in Fosse's plays epitomize the laureate's individual innovativeness and the regional, ethnic traditions that underpin his work.

**Keywords**—Jon Fosse, auditory narratology, drama, Nobel prize in literature

## I. INTRODUCTION

Norwegian author Jon Fosse, recognized as one of the world's most prolific living playwrights, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2023 for his "for his innovative plays and prose which give voice to the unsayable" [1]. Fosse's plays transcend being mere visual texts; they are also a craft of sound. 'Saving the Collective: On the Dramatic Creation of Jon Fosse' [2] discusses phenomena in Fosse's dramas such as interruptions in dialogue, monologues serving as interludes between dialogues, and repetitive rhythms. 'Perceiving the Inner Connection between Fosse's and Ibsen's Dramas through 'Negative Space'—Also Tracing a Developmental Trajectory in Contemporary European Drama' [3] views interruptions, pauses, and silences in Fosse's scripts as an evolution of Ibsen's art of negative space. It argues that this silence and pausing create a unique auditory effect in the theater, instilling a sense of tranquility and stillness while heightening tension and uncertainty. In "The Musicality in Jon Fosse's Plays [4]," Jingqing Wu explores the auditory characteristics of Fosse's dramas from the analogy of drama and music. The paper meticulously analyzes the paradoxical variations and rhythmic expressions in Fosse's plays, likening the "repetition with variation" in the scripts to musical variation. It further elucidates how Fosse's polyphony in plays, by being closer to musical attributes, transcends the phenomenon of polyphony in novels.

Current research on Fosse predominantly falls under the realm of comparative literature's influence studies. Numerous scholars have delved into the artistic qualities of Fosse's dramas through analyses of linguistic features or comparisons with playwrights like Ibsen, Beckett, and Pinter. However, there lacks a dedicated study examining Fosse's scripts from the perspective of acoustic narratology,

reassessing his works with an emphasis on their auditory dimensions. By retracing the soundscapes of his pieces and investigating how the author constructs an overarching auditory landscape—exploring the narrative functions of various sounds—this approach promises to enhance our comprehension of the thematic depth and aesthetic peculiarities of his plays.

In light of this gap, the present article intends to first explore how Fosse's plays, through a reduction in visual depiction, reveal a trend towards an auditory resurgence, thereby offering a complementary annotation to previous scholarly endeavors. Following this, the paper will embark on an analysis of the overall soundscape characteristics of Fosse's dramas from an acoustic narratological standpoint, initiating a preliminary exploration of the auditory narrative techniques employed in his oeuvre. This dual-pronged approach aims to illuminate the intricate ways in which Fosse utilizes sound to convey meaning, atmosphere, and narrative progression, enriching our understanding of his dramatic artistry.

## II. AUDITORY NARRATION IN PLAYWRITING

Auditory narratology refers to the representation and inscription of elements related to auditory perception within narrative works. At the core of auditory inscription lies the concept of "soundscapes." The term "soundscape" was introduced by R. Murray Schafer, who posited that a soundscape constitutes any acoustic field of study, the soundscape may be a musical composition, of a radio program, or of an acoustic environment [5]. He categorizes soundscapes into three primary types. Keynote sound, though not always consciously apprehended, permeate environments, potentially influencing behavior and mood. In some instances, the keynote sound of a given location can even evoke the character of those inhabiting it. Signal sounds occupy the foreground of soundscapes, typically carrying information requiring decoding. Soundmark, akin to visual landmarks, are distinctive sounds that attract particular attention within a region. Furthermore, Schafer suggests the existence of archetypal sounds with primordial symbolic significance, echoing ancient and quintessential auditory experiences.

Compared to literary genres born in the age of print, such as the novel, poetry and drama, which originated in the era of oral communication, exhibit a more pronounced emphasis on aural elements. A significant portion of a play's text is envisaged as vocal exchanges, resonating in the minds of both its author and readers. Character portrayal in plays predominantly arises through dialogue, with the plot unfolding through the interactive dynamics of speech and listening. Voice is regarded as an individual's unique identifier, and the personalized dialogue and soliloquies in plays exemplify the "uniqueness of voice [5]," a hallmark of

distinct character expression. When physically performed, the “sonic imagery” imbued by actors becomes the aesthetic focal point. Consequently, the soundscape serves not merely as a vehicle for narrative in plays but constitutes an integral part of their content. From an aesthetic reception perspective, it forms the primary object of aesthetic experience for readers of scripts and theater audiences alike.

The soundscapes within a script are multifaceted and diverse, categorizable into several layers: the story site level, encompassing elements like characters’ speech, dialogue, and ambient sounds occurring within the narrative scene, and the discourse site layer, comprising off-screen sounds such as voice-overs, which are extraneous to the immediate setting. Professor Wang Dun, in his work “Between ‘Sound’ and ‘Listening’: The Discursive Construction of Auditory Culture Studies,” asserts that “the subject of auditory culture studies is human hearing itself, shaped by society, history, and culture [6].” This statement underscores that, beyond the study of sound per se, auditory culture research necessitates a keen focus on the formation process of human auditory experiences underpinning specific socio-historical-cultural contexts.

Consequently, when examining scripts as objects of auditory storytelling, priority should be given to the depiction of soundscapes and a thorough examination of how characters’ auditory experiences are molded. This analysis can proceed along two axes: firstly, by exploring the auditory imagination evoked by the script as a whole and its aesthetic attributes; secondly, through an auditory narrative analysis of sound events, meticulously discussing how character dialogue, moments of silence, and ambient sound effects collectively propel the plot, sculpt multidimensional character profiles, and enhance thematic profundity.

### III. DOWNPLAYING VISUAL SPATIAL IMAGINATION TO HIGHLIGHT AUDITORY ELEMENTS

Dramatic performances have the capacity to engage the full spectrum of human senses, immersing the audience in a multi-layered tapestry of sensory experiences, with scripts particularly emphasizing the artistic expression of both visual and auditory dimensions. As previously discussed, scripts concentrate on delivering compelling auditory sensations. However, paralleling the flourishing of the publishing industry, there has emerged in scripts a trend where visual effects gain prominence, inversely overshadowing their original emphasis. The bearers of these visual impacts within scripts reside in the depiction of narrative spaces, character gestures, and the interplay between them, shifting the focus onto the visual representation realized through these elements.

Jon Fosse, in his playwrighting, effectively attenuates this visual dominance by minimizing the presence of stage directions and reducing character actions, thereby simplifying the visual spectacle of the script. This deliberate simplification facilitates a return to the aural realm, prompting readers to direct their imaginative faculty more intently towards auditory elements. In essence, it fosters an environment where auditory imagination is prioritized over visual spatial constructs, reorienting the reader’s experience towards a deeper engagement with the script’s sonic landscape.

#### A. Strategic Curtailment of Visual Effects

The strategic reduction of visual effects is primarily evident in the construction of space, an element of Fosse’s

writing that is meticulously considered. Unlike traditional realism’s meticulous depiction of environments, Fosse’s reality is centered on profound explorations of existential themes, emphasizing thematic rather than formal realism. Sarah Cameron Sunde comments, “The idea of space (both the space that separates people from each other and the limitless possibilities of what might occur in a space that is wide-open) winds its way through every layer of Fosse’s work. Everything is linked in his world. Within the space he creates, he often explores the presence of death (whether clearly as in *Death Variations* or more subliminally as a counterpoint to life) and the tension of opposites [7].”

In spatial writing, Jon Fosse adopts a minimalist strategy of “mentioning only when necessary” to construct the story space of his plays. Specific locales such as the old house by the sea in *Someone Is Going to Come*, the featureless multi-story interior space in *The Name*, the solitary bar counter in *Guitar Man* [8], and the graveyard in *Dream of Autumn* [9] are not elaborately described, serving as stages for character interactions without elaborate depiction. In *Shadows* [10], the same space integrates multiple temporal narratives, abstracting the space; whereas in *I Am the Wind* [11], the space is even more virtual, rich in symbolism.

While stories grounded in everyday life may seemingly require a concrete setting, in Fosse’s plays, even when objects are present in the space, their number is kept to a minimum. Fosse’s descriptions of these objects lack embellishment, suggesting that they are not the focal points; these mentioned objects exist solely as recipients of characters’ actions. In *The Name*, the space spans two levels with multiple rooms, yet the only definitive furnishings include a sofa, doors, stairs, a wall cabinet, and photographs. The sofa is included as a prop for characters to sit and interact during relaxed moments; doors facilitate entrances and exits, with characters feeling tense often exiting as a reflection of strained relationships; stairs connect the levels, facilitating the portrayal of dynamic changes in relationships; and old photographs are included to reminisce about the girl’s past. Readers’ understanding of objects within the space is limited to their existence within the story and their positioning relative to other items.

If characters’ actions lack interaction with external objects, the dramatic story space becomes vacuous, a highly abstract summoning structure awaiting meaning manifestation. In *Shadows*, individuals interact within the same narrative realm unaware of its true nature. Dialogue reveals their perception of this space as locales from shared memories, illustrating a postmodern openness. The overarching space, fragmented by divergent character interpretations, represents themes of marriage, infidelity, youth, and aging, each a composite piece.

The minimalist and abstract spatial design redirects the reader’s focus from visual descriptions to characters’ “words and deeds.” Information gleaned is confined to identity, dialogue, and demeanor, with Fosse sparingly detailing actions irrelevant to plot progression, relationships, or psychological states. Even in the monologue piece *Guitar Man*, stage directions are scant. Actions center on *Guitar Manipulation*, expressions of frustration and awkwardness, demonstrations of poverty, and bar scenes of drinking and singing. These serve to expose characters’ existential conditions, thought processes, and propel subsequent streams of consciousness rather than augment visual reading experience.

Contrary to visual imagery prompted by action and setting depictions, characters’ language elicits an auditory

imagination fitting their personas. Simplified settings and actions highlight the language, with its entangled thoughts becoming the richest terrain for critique. Fosse's emphasis on generating auditory effects over visual imagery in his scripts underscores emotional content conveyed through speech, thereby prioritizing the significance of characters' discourse. This aural emphasis, downplaying visual associations, aligns with Fosse's initial motivation for playwriting—stage drama—underscoring language's centrality in his works.

#### B. *The Reason Why Emphasis on Auditory Effects*

The emphasis on auditory effects constitutes a reflection of Fosse's works' regional and ethnic identity. As noted by the Nobel Committee Chairman, Fosse's writings maintain a close connection to Norway linguistically and geographically. "In common with his great precursor in Nynorsk literature Tarjei Vesaas, Fosse combines strong local ties, both linguistic and geographic, with modernist artistic techniques [12]," yet the impact of regional culture extends further. Nordic cultures, shaped by unique environmental and cultural contexts, espouse a return-to-nature ethos and an appreciation for simplicity, which has globally influenced "Scandinavian Design," characterized by minimalism and functionality. This design philosophy employs subdued, pure colors and unadorned objects, embodying the maxim "less is more [13]." Consequently, the starkly minimalist story spaces in Fosse's plays exemplify this distinct Nordic spirit.

The minimization of spatial elements complements the sparse architectural structure. Fosse's plays feature a limited cast, eschewing grandeur for intimate interactions among a few. Physical descriptions and even basic identifiers like names and professions are often omitted, blurring boundaries between "he," "she," "the girl," "the friend," and readers. Characters become symbols decipherable primarily through dialogue, highlighting the centrality of the script's aural imagination. This intentional sparsity in character detail and setting fosters a unique ambiance and encourages active reader interpretation of character dynamics, with the aural perception of dialogue emerging as the paramount element.

The emphasis on auditory elements over visual effects in Fosse's plays is emblematic of the author's artistic philosophy. Prioritizing visual detail in scriptwriting aligns with a literary approach, yet Fosse's debut play, *Someone Is Going to Come*, emerged amidst a government-driven initiative to stimulate script production, indicating an intent for performance from inception. Traditional stage plays necessitate room for interpretive creativity by other theatrical artists, avoiding meticulous scenic descriptions; all depictions serve to emphasize themes and character development, with dialogue between characters being the paramount focus.

Beyond his creative motivations, Fosse's comprehension of drama deeply informs his scriptwriting practice. In his Nobel Lecture at the Swedish Academy in Stockholm, Fosse posited that "Theatre is really a large act of listening—a director must, or at least should, listen to the text, the way actors listen to it and to each other and to the director, and the way the audience listen to the whole performance [14]."

Consequently, the emphasis on the aural dimension in his works is a natural outcome of his creative ethos. This deliberate focus on soundscapes fosters a resurgence of auditory storytelling in his scripts, highlighting the potency of linguistic expression. It enables readers to perceive the emotional depth and thematic substance of the drama through

their auditory imagination of the written word. Furthermore, dialogue in his pieces is frequently reduced to its essential form, stripped of superfluous ornamentation, thereby emphasizing the essence and strength of speech. Fosse's aural focus may also signify his interest in fundamental modes of human communication: bonding and sharing experiences through sound and language.

During his youth, Fosse engaged in musical composition. When he abandoned his musical career for writing, he sought to create something of what he felt when performing: "I actually completely stopped both playing music myself and listening to music, and started to write, and in my writing, I tried to create something of what I experienced when I played. That's what I did then—and what I still do [14]." This reveals an intention to imbue his works with musicality.

Moreover, in his address on the 7th of December, Fosse disclosed his lifelong fear of reading aloud, which not only accounts for the typically quiet soundscapes in his scripts but also elucidates his characters' tendencies to evade communication, self-expression, and encounter frequent barriers in their interactions. In his dramas, pauses hold paramount importance: "without a doubt, the word pause is the most important and the most used word in my drama [14]." Within these pauses, silence reigns supreme, conveying the unspeakable. This reveals Fosse's inherent preference for serene environments, with his aesthetic inclinations, shaped by past experiences, influencing the aural landscapes in his works. Quiet backgrounds, in turn, emphasize the pauses in dialogue, with Fosse believing that silent pauses can articulate the ineffable, approximating the divine sound in silence. His approach to creation echoes the ancient Greek concept of inspiration in artistry. Consequently, for an author like Fosse, who articulates his theories clearly, biographical criticism serves as an effective means to understand his works. Drawing from his statements, we conclude that the overall characteristics of the soundscape are instrumental in expressing the script's central themes.

#### IV. NATURAL SOUNDS IN THE SOUNDSCAPE

##### A. *Soundscape Dominated by Stillness*

Jon Fosse's auditory emphasis does not equate to many bustling scenes in his plays. Instead, he prefers characters speaking amidst quietude. His characters often display a simultaneous aversion to human interaction and an affinity for nature. Reflecting the characters' preference for tranquility, the overall ambiance of his plays is serene. Conflicts are verbalized, with eruptions in dialogue serving as moments that disrupt this calm, rendering "stillness" the norm. Underneath this calm, simmering tensions hint at thematic anomalies, marking deviations from the ordinary.

This "stillness" in Fosse's works embodies the regional and ethnic traits of Norway. The high-latitude nation, with its inherent chill, resonates with the melancholic tone in Fosse's works. Surrounded by seas on three sides, Norway's coastal climates are moderated by the ocean, resulting in milder winters, paralleled by underlying tensions persistently lurking beneath daily discourse in Fosse's scripts. Lulu Zou, a prominent Chinese translator of Fosse's plays, titled her preface "The End of the World and the Cold Wonderland—Key Imagery in Jon Fosse's Dramas" echoing National Geographic's slogan, highlighting the desolate and serene spaces in Fosse's plays inhabited by characters yearning for, yet never attaining, understanding [15]. Thus, the serenity

and melancholy in Fosse's works harmoniously align with the foreign perception of Norway as a "frosty wonderland."

Fosse's sensitivity to "listening" in his scriptwriting is intimately tied to his early experiences, with his past shaping an aesthetic inclination that influences his narrative of sonic landscapes. During his address in Sweden on December 7th of 2023, Fosse confessed to having had a fear of public reading since junior high [14]. This revelation not only explains why the sound space in his scripts is typically quiet, with conflicts in character exchanges not erupting in loud altercations, but also illuminates why his characters tend to evade communication and resist self-expression, often encountering barriers in their interactions. Silence, especially during pauses, holds utmost importance in his dramas, conveying the ineffable. This underscores Fosse's dislike for voices dominating the environment, favoring instead an overall serene ambience, where the absence of noise accentuates vocal pauses, enhancing the aural narrative's service to the script's themes.

The origins of sounds in the script are diverse, emanating from either character actions or nature; they can function as background sounds, exist within characters' imaginations, or serve as metaphors. Amidst dialogues, silent scenes, background sounds that set the mood, signal sounds propelling the plot, and soundmark defining story locations intertwine, collectively constructing the auditory narrative depth of the script's story layer (perspective). The soundscape is nonlinear, with scattered sound sources and overlaid imagery forming a rich acoustic field. In a soundscape composed of multiple sources, a scattered perspective approach is required, with audience focus only drawn to a particular source when a signal sound is emphasized, foregrounding it in the soundscape.

Due to Fosse's plays featuring few elaborate scenes and a restrained variety of sound sources, non-vocal events, aside from signal sounds induced by character actions, predominantly consist of natural ambient sounds. Characters never engage in extended discourse amidst noisy surroundings. Conversely, in tranquil environments, subtle currents churn beneath character conversations, with interpersonal conflicts taking precedence over those between humans and their environment or nature, a recurring theme in Fosse's works. In *Someone Is Going to Come* and *A Summer's Day* [9], set in a coastal cabin, the primary conflict resides between partners. *Dream of Autumn* contrasts the serenity of a graveyard and the somber funeral atmosphere with sharp familial discord. *Shadows* employs a virtual space as a confluence for overlapping memories from differing times and places. This soundscape construction, highlighting "movement within stillness," facilitates a deeper audience engagement with plotlines and character emotions during listening sessions, underscoring the multifaceted nature of sound and its pivotal role in crafting immersive experiences within the script.

#### B. Nature's Sounds Emerge from the Background

The coastal cottages, enclosed interiors, graveyards, on the seas, and even abstract spaces of fantasy depicted by Fosse exude tranquility, distant from the hubbub of human voices. The concise yet enigmatic environmental soundscapes create a serene auditory space throughout the script, echoing the profound narratives and melancholic character portrayals. As superfluous vocal elements recede, natural ambient sounds begin to prominence, permeating from the backdrop into

dialogue scenes, "emerging from the background to take center stage," becoming pivotal signals that propel the plot forward.

This minimalist and mystical soundscape not only distinguishes the script but also serves as a potent tool for atmosphere creation and emotional emphasis. By designing such soundscapes, Fosse guides the audience into a profound and quiet realm, resonating with the weighty plotlines. In Fosse's works, the soundscape transcends mere background effects to become a manifestation of emotion. This shift in sound space, from human voices to natural sounds, subtly mirrors the plot's progression, offering viewers a unique and profound aural experience. Thus, the soundscape in Fosse's pieces is not merely an expression of sound but a crucial factor in driving the narrative.

In the analysis of the relationship between sound and events, Professor Xiuyan Fu defines the soundscape in narratology as "an integration of a series of sound events [16]," also highlighting the special roles certain sounds play in narration. In Fosse's play *Someone is Going to Come*, from the moment the woman perceives the indistinct sound of footsteps, her anticipation of someone's arrival is confirmed, and the intrusion of these footsteps signifies the shattering of their harmonious twosome world. Sounds possess ambiguity; discerning them is more challenging than interpreting concrete images. Characters often undergo complex emotional transformations while imagining and verifying low-fidelity, intermittent sounds. These vague footsteps resonate like the rhythm of their inner anxiety, with external actual sounds and characters' moods intertwining to form "multi-layered meanings." Sounds function as both signals and reflections of the emotions of the characters within the drama.

Norway, surrounded by sea on three sides, provides the setting for Jon Fosse's writings, situated on the Norwegian coast, far from urbanity. Thus, it comes as no surprise that "the sea" recurs as a pivotal motif in Jon Fosse's works. The story of *Someone Is Going to Come* unfolds by the seaside; Arthur in *A Summer's Day* enjoys venturing out to sea; the girl in *Death Variations* [17] meets her demise in the ocean; *I Am the Wind* is set amidst the seas. In these plays by Fosse, the sea possesses archetypal and symbolic significance, influencing the characters' behaviors and words. The modes of interaction between the sea and humans encompass four forms: listening to the sea, gazing upon it, sailing upon it, and perishing within it. The impressions characters have of the sea's sounds mirror their mental states, while the expression of these sounds influences the dynamics between characters. Notably, those who opt to draw near the sea tend to exhibit sensitivity and solitude.

As the dominant spatial element, the sea's sounds naturally become landmark features in the soundscape. The sea's sounds not only serve as signature elements within the works but can also function as a primary melody symbolizing the inner voices of the characters. This intricate and rich interweaving of soundscape and narrative imbues Fosse's works with depth and uniqueness on an emotional level.

In *Someone Is Going to Come*, the sea's sounds act as the signature sounds of the living environment, subtly influencing the relationship between the two protagonists and thus acquiring metaphorical meaning, eventually ascending to become the dominant theme of the play. The couple prefers not to be in places inhabited by others, yearning for solitude by the deserted shore. In an overly quiet setting, the sea's

sounds become strikingly prominent, leading the woman to associate them with the roaring waves during storms, contrasting starkly with the fact that there are only two of them in this environment, instilling fear and helplessness within her. Her unease provoked by the sea's sounds reflects a fear of others' influence on relationships and the psychological conflict born from isolation. The past idealized vision crumbles in the face of new realities, suggesting that individuals can never quite find an ideal external environment, but must perpetually strive for an ideal state of existence amidst various choices. Here, the sea represents an "unknown challenge," testing the characters' psyche through the sea sounds' absolute dominance in tranquil spaces and the deadly threat posed by waves, hinting at potential turmoil in the couple's relationship akin to stormy waves brought about by exterior disturbances. The openness of the sea during storms parallels the vulnerability of relationships to external disruptions. Hence, the sea's sounds also symbolize the contradiction within the couple.

Unlike the woman's fearful attitude towards the sea, the man finds solace in the unspoiled beauty of the surging waves. In Jon Fosse's works, the man is not alone in his affection for the sea; Asle in *A Summer's Day*, after venturing out, disappears into its vastness. The primary setting of 'A Summer's Day' remains a house by the fjord, where again a couple inhabits an isolated space. However, it is the male protagonist who becomes restless amidst the "stifling" ambiance, while the female counterpart relishes the tranquility, attempting to acquaint the man, Asle, with the merits of their new surroundings. He describes the house as "beautiful" and advocates for serenity as necessary for them both to integrate into this peaceful environment. Asle struggles to adapt to the bleak atmosphere, unable to maintain composure, which the woman interprets as an extension of his intolerance towards her. Similar to *Someone Is Going to Come*, underlying tensions in their relationship surface through discomfort in the new environment, significantly exacerbated by auditory dissonance.

The dominant sound of the sea drowns out all human voices. Asle's love for the sea is largely rooted in the immersive sense of solitude the encompassing sea sounds provide. He fears loneliness yet dislikes the intrusion of others, opting for the companionship of the sea. His willingness to venture to the fjord even before rain exacerbates the woman's perception that he spends more time there than at home, a feeling Asle inversely experiences. Anticipating visitors, Asle prefers the solitude of the fjord to social engagement. This dread and unease towards impending arrivals resonate with *Someone Is Going to Come*, both works conveying a trend towards self-isolation tinged with persistent anxiety.

The distant waves hold a unique appeal for Asle, primarily because proximity to the sea signifies escape from terrestrial interpersonal strife, immersing him in nature and his own world. Asle relishes engaging with the sea through multiple senses; conversely, the woman fears and avoids going out to sea, preferring to observe it from a safe distance by the window. The sea and land represent interconnected yet incompatible realms, paralleling Asle and the woman's cohabitation without true mutual understanding. Thus, the profound sounds of the sea symbolize Asle's incomprehensible inner voice to the woman, forming a metaphorical pair. Beyond escapism, Asle's affinity for the sea stems from its rhythmic sounds that alleviate loneliness

and facilitate free-flowing thoughts. His eventual disappearance at sea carries symbolic weight: immersion in one's world to the point of societal detachment resembles a social death. This allegorizes the human condition where societal ties preclude finding absolute solitude, and Fosse's characters, in their rejection of social attributes, are destined for melancholy and a proximity to death.

Analogous symbolism applies to 'The One' in *I Am the Wind* who chooses immersion in the sea. When queried if his love for the sea stems from a desire for silence. When being asked "Do you like being at sea so much/ because you want everything to be silent." 'The One' responds that "I don't know if I do want it to be silent/ And there are noises on the water too/ Creaking/ Fluttering/ Screeching [11]." Like Asle, 'The One' seeks a reclusive existence, embracing the vocal sea as an ideal companion. The sea connects once more with melancholic figures, symbolizing a retreat into solitude and refusal of communication.

## V. CONCLUSION

Amidst the global theatrical trend leaning towards script desk-reading and visual dominance, Fosse swims against the current by paring down intricate storylines and distilling character actions to their essence, guiding audiences beyond superficial visual associations to immerse themselves in a meticulously crafted auditory realm woven from nuanced sounds and profound silences. In Fosse's works, "silence" is not mere absence of sound but a dynamic tension teeming with movement; this distinctive "stillness-in-motion" soundscape is a testament to his profound comprehension of dramatic art and a deep reflection of Norwegian cultural roots. The sea, as a natural symbol, transcends its role as mere background murmur to actively participate in the narrative, echoing the inner turmoil of characters and underscoring the core themes of the plays. Thus, Fosse not only redefines the aural experience in theatre but also demonstrates through his works that genuine dramatic art transcends sensory boundaries, integrating personal innovation with the essence of national culture to form a universal language.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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