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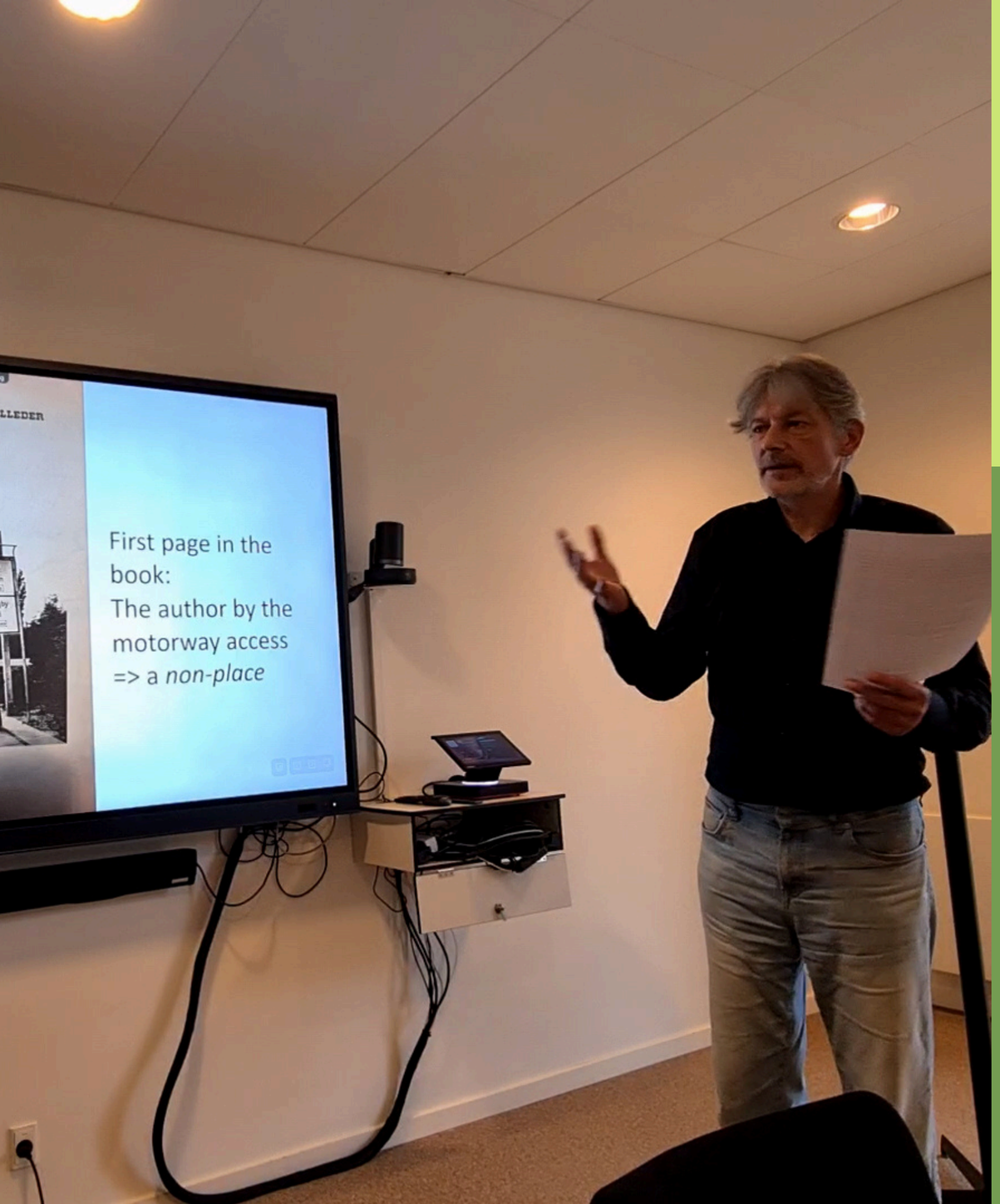
PLASE
POWER OF LOCAL AUTHENTIC
SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION

PLASE WORKSHOPS

The PLASE Workshops present local and transnational training sessions where educators enhanced their didactical and pedagogical skills through Place-Based Education (PBE), highlighting key activities, results, and participant feedback.



WORKSHOP: HOW TO USE PLACES WHEN TEACHING LITERATURE

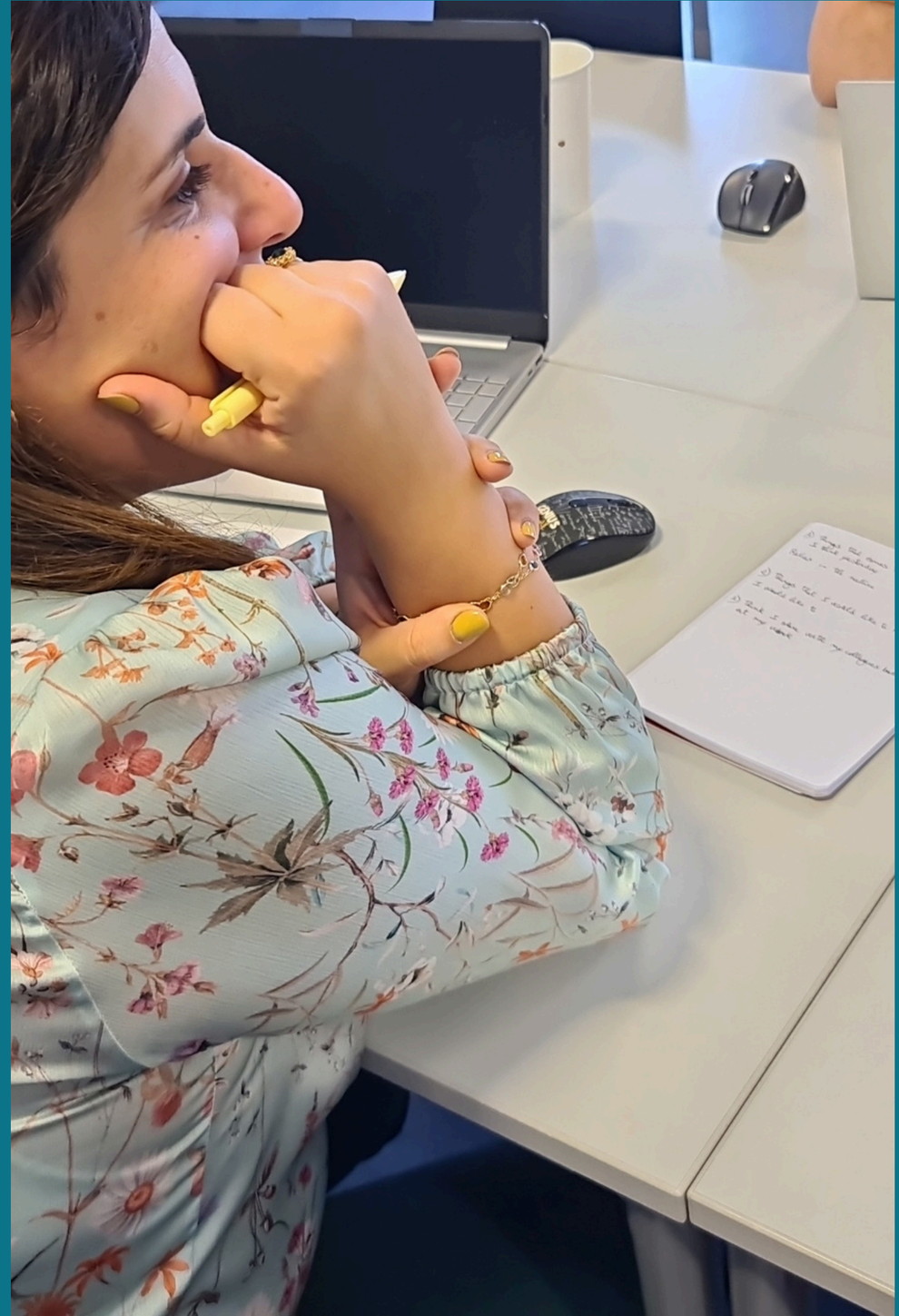
Overview of the Workshop

The workshop “How to Use Places When Teaching Literature”, held in Nykøbing Falster, Denmark and led by Lasse Isholm, explored how the concept of place can enhance literature teaching. It showed how places in texts are not just settings, but carriers of meaning, memory, and identity, helping students engage more deeply by connecting literature to their own experiences.

Objectives and Key Activities

The main objective of the workshop was to provide educators with tools to integrate the concept of place into literature teaching, helping students develop both analytical and personal connections to texts. It aimed to strengthen understanding of how places shape narratives, identities, and interpretations.
Participants explored theoretical frameworks such as the concept of place as a combination of location, physical setting, and personal meaning, as well as the idea of the chronotope, where time and space are intertwined in narrative.

The workshop combined theoretical input with practical activities. Participants analyzed literary texts, focusing on how places are described and how they influence characters and storytelling. They were also encouraged to reflect on their own meaningful places and to experiment with exercises that can be used in the classroom, such as personal storytelling and place-based observation.





THE NARRATIVE OF LOLLAND-FALSTER

The first part of the workshop focused on the narrative of the region of Lolland-Falster, which has long been associated with negative stereotypes in Danish media and culture. Through examples from films, documentaries, and television, the area is often portrayed as marginalized, economically disadvantaged, and socially fragile. These representations contribute to a dominant narrative that shapes how the region is perceived both internally and externally.

By analyzing these narratives, participants reflected on how places are constructed through storytelling and how such representations can influence identity and expectations. This part of the workshop encouraged a critical awareness of how cultural narratives can reinforce or challenge stereotypes, and how alternative narratives can be developed.

To illustrate how the narrative of Lolland-Falster has been constructed over time, the workshop presented a series of examples from film and television. These examples show how the region is often portrayed as peripheral, fragile, and socially marginalized, reinforcing a dominant negative image.

- One of the key references is the Dogme 95 film Mifune’s Last Song (1999), which is largely set in a neglected rural farm in Lolland, contrasted with scenes from the wealthy and urban environment of Copenhagen. The film uses this spatial contrast to emphasize social and cultural differences between center and periphery.
- Another example is the documentary TV series På røven i Nakskov (2015), which portrays the inhabitants of Nakskov as living on the margins of society. Through a raw and direct narrative style, the series reinforces an image of social struggle, unemployment, and instability, presenting the town as emblematic of decline.
- A more recent example is the reality show Kærlighed hvor kragerne vender (2020–2025), which focuses on dating in rural and peripheral areas. The show follows young men from Lolland-Falster who meet women from other parts of Denmark, highlighting demographic challenges such as depopulation and the difficulty of building relationships in remote areas.

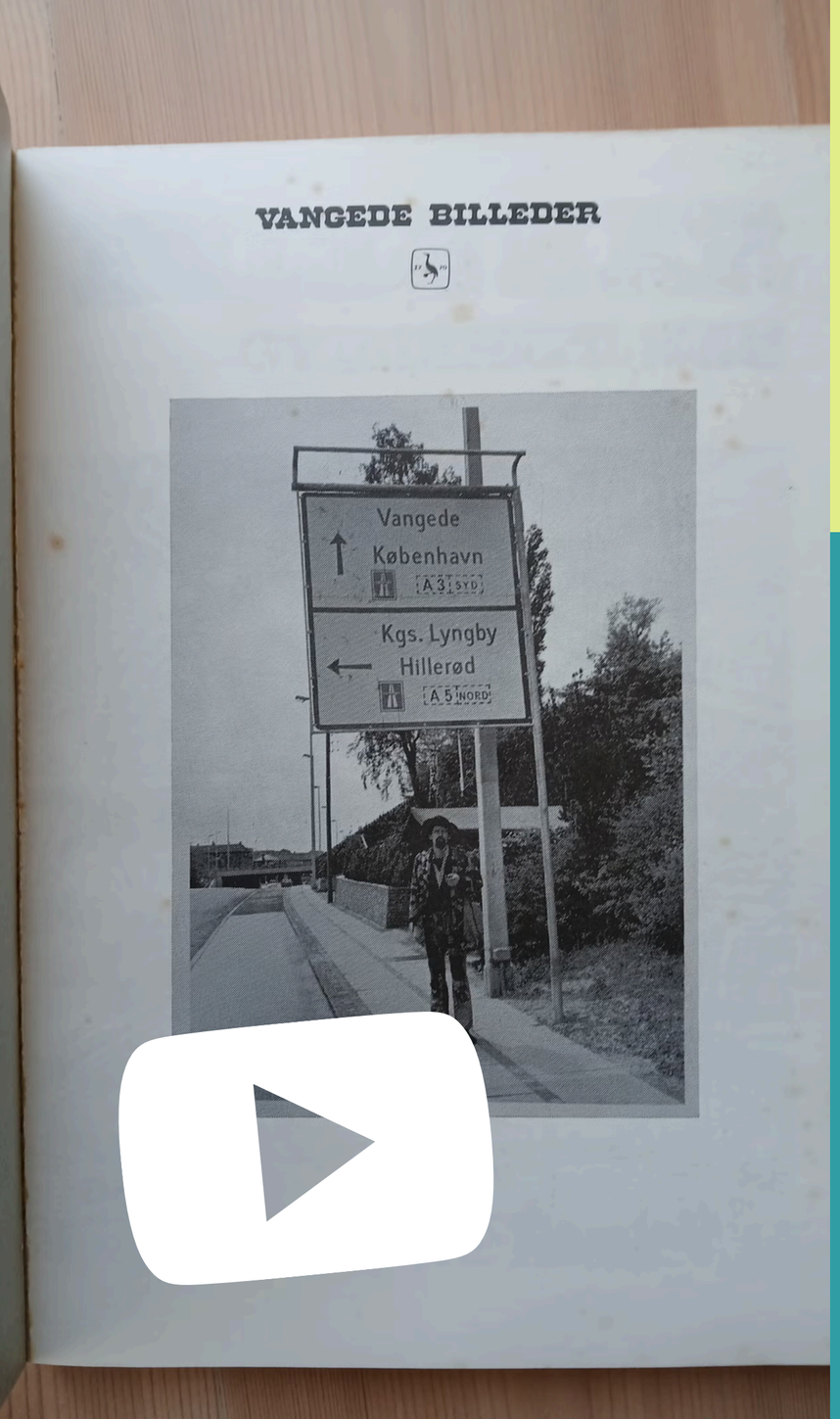


PLACES IN LITERATURE: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The second part of workshop introduced key theoretical perspectives on the concept of place. Drawing on the work of Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, place was described as “space in time,” emphasizing how a location becomes meaningful when experienced within a specific temporal and narrative context. This distinction highlights the difference between space as a neutral, abstract location and place as something shaped by human presence and memory.

The concept was further expanded through the idea of the “non-place,” developed by anthropologist Marc Augé, who defines it as a depersonalized space of modern life, often associated with transience, anonymity, and alienation. In contrast, geographer Tim Cresswell describes place as a combination of geographic location, physical setting, and personal meaning, emphasizing the role of human experience in shaping a sense of place.





PLACES IN LITERATURE

Building on this theoretical framework, the workshop explored how places function within literary works through three key examples:

- Dan Turèll: Vangede billeder(1975) – memoires
- Helle Helle: Rødby-Puttgarden (2005) – novel
- Knud Romer: Den som blinker er bange for døden(2006) – novel (English title: Nothing But Fear)

Vangede billeder – Dan Turèll

In Vangede billeder, Dan Turèll transforms an ordinary suburban area into a meaningful literary place. Although Vangede is often seen as lacking cultural value, the author’s personal memories and detailed descriptions give it depth and significance.

Through the interplay of time and space, the suburb becomes a place rich in identity and emotion. This example shows how literature can elevate everyday environments and reveal their hidden cultural and personal value.

Rødby-Puttgarden – Helle Helle
The novel Rødby-Puttgarden presents a seemingly uneventful setting, a ferry route and a small harbor town, often perceived as a “non-place.”
However, through precise language, sensory details, and the use of real place names, the author creates a strong sense of realism and atmosphere. The narrative demonstrates how even places that appear empty or insignificant can become meaningful through lived experience and literary representation. It also highlights how time, space, and everyday routines shape the narrative structure.

Den som blinker er bange for døden (Nothing But Fear) – Knud Romer
In this autofictional novel, Knud Romer describes his childhood in Nykøbing Falster, offering a more critical and personal portrayal of place.
The town is depicted as limiting and oppressive, yet it also becomes deeply embedded in the author’s identity. The narrative shows how a place can simultaneously be a source of conflict and belonging. This duality illustrates how places are not fixed entities, but are shaped by personal experience, memory, and perspective.







EXERCISE FOR THE STUDENTS: MY OWN GOOD PLACE

- Reflect on, which place that have had a special meaning to you. Write notes while you think.
- Present this place to your group. You can tell each in turn. It will be fine, if you also can tell a little story, that is set at this place.
- Reflect on, what your dream place looks like. A place where you would like to live in the future. Where is it? What does it look like? Who is living there?
- Describe your dream place to your group.



EXERCISE FOR THE STUDENTS: A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT PLACES IN THE NOVEL 'RØDBY-PUTTGARDEN'

- Write down all the place names, that you can find in chapter 1-5.
- What effect does the author Helle Helle achieve by using these place names?
- Find out, whether the place names are real places in Rødbyhavn - you might know some of them already.
- Take a walk in Rødbyhavn and try to find the places.

Feedback and Lessons Learned

The workshop demonstrated how working with place can make literature more accessible and engaging, especially for students who may struggle with abstract analysis. By connecting texts to real or familiar places, participants observed that students can develop a stronger emotional and cognitive engagement. This approach helps bridge the gap between theory and lived experience, allowing students to relate more personally to literary content and to interpret texts with greater depth and confidence.







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