PLACE-BASED READING. LITERATURE DIDACTICS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

This article presents a theoretically based model for place-based reading as a specific method for teaching literature outside the classroom. The model is designed for lower secondary school students (ages 13–16). With its four didactic stages, place-based reading is supposed to prompt and scaffold the students' exploratory, bidirectional text–place attention. The place-based reading model's theoretical foundations are presented by merging three broad academic fields: philosophies of place, literary topographies, and education outside the classroom (Danish: udeskole). The article is intended to contribute to a discussion of education that addresses how exploratory literature teaching outside the classroom could reveal to students that literature and the world surrounding them are related by concretizing the time element.

Keywords: place-based reading, L1, literary didactics, education outside the classroom, udeskole.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This article starts from the premise that, as a teaching method, place-based reading offers a different approach to teaching literary history by incorporating outdoor- and place-based educational elements. I suggest that place-based reading may provide a more world-oriented literature instruction than the more abstract and formalistic focuses on time and periods, which appear to be commonly used in Danish schools, according to empirical research on literature instruction. Recent Danish empirical studies of literature education in primary and secondary schools, such as Bremholm, Bundsgaard, Fougt & Skyggebjerg´s (2017), Gabrielsen and Oksbjerg's (2022), Mai's (2010), and Rørbech and Skyggebjerg's (2020), reveal a dearth of literature instruction that considers the relations between student, text and life-world. Also, literature didactics seem to have ignored and devalued the physical learning environment, the material world, and the realm of the body (Eggersen, 2024). This lack of corporeal, context-based, and experience-based literature instruction probably derives from what Casey (2002), Mai (2009), and Moslund (2010) describe as a longstanding literary focus on the abstract construct of *time*, rather than on what they consider to be a more concrete and sensory textual element: *place*. The time-based perspective has predominated in many narrative literary analyses of characters and plots, as well as in classroom studies of literary history and its division into tidy, linear periodizing categories (Mai, 2009; 2010). Time should not be ignored in the classroom as either a text-structuring element or as a path to historical awareness in reading. But time may seem rather abstract to lower secondary school children with limited life experience. According to Mai's analysis (2009), the ways in which literary history is presented in Danish textbooks do not always seem to help them. Like Mai, Felski (2011, 575) criticizes the way in which literary history instruction suffers from what she calls *historical schemata*, which students seem to find rather abstract and demotivating. Therefore, in merging philosophies of place, literary topographies, and outdoor teaching, I suggest changing the foreground of literary didactics to an awareness of place and text–place interrelations, as a different and more world-orientated approach to the literary time focus of teaching programs.

My proposal aims to contribute to the discussion of *whether*, *how*, and *why* teaching literature could and should involve the natural and cultural worlds outside the school walls to a greater degree, by asking:

> How could place-based reading be developed as a method of literature didactics based on philosophies of place, literary topographies, and education outside the classroom?

This question leads me to the designation of a graphic model for place-based reading. Thus, the model of place-based reading derives from a phenomenological understanding of the term *place*, from a literary interest for interrelations between place and text, and from educational theories of teaching and learning outside the classroom. Therefore, this article is organized as follows. First, I introduce an underlying philosophical approach to the term *place* by primarily referencing two phenomenologist philosophers of place, Casey (1993; 2002) and Greve (1996; 1998; 2000;

2005; 2008; 2014). Second, I unfold the role of their thinking in literary topographies by referring to Mai and Ringgaard's (2010) and Moslund's (2010) works. Third, I introduce my understanding of teaching and learning in places outside the classroom as a merging of Danish *udeskole* and American *place-based education*. Fourth, I apply these theoretical understandings to an explanatory presentation of a model for place-based reading's operational stages. Finally, I relate this model to place-oriented literature instruction programs in others' studies. In my concluding remarks I briefly relate the place-based reading-model to that of the American place educationalist Gruenewald, and his essay, *The best of both worlds: A Critical Pedagogy of Place* (2003a), in which he calls for a more place-based, world-oriented, and critical educational thinking.

2. PHILOSOPHIES OF PLACE

Influenced by Heidegger's (1927) onto-phenomenology and Merleau-Ponty's (1945) body phenomenology, the two phenomenologists Edward S. Casey (1993; 1996) and Anniken Greve (1996; 1998; 2000; 2005; 2008, 2014), have contributed to an understanding of the concept of place. They both emphasize the idea of place as significant to our corporeal being-in-the-world. The phenomenological influence is apparent in their shared fundamental understanding of place as principally a corporeal and sensory experience in between humans and their physical surroundings. Casey describes how, by being in a constant and inevitable *here-ness* (Casey, 1993, 50) we always relate to place in some way. To be is to be in a place, and since we cannot separate our thinking from our corporeal existence, Casey considers place to be "the bedrock of our being in the world" (1993, xvii).

Although time may be rather abstract to young school children, I argue that place may be more concrete. At any life stage, we are always in a place, and we are always relating to places through our physical existence, although we are not always aware of it. To Casey (1993), place is inevitable and subsistent: "Place subtends and enfolds us, lying perpetually under and around us" (xvii), and being will always mean to be in a place. Casey (1993, xv; 1996) further claims that the question of place has always been an epistemological and ontological concern of philosophy and of human existence, with regards to its link to the more abstract term, *space*, although it has been considered marginal to the complementary term, *time*. The 20th century's *spatial turn* challenged this marginalization, he says, and began to emphasize the importance of place and space in the social sciences and the humanities. Today, the research of various disciplines and fields considers place. Since the 1990s, theory of place has come to embrace a broad field of thoughts and ideas about places as existential human anchoring points, and spread into countless areas of research, such as geography, anthropology, architecture, sociology, and, as I will soon demonstrate, literary theory and educational thought.

Greve considers places from a body phenomenology perspective, constitutively conditioned by human presence: "A place is a spot or an area on the planet, but not

every spot on the planet is a place" (Greve, 1996, 20, my translation from Norwegian). To Greve, place is what appears between body and horizon, when humans relate to the material world by sensing it and dwelling in it: "Territories appear as places to humans as they relate to their surroundings. Place depends on this way of relating to the surroundings" (Greve, 1996, 20, my translation from Norwegian). Thus, places as such exist only by virtue of a corporeal human presence.

Casey seems to agree with this, and distinguishes between locations and places. He considers a location as a spot, "a place reduced to being "just there"" (Casey, 1993, 65). However, he notes that, as embodied beings, we cannot just "be there." A place is not just a spot; places exist "between the body, the landscape and the culture," when a sensing and reflecting human steps into a location, and is "subtended and enfolded" by it. In this way, place occurs with a time dimension, or as something 'taking place' (Casey, 1993, 29).

However, the above mentioned appearing-as-place depends on our ability to relate to places with a certain awareness, which Greve calls *omverdenømfintlighet* in Norwegian. Omverdenømfintlighet may be translated as a "sensitive awareness of the surrounding world." Omverdenømfintlighet is further described as a sort of "active susceptibility". It is a form of susceptibility, as it involves passively perceiving the given: "That is why it matters to us where we are, that is why it makes a difference where we are, that is why we care about the arrangement of our surroundings." And at the same time, omverdenømfintlighet demands an active creation, when it involves "participating imaginatively in what it perceives from the surroundings" (Greve, 2000, 140, my translation from Norwegian). From a phenomenological perspective, one may say that a place always appears to us within a time dimension. Casey states that the above mentioned 'taking place' implies temporality:

> "(…), place becomes an *event*, a happening not only in space but in time and history as well. To the role of place as facilitative and locatory we need to add the role of place as eventmental: as a scene of personal and historical happening."
>
> (Casey, 1993, xxv)

Greve seems to agree with this, and says that we always experience our environments as something with a history:

> "They do not appear to us as environments that have just been created. They appear to us as surroundings with duration, stability, as environments that have included and accommodated humans for a long time, before us."
>
> (Greve, 2014, 34, my translation from Norwegian)

To be place-oriented is to encounter your environments with knowledge or recollection that may help you to either imagine or remember the past. Greve notes that place has a present, a *now*, as it appears to our senses, but the history of the place is also part of this present.

Greve furtherly regards place as a concrete expression of abstract time and of the passage of time: "Place is what remains, what gathers and reminds us of past

times, and what carries our imprints and our time for posterity" (Greve, 2005, 80, my translation from Norwegian). Therefore, in places we can sense the imprints of the flow of time by discovering or recalling what has happened here, and we can imagine what will happen here in the future. Thus, according to Casey and Greve, place may be seen as a concretization of time as well as of the passage of time. Time becomes concrete and perceivable, when it leaves its marks and imprints in the places through which it flows. This is crucial to my description of place-based reading as an exploratory, corporeal, and sense-based teaching method.

3. LITERARY TOPOGRAPHIES

Place and world orientation seem somehow to have faded from literature didactics. This is probably due to a predominant focus on time. According to Casey (2002, 163) and to Moslund (2010, 2), literary theories have mainly regarded literature as narratives addressing time, as it describes action and the succession of *when*, rather than questions of *where*. Literary theory has addressed time and narrativity, rather than settings, landscapes, geography, and descriptions. In his study of how maps and landscape paintings represent places, Casey (2002, 16ff) examines the longstanding imbalance between literary theories' focus on time and their focus on place. Casey (2002) suggests a change in perspective, based on his important contribution to a new focus based on the philosophy (Casey, 1993) informed by the history of landscape painting, and refuses to consider literature's settings and landscapes as "just pretext" or "(just) context for a central story" (Casey, 2002, 163). Greve, likely, applies philosophies of place to literary theory, to show how a text's setting plays an important role in its creation of meaning, by "enabling, shaping, managing, or loading the situations that the characters find themselves in" (Greve, 2009, 145, my translation from Norwegian).

Narrative literature is constituted by a setting: it 'takes place'. Given a traditional focus on time and narrative, literary topographies offer place awareness as a change of perspective. Like Casey (1993; 1996) and Greve (1996; 1998; 2005; 2008; 2009), literary critics such as Moslund (2010) and Mai (2009) have embraced literary topographies by saying that literature's main endeavor has always been to explore and describe the fundamental conditions of human existence. Building on Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's ideas, Casey and Greve describe place-boundedness as a fundamental, inevitable, essential part of the human condition. As an exploration and description of fundamental conditions of human existence, literature constitutively relates to places by taking, describing, addressing, or emanating from places. Literary topographies have turned their attention to such interrelations between literature and places, and as such, they constitute the second theoretical pillar of place-based reading.

Moslund (2010, 1) describes place in language and literature as prompting "a physical, sensory experience." As I see it, the physicality of place could connect fruitfully with theories of education outside the classroom, by including a corporeal

element to teaching literature. However, literature may interrelate with places in various ways: through a text-internal *representation of place*, as the plot unfolds in real or fictitious places (Casey, 2002; Mai & Ringgaard, 2010, 14, my translation from Danish), or by reflecting text-external places, such as the place that inspired the author, the place where the text was written or was read, the place where it was stored, taught, discussed or criticized, what Mai and Ringgaard (2010, 14) term *the place of the representation* (my translation from Danish). Text-internal places are the geographic or fictitious localities where the story takes place, corresponding to the setting; whereas text-external places are localities that may relate to the text in almost any other way. The place–text interrelation is not just mimetic. It is also reciprocally creative: places constitute literature, and literature constitutes places, in the sense that it affects our experience and our awareness of them. Teaching with place-based reading is meant to be conducted in text-external, as well as in text-internal places, outside the classroom.

4. UDESKOLE AND PLACE-BASED EDUCATION

How could these unfolded theories of place and of literary topographies be applied to didactic thinking? The third theoretical pillar of my model for place-based reading merges two related pedagogical directions, namely Danish udeskole and American place-based education.

In Denmark, curriculum-based education outside the school walls, termed *udeskole*, originally grew out of a grassroots movement of dedicated teachers who launched local initiatives (Bentsen & Jensen, 2012, 200). In the past two decades, udeskole has attracted increased attention in Scandinavia, also as a field of research. Bentsen, Mygind, and Randrup (2009, 32) state that udeskole is characterized by "the fact that compulsory educational activities take place outside the school walls/buildings, on a regular basis." Udeskole activities are characterized by "teachers making use of the local environment when teaching specific curriculum subjects" (Bentsen & Jensen, 2012, 200). Furthermore, udeskole pedagogy involves *exploratory*, *world-oriented*, *applicative*, *experience-based*, and *student-involving* teaching and learning activities, in "an interaction between outside and classroom teaching" (Ejbye-Ernst, Mygind & Bentsen, 2016, my translation from Danish).

Danish udeskole has an important counterpart in the United States, where *place-based education* emerged in the 1990s, thanks to educators such as Orr (1992), Smith (2002), and Williams (Smith & Williams, 1999), who presented their fundamental ideas for a new, cross-disciplinary, community-oriented form of schooling, often linked to ecological or eco-critical thinking. A new "place-conscious education" (Gruenewald, 2003b), and the idea that place should be a significant educational aspect and tool was described, prompted by the rather harsh criticism of the contemporary school system as being *place-less*: "Other than as a collection of buildings where learning is supposed to occur, place has no particular standing in contemporary education" (Orr, 1992, 125). In the following decade, place-based education

matured, and was described in a more instructive way by Sobel, who presented his *design principles for educators* (2008), and by Smith (2002), who suggested "ways to overcome the disjuncture between school and children's lives," whereas Gruenewald (2003a, 2003b) presented an important theoretical statement as an argument for (critical) teaching and learning through place. In contrast to the green spaces characteristic of the Danish udeskole tradition, in this case place is instead understood as the community or region in which the students live and learn, including its natural and cultural surroundings. However, according to Gruenewald, (2003b, 638; 2004), American place-based education, like Danish udeskole, has catalyzed most of science instruction, whereas more cultural settings (Bentsen & Jensen, 2012, 200), also termed *cultural realms*, seem to have been somehow neglected (Gruenewald, 2003b, 638).

Both udeskole and place-based education are seen as didactic approaches to developing a place awareness and a focus on the surrounding area. Besides, each of these educational theories builds on an experiential and exploratory educational foundation developed by Dewey (1938), as is evident in Bentsen and Jensen's (2012), and Gruenewald's (2003a, 2003b) works. But the two approaches differ. As I see it, unlike udeskole, place-based education is not clearly defined as a teaching approach, in which the teaching takes place outside the school walls. And as normative educational theories, udeskole and place-based education mainly differ in their respective emphasis on critical pedagogy. With reference to Gruenewald's seminal article, "The Best of Both Worlds: A Critical Pedagogy of Place" (2003a), I consider place-based education to be, to a greater extent than udeskole, a critical and socio-educational theory, whereas udeskole's theoretical and empirical bases, and its traditions, seem to be oriented more towards the student's corporeal experiences with, and their learning in and about, nature (see Eggersen, 2020). My model for place-based reading borrows from Gruenewald's work (2003a), and this article's description of, and application of, udeskole place a greater emphasis on a historicizing, critical and cultural theory than on a nature-oriented foundation.

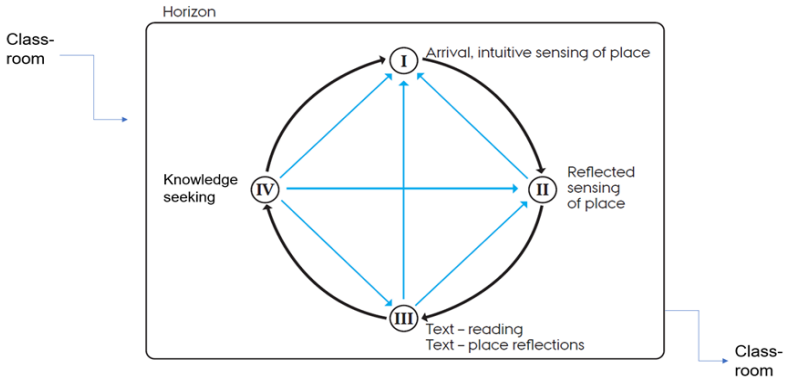
5. PLACE-BASED READING: A MODEL

The bidirectional text–place awareness of my model of place-based reading begins as an interaction among student, place, and text, launched and scaffolded by the teacher. The outdoor elements of place-based reading are presented in four stages (I–IV), and designed as follows (Figure 1). Notably, when models such as this are used, they must always be adapted to the current factors, such as the weather, the students, the text, the place, and the learning goals.

The four stages, illustrated in Figure 1, should prompt an exploratory interaction between the students and the text–place. In the following section I describe and explain this interaction. Repeated sensing, interpreting, and open assumption, as well as repeated revisions of this process, indicated by the blue arrows, gradually qualifies the students' observations and their reasoning. As such, the progression of the

stages I-IV is also a hermeneutic recursive process in the sense that teacher and students keep looking back to the former stages to eventually redo or revise their observations. This is scaffolded by the teacher, who invites the students to participate in the progressive—recursive dialogue with the help of a variety of open questions posed at each stage (figure 2).

Figure 1- displays the four didactic stages of place-based reading. The black arrows show the stepwise teaching progression, whereas the blue arrows show the students' recursive process of hypothesizing and revising their preliminary answers to the open questions about text, place, and text–place interrelations.



Preferably, the students should arrive at and sense the place without seeking knowledge about it, and without reading the text in question beforehand. The use of physical teaching and learning dimensions is a key principle of stage I, in particular when the students are supposed to arrive at the place, and explore its attributes intuitively and through their senses, prompted by questions such as, "What is here, and what is seen/heard/smelled/felt here?" The outcome of these intuitive observations may be maintained as notes, recordings, or photographs for later retrieval. Considering the insights offered by Greve's previously-mentioned term, omverdenømfintlighet, this is to ensure an optimal sensory, passively perceptive or susceptible sensing of place 'passively', without assumptions.

In stage II, a more reflective sensing of the place and its time dimensions is prompted. This is guided by new, open questions and activities to encourage the students to make preliminary assumptions about the place´s "imprints of time passed" (Greve, 2005, 80) and its daily functions or the historical significance of the place, consulting their existing knowledge. The students now compile, share, and compare their individual outcomes of the immediate sensing. Some observations from stage I may now seem more relevant than others, when they eventually emerge

as imprints of the past that indicate how the place has "contained and accommodated people for a long time, before us" (Greve, 2014, 34).

Figure 2 The didactic stages of place-based reading and the type of questions posed in each stage.

I. Arrival. Intuitive, sensory experience of the place, prompted by questions such as *What is here? What do you see/hear/smell/feel here?*
II. A more reflective sensing of the place and impressions of the place, prompted by open questions such as *What comes to mind here? Are you somehow related to this place? What do you think has been here over time?*
III. Reading the work of fiction. Students now draw their observations from stages I and II into the reading of the text, as potential keys to understanding and interpretation, prompted by open questions, such as *What could this text tell us about the place? and What could the place tell us about the text?*
IV. Seeking knowledge about the place and the text, with a view to revising the observations and interpretations from I, II, and III.

Casey's distinction between locations and places explains why the students' arrival in and perception of a place are conducted in two stages. Somewhere between stages I and II, scaffolded by the teacher's open questions, the chosen location becomes a place. As the students dwell, sense, and relate (Greve, 1996, 20) to the location, one could say that the place happens, emanates, or occurs between the body, the landscape and the culture (Casey, 1993, 29).

In stage III, the students read the written text, either in its entirety or as extracts, depending on the genre and the scope. This should take a while. Students may read the text in collaborative groups or individually, depending on the methods with which they are familiar. Regardless, reading the text should lead to a revision of the students' preliminary answers to the questions from stages I and II, to allow new observations and answers to emerge.

Whereas stages I and II should make a location "appear" (Greve, 1996, 20), or "happen as a subtending and enfolding" place (Casey, 1993, 29), stage III takes the teaching further, towards a bidirectional awareness of text–place, by means of new open questions, such as, "What could this text possibly tell us about the place?" and "What could this place possibly tell us about the text?" By posing such questions, the teacher assumes a reciprocity between text and place, which allows the students to grasp that and how literature and world interrelate. Thus, the students and their

teacher do not only read and analyze the text theoretically with different (place) focuses, as suggested by literary topographies, they are also supposed to experience place as a physical aspect of literature, by this focus on being-in-place, before they read the text. The inquisitive involvement of their physical arrival at the place, and of the corporeal perception of it, combined with the textreading, are intended to reveal a text approach, that can be described as an awareness of "how place may be called forth in language and literature as a physical, sensory experience" (Moslund, 2010, 1). Likewise, reading the text at the place in question, may elicit and develop an awareness of place.

As the pre-reading in stages I and II is based on concrete sensations and the activation of existing cultural and historical knowledge, notably, stage III's immersion in the text is likely to assume a rather knowledge-seeking character. During their sensing, wondering, guessing, and assuming, the students identified and stated apparent facts concerning the place, its daily use, and its historicity. They will now probably seek to confirm or refute these apparent facts in the work of fiction, or, to use Felski's words (2008, 83), they will seek to "expand, enlarge, or reorder [their] sense of how things are." Ultimately, stage IV challenges this factual reading, when the given facts about the place may lead the students to deconstruct, or at least revise, their knowledge-seeking involvement with the work of fiction. At this stage, the teacher can gradually take on the role of an expert, by sharing her knowledge about the place and the text. Also, this stage may continue indoors, once the students have returned to their classroom.

The place-based reading model demonstrates a way to scaffold what Ejbye-Ernst et al. (2016, 8, my translation from Danish) call the "interplay between outside and classroom activities," referring to the interplay between abstract academic material, and a more concrete, sense-based, exploratory, and corporeal experience of it. By presenting open questions, the teacher must prompt, launch, and scaffold a bidirectional awareness and an interpretative dialogue among students, text, and place, to stimulate the students' curiosity about the place and the text–place interrelation.

The designated circular model shows the students' reading process as an extended aesthetic-hermeneutic awareness, where the understanding of a text is never direct, but always based on knowledge and experience. The model assumes a close relationship between topology and hermeneutics, as Malpas (2016) discusses. Heidegger's ideas are the basis for Malpas's claim that place and understanding are "intimately connected", as "something suggested by the very etymology of the English *understand*, as well as the German *verstehen*" (387). By being- or standing-in-the-world, we are always and already in situations of realizing, and to reveal knowledge and thought in such processes we may interpret and adjust this interpretation. Our comprehension of a text is never direct but based on our experience. Thus, the continuous progress of place-based reading's *place hermeneutics* circle creates (an awareness of) interconnections between text, horizon, perception, preknowledge, experience, reflection, and the surrounding world, as a general image for grasping the essential relation between the world and humans. The place-based

reading circle describes a continuous interplay; a movement of ever-increasing complications and complexities, new inputs, new experiences, new readings, new terms, and a new sensibility. Being part of this recursive text–place interaction involves change and growth. To grasp place is to presume, to give preliminary answers, to be invested in it, to make yourself available, and to question your participation and your way of being part of the circle. In each stage, you sense the place, along with the way the text represents the place, and you relate to the historical facts about the place.

At first, you see the visible horizon, after which you meet an expanded horizon of understanding. We have an intellectual horizon, we sense a horizon in the text–place interrelation, and we encounter new horizons when we share these experiences with others, when we consult our historical knowledge. To be, and to read and to learn in places, to actually see the horizon, is the fulfillment of the hermeneutic and more abstract metaphor of interpretative horizons. Thus, place-based reading builds on a hermeneutic epistemology, and expands the term *horizon* to include the visible horizon.

5.1 The model for place-based reading in relation to other's studies

The didactic focus on a text-place connectedness can be taken in various directions. To put my model of place-based reading into perspective, I will give examples from the research literature on primarily empirical studies of place-oriented reading.

Pjedsted's PhD project [*It's like being part of the story. When students Sense Literary places*] (2020) builds on the theoretical merging of experience-based pedagogy (Dewey, 1938; Pugh, 2002, 2011), postcritical literary theory (Felski, 2008), and psychology (Coplan 2011; Zahavi, 2012). In a qualitative intervention study, Pjedsted examines how a "place-oriented" literary pedagogy affects lower secondary school students' reading experience and interpretation (Pjedsted, 2020). More precisely, she studies the students' empathy with, and empathetic understanding of the characters in modern young adult literature when they read in locations that can be compared to the text's setting. Through thematic analyses of qualitative interviews carried out in situ, Pjedsted shows how students, when reading on a "place-oriented" basis, participate in the teaching and reading with a sort of affective and corporeal understanding of the text: "The student's body becomes a knowing body in which the student's cognition is based on the whole body, sensing and moving" (2020, 169), and "The characters in the text give the students an opportunity to contemplate other people's self-observation and, in this way, they may also learn to contemplate themselves" (228, both are my translation from Danish). Thus, according to Pjedsted, a place-oriented reading could, in fact, become an affective, sensitive, corporeal embedding and, empathetic way for students to approach the text's characters.

Wason-Ellam (2010) refers primarily to American place-based education's (Gruenewald, 2003b; Sobel, 2008) understanding of place awareness. She describes a way to develop the student´s "ecological literacy" by teaching literature outside the classroom. In an ethnographic study, Wason-Ellam, similarly to Pjedsted, developed and

tested a literature teaching program, where teacher and students for a period work with modern picture books about nature at a local river valley. Whereas Pjedsted sees place-oriented reading as offering potentials for an affective, empathetic and corporeal embedding way to study the text's characters, Wason-Ellam sees this approach to teaching literature as a kind of springboard for embodied learning in and about places, with an ecocritical perspective.

Unlike Pjedsted and Wason-Ellam, Halberg & Brumo (2021) are not explicitly interested in places, but in a reading-theory approach with a particular focus on the students' reading commitment. They studied the effect of udeskole elements on a cross-disciplinary teaching program conducted outside the classroom. Their study shows how students' commitment to a text may be characterized when they read an old (1892) narrative about a human battle against wolves, in connection with a visit to a predator park. The teaching program was conducted in a region of Norway where the question of protecting versus hunting wild wolves stirs emotional public debates. The study shows how teaching literature in connection with teaching activities outside the school walls could provide "subjective relevance" (16) to the students' learning.

Place may also be considered in in-class literature instruction programs. Building on the work of the literary scholar, Moretti (1998), Samoilow (2022) studied the possibilities of working with literary geography as an analytical lens, in what she calls *spatial literature didactics.* Samoilow's students mapped the geography of a historical graphic novel. The study shows how this kind of topographic approach appears to help students, by facilitating their analytical reading skills, as, among other things, it stimulates their critical reflection on post-colonialism, when the geography of the text, departing from Lisbon, comprises former colonies around the world.

Cahalan (2008), like Samoilow, is concerned with real geographic locations in in-class literature teaching programs. Theoretically based on literary topographies and on literary regionalism, Cahalan suggests a "distinctive" and student-centered literature class, where his college students, who come from various geographic regions of the United States, bring literature from their individual hometowns to class, to read it "from the perspectives of their home places" (249). Thus, Cahalan argues for a study of individual hometown literature "as a new way of reading and organizing literature and [...] for a hometown pedagogy that draws students powerfully into what they learn, and how they learn it" (249). Each region has its unofficial canon, and its local authors and stories. To Cahalan, the awareness of place could determine an individual and differentiated choice of text in teaching programs. According to Cahalan, literature instruction may include places as a form of territorial anchoring that gives students a sort of ownership of the learning material, and of the form of learning.

Gruenewald (2003a, 2003b), Orr (1992), Smith (2002), and Smith & Williams (1999) seem to have inspired several empirical studies in the anglophone educational world, which focus on educational institutions embracing their local communities and environments as part of their educational settings and material.

Apparently, only a few of these seem to have addressed Gruenewald's previously-mentioned desire to incorporate the cultural realm into place-based and environmental education, by drawing attention to literature and places when teaching. Reisberg et al. (2006) describe a way to examine "place, art, and culture" when deep reading "multicultural children's literature" in teacher education programs. Although it does not involve an out-of-class element, the method described has interesting similarities to place-based reading, in the way it includes open questions to text settings, and to the students' (US) immigrant heritage and experiences of place (129). Szabo and Golden (2016) use place to establish a literary perspective in class, when they offer five lists of children's literature to support Smith's (2002) statement, "as it relates to where they live as well as to the larger world." Wells and Zeece (2007) also present guidelines for selecting "developmentally appropriate and scientifically accurate literature" as tools for place-based literature instruction (285). Charlton et al. (2014) explore children's place-related identities through their reading and writing related to the Australian time-lapse picture-book, *My Place* (Wheatley & Rawlins, 2008), as a prompt for thinking about place and place-related identities. Bishop (2004) draws on the same theoretical framework, which is strongly related to Cahalan's hometown in-class literature reading, and describes and reflects on her literature classes, where she has her high school students read literature from the region and write locally-set stories, urging them to "recognize the value of (rural) community, and to acquire the skills to live well anywhere" (65). Like Samoilow's study (2022), all the studies of these American place-based literature programs, where place is mainly related to ethnicity and identity, are conducted inside classrooms.

What the scholars mentioned here have in common is a literary and didactic approach to a focus on place in teaching. Thus, place has been included in, and related to some—although rather few—empirical studies of literature instruction as an affective, sensitive, corporeal embedding, and potentially empathetic path for students to approach the characters in a text (Pjedsted, 2020); to analyze particular authors' or in particular oeuvres' use of place (Samoilow, 2022; Wheatly & Rawlins, 2008); to study the literature of a particular geographic place (Bishop, 2004; Cahalan, 2008), or to reflect more generally on how literature and place interrelate (Reisberg et al., 2006) in hometown literature, as well as in literature in general.

The selected examples of studies of place-oriented literary education practices presented here, share the fact that each is based on literary topographies and on place-oriented pedagogies. Each relates to a concern with and an awareness of places as fundamental to reading and writing literature. To be in a place is part of being human, and literature may make us aware of this. This article's presentation of a didactic model for place-based reading emerges as another variant of this, which I now briefly present by relating the place-based reading model to the previously-introduced field of place-oriented literature teaching programs and studies.

This article's proposal for place-based reading, with its focus on arrival at and sensation of the place, has similarities to both Pjedsted's (2020) and Wason-Ellam's (2010) experience-based views on the teaching place as providing an opportunity for

a corporeal embedding reading and learning. In my model, the corporeal involvement is part of the outdoor educational approach and of the literary approach, which Moslund (2010a), in particular, explains. Like Wason-Ellam's teaching program, my model for place-based reading has potential social geographic and critical dimensions, although it does not necessarily include an ecocritical one. In my model, the critical potential is understood as attention to the place where you live—through the text.

In terms of its cultural–historical dimensions, my model for place-based reading differs from Pjedsted's focus on an affective–empathetic approach. Also, my model is less student-oriented than Pjedsted's teaching program, and more oriented towards a cultural–historical dimension, in the explicit inclusion of learning from and about a place, in accordance with stage IV of my didactic model. Starting with the open questions of my model´s first stages, teachers and students should consider place, within and outside the written text. They should consider the importance of places to the people who live there, or who have lived there, with questions such as, *Who is using this place? For what? Who arranged it in this way? What has occurred in this place before? Who owns this place, or who has the power in this place, and how may it appear in the future? How do place and text interrelate?* Such questions about the place and its time dimension should offer the opportunity for a study of literary–historical dimensions. These dimensions do not seem to interest Pjedsted and Wason-Ellam to the same extent.

Although Halberg and Brumo's predator-park-based teaching program (2021) does not explicitly include udeskole or place-based pedagogy, education outside the classroom seems to form a basis that they share with my model for place-based reading. Halberg & Fiskum (2022) confirm this. For example, the predator-park-based teaching program includes interaction between indoor and outdoor teaching, as does my place-based reading model. The predator-park-based teaching program incorporates explorative elements, and it creates opportunities for involving a critical cultural dimension, in the form of nature-related and cultural–historical knowledge of predators, and of human coexistence with predators today and in the past.

As I describe it in this article, place-based reading is not specifically designed for, or aimed at reading hometown literature in the way Cahalan (2008) suggests. But the model does not preclude it, either. Instead, place-based reading facilitates an interest in connecting local place to literature from other places, to develop students' awareness of their local place's involvement in the global, and of its interconnectedness to other places in the world. Thus, my model for place-based reading is also slightly different from Samoilow's (2022) using the text´s setting as an analytical lens. Whereas Samoilow's students create maps in class, students who are taught with my model of place-based reading focus more on the place of reading the text and in their currently being (t)here (Casey, 1993), when they examine the potential text–place connectedness. To summarize, my proposal for place-based reading as a method of teaching literature differs from other place-oriented approaches to the study of literature in the following respects:

- Its explicit theoretical anchoring in philosophies of place, and in the place´s philosophical time dimensions in particular (Casey, 1993; Greve, 1996);
- Its explicit theoretical anchoring in literary topographies (Mai, 2010; Mai & Ringgaard, 2010; Moslund, 2010);
- Its outside-the-classroom/udeskole dimension (e.g., Bentsen et al., 2010; Ejbye-Ernst et al., 2016);
- Its historical–cultural and critical dimensions (Gruenewald, 2003b), anchored in a body-phenomenology-based understanding of text–place interrelations (Moslund, 2010).

6. WHY PLACE-BASED READING? CONCLUSIONS

This article is intended to contribute to the discussion of how place-based reading, as an exploratory, outdoor approach to teaching literature, could reveal to students that literature and the surrounding world are related by a concretizing of the temporal aspect, and how this is the case. This identification of the main potential of place-based reading when studying written texts in various historical contexts is a response to Gruenewald's (2003a; 2003b), Orr's (1992), Sobel's (2008), and Smith's (2002) over-20-year-old criticism of a school system that ignores place, and to udeskole's intent to develop more world-oriented and authentic teaching in elementary schools. In various ways, these scholars "aim to strengthen the connections between education and the places where we and others live" (Gruenewald, 2003b, 621). Gruenewald states that a lack of insight into humans' role as creators of place may lead to limited "social, democratic, and cultural insight." Since the same could be said of a lack of literary insight, here I have introduced a model for place-based reading as a possible way to address these points from an L1 perspective, with the hope that this sort of literature didactics could strengthen children's place awareness through literature, and that it may enhance their literary awareness through places. This reflects how one of the main pedagogical goals of place-based reading is to make students aware of themselves as place-bound place creators, and of literature's interrelatedness with places. Reading literature could be a way to create and develop place awareness, whereas place orientation is a means to literary awareness, here understood as an awareness of the fact that the physical world and literature are, and always have been, connected, and how this is the case.

To summarize the foregoing claims, place-based teaching and reading may achieve the following results.

Enhance place awareness through literature. Place awareness, understood as omverdenømfintlighet (Greve, 1996, 2000), may be a relevant departure for an explorative and world-oriented literature didactics that seeks to relate literature to the student reader's life world. As place relates to various textual elements, and not just to the text's setting (Casey, 2002, 163; Greve, 2009, 145), a change in perspective from the traditional text–time to text–place may be a way to support text

comprehension related to worldly knowledge, and to stimulate and encourage an experience-based and world-oriented interpretation of the text. In many ways, an omverdenømfintlig person or student is a competent reader of fiction.

Enhance literary awareness through place. If the teacher succeeds in prompting and scaffolding the students' bidirectional awareness of text–place interrelations, the sensory experience of the indisputable physicality of place may be a means to explore, experience, and acknowledge literature's corporeal dimension, together with the time dimension. A literature-sensitive person is aware of his and others' places. He can see that literature and the world, including his neighborhood, constantly interrelate, and how this is the case.

Increase awareness of how texts and places resonate across time through a transtemporal reading, liberated from the historical schemata (Felski, 2011, 575) of traditional literature instruction. It is difficult to imagine how students could identify and empathize with human existence in the past times, with its different languages, conditions, and values, and to imagine the future, were it not for literature. At best, with a bidirectional attention to text–place interrelations, students may discover how literature, older as well as contemporary, may provide an opportunity to "meet others, different from themselves, different ways of thinking and being conscious, different fantasies, deriving from different living conditions and societies" (Danish L1 curriculum, UVM, 2019, 123, my translation from Danish) in the past, present, and future. In many ways, topographic literary theories seem to consider this, as Casey (2002), Felski (2008; 2011), Greve (2000; 2009), Mai (2009; 2010), and Moslund (2010) demonstrate, whereas literature didactics, in my opinion, continue to search for ways to awaken children's curiosity about literature's relatedness to the world, to themselves, and to their local and global existence. Besides, learning in, from, and about places and their connectedness to literature, also offers a way to understand that the living conditions of the past did not only take place in an abstract time described in textbooks as tidy, linear, periodizing categories (Mai, 2009; Felski, 2011, 575), but also take place in the present, in the students' surrounding environment, where they read, learn, and live their lives. When it comes to the literature of the past, and to literary history, place-based reading may offer an alternative way to help students to understand the abstract matter of time, through their concrete and sensory experience of places outside the school walls: places that carry the imprints of, and remind us of, the past (Greve, 2005, 80).

In addition to supporting reading comprehension and text interpretation, place-based reading may also ontologically, body-phenomenologically, and epistemologically reflect the human being-in-the-world by offering a way to address time through an inquisitive exploration of text–place interrelations. Gruenewald states that if we want future generations to flourish, and to develop their empowerment, critical thinking, and changes in attitude, place-based education should be part of the school curriculum, and of all subjects (Gruenewald, 2003, with ref. to Sobel, 1996, 39). Awareness of your place, where you live and learn, is fundamental to developing a broader place awareness, and in particular, to learning to care for other's places.

Sobel says, idealistically (Sobel, 1996, 13), "What's important is that children have an opportunity to bond with the natural world, to learn to love it and feel comfortable in it, before being asked to heal its wounds." My hope is that place-based reading could be an L1 contribution to this.

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