Nomadic Writing
Exploring Processes of Writing in Early Childhood Education

Carina Hermansson
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Abstract

This thesis explores how writing is made in two Swedish early childhood classrooms with a focus on how processes of writing are constituted in the writing event and what writings and writers the event offers potentials for. Theoretically, the research project takes its starting point in the assumption that processes of writing are an effect of relations between different elements, where the young writer is only one part of many human and non-human matters that make way for multiple becomings of writing and writers. In this context, the figuration of the nomad thought of Deleuze and Guattari is particularly applicable as it builds on the assumption that everything is always connected, continuously moving. The questions addressed are how the processes of writers, text-like writings and educational writing processes emerge, continue and transform in the writing event, and what writers, text-like writings and educational writing processes the event offers potentials for.

The thesis consists of three research articles based on different empirical data. The first article builds on data from the thinking and talking about writing and the writing child in scholarly literature since the 19th century. The second and third articles are based on analyses of ethnographic documentation of six- to seven-year-olds’ writing activities in two early childhood classrooms. The ethnographic strategies of the audio and video recordings, field notes, informal interviews and the collection of children’s text-like writings were carried out over a period of one and a half year during which the children moved from preschool class to their first year of school.

The findings of the first article suggest that the image of the ideal writing and the ideal writer has changed over time. However, the image of the young writer training for adult life predominates over time. The main result of the second article shows in specific ways that the mutual production of stabilizing processes of writing and processes of experimentation are vital components for becomings of writers and writing, irrespective of pedagogical framings. The finding of the third article illustrates how the teaching method of creative writing produced over time creates multiple pedagogical trajectories of “doing method” and “doing creativity”.

The thesis posits nomadic writing as a way to account for the movement, the connectivity and change in the processes of writing, thus contributing to an understanding of how the processes of writing create potentialities for multiple becomings of writers and writing.

Keywords

Early childhood education, writing, Deleuze and Guattari, writing processes, movement, connectivity, transformation, nomadic, becomings
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Long before writing, “Nomadic Writing. Exploring Processes of Writing in Early Childhood Education”, I undertook a six-month expedition to the Saharan and Sahel interior of North Africa. We were four friends following in the footsteps of the Tuareg, people with a traditionally nomadic pastoral lifestyle. Coming back to Sweden I can remember sharing with my friends events like the time we gave a Tuareg lift to the next village, which opened up to an unforgettable day of being part of their ceremonious event of slaughtering a goat. Or the visit at the nomadic school where some of the children walked for several days to get there - an event that made me think of sharing my experiences of the nomad life with children in Sweden and thus the making of a teaching material about the nomadic life of the Tuareg. Today, these experiences give life to Deleuze and Guattari’s (two French philosophers) concepts of “nomadic”, “events”, “becoming” and “line-of-flights”, and conversely, Deleuze and Guattari offer a framework and a vocabulary for not only my research but also my past and present experiences, which make sense of the movement, the unpredictability and the connectivity inherent in processes of life.

During my Ph.D. studies a multiplicity of events and persons have contributed to making the complexity inherent in the process of writing this thesis realizable and at many times pleasant. I acknowledge all of those unnamable multiplicities contributing to the thesis and recognize a few by name.

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There is fortunately much more to life than writing a thesis and I am lucky to share all that with David, Jonas and Peter – you are the gold nuggets in my life! Peter, without your support and encourage this project would never have been.

[Signature]
List of Publications

This thesis is based on the following articles, which will be referred to by their Roman numerals:


1. Exploring processes of writing in early childhood education

Classrooms of early childhood writing practices are often dynamic and vigorous sites, as was the case with the early childhood classroom where I made some of my field observations for this study. Typically, in this classroom, some children are seated, others are standing at the computer, and still others are lying on the floor – all are writing. Some work in pairs, others by themselves. Talk, gestures, computer screens, alphabetic letters, bodily movements, irritation and laughter – all blend in the writing activity. Sara, six years old, Zilan, seven years old, and I are sitting at a table. Sara and Zilan’s heads are close. They mix verbal and written words with symbols and colorful pictures as they write their book. Suddenly Sara suggests that they should sell their book, to which Zilan responds that they can put it in the library. As we continue talking about their book and about writing, I ask them, “What do you do when you write?” While still writing, Zilan answers, “It just happens”.

My interest is to explore and understand how writing is made and the focus is on the early childhood educational writing event, such as the event described above. Specifically, my attention is drawn to the actual happenings where various processes of writing take place and writers are made.

As illustrated by the observation above, writing is a complex activity. The writing event unfolds a myriad of connections between different elements, human elements, such as children, laughter, and talk, and non-

1 Such texts are in present thesis referred to as text-like writings. Text-like writings denote writings – products as well as processes - where alphabetic letters are one among many elements involved (e.g. speech, images and bodily movements).

2 I use the phrase “how writing is made” as a rhetorical way to express how writing is created (or how writing happens or is produced) as an effect of many assembling or combining parts in the writing event.
human elements, such as notebooks, computers, tables and chairs. Also, other elements are involved, for example, knowledge about the functional use of writing, but also educational discourses, and global flows of economic and social forces. In the described writing event, these elements entwine in multifaceted ways creating a variety of processes of writing. Sara and Zilan are involved in processes where they practice and explore the conventions of the Latin script (e.g. letter-to-sound correlation and capital letters at the beginning of sentences), book layout (e.g. the relation between alphabetic texts and pictures), and processes of becoming writers (e.g. an author who can tell a story to an audience by putting it in the library).

**Children’s contemporary educational writing practices**

The example of Sara and Zilan can stand as an instance of the contemporary early childhood educational writing practices in which there is no simplistic homogeneous understanding of writing. Educational writing practices are embedded in an increasing variety of elements. A media-filled world unfold and fold experiences, tools, and discourses around, for instance, moving pictures, screen-based and print-based texts, computer games, adventure or popular media genres. Also diversities of social, political, economic and religious circumstances are embedded in the contemporary Swedish educational writing practices. Further, factors involved are the new Swedish National Curriculums with a stronger focus on reading and writing (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011a; 2011b), together with the establishment of preschool classes (Proposition, 1997/98:6). The examples of interconnected factors may go on. It is clear, however, that as children (and teachers) engage in these everyday writing practices, they also engage in these multifaceted and intertwined relationships of different elements. Although writing is viewed as a complex activity, Zilan still states that writing “just happens”.

The statement, “It just happens”, was frequently used by the children observed when they described how writing is made. To me this statement links to a conceptualization that writing happen in a self-explanatory way with a rather passive subject. As such it clashed with my observations of
young children’s writing activities as a multifaceted event and thus opening up to the research problem of how processes of writing are made. Although each and every writing event described involves intertwined relations between different elements, exactly how these relations or processes connect, combine and transform, and how distinctions are made are not directly expressed and often pass unnoticed (Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Hagood, 2009; Juzwik, et al., 2006).

The purpose and research questions

The overall purpose of this thesis is to explore and understand how writing is made. More specifically the aim is to analyze, describe and discuss how processes of writing in early childhood education are constituted in the writing event and what processes of writings and writers the event offer potentials for.

The thesis puts forward the following questions: How do processes of writers, text-like writings and educational writing processes emerge, continue and transform in the writing event? and What writers, text-like writings and educational writing processes does the educational writing event offer the potential for?

Contextualization of the inquiry

The exploration of how writing is constituted is done partly through analyses of the thinking and talking about writing and the writing child provided in scholarly literature since the 19th century, and partly through analyses of ethnographic documentation of young children’s writing activities in two early childhood classrooms. The ethnographic inquiry was carried out at two different community schools in the south of Sweden, from the fall of 2009 to June 2011. The on-site research activities involved systematic observation of six- to seven-year-olds’ writing practices to understand how writing is made.

My theoretical approach, based on poststructuralist ontology and the
nomad thought of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987),⁴ was inspired by the context of the situated relations between different elements encircling the young writers. Both the purpose and the aim of the thesis required trying to understand how the processes of writing are constituted in the event with respect to movements, connectivity and change. Moreover, the purpose and the aim guided my thinking, writing and inquiry at all points on the research path, while still allowing for an openness to things that “just happens”, i.e. for new experiences and multiplicities during the research process. The present research project is a result of the relationship between literacy dilemmas encountered in Swedish educational settings, questions and dilemmas raised by researchers in scholarly literature, and the poststructural conceptual and theoretical framework inspired by the works of Deleuze and Guattari.

The thesis is a contribution to educational research discussions of children’s writing and writing development, embedded in the political, economic and social context of contemporary society. Once again the example of Zilan and Sara can serve as an example, but this time in relation to discussions concerning the purposes of writing education. Sara’s initiative to sell their book and Zilan responding that they may also put it in the library (see the introductory example) may link to the late modern arguments of schooling that focus on the importance of equipping children with the competences required for flexible and critical participation in a changing society, i.e. a practice of empowerment related to a continuation of cultural and social developments. The example also includes the tenet of the child who practices and trains writing when producing their book, thus developing more and more advanced writing skills and competence. These tenets are connected to the modernist understanding centering “on the importance of young people learning reading/print texts, writing narratives, and studying and rehearsing the routines and procedures for examinations and standardised tests”

⁴ Poststructural and poststructuralism do not refer to a homogeneous body of theory. Rather, in the present thesis, poststructuralism refers to a group of thinkers who subscribe to difference and diversity (cf. St. Pierre, 2011b). Drawing on the ontology (what is the nature of reality) of the two French philosophers’, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s, work via the nomad notion (1980/1987) allows for thinking about the ongoing, changing and transforming early childhood educational writing events.
Such traditional arguments of writing education rest on Enlightenment ideals (cf. Alvermann, 2000) including the construction of the ideal young writer who would develop into the competent adult writer. The late modern writing project is evident also in Swedish educational reforms that, with respect to the economic processes of globalization, shape (and are shaped by) the understanding of writing and writers. Curriculum, teachers and educational writing practices often celebrate the norm of the autonomous, flexible writer who explore and train writing in relation to taught structures and idealize those writers who develop in relation to national tests and standards as well as those teachers who practice evidence-based teaching approaches (cf. Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Semetsky, 2008). Learning to write and writing development are based on a faith in the power of human agency.

In order to gain an understanding of how writing is constituted in contemporary early childhood educational writing practices, this thesis attempts to supplement dominant conceptualizations developed particularly in the Western world. My contribution to the discussion on writing and writing development is to focus on connectivity, movements and change to see how processes of writing are produced and to try to understand their constitutive role in the writing events. Further, the thesis provides a set of conceptual tools and a theoretical framework with the potential to enable researchers and educators to describe how processes of writing are constituted in the educational writing event and what writings and writers the event offers potentials for. Accordingly, the introductory example serves to draw attention to how contingent stabilizations, reproductions and re-creation of conventional writing structures and experimentation are mutually produced in a continuous becoming.

The present thesis is both a theoretical and empirical thesis. As a theoretical thesis it employs and discusses conceptual and theoretical tools for thinking about and exploring processes of writing in early childhood education, i.e. a theoretical thesis that deconstructs the modern and assumed project of writing development. As an empirical thesis it builds on experiences made in two educational writing settings and asks questions about pedagogical concerns related to early childhood writing.
Further, as an empirical thesis it discusses its findings in relation to the presentation of knowledge and values in education and to understandings of the child.

Three articles provide detailed analyses of how various processes of writing are constituted in early childhood education. Article I (AI) investigates and describes how pedagogical discourses about writing and writers are constructed over time. The purpose of this article was to inquire into and problematize certain aspects of images of writing and the writing child in order to gain a perspective on contemporary ideas about processes of writing in early childhood education. Article II (AII) explores and describes, in detail, the on-site multifaceted processes of writing, i.e. how the text and the young writer produce each other in a mutual and continuous interconnectedness between various human and non-human elements, such as gestures, talk, joy, pen and computer. It rests on the three research questions: (1) What elements and relationships of elements are brought into play in the three writing examples?, (2) How do these elements and relationships of elements combine and transform? and (3) What writings and writers do the three writing events provide as potentialities? Article II responds to these questions by analyzing and discussing three examples in which the children create text-like writings. Article III (AIII) illuminates both pedagogical discourses and multidimensional processes of writing by analyzing an educational writing process over a period of five days. The article explores how the teaching method of creative writing is produced and emerges, i.e. what happens from the teacher’s planning and implementing of a creative writing event to the children’s presentation of their texts. The questions guiding the inquiry are: (1) What is the creative writing method an effect of? and (2) How does the method emerge and transform over time? To recapitulate, article I illuminates beliefs and ideas formulated in history, materialized in diverse texts, whereas Article II and Article III illustrate processes of writing in two contemporary Swedish early childhood classrooms.

As stated earlier, given the poststructural ontology via Deleuzian-Guattarian concepts, the aim of the thesis is to analyze, describe and discuss how processes of writing are constituted in the educational writing event and what processes of writings and writers the event offers the potential for. Accordingly the thesis brings together the fields of early
childhood educational writing studies, poststructuralist studies, and childhood studies. The thesis hereby relates to contemporary literacy discussions, more specifically to discussions in the field of early childhood writing education, through questions such as: How do young writers engage in creating texts involving different factors such as modalities? (AII), How are educational writing methods enacted in practice? (AIII). It also links to questions related to the field of poststructuralist studies, for example: What new understandings of writing may be gained by taking a poststructuralist approach via Deleuzian-Guattarian concepts? (AII & AIII), or what implications do an understanding of writing within a poststructural paradigm have for pedagogy? (AII & AIII). Finally, the focus of the thesis relates to discussions about the changing childhood within and across the field of childhood studies. For example, it connects to questions of how children’s popular cultures, text messaging, multimodal texts, and a TV advert interrelate in contemporary educational writing events (AII & AIII), or how some children are recognized and others marginalized because of certain aspects of writing and the writing child is emphasized at certain times (AI).

**Nomadic writing**

This thesis offers a conceptualization of writing as *nomadic writing* as a way to account for how the dynamic and evolving character of children’s writing events create potentials for various processes of writing and writers. It forefronts the interconnectedness between not only humans but to things and other non-human elements, such as writing materials, the physical environment of the classroom, children and teachers, and the discursive conditions of early childhood educational writing practices. Moreover, nomadic writing focuses how different elements connect and how these relations continue and change influencing and forming young children as writers and their text making, i.e., nomadic writing centers that which happens.

Conceptualizing writing as nomadic also provides a way to view young children’s educational writing practices as sites of experimentation guiding the pedagogical attention to the productive potential of writing events. The thesis thus supplements how the linguistic or social
approaches conceptualize writing by introducing the notion of “nomadic writing”. This notion is neither typically or principally linguistic nor social, but rather linguistic and social and material. Nomadic writing allows for an inquiry of educational discourses, processes of writing, and the product, i.e. the text and the writer – not as separate entities, but as continuously entangled relationships creating new processes and relations (Semetsky, 2008).

In using poststructural ontology via Deleuzian-Guattarian concepts, this thesis moves along trails that have been outlined by scholars such as Semetsky (2008), Masny and Cole (2012), Waterhouse (2011), and Leander and Rowe (2006). These theoretical trajectories include educational studies, literacy studies as well as early childhood literacy studies. The thesis is a contribution to this literature through its attempts to think differently about how writing is made, in particular by illustrating how the processes of the writing, the writer and the educational writing process are part of and emerge from different relationships between human and non-human elements assembled in the writing event. Although I take a nomadic perspective, I do not claim that there is a right or wrong understanding of how processes of writing are produced. Rather, diverse perspectives are a necessity as each makes different contributions to expanding the field of early childhood writing research.

Furthermore, the conceptualization of writing as nomadic writing can connect with questions related to how the processes of writing are created taking a child perspective. Nomadic writing indicates a shift in focus from taking the writer’s (the child’s) perspective as an autonomous individual towards viewing the writer as one of many parts in the writing event. Attending to the writing event as a field of processes means taking the perspective of the child through exploring, for example, how the young writer experiments, copies, and creates writing but also how the writer is created in a mutual construction with other human and non-human elements. Hereby the processes of the writer and of the writing are centered in the analysis, rather than the child’s development of writing competences associated with endpoints.
**Entangled processes of the research**

Applying a poststructural-oriented framework has shaped the present research project in three aspects; in relation to the processes of research design, the processes of writing and reporting research, and in relation to the processes of becoming researcher – entangled and continued in specific ways. Firstly, the poststructural orientation via Deleuzian-Guattarian concepts, in particular the nomadic thought, offers a response to the empirical problem of how writing is made. This framework enables a research design in which the intertwined relations between various human and non-human elements and the ongoing movements and transformations are emphasized. Accordingly, the nomadic thought of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) influence and is influenced by the research question, the data production and the analytic procedures. Moreover, this theoretical framework allows for systematic and rigorous as well as experimental and transformative research design processes.

Secondly, a poststructural orientation evokes a special undertaking of writing within and through the current thesis. The project of writing in a nomadic manner means highlighting the interrelatedness rather than points, such as a beginning point and an endpoint. Although the structure of the thesis includes introduction, literature review, conceptual and theoretical frameworks, methodology, results, and conclusions, it offers a potential for multiple connections within and across the chapters as well as links to other fields, for example, further literature readings.

Finally, the poststructural-oriented approach requires specific ways of going about the processes as researcher. The Deleuzian-Guattarian epistemology disturbs the notion of the researcher as the centre of experience and knowledge (e.g. in relation to the on-site experiences). Instead, the researcher is acknowledged as one body of many other bodies that is part of an ongoing transformative process itself, i.e. a continuous researcher-in-becoming. This means entering a more nomadic terrain of irregular and divergent processes, in which subjectivity is deconstructed. All together, the process of designing the research, the process of writing and reporting the research and the researcher’s process are continuously and mutually produced in the relations of different elements.
With its specific aims, conceptual and theoretical framework and methods, the thesis can be placed in the tradition of critical studies. The thesis offers space for disrupting dominant understanding of writing in early childhood writing education by posing a supplementary conceptualization of writing as nomadic writing that gives account for how processes of writing are constituted in the event and what the event can offer potentials for.

**The structure of the thesis**

Chapter 2, *Mapping the territory*, outlines a brief overview of key movements connected to the field of writing studies with a focus on early childhood education in recent research. Then I link to studies connected with the nomad thought of Deleuze and Guattari, in particular in relation to literacy research. The chapter ends with a conclusion and a critique of current studies.

Chapter 3, *Theoretical framework: Connecting with Deleuze and Guattari*, turns to the conceptual and ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the research project. The chapter provides a brief overview of the nomad thoughts of Deleuze and Guattari whose conceptualization strongly resonates with contemporary educational discourses. Thereafter, essential concepts for the thesis are elucidated.

Chapter 4, *The Nomadic inquiry*, returns to the methods and the empirical inquiry and discusses the position of the researcher. First, the on-site research is described. In *The trajectory of the empirical setting* I present in detail the research design, the research sites, the participants and the methods used for the data production. Then, in *The trajectory of rethinking interpretation*, I draw on the conceptual explanation of Deleuze's approach known as transcendental empiricism to rethink interpretation in the research process before I elaborate and discuss various ethnographic and analytical processes of the inquiry. These research processes are described with a specific focus on their dynamic and transforming character. Third, in *The trajectory of research quality* quality in qualitative research is discussed in relation to transcendental empiricism in which pragmatic consistency
and reflexivity are highlighted. Chapter 4 ends with mapping and discussing processes of inquiry specific to each article.

Chapter 5, *Appended Articles: Findings and analyses*, consists of the three articles:

I. Images of Writing and the Writing Child
II. Children’s Text-Like Writing as Nomadic Writing
III. Five Days and a Story: The Emergence of an Educational Writing Process in a Swedish Early Childhood Classroom

A summary of the main result is presented in direct relation to each article.

Chapter 6, *Nomadic writing and potential connections*, discusses the results of the research project and reflects on some concerns in relation to the critical work that follows a conceptualization of writing as nomadic writing.
2. Mapping the territory

The research interest in writing as emergent, created in process and multiple has increased during the last two decades. Studies on early childhood writing have been conducted in relation to diverse settings (e.g. out-of-school, digital media, in school) and from various methodological and theoretical perspectives, in which the text, and/or the writing, and/or the writer, and/or the processes are focused. In this section, such studies create the demarcation, internal interaction and identity of the writing research territory in question. The territorial mapping of early childhood writing research will delineate the viewpoints of some key movements regarding questions related to the processes of writing in the last two decades. This section will thus serve to further support the analysis of research presented in the article, Images of Writing and the Writing Child (AI). As Article I provides a historical review of literature on various pedagogical discourses on how writing and writers have been constructed in different texts since the nineteenth century (see AI, pp. 95-113), this section will give a brief overview of the key movements and research in the last two decades.

The mapping of recent research draws on the four discursive formations\(^4\) constructed in Article I: writing as skills, writing as development, writing as social phenomenon, and writing as semiotic activity (see AI for detailed explications, pp. 95-113). Furthermore, the section Towards writing as nomadic is linked to scholars who have worked with the nomad thought of Deleuze and Guattari as well as literacy scholars drawing on Deleuze and Guattarian concepts and analytical tools in their works. The present mapping includes movements in Anglo-Saxon research relevant to the field of early childhood writing studies and studies combining

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\(^4\) Inspired by Foucault’s methodological approach (Foucault, 1969/2002), the four discursive formations refer to what keeps together the talking and thinking of writing and the writing child within various texts.
poststructural early childhood and literacy studies with special attention to the nomad thought of Deleuze and Guattari. At the end I explain how writing as nomadic contributes to calls for frameworks that recognize the complexity of writing with respect to movements, connectivity and change. This thesis is thus an attempt to add dimensions to the dominant understandings of writing developed particularly in Sweden.

### Writing as skills

Research on writing can be described as connecting to one of four formations on writing in which various epistemological principles are stressed. First, research linked to the formation of writing as skills emphasizes the individual’s writing acquisition and skills. Research based on writing as cognitive skills is probably the oldest tradition of research and continues to be part of writing research and practice today. It provides valuable knowledge about the ways that individuals make sense of written language, e.g. the sound/symbol relation or the encoding/decoding of alphabetic print (cf. Aram, 2006; Høien & Lundberg, 1999). Studies have underpinned investigations of skills prerequisite for handwriting (Marr & Cermak, 2002), writing instructions (cf. Graham, et al., 2001), and has also influenced the design of writing programs, including computer-based methods for teaching writing, e.g. individualized drill and practice in phonics (see Labbo & Reinking, 2003).

Moreover, conceptualized writing as “a technical and neutral skill”, also described as the autonomous model (Street, 2003:77), which is dependent on the writer’s intellectual and perceptual capacities, has created dichotomies such as literate/illiterate and oral/literate (Ong, 1982/2002) in which becoming literate has specific and profound effects on the ways of thinking for societies and for individuals (Goody, 1977).

### Writing as development

The position of ‘becoming’ turns out to be crucial in the formation of writing as development emphasizing how children become literate and about their chronological and age-related writing development.
Most writing researchers agree that children begin to understand that writing is a form of communication at early age (cf. Söderberg, 1997; Tolchinsky, 2006). Research has shown that children explore writing by scribbling and drawing (cf. Levin & Bus, 2003), and that they move back and forth across various forms and levels of writing (cf. Liberg, 1990; Tolchinsky, 2006). This perception of a very young writer and her/his progression through and between levels or stages of writing has had a strong impact on contemporary early childhood writing research as well as on educational writing practices.

Moreover, children’s writing as developmental has engaged researchers in investigating the relationship between reading and writing (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). Furthermore, while some researchers explore the strategic behavior of children engaging in writing (cf. Bus et al. 2001), others investigate how children’s writing process (Graves, 1994) or how writing skills (Kellogg, 2008) typically develop. The ability to write is also studied in relation to the social interaction in which the importance of scaffolding is highlighted (cf. Burch, 2007).

In these works the young writer is viewed as a becoming—a writer under development (Woodrow & Brennan, 2001), a becoming adult writer. According to Cope and Kalantzis (2000) the becoming writers are “agents in the reproduction of conventions” (p. 204).

**Writing as social phenomenon**

A number of researchers have launched criticism of a universal view of writing development and cognitive effects and instead argue for the need to theorize the social significance of diverse literacy practices (cf. Dyson, 1997; Heath, 1983). In scholarly literature related to the formation *writing as social phenomena*, writing is described as “social practices” (Street, 2003:77). The works of Scribner and Cole (1981), Heath (1983) and Street (1984), which emphasized the social nature of literacy, were key empirical studies in this significant shift in literacy studies emphasizing the social nature of literacy. ‘New Literacy Studies (NLS) is a term, and a line of research that focuses on the nature of literacy rather than on basic skills or developmental stages of writing (Gee, 1990, Street, 1984). Literacy, and
so writing, came to be understood as socially, culturally and politically situated in time and place. The context in which early childhood writing took place turn into an important field of research in which, for instance, writer’s interaction with others and the text production were highlighted (cf. Gustafsson & Mellgren, 2005; Rowe, 2008). Also the effect of social interaction on the writing was described (c.f. Dyson, 2008; Rowe, 2008). Moreover, several researchers have engaged in exploring the very youngest writing and practices, which involve much more than the conventional ability to read and write (cf. Björklund, 2008; Lancaster, 2007; Rowe, 2008). The understanding of writing was reconstructed as a dynamic and interactive process, in which the writing child was positioned as a competent writer and the child’s own activities were highlighted.

**Writing as semiotic activity**

Scholars started to question the use of print as an a priori condition of writing. Multiliteracies, created by the New London Group (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; New London Group, 1996), gained ground emphasizing cultural and linguistic diversity and multimodality. The interest in understanding children’s use of different modes, i.e. “socially shaped and culturally given resource[s] for making meaning” (Kress, 2009:54) in relation to writing, increased at the end of the twentieth century. Seminal researchers, such as Kress (1997) and Dyson (1997), have produced key insights into how young children construct and reconstruct meaning using different modes. Additionally, several other researchers have contributed to new insights about the modes and media children use and adapt (or design) when making text (cf. Björkvall & Engblom, 2010; Mavers, 2007; Merchant, 2005b; Pahl, 2009; Pahl & Rowsell, 2011). Moreover, research addressing the relational structures between multimodal texts and bodies has turned to the multimodal implications of children’s uses of writing in conjunction with digital media, for instance, communication through email (cf. Mavers, 2007; Merchant, 2005b). Explorations have also been made into other forms of onscreen writing, for example, the production of movies (Nixon & Comber, 2005) and how digital writing is integrated into imaginative play (Merchant, 2005a).
These scholars define the young writers as “language makers” and as “language users” (Kress, 1997:xvi). The young writer is often looked upon as a creative constructor and a competent user, someone who may take the freedom of action, but not always as expected.

Writing as a semiotic activity has become increasingly acknowledged as a way to conceptualize multiple literacy practices across workplace, public, and private domains, the designing of multimodal texts involving written, oral, visual, audio and gestural modalities, and the significance of digital literacies. However, the formation also includes scholars who warn against the use of digital literacies. Armstrong and Casement (2000), for example, discuss the developing of writers and argue that word processing programs have children focusing on formatting and fonts rather than content and creative writing.

**Towards writing as nomadic**

The four described formations of writing include significant contributions to the field of early childhood writing research by offering ways to conceptualize writing and writers. The formations range across paradigms informed by developmental perspectives and cross over into paradigms informed by socio cultural perspectives, constructivism and critical theories. Although a wide range of theories are implied, there are shared ontological assumptions within and between the four conceptual formations, i.e. writing as skills, as development, as social phenomenon and as semiotic activity. The common feature is that the conceptualization of writing within and across the four formations depends upon the power of human agency. The subject is the center of experience and knowledge. It is the writer, the individual, who practices and trains certain skills and expresses her or his creativity, and it is the writer, the subject, who makes choices and produces writing using multiple modes and media. Also, although the four formations include theoretical perspectives that take many stands on the study of writing, the various movements can be understood as aiming to identify and describe patterns or structures. In a structure, any entity is defined for what it is by the structure in which it appears and the relationships it is given – often in the form of binary
pairs, i.e. of two terms placed in some sort of contrary relation. Such binary relationships are implicit in all four formations of writing. For example, the structures underpinning the understanding of writing as skills create binary oppositions between being a writer/non-writer, writing/drawing, and oral/written language (Street, 1984). Also, structures linked to the conceptualization of writing as developmental produce distinctions between advanced/beginning writers (Street, 1984). These are examples of divides that are challenged by the scholars that understand writing as a social phenomenon. In viewing writing as situated and social, it appears highly contextual, various in form and sensitive to ideological complexities of time and place (cf. Heath, 1983; Street, 2003). Although this contextualization of writing may have the potential to disrupt binaries, Brandt and Clinton (2002) argue that structures connected to the understanding of writing as social phenomenon still construct binary divides between the local and the global, and agency and social structure. But also, “[b]y exaggerated the power of local contexts/…/and by undertheorizing the potentials of the technology of literacy, methodological bias and conceptual impasses are created” (p. 337). Yet another critique of constructed divides is raised in relation to the thinking in the formation of writing as semiotic activity. Prior and Hengst (2010) argue that the “attention to multimodality in new media has so far addressed a narrow range of oppositions: print texts vs. electronic screens, language vs. the visual, critique vs. design” (p. 7).

In sum, the four described formations build upon different theoretical frameworks that center the subject and that produce structures and patterns in order to understand how various processes of writing take place and writers are made in early childhood education. As a consequence, the formations presuppose an understanding of a writer agent of making meaning and designing life, and structures creating hierarchical binary relationships. Like the described formations, research building on poststructuralist ontology also problematizes hierarchical binary relationships. However, poststructuralist ontology differs by designating multiplicity as a tenet of the practices (cf. Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987) and thus they have the ability to disrupt binary relationships and the unity of subject. Accordingly, plugging into poststructuralist ontology via the nomad though of Deleuze and Guattari provides
potentialities to explore and deconstruct categories and systems and open up to an exploration of how forces, flows and fluxes are actualized in a specific space and time.

Seminal studies situated in and informed by the poststructuralist ontology via the nomadic though of Deleuze and Guattari include Braidotti’s (2011) elaboration of the notion nomadic subjects, St. Pierre’s (1997b) exploration of nomadic inquiry, and Semetsky’s (2008) considerations of nomadic education. In her work, Braidotti (2011) describes in her work the nomad as a device for thinking differently about the subject and subjectivity. She destabilizes the unity of the subject by deconstructing the constitution of contemporary subjectivity. Moreover, while St. Pierre’s work (1997b) on nomadic inquiry problematizes the structure of conventional, interpretive qualitative inquiry, Semetsky and her co-writers (2008) challenge that which is, i.e. its essence or being, by focusing on the dynamic connections of education, processes of becomings.

Furthermore, there are a growing number of scholars working with Deleuzian-Guattarian concepts and analytical tools related to early childhood education, such as Dahlbeck’s (2012) elaboration of a particular form of ethics to make the conditions of the child visible in early childhood education; Lenz Taguchi’s (2010) notion of intra-active pedagogy as a way to contest dominant discourses prevalent in early childhood education; and Olsson’s (2009) attention to the concept of ‘collective assemblages of desire’ to regain movement and experimentation in subjectivity and learning in early childhood education. These studies are as described examples of research related to early childhood education, but not specifically to writing and writers. Researchers that have asked questions in relation to literacy work have mainly focused on high school students, students within higher education or adolescents (cf. Alvermann, 2000; Hagood, 2002; Kamberelis, 2004; Leander & Rowe, 2006; Waterhouse, 2011), with some exceptions, for example, Masny’s empirical research on young children and bilingualism (Masny, 2006; Masny, 2009). Exploring children’s perceptions of competing writing systems she describes processes of literacies in becoming and concludes that becoming is interconnected with “reading, reading the world, and self” (Masny, 2009:15) as multiple literacies.
Masny has also developed the Multiple Literacies Theory (MLT) on the basis of her research on multilingual children’s perception of competing writing systems (cf. Masny, 2006; 2009, Masny & Cole, 2012). MLT makes use of a number of Deleuze’s conceptual tools to show how desire and processes of de- and reterritorialization open up to transformations, i.e. becomings. Studies applying MLT include Masny and Waterhouse’s (2011) exploration of curriculum as a constant becoming within literacies education; Dufresne’s (2006) attention to the productive force of affect and desire for children becoming biliterate; Cole’s (2009) notion of affective literacies; Masny and Cole’s (2009; 2012) exploration of what Multiple Literacies Theory can do to diverse literacy practices when literacies are understood as processes of becoming rather than as situated social practices linked to products; and Waterhouse’s (2011) account of the complexities of teaching and learning English in the program for adult immigrants in Canada. Further examples of literacy researchers working with Deleuzian-Guattarian concepts are Alvermann’s (2000) methodological experiments with rhizoanalysis to analyze and explore texts used by a youth reading club, and Rowan, Knobel, Bigum and Lankshear’s (2002) use of the rhizome to theorize connections across territories of gender. In another context, Hagood (2002) applies rhizomatic cartography to analyze data illustrating how adolescents read and use popular cultural texts in ways that both construct and disrupt subjectivities. Moreover, Leander and Rowe (2006) explore literacy performances in high school classrooms and its unpredictable becomings.

Situated in and informed by the poststructuralist ontology, the contribution of the present inquiry to the body of early childhood writing research is an understanding of children’s writing as nomadic and to analyze processes of writing as trajectories and zigzagging patterns that undo dominant structures and binaries (to paraphrase Braidotti, 2011:2). Understanding writing as nomadic writing provides the potential to focus on the flow of change and relations between elements in which the writer, the writing and different elements are mutually interacting in the processes of writing. The nomadic thought of Deleuze and Guattari does not privilege human potentiality in the standard modern, structural tradition of the autonomous individual. Rather it brings into play relations between human and non-human elements, for example, writing materials,
the physical environment of the classroom, children, teachers, and discursive conditions that exist within early childhood educational writing practices.

The significance of this thesis lies in the change from conceptualizing writing as a linguistic and social activity to understanding writing as a linguistic and social and cultural and historical activity. As such, the understanding of writing as nomadic writing responds to the call for research on the beginnings of writing and writing development in the preschool-age and early school-age years “particularly in the problem area of relationships among literacy” (Juzwik, et al., 2006:469). As a consequence, nomadic writing connects to the text-like writings and the writers and the educational writing processes.
3. Theoretical framework: Connecting with Deleuze and Guattari

This thesis is situated in and contributes to educational discussions trying to understand children’s lived educational writing practices (cf. Leander & Rowe, 2006; Masny, 2009) by focusing on the complexities of writing, the movement, connectivity and change. Each and every writing classroom involves intricately intertwined relationships between, for example, computers, desks, learning outcomes, instructions, children, teachers, and text-making experiences. Also children’s TV-sets, computers, toys, parlor games, text messaging, and tablet activities at home are likely to be part of their educational writing practices as they bring their contents into their writing. So are global flows and forces of best practices and international student assessment tests as well as discourses of development, learning and teaching methods, which all are historically and socioeconomically grounded. This myriad of relations imply that young writers at each moment of a writing event are in the middle of these moving and intertwined relationships of different human and non-human elements that shape the becoming of their writing or them as writers. Accordingly, when the children engage in educational writing practices they are embedded in educational and societal expectations on, materializations of and ideas about writing and the development of the writer. At the same time the writing events unfold and enfold unexpected and unpredictable processes that influence the emergence of the writers, their writings and educational writing methods.

As I have described in the previous chapter, structuralistic perspectives investigate, as the present and other poststructuralist research, the multifaceted processes of writing, however, informed by different ontological assumptions. Depending on the ontological perspective different questions are asked and different kinds of thinking and knowledge are produced. As described initially, the present thesis
addresses issues of how writing is made and taking up the poststructuralist ontology via the nomad thought of Deleuze and Guattari offers a way to consider how processes of writers and writing are constituted in the writing event, as an effect of relations between different elements and as Semetsky (2008) notes, “a vehicle for expressing/…/becoming” (p. viii).

This conceptual and theoretical framework builds on Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy of life (1980/1987). The Deleuzian-Guattarian thinking of life, as elaborated in the figuration of the nomad, with its dynamic and evolving character flows within and across the chapters, influences the content and the scope of the present thesis. The figuration of the nomad thought is not used as a metaphor, rather it is “materialistic mappings of situated” (Braidotti, 2011:4), in this study, connections and relations constituted in the event.

Deleuze and Guattari align themselves with Nietzschean-inspired problematization of unity, hierarchy, identity and representation. They express suspicion of the idea of the world, the subject and knowledge as a representation that can be more or less accurately observable and represented. Instead they have an interest in creativity and they explore the principle of becoming. The process of becoming is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, an ongoing active process of movement and change. It relates to their thinking about life and the world as a complex set of relationships that connect, run parallel, combine and transform. Deleuze and Guattari thus challenge the conceptual divides of, for instance, stability and change, active and passive, and goal-oriented and process-oriented. Hence they also contest dominant discourses of Western thinking that relies on theories that are grounded in the essentiality of representation structuring thinking to reduce or simplify complexity and diversity. Instead, they argue that processes are in close relation, mutually constructed and thus there is no predetermined hierarchical relationship between the different processes. In relation to writing and the present research project, this denotes taking a step from writing as a reproduction of something stable, to writing as an effect of transforming and evolving processes of stability and change, active and passive, and goal-oriented and process-oriented. In this context the children engage in the different skills needed for the reproduction of
writing and the creativity providing the potential for the unpredictable or unfamiliar.

Situating my approach to research within the tenets of poststructuralist ontology is an attempt to see how it can be used to work out how the processes of writing are constituted in the early childhood educational writing events. Three aspects are highlighted: (1) The conceptual and theoretical framework emphasizes how any process of writing is part of and emerges from different relations or movements. Each event creates its specific potentialities of the situation. (2) Hence, the framework contributes to opening up to the relational space of more than human entities. This entails accepting a principle of connective multiplicity of non-human entities and forces. It is in these relations that power and change emerge. Material and other non-human elements are thus part of a performative production of power in interconnectedness with other elements. (3) It draws attention to the importance of apprehending the connectedness as ongoing and unpredictably relations, rather than as sequential series of connections from which to extract representational meaning. In this light I see the processes of writing as continuous and unforeseen, opening for potentialities, processes of becomings. The driving power of these relations is manifest as a capacity to affect and a capacity to be affected (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987:261), which is visualized as an increase or decrease in a body’s capacity to act.

First, for Deleuze and Guattari any body, “chemical, biological, social or political” (Deleuze, 1962/1983:40) is composed of differential relations of movement between elements belonging to it. In this respect I follow Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010) argumentation that “nomadic thinking produces another kind of knowing: knowing of what emerges in-between” (p. 538, italics in the original), a knowing that cannot be unified nor stable. Rather, it addresses attention towards an open-ended, non-hierarchical and non-representational thought, a rhizomatic thought. The rhizomatic thought is similar to the nomadic thought, which is not like the arborescent (i.e. tree-like, linear, hierarchal) that links to unified and hierarchy systems. The leaves on such trees in educational writing practices have names like Right, Normalcy, Writing Matrix, and Best Practices and generate dualities such as beginning or advanced writers.
Arborescent thinkers reduce differences and multiplicities into universalizing, essentializing, and hierarchical schemas (Best & Kellner, 1991). It is important to note that, for Deleuze and Guattari, arborescent processes interrelate with rhizomatic processes; they may intersect and they may move parallel.

Deleuze and Guattari’s perhaps most important contribution to education and young children’s writing practices is their emphasis on the relational and thus the productive potential of events. They point to the dynamic processes, i.e. the relations of movement that flow in a myriad of different directions, creating ruptures and differences that both stabilize and open up to change. Deleuze and Guattari argue that events are “not as things to be interpreted but as creations that need to be selected and assessed according to their power to act and intervene” (Colebrook, 2002b: xlv).

Second, the nomad thought of Deleuze and Guattari disrupts the human subject as the centre of attention and the source of knowledge. This humanist notion privileges humans above other matter and thus “ignore *inhuman* experience (such as the experience of animals, nonorganic life and even future experiences of which we have no current image)” (Colebrook, 2002a:2, italics in the original). The political ambition of Deleuze and Guattari attempts to make possible the emergence of new types of decentered subjects. They build the argument that the human subject is an effect of specific relations where human and non-human forces are equally at play. Decentering the subject opens up to becoming multiple and to transgress fixed representations.

Third, Deleuze and Guattari’s ontology highlights the ongoing, unpredictable process of becoming and transforming as an effect of various relations where, for example, the writer, the writing and other elements reciprocally interact in the educational writing event. Also, the text and the writer are mutually created in the flow of change and relations between different elements. Moreover, positing the concept of nomadic writing offers a way to conceptualize and analyze the product, i.e. the text, and the writer as continuously entangled, and thus opening for supplementary ways of thinking about processes of writing as intrinsically intertwined becomings. These ongoing performative processes of becoming, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987),
refer to life where, for instance, writers overcome the fixed form of identity or where writing methods produce multiplicity and creativity. Life creates “moments that create ruptures and differences” (Masny & Cole, 2009:187) and untimely processes that we cannot predict. Conceptualizing writing as nomadic writing privileges a position wherein elements are involved in continuous, performative and unpredictable connections with other elements. In this way, writing and writers are refigured as effects of events that are continually in processes of becoming.

The nomadic movements are not characterized by rootlessness, but by their ability to create and recreate processes of writing as an effect of interconnected and interdependent relations constituted in the event. Therefore the processes of writing do not become anything, anywhere. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the nomad has a territorial principle in which he “distributes himself in a smooth space; he occupies, inhabits, holds that space” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987:381). They state:

> [E]ven though the nomadic trajectory may follow trails or customary routes, it does not fulfill the function of the sedentary roads which is to parcel out a closed space to people. (p. 380, italics in the original)

This indicates that the nomadic trajectories shift and change but have their cycles of repetition and recurrence. It is the in-between, between passing points like water points and assemble points, that “has taken all the consistency and enjoys both an autonomy and a direction of its own” (p. 380). Deleuze and Guattari challenge the idea of representation, recognition and identification suggesting a more nomadic thought that builds on “the conjunction ‘and … and … and’” (1980/1987:25). What counts is what something does, and how in its doing it connects with other things, creating, recreating and rejecting boundaries when creating new ones.

**Conceptual ABC**

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994), the creation of concepts is crucial in that they offer new ways of thinking about problems. And thinking differently has the potential to create different ways of becoming
in the world. For Deleuze and Guattari, concepts are intensive, fluid and transformative as they connect with other concepts, thus vital to the process of becoming (p. 169). Deleuze and Guattari accent experimenting with how concepts work and what they make possible to think, rather than asking what concepts mean. Consequently it is quite common to find slightly different understandings of a Deleuzian concept in different texts. Yet there is a consistency of thought in that they are all interconnected. Conforming to the Deleuzian thought of exploring concepts, I will in this section introduce key concepts within and across this research project, not as fixed terms isolated from its context, but as concepts that allow for movements and connections to new understandings. Thus, each concept description connects with other concept descriptions in this conceptual ABC. These links may be followed as the connecting concepts are underlined.

I do not only refer to how the concepts of affect, assemblage, becoming, event, lines, nomadic, rhizomatic and territorial movements connect to one another, but also to how these concepts interact with the research project. The concepts are further explored in relation to the specific aims of Article II and Article III (see Chapter 5).

**Affect**

Deleuze and Guattari describe the ways in which power works through affect (1980/1987). When something in an assemblage changes, the entities involved affect and are affected, i.e. they are either expanded or restricted in their capacity to act which is registered as feelings (e.g. joy and intensity or passivity and sadness). Hence, affect refers to “life’s power to create connections and relationships that deterritorialize and effect a becoming” (Waterhouse, 2012:136). Accordingly, the transformative processes of becoming writers and writing presented in this thesis, can be conceptualized as an effect of the “capacities to affect and be affected” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987:261). Further, Deleuze and Guattari describe how affect is created in situational moments of intensity, which indicates that the context of children’s educational writing becomes important, but not as causality.
In this thesis, affects prove to be a vital component of keeping the children’s writing events going. The concept is used to connote “a body’s capacity to act” (Olsson, 2009:148) and conceptualize the force that “allows creation and invention to occur continuously” (Masny, 2006:150). The force of affects may in this way contribute to unpredictable directions in the process of writing.

Assemblage

In French, Deleuze and Guattari use the term ‘agencement’ to point to the arrangement of specific relations in a broad sense (Phillips, 2006). It is an intensive network or a collection of heterogeneous elements that link things and bodies (human and non-human). Also, the French concept agencement has the same root as agency, which implies a capacity to act in different ways depending on the arrangement of various material and expressive components. Although the English word assemblage also describes a collection of entities, it has a more restrictive range of use. Thus, it is important to keep its use as a translation of agencement in mind, in order not to miss what is really forceful in Deleuze usage.

Deleuze and Guattari’s use of the concept agencement/assemblage may draw attention to how arrangements of various elements can be situated in a broad range of contexts, from ‘the educational world’ to each writer who is its own assemblage. The Deleuzian-Guattarian assemblage “changes in nature as it expands its connections” (1980/1987:8) and links strongly to the concept of event and becoming. As such it is used in this thesis as a particularly powerful way to conceptualize the complexity,

5 Affect has been used in various ways by Deleuze and Guattari when inspired by Spinoza, Nietzsche or Bergson. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) tend to, for instance, distinguish more sharply than Spinoza does between affect and affections. The term "affect" is also central to what has become known as the "affective turn". Several authors in the social sciences and humanities (cf. Clough & Halley, 2007) have challenged the conventional dualism between emotion and reason and explore affect as an alternative way of conceptualizing experiences, different from the dominant paradigm of representation.

6 The concept assemblage is beginning to gain currency in a number of different fields such as political science (e.g. Manuel DeLanda), social studies (e.g. Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre) cultural studies (e.g. Brian Massumi), and science studies (e.g. Bruno Latour).
dynamism and differences of young children’s educational writing events. Furthermore, this research project illuminates how young children’s educational writing practices comprise a multiplicity of assemblages, how they interact in various ways, and the capacities of the assemblage. The assemblage is contingent, in constant transformation through territorial movements of de- and re-territorialization.

Becoming

Deleuze and Guattari’s (1980/1987) thoughts on becoming are central to their theory. Becoming comprises their nomadic epistemology emphasizing processes of change or non-linear processes of movements within an assemblage. Hence, the concept of becoming is a way to account for the connections between the various elements of the event. It opens up to differences and creativity to go beyond what is (Masny, 2009). The transformative movement of becoming is driven by the powers of affect and is an open, connective process unfolding different ways of becoming with the world.

In this thesis becoming guides the focus to the productive potential of the writing events. Becoming offers a way of thinking the text-like writing, the writer and the educational writing process, as multiple, as very specific and direct and turns against both hegemony and progress, defined in terms of a linear move towards various defined standards and ethics. In that, becoming dedicates to answer the complex and unpredictable ways of how writings, writers and educational writing processes emerge, continue and transform.

Event

At the heart of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy is the event, which transcends the customary usage as a bounded occurrence or phenomenon in time and space that hinges on an agentive, autonomous subject. Instead Deleuze and Guattari explain that the event happens as the effect of intertwined and continually transforming connections and relations between different elements (e.g. in this study it could be pen, book,
gestures and talk), driven by the forces of affect. Stagoll (2005) helpfully explains the dynamism in the concept:

An event is neither a beginning nor an end point, but rather always ‘in the middle’. Events themselves have no beginning- or end-point, and their relationship with Deleuze’s notion of dynamic change - ‘becoming’ - is neither one of ‘joining moments together’ nor one in which an event is the ‘end’ of one productive process, to be supplanted or supplemented by the next. Rather, becoming ‘moves through’ an event, with the event representing just a momentary productive intensity. (p. 88)

This means that events of writing are not mechanical or linear. In this thesis, various elements, such as experiences, the computer, speech and writing instructions, allow for different connections to happen. These connections and digressions may create events.

**Lines**

For Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) every assemblage is comprised of a multiplicity of lines and connections. They state that “[t]here are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only lines.” (p. 8). The concept of line is not defined by points that it connects. Rather “it passes between points, it comes up through the middle” (p. 293, italics in the original). Lines are, unlike points, not limited. Each assemblage contains three kinds of lines. One kind of line creates boundaries, binary oppositions and segments with a hierarchical structure, i.e. the molar line. A second kind of line, the molecular line, organizes space in a subtle way, connecting segments in a non-hierarchical way. The third kind, the line of flight, is a structure through which nomadic movement takes place. It is a line associated with change that may open up to new ways of thinking and acting. It does not organize in a linear sequence (p. 222). These lines co-exist and can always change into one another. That is why dualism, as for example “a good writer” and “a bad writer”, will not work.

Following lines of processes of writing in early childhood writing practices means mapping the described lines through and across various
data and thus provide accounts of plausible readings of how young children’s educational processes of writing are created.

**Nomadic**

The nomad is a powerful figuration created in Deleuze and Guattari’s (1980/1987) *A Thousand Plateaus* which not only provides for a theoretical option, but also relates to modes of thinking and writing (Braidotti, 2011). It highlights movements, relations and “in-betweeness”, multiplicities and unexpected ruptures. According to Braidotti,

> Being a nomad, living in transition, does not mean that one cannot or is unwilling to create those necessarily stable and reassuring bases for identity [writers] that allow one to function in a community. Nomadic consciousness rather consists in not taking any kind of identity as permanent: the nomad is only passing through; he makes those necessarily situated connections that can help him…/but he never takes on fully the limits of one/…/fixed identity. (2011:64)

Nomads have no established paths of knowing and learning. Neither do they wish to follow one path. Instead the connections between different lines of flights become central. Thus, even though s/he knows s/he can go anywhere, s/he does not go everywhere. Instead, nomads define and redefine boundaries in a particular place, at a specific time. Their boundaries are open to change at all times.

In short, I am deploying the concept of *nomadic writing* in this thesis to deterritorialize received conceptualizations of writers, text-like writings and educational writing methods as linear, with a beginning and an endpoint; and to reterritorialize writing differently as an effect of various relationships between material and expressive components.  

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7 Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) describe the spatial relationships as they refer to the game of Go and compare it with the game of Chess. They say, “Go pieces are elements /…/ with no intrinsic properties, only situational ones” (p. 353) whereas Chess pieces have predefined, hierarchical identities and corresponding preordained capacities (e.g. the queen piece may move in only one particular way).
through history. Understanding writing as nomadic writing offers a way to explore the dynamic and evolving characters of writing. A nomadic perspective also means putting the focus on the multiplicities, flows and becomings constituted in children's educational writing events.

Rhizomatic

The concept rhizome describes the structure of the connections between things, human and non-human (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). Mapping these connections involves following lines. The lines of the rhizome are very different from the arborescent or tree structure, which symbolizes stable, linear and hierarchical structures. Instead, rhizomes encourage non-hierarchical networks with “no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things” (p. 27). The rhizome and the nomad are inseparable in the sense that the rhizome is the structure of the path that the nomad follows. Deleuze and Guattari continue explaining:

[T]he tree imposes the verb ‘to be’, but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, ‘and ... and ... and ...’. This conjunction carries enough forces to shake and uproot the verb ‘to be’. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987:25)

In rhizomatic structure becoming has replaced “to be” which illustrates that, for example, the writer is ever moving, i.e. s/he is no longer a fixed entity. So is the text.

Viewed from a rhizomatic perspective, writing is seen as an ongoing and connective activity where a complex of modalities and products are produced, assembled and transformed in a way that goes beyond for instance prediction and prescribed methods. Looking at significant moments, collisions or ruptures, allow recognition of how processes of writing may connect to an old process or create a new one. These moments of change came to be of importance for analyzing how processes of writing are continuously constructed in the early childhood writing classrooms.
**Territorial movements**

Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) use territorial concepts to direct the attention towards conditions for how the arrangement of *assemblages* is constructed and what it can do. Depending on the nature of the connections between the various elements, an assemblage can be more or less territorialized, i.e. more or less stable and consistent. These connections open up to various moments that interact in every assemblage. A territorial movement refers to how fixed, presupposed structures emerge. Deterritorialization is a movement of leaving the territory, of exploring new things, of altering your patterns, for example, starting with the end in a piece of writing. It is characterized as being carried out by *lines* of flights. Reterritorialization is to form a new assemblage or to re-establish a territory.

In this thesis, these territorial concepts developed by Deleuze and Guattari help to describe not only movement, change and flux within the children’s writing *events*, but also how the child, writing processes and the text mutually produce each other.
4. The Nomadic inquiry

In the following, I will illustrate the ongoing, transformative processes of the current inquiry that emerge between the data collected and analyzed from the writing events at two early childhood educational settings (see also AII & AIII, Chapter 5), and the data collected and analyzed from the readings of the thinking and talking about young children’s writing since the 19th century (see also AI, Chapter 5), and the conceptualization of transcendental empiricism (for further elaboration see Transcendental empiricism, p. 61). This chapter comprises three main trajectories illustrating the dynamic processes of the major research inquiry before mapping and discussing the processes of inquiry specific to each article.

The first trajectory, The trajectory of the empirical settings presents the research question, defines the empirical setting, and the observational position. Guided by the research question I situate my approach to research within a poststructural research paradigm via transcendental empiricism. Thereafter, I describe in detail the selection of the research sites, participants and methods used at the two early childhood schools. This description aims to clarify the empirical settings at the on-site inquiry at the two schools and is to be viewed as a complement to the detailed data presentation of the readings about the thinking and talking about writing and the writing child in the article Images of Writing and the Writing Child (AI).

Second, The trajectory of rethinking interpretation offers a presentation and discussion of what is conventionally discussed in the section “Method” of a dissertation, as data, data collection, and reporting data. I draw on the conceptual explanation of Deleuze’s approach known as transcendental empiricism to rethink research inquiry. Accordingly, I situate data as transgressive, analysis as nomadic connections, and reporting as mapping. I also discuss how my own process as researcher emerges and transforms throughout the research project.
Third, *The trajectory of research quality* turns to the discussions on quality in qualitative research. I discuss what quality can be when taking a poststructuralist approach via Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism and how it can be recognized in the present research.

The emergence of the various processes is not about a linear transition from one process to another through integration. Instead this chapter illustrates how the research design involves going back and forth between the different components of design and how the various research processes of on-site data production, analysis, and reporting move in a parallel fashion and overlap throughout the inquiry.

I use the concept of “nomadic inquiry” (St. Pierre, 1997b) to map my “walks” through the process of inquiry (Eakle, 2007). When walking I move along customary paths with points, such as aim and research questions, and through territories of conceptual, theoretical, methodological, philosophical and rhetorical challenges. These trajectories are produced in the territory of research design; a territory whose borders are in constant motion. Using the concept nomadic inquiry helps to address the process of inquiry as the dynamic and creative process it is; a process that follows disruptive and stabilizing trajectories opened through multiple connections. Hence the methodological approach of this inquiry can be articulated, offering a complementary approach to dominant methodology in the overall body of educational research, through engaging in theory and practice as a relational field. It proposes a “theory conceived as a practice speaking with another practice” (Olsson, 2009: 52) through exploring the transforming process of inquiry. Accordingly, nomadic inquiry aids the understanding of the process of inquiry as an ongoing, intertwined and fluid process.

**The trajectory of empirical settings**

**The research question guiding the inquiry**

At the heart of this qualitative inquiry is an interest in exploring how young children’s writing is made in educational settings. As described earlier, the research questions that guide the inquiry are: How do
processes of writers, text-like writings and educational writing processes emerge, continue and transform in the writing event? and What writers, text-like writings and educational writing processes does the educational writing event offer the potential for? At the same time the conceptualization of writing as nomadic writing is here emphasized to highlight the dynamic and context-dependent pictures that are embodied in the educational writing practices of this study.

These research questions guide the thinking and the inquiry from one point to another on the research path, while still allowing for an openness to things that “just happens”, for new lines and multiplicities, during the educational writing events. It is an effect of a relationship between literacy dilemmas encountered in Swedish educational settings (Chapter 5); questions and dilemmas raised by researchers in scholarly literature (Chapter 2); and the poststructural conceptual and theoretical framework inspired by the work of Deleuze (Chapter 3).

**The research approach**

The ethnographic strategies of this thesis move along the trails of scholars (often labeled postmodern and poststructural), including St. Pierre (1997a; 2011b), Eakle (2007), Lather (1993), and Waterhouse (2011). I intend to be faithful to the poststructural orientation of research which challenges the idea of representation, recognition and identification, also referred to as the “crisis of representation, legitimation, and praxis” (cf. Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:19), by emphasizing the performative and transformative production of the researcher, the researched, the on-site data production, the data analysis, and the reporting of data.

Exploring the contemporary educational writing events as they happen, fluid and in flux, is made through a poststructuralist ethnographic inquiry. One of the strengths of this particular strategy is that it allows for multiple, dynamic and contextual pictures of the events being researched. Although ethnographic techniques are used during the present research, it is not ethnography as practiced in cultural anthropology or sociology. Instead, I propose that the current research project builds on ethnographic strategies for reasons of research design and practices. Firstly, the focus of this study is not to document the individual children’s
lived writing experiences, nor to present their worldviews. Instead, the attention is on tracing and mapping the network of forces and flows in the writing events in which writers, writings, and educational writing processes are created. Secondly, although the educational writing events are studied in the daily school life for an extended period, the on-site research activities do not involve life 24 hours a day because of the hours at school (8 am to 1 pm). Furthermore, even though the on-sight activities took place over a period of one and a half year they were only carried out one day each week.

One major concern in the research design and practice of this project involves a doubt that data can be truthfully and accurately represented in words and that the words can secure meaning and truth. This doubt links to the problematic of representation (cf. Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; St. Pierre, 1997a). Furthermore, the research design gives rise to hesitancy about how I as a researcher can be an objective knower, or a revealer of truth. Throughout the research process I troubled my understanding of myself as a researcher and the researched by viewing us as entanglements or assemblages, i.e. as effects of various elements (see Research- and researcher-in-becoming, p. 66). In like manner, the data are produced in an assemblage of the current research design and practices. Data are not regarded as fixed, nor value-laden, and do not reveal something about the researched but about “the possibilities of sense making available within the discourses within a particular sense-making community” (Davies, 2004:4-5, italics in the original) in which I, the researcher, am part. Data are thus suggestive of ways in which sense is being made. Accordingly, this poststructural research project does not aim at revealing the absolute truth but at contributing to “lines of flight that make new realities” (Davies, 2004:7, italics in the original), different thinking and doings.

In sum, while the research interest of this thesis has a pedagogical nature relating to the construction of writers, writings and educational writing processes in early childhood education, a research design addressing the fluid dynamics of processes of writing are focused. Thus, the inquiry has no predetermined, fixed boundaries to a specific pedagogical case or specific individuals. In this study, the on-sight research activities are ongoing performative productions situated in two Swedish early childhood classes at the two schools.
Tracing the empirical setting

The exploring of how processes of writing are constituted in the two Swedish early childhood educational settings included all the children and their teachers in the two classes at the two public schools. The classrooms were selected on a basis of geographical convenience and the selection was contingent on their willingness and ability to take part in regularly occurring on-site research activities. Moreover, although there is no “standard” writing practice, the selection of the two classes depended on that the classes should not have significant extraordinary features. Two early childhood classes were selected on basis of my experiences as a former teacher and lecturer in the teacher education program and criteria such as, no significant pedagogical profile was established, no exceptional material matters were a pronounced feature (e.g. one-to-one tablet or classrooms with no walls) and as balanced a range of the participants as possible concerning age, social and cultural background, and gender. There was a requisite for participation that the classrooms should be equipped with computer/computers available for the children, and that consent was given by or for all involved. Both classes were diverse in terms of social and cultural background, and were more or less equally divided in terms of gender. At the onset of the inquiry I expected gender to be of interest since writing is interwoven with dimensions of difference including gender difference (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2009).

I selected the ages on the grounds that six-years-olds and seven to eight-years-olds attend different systems in the Swedish early childhood education system, the preschool and the school. By law Swedish children start school at age 7, but almost all 6-year-old children are enrolled in non-mandatory preschool classes, instituted by the Swedish government in 1998 (Statistics Sweden, 2011). The aim of establishing preschool classes was to create an arena where the preschool traditions of learning-through-play, with roots in Froebel’s kindergarten and a pedagogy based on Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Key, could meet the more conventional education of the school (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2001). Accordingly, there are sociohistorical differences between preschool class and school although a large part of the early childhood education system
is financed by the state as well as guided by the same curriculum (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011b). Such sociohistorical differences have, however, been ignored in favor of quality issues in the last decade. Sweden has implemented school reforms in recent years to improve the quality and the results in education. For example, the national curriculum, which came into force 2011, includes clearer goals for children’s linguistic and communicative development (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011a; 2011b). At the very beginning of my research project I found these sociohistorical and edupolitical issues interesting in relation to young children’s writing practices and they guided the choice of age group in the design of this research. I decided to follow six-year-old preschool children on to their first year of school. Also the organization of education guided the design to select two different community schools. Six-years-olds can, depending on the municipality’s different organization of education, attend a single-age preschool class or take part in a coordinated group of preschool class children and school children in Year 1 and 2. As a result, a single-age preschool class and a multi-age class with preschool and school children were selected.

In the fall of 2009, after obtaining approval from the Karlstad University’s Research Ethics Board to conduct my research, I began recruiting participants via the teacher education coordinator at a university teacher training program in southern Sweden, who then forwarded it to teachers working with literacy and young children. I contacted two teachers at two different schools, the North School and the South school, and both responded favorably to the research project. During the fall of 2009 a five-days pilot study was conducted at the South School; however, both the South School and the North School participated in the main study, starting January 2010 ending at June 2011.

During this period the aim of the on-site data production was to a large extent general, i.e. not designed to follow either specific individuals or particular writing events over time, and designed to document situated writing events that showed intensity, that were critically significant or commonly encountered. However, in December 2010 there was a shift in focus. The recursive process of doing ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), i.e. the intertwined process of producing on-site data, and conducting the data analysis, and reading theoretical works, generated
new questions such as, how do processes of educational writing methods emerge and change? As an effect of this recursive process, the interest of the inquiry changed to include the documentation of one and the same educational writing process that was followed over time. Consequently, the focus on producing data expanded throughout the time, from the situated writing events of critical significance to aspects of the same writing activity over time. Consecutive lessons that were related to each other by virtue of belonging to the same writing process were documented.

The six-year-old children at the North School, a primary school in a rural village, attended a single-age preschool class for one year before starting “the real” school (as some of the children say) at seven. The children at the South School, an inner city primary school, attended a multi-age group of six-, seven- and eight-year-olds. These schools and the participants of the study will be described in the following subsection; however, these descriptions are not to be confused with the empirical descriptions in Article II and III, where it is the production of the young children’s processes of writing and events that are studied. No name in the study is authentic.

The schools and the participants have in various ways been a source of experiences. For example, the informal talks have been a way of verifying what I thought I understood, not just as presumptions but as plausibilities. This required a high degree of commitment from the participants, who both provided the data and helped me to make sense of them.

The pilot study

I met the team teachers for the class at the South School for the first time on the 1 September, 2009. They were asked to take part in a five-day pilot study. Sara, the elementary teacher, Alice, the after-school teacher, and Eva, the pre-school teacher, were sitting in a side-room to the classroom talking about their ongoing writing project, Our Circus. The children had written summaries of a visit by a circus artist, programs and invitations for their own Circus and manuscripts for their own performances. The
teachers shared responsibility for the pedagogical work throughout the whole school day. The teachers’ narrative about their pedagogical work was multifaceted and informative and they exemplified learning outcomes, pedagogical beliefs about writing, the writing child, and daily routines.

This meeting was also an occasion for informing and discussing various aspects related to the pilot study, such as aim, consent, confidentiality, and use. We discussed what it meant to follow an “ordinary day”, which was related to several other discussions such as the aim of the inquiry and power relations between researcher/participants. These discussions were a way to clarify issues involved in researching young children’s writing practices. Furthermore, the pilot study was used to explore what methods and technical equipment were best suited to further inquiry in the field and how they could be adjusted to suit the research questions. Four methods were used: audio and video recording, field notes, informal interviews (with the children and the teachers) and collection of children’s text-like writings. This exploration of the various method of on-site data production generated changes in the technical equipment and practical knowledge of how to use the same (see On-site activities, p. 57) as well as ethical discussions of consent (see Assemblages of information and consent, p. 54).

Soon after this first meeting I met with the children in class and with the parents at an evening meeting to talk about the research project, to answer their questions and to discuss issues of consent, confidentiality and use. Also the headmaster was informed. The pilot study included 28 children and three teachers. The study was limited to five days, which was considered sufficient to determine the feasibility of the long-term study.

The main study

After the analysis of the pilot study, I was ready to undertake the long-term ethnographic inquiry. I contacted the North School and asked for permission to return to the South School in early December 2009. Both schools were positive to taking part in the long-term study. By way of introduction, I discussed the aim of the inquiry, consent, confidentiality and use, with the North School, as I had done with the South School. I
distributed an information letter and consent forms were signed (see Appendix: *Letter of consent*, p. 227). The participants at the South School received and signed these documents anew. The information and consent forms were signed for the time period of the main study, which lasted from January 2010, to June 2011. Below, the participants are listed for each school site (Table 1 and Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Children, total</th>
<th>Boys/Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan-May, 2010</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep-May, 2010-2011</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14/15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Participants in the South School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Children, total</th>
<th>Boys/Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan-May, 2010</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep-May, 2010-2011</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13/12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Participants in the North School

Although this thesis is an empirical study, it is important to remember that the focus is not on the participants or comparisons of the two schools (the North School and the South School). Rather than viewing the participants as individuals, or the two schools in themselves, I saw them as a means to explore early childhood educational processes of writing in which the participants are only one of many factors.

Usually, the production of and the intersection between ethnicity, socio-economic background and gender are important processes in relation to children’s writing and processes of writing. These variables are, however, not the focus of this thesis. The aim of the thesis is to explore how processes of writing are constituted in the educational writing event, rather than emphasize individual differences linked to ethnicity, socio-economic and gender.
**Assemblages of information and consent**

One assemblage concerned the consent given by and for parents/carers, a group known as gatekeepers (cf. Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The teachers of both schools informed me that several parents were not fluent in Swedish. This information gave rise to questions such as: How may the parents get insight into the inquiry? How can I be sure that they know what their children were asked to take part in? The information that some parents are not fluent in Swedish in this way resulted in an assemblage that is related to the ethical aspect of how to create insight into the inquiry, regardless of mother tongue, educational background, or difficulty with written language. The assemblage involved relations between, for example, the written information (e.g. the purpose of the study, why they had been asked and how conducting the inquiry could effect their children) and the oral presentation (to which all parents and teachers were invited), which provided potential to get insight into the inquiry. But the assemblage also involved ideas about research and about consequences of having one’s child video recorded and documented. The written information was thus only one element that came to be important in order to make sure that the parents and the children knew enough to give or decline consent.

Ethics, as expounded by Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987), is not something that can be secured. Rather, it is locally produced and in continuous motion, unfolding and forming new relations. For example, the teachers and the children at the two schools and I created local ethics of information and consent in relation to likely language barriers. The teachers at the North School decided to be the link to the parents of their children. They sent out the written information and the form of consent, and took it from there to decide on further activities. According to the teachers, the written information was satisfactory and no further activities were needed. At the South School, one of the children suggested that she could be the interpreter at home. Being interpreters were something all the children agreed to. The teachers were also asked to act as interpreters.

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8 In Sweden, the parents of children under the age of 15 have the right to/should give informed consent on behalf of their children according to the ethical principles developed by The Swedish Research Council (2011).
when needed; not only translating language but also being sensitive to what was not yet imagined. Moreover, the second language teachers were asked to back up the teachers if needed (which turned out not to be the case). Irrespective of the local production of ethics, the ambition was that this assemblage should establish a feeling of trust so that the parents could ask any question or withdraw from the project at any time.

Ethics as locally created indicate a continuous process. For example, the ethical processes created with the parents (as described above), when we met physically and through written information, continued over time. At the South School I met the parents twice and a third occasion is planned in which the parents will get feedback on the becomings of the research project. An important ethical consideration in these meetings (and in the written information) was to stress the research interest. That is, the writing event as a whole and how the processes of writing are created are in focus, and not the performance or skills of individual children.

Another assemblage of ethics relates to the consent of the children. A frequently discussed dilemma is how to ensure that the children know that they are part of the study, let alone being asked for their consent and the possibility of withdrawing from the research at any time (Skånfors, 2009; Swedish Research Council, 2011). In line with the onto-epistemological approach of this thesis I cannot guarantee that the children know once and for all. Giving consent is an open-ended, unpredictable, and mutually created process between the researcher and the researched, but also in connection with methodological literature (in which I sought guidance, for instance, on how to know when children are not giving consent) and physical material (e.g. the video camera and the size and design of the classroom).

The first time I met the children9 I planned a one-day-activity in class. I started by telling my story of the cause of my ardent interest in writing, children and education, and in asking questions about things I do not have an answer to. My ambition was that the story would create an interest and understanding of what research can be as well as encourage

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9 I met the children at the South school for the first time in mid-September 2009, when the pilot study was conducted. A similar meeting was arranged with the children at the North School in mid-January 2010, when the main study was to start.
open responses from the children. On a voluntary basis the children were asked to share questions of which they did not have an answer. The questions flowed easily and an intense discussion took off in both the classes at the South School and the North School. While some children wanted to know how a robot, vacuum cleaner or a TV worked, others were curious to find out how a fire can burn or how a heart works.

Next, we (the children, the teachers, and I) discussed various issues, such as different ways of how not giving consent may be signaled (e.g. walking away, saying no), emphasizing that consent is something that is given in each moment and my responsibility to be sensitive to signals at all times. This discussion resulted in a form of consensus. However, this “consensus” on how to give consent troubled me. What are the impacts of me being an adult, an adult researcher, initiating and being part of the discussion? What does it mean that the discussion takes place in an educational setting? What consequences does the discussion as a work model have and what does it mean that all agree? For example, the very notion of consensus on consent, arrived at through discussion between all, is itself a participatory norm based on adult democratic ideals. As a consequence, there is a danger that these ideals convey the idea that certain kinds of action related to consent or non-consent are legitimate ways of engaging in research, and others are forms of aberrance (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). Because of this concern, it became important to me to be sensitive to the situated acts of consent or non-consent throughout the whole data collecting process.

Although I thoroughly thought through how to create opportunities for the children to raise awareness of various aspects of consent when introducing the study, time and time again I re-entered the process of consent as it is created anew in each moment of data collection. A common situation was the child asking, “Why do you write?” or “Do you write about me?” and each time my answer depended on what the situation called for. Often I explained the purpose again or referred to earlier discussions of consent, but I always asked again and again for their consent; a question to which they nearly always said okay. If not, the child and I decided what to do which could result in that my reading aloud what was written in my field notes or, as on one occasion, erasing it.
Giving consent is an open-ended, unpredictable process, transforming over time, in which the data, the participants and I are mutually produced.

All participants agreed to be part of the inquiry, but not all agreed to be recorded on video. Three out of 54 children objected to be filmed. One of the non-consenters objected although the parents had agreed. This child was not filmed until she one day said: “Can you take a picture of me writing?” Two more children rejected to be on film used at conference and for educational purposes.

The described assemblages of information and consent are examples of potentialities to get insight into the study in which the parents and their children could choose to be part. Still, I cannot guarantee their awareness of what it can mean to be part of the study, which calls for continuous researcher sensitivity to ethical issues not yet imagined.

**On-site activities**

In September 2009, I began visiting the classroom of the South school and in January 2010 I visited the classroom of the North School. I previously described how I began with introducing the research project (see *Pilot study*, p. 51, and *Main study*, p. 52). This time I also introduced the various methods of data documentation: audio and video recording, field notes, informal interviews (with the children and the teachers) and the collection of children’s text-like writings. When I introduced the technical equipment, the children were especially eager to try them out. They recorded and listened to their own voices on the dictaphone, looked through my field notebook and recorded and watched themselves and each other in the video camera. These acts are part of the data as they can be part of the construction of processes of writing.

At the onset of the inquiry, I took notes, photo copied material, and used both the video and the still-photo camera to document the two classrooms and the hallways. I took photos of written messages on the walls, windows or desks. I made a floor plan of the classroom, videotaped the physical classroom (while empty) and photo copied the educational writing materials. These notes, copies, video and still images produced the details regarding the contextual information of physical, structural and institutional characteristics of the two schools and the two classrooms.
In total, the data collection yielded almost 70 hours of videotaped and 30 hours audiotaped educational writing events, 400 pages of field notes and 350 photographs or photocopies of the children’s written products. I spent approximately three to four hours each time in the field, which was approximately the whole “day” of education for the children. During this time, I wrote detailed observational notes on the left side of the field note book to document the daily routines related to procedures of educational writing practices, the ways in which the various areas connected to the classrooms tended to be used, and details related to the writing activities and the writers. My ambition was to make these notes as accurate as possible in response to the observed event (e.g. by quoting the children) and to avoid preconceived ideas of what is worth including or not. However, it is not a totally feasible task. The moment of selecting what to document can be connected to theoretical concepts that come to mind. My field notes are thus not be viewed as an objective record of the observations made in that particular setting. This problem of reduction also applies to audio and video recording (cf. Aarsand & Forsberg, 2010).

On the right side of the field notebook, I marked things that were “Interesting, Remarkable, or Important” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994: 82) as they happened. However, I also used this side to add ideas or questions when watching the video recordings or re-reading the field notes. Accordingly, the right side of the field notebook was used more as a research journal in which the interaction of subjective and objective aspects of doing research is openly acknowledged.

Documenting the educational writing events were also done through video recordings. I had the camera with me from the beginning of the fieldwork. I documented the events as they happened, which offers the opportunity to analyze the intricately intertwined connections between various elements in detail and to expose the seen but unnoticed details of the writing practices. Hence, video recordings allow repeated, detailed analysis of “just those fleeting circumstances that our interpretations of action systematically rely upon, but which our accounts of action routinely ignore” (Suchman, 1987, as cited in Lymer, 2010:59).

Most children did not take any notice of the cameras in any significant way. However, at times some children oriented themselves towards the cameras, making wry faces, wanting to film, or, when
realizing that their writing was being taped, indicating that their products were not good enough. These moments are part of the data collected and analyzed in relation to how processes of writing are produced. Moreover, the use of the video cameras was a constant problem for the researcher (me) and the participants (the children) regarding how to interact with it in an ethically responsible way. For example, at times the children devised various ways of signaling a wish not to be filmed, such as turning the face away from the lens. According to Aarsand and Forsberg (2010), video documentation relates strongly to children’s construction of public and private-produced spheres, in this study produced in the classroom. Gradually, I developed a sensitive awareness of and receptivity to the children’s different signals of privacy in such a way that each video documentation turned into an event in which I had an endeavor to establish on-sight consent. For example, bodily gestures and especially my reading of the eye contact between the children and me came to be crucial moments of developing sensitive awareness. This work of conceptualizing the interconnectedness between the data production and me as a researcher was thus a continuously transforming work process. It called for sensitivity to yet unimagined ways of signaling consent or non-consent throughout the whole process of collecting data (Macbeth, 2001).

Although the children adjusted quickly to the methods of data documentation, there were other dilemmas in relation to video and audio recording. After having undertaken the five-day pilot study, I had to adjust technical equipment and ways of recording in order to document a detailed view and a larger view of the participation frameworks of the educational writing events. The recordings from the pilot study suggested a limitation of seeing exactly how the children used different modes as they wrote on their papers or of what happened on the computer screen. To some extent I could adjust and make the children’s writing visual by the placing of the camera. Certain ways of placing the camera made it possible to document the children’s notes or the computer screen, while other angles and focus documented the classroom activities in a fairly adequate way. Each recorded moment required in this way judgments of framing (i.e. what to include) and zooming, which influenced and were influenced by theoretical or analytical stances. Moreover, I collected or photocopied the children’s text-like writings and made field notes in order
to overcome the limitation of not seeing exactly what happened on the computer screen or how the children created text-like writings.

Apart from adjusting the placing of the camera, I began to use more than one camera after the pilot study. In order to document children’s writing and writings as well as the context of the classroom, I used two video cameras (when available) in the long-term study. I carried one hand camera, selected and filmed significant writing events, or documented as a detailed view of writings (e.g. colors and layout) and bodily movements as possible. The second camera was placed on a tripod. This camera had a wide-angle view and was, depending on the classroom activity, placed in the classroom or in its side room to record an extended view of the writing activities. Both cameras were connected to wireless microphones placed on or in close proximity to the children and teachers in order to enhance the quality of the sound. Also dictaphones were used to enhance the situational sound. Despite these changes it is hard to hear what others than those close to microphone are saying on the recordings. This limits the analysis of, for instance, peer interaction.

Although the video and audio recordings aid to provide detailed renderings of the field they record, the recordings does not present a transparent window on what happened (Heath, Hindmarsh & Luff 2010). The recordings, and all the methods of on-site data production, present the situation from a perspective that reflects my presuppositions of what was important and what was not. Also, the documentation of the educational writing events can only be partial because there is always a risk that significant aspects of the activity happen outside the frame of the recordings and other observations.

The trajectory of rethinking interpretation

This trajectory, involving the experiences from the on-site activities (see On-site activities, p. 57) and the thinking in line with transcendental empiricism, offers a way to explore the daily lives of early childhood writing practices at the South School and the North School. It allows a shift from acknowledging writing as a structure that can be recognized, identified and represented to understanding writing as a result of
entangled processes of becomings. More specifically, thinking in line with transcendental empiricism provides an exploration of how the processes of writing happen and what they may create. It also provides a shift of thinking, from data as evidence to data as transgressive data, from analysis as interpretation to analysis as nomadic connections, and from reporting as representation to reporting as map making.

In the following subsections, I first describe the conceptualizations of data as transgressive, analysis as nomadic, and reporting as mapping in a poststructuralist framework via Deleuze’s *transcendental empiricism*. Thereafter, I map references to, and reflections on, the emergence of the current research and of me as a researcher, referred to as *research-and-researcher-in-becoming*. The purpose is to illustrate how the subjective, the empirical, and the theoretical ways of making sense blend, as well as influence, and is influenced by, the continuous process of research-in-becoming and becoming researcher.

In sum, *The trajectory of rethinking interpretation* unfolds, enfolds and folds various lines that engage in what is conventionally known as data collection, data analysis and data reporting, but in a way that “resists temptations to interpret and ascribe meaning” (Masny & Cole, 2007:203). Instead, the relations, flows and connections are emphasized.

**Transcendental empiricism**

Data and interpretation appeared to be problematic concepts in my research process because of a conflict between my readings of qualitative research textbooks (cf. Silverman, 2006), and readings of transcendental empiricism as conceived by Deleuze, and experiences from the on-site data activities. This conflict was caused by different readings and experiences linked to diverse epistemological stances. These colliding readings challenged my thinking about interpretation and interpretative research. At the onset of the research process traditional foundational understandings based on transcendental views of epistemology were used. The concept of data implied a rather unified, stable and hierarchal system of ideas and experiences. Such understandings are rooted in an epistemological positioning connoting individuals (human beings) striving to find stable categories, themes or pictures to describe the world as it is
perceived. These perceived pictures, or ideas, order experiences and are thus certified to the individual, to the thinking subject. From another standpoint, transcendental empiricism holds that “the world itself produces ideas – or images – of which we are effects. /---/ ideas do not order experience; ideas are the effect of experience” (Colebrook, 2002a:80, italics in the original).

The premise of transcendental empiricism may also be described as the thought of an experience. Masny and Cole (2012) explain this by giving an example of a movie scene in which a car is driving fast down a narrow wet road. This scene might evoke thoughts of an accident, i.e. an experience. The following scene is an actualization where the movie offers one response (p. 27). Likewise, the on-site activities in the research project recurrently evoked thoughts of an experience. For example, an event in which a boy was spinning his pen case around his pencil brought on a thought of ... maybe a trip to Paris, or an experience of a fascinating picture of the Big Wheel of Paris. What happened next was an actualization. He and his cowriter started to write a story about “Erik in Paris” (see AIII, p. 182). In Deleuze’s conceptualization of transcendental empiricism it is the thought of an experience that may create a moment of disruption and thus “allows thinking to take off” (Masny & Cole, 2012:27) to yet another experience that sets yet another wheel in motion and triggers yet another experience, in this case the story of “Erik in Paris”.

Thus, transcendental empiricism not only encourages viewing on-site research activities, but the whole inquiry in terms of the thought of something. In other words, research inquiry via transcendental empiricism is not what data are (interpretation). Neither are the on-site research activities ascribed to the individual, the autonomous thinking subject. Rather, transcendental empiricism unfolds and folds both the subject and the object of research as well as knowing. Accordingly, from Deleuzian and Guattarian point of view, the interest is in the ideas that may happen in the writing event.
Data as transgressive

During my on-site research activities (e.g., field notes and video documentation) I collected what in conventional qualitative methodology are known as data (cf. Silverman, 2006). However, the concept of data is conceptualized in several different ways. In general, data are related to words (St. Pierre, 1997a). Not only are words collected in interviews, observations or audio and video recordings, but words are also used to describe and present the data. St. Pierre (1997a; 2011b) problematizes the concept of data in two different ways. First, she challenges data as “that which can be reduced to words” (2011a:3). These words may further be reduced to groups of words labeled with other words called codes. St. Pierre then introduces the concept transgressive data, thus opening up a view on data as escaping language and becoming “uncodable, excessive, out-of-control, out-of-category” (1997a:179), for instance, as memory data and emotional data. Such data may not appear until the research writing begins.

Second, St. Pierre (1997a) problematizes the assumption that words can be brute and free from values. When words are used as data and data are used as evidence, words are treated as brute data, “transparent, neutral, waiting to be analyzed, to be interpreted” (2011a:2). However, in deconstructing data as described in qualitative textbooks, St. Pierre troubles the idea that language mirrors the researched (the world) as an objective account of the real. Her questioning of the real does not indicate a total rejection of reality, rather it points towards studying differences and multiplicities within and between realities. St. Pierre’s critique is supported by others who question representation and language as objective accounts of the real (cf. the crisis of representation Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In doing so, she questions data as effects of textuality and data as evidence, as the essential and universal truth.

Analysis as nomadic

Data and analysis are inseparable in a discussion of data analysis. Regardless of epistemological stance, the conceptualization of data makes certain assumptions about the nature of data analysis possible. Thinking
in line with Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism, data and analysis mutually produce each other. As described above, some data (e.g. memory data) appear in the actual research writing, and some data analysis takes place in the on-site activities such as when taking field notes. In view of this, the production of data analysis does not follow linear or predetermined trails. Rather, the production of analysis is created in the course of the inquiry and is a result of an assemblage of nomadic connections and flows.

Analysis conceptualized as nomadic connections involve “the integrated use of experimentation above and beyond fixed terms of pre-defined categories” (Masny & Cole, 2007:197). Instead of giving rise to fixed themes and categories, analysis as nomadic connections is characterized as a creative process in which the researcher enters the middle and “follows multiple and unpredictable paths of analysis” (Waterhouse, 2011:128). It is from these nomadic connections, or relations, that sense emerges and potentials for new trajectories and assemblages are created in the research event (Waterhouse, 2011; St. Pierre, 1997b). In this case, the assemblage of analysis folds and unfolds ongoing connections between the research design, the on-site data activities, the on-site data, and the data which exceed representation (e.g. memories), and the researched, and me as a researcher. Consequently,

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10 Several educational literacy researchers are exploring analysis in line with Deleuze’s perspective. While some have disrupted the unity and linearity of analysis by using rhizoanalysis, others have in various ways deconstructed traditional formats of data presentation. Alvermann (2000) turns her attentions to adolescents talk about texts in a public library using rhizoanalysis; Dufresne (2006) creates rhizomatic cartographies of multiple literacies (reported in Telling Maps) by studying the affects at work in bilingual classrooms; Hagood (2002) analyzed data using poststructural rhizomatic cartography and chiaroscuro, an artistic technique, that showed how adolescents read and use popular cultural texts; Leander and Rowe (2006) engage in a rhizoanalysis of student presentations as performances; Eakle (2007) maps assemblages of literacies in Christian faith-based education expressed as dramatizations; Masny (2009) explores through rhizoanalysis how multiple literacies may be mapped differently as a process of becoming; Waterhouse (2011) creates diagrammatic assemblages of what literacies can mean to adult newcomers in Canada in an English classroom. Following the trail of these researchers’ experimentation of rhizoanalysis I do in the present study I take up analysis as nomadic connections (see Lines of rethinking data in practice, pp. 68-71). Also, in the article “Children’s Text-Like Writing as Nomadic Writing” (All), I show how Leander and Rowe’s (2006) rhizoanalytic work inspired my own approach to making diagrams, called flow charts, of various writing trajectories (see All, p. 127; 164).
I as a researcher am one part, of many parts, in this assemblage. The epistemological stance of transcendental empiricism thus questions conventional concepts linked to analysis, such as interpretation, representation and coding conceptualized as acts of autonomous thinking subjects. Accordingly, the researcher cannot adequately or honestly turn the context of the on-site inquiry into the context of explications and contend to write objective and accurate knowledge. Moreover, the analytic process grounded in transcendental empiricism connotes a resistance to interpreting and ascribing fixed meaning to data. Instead the processes of analysis follow multiple paths, connections and thoughts produced in the analytic event.

**Reporting as mapping**

The deconstruction of the concept of data disrupts not only the conceptualization of data collection and data analysis (as described), but also the assumptions of reporting as a representation of the researched by the researcher. The concept of mapping, as conceived by Deleuze and Guattari, links to cartography and geophilosophy. Map making is a process of building a map of the research with its strata and territories, and lines of deterritorialization. For Deleuze and Guattari

> “[t]he map does not reproduce/---/it is/…/part of the rhizome/…/open and connectable in all its dimensions./---/A map has multiple entryways as opposed to the tracing, which always comes back ‘to the same’” (1980/1987:12).

Maps, unlike tracings, are open systems with no beginnings or endings, just middles. They are becomings and are “oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real” (1980/1987:12) and can be described as momentary snapshot that will transform.

Conceptualizing reporting of data as mapping troubles the notion of reporting in three ways. First, the linear representation of research defined in qualitative research textbooks is questioned (e.g. the presentation of repeating ideas that lead to major themes that inform conclusions and implications). Rather, Deleuze and Guattari connote a mapping of the
connections, of the multiplicities and of the transformations of elements at play within an assemblage. Mapping data is thus an ongoing process throughout the inquiry, which serve “to send thought off on a line of flight, and to spur thinking into ongoing movement” (Waterhouse, 2011:136). Although mapping research focuses on disruptions (deterritorialization), it cannot be done without tracing the conceptions and representations of writing and writers constituted in the writing event (reterritorialization).

Second, conceptualizing reporting as mapping, disrupts the notion of the autonomous thinking researcher “writing up” the research. The Deleuzian-Guattarian concept of assemblage has been most useful in giving up the thinking of the human being (the researched and me as the researcher) as the center of knowledge as well as disrupting the thinking of personal identity that stays the same across time. However, my trajectory of troubling the humanist subject has been a crooked path with fallbacks of disorientation (see Research- and researcher-in-becoming, p. 66).

Finally, reporting as map making disrupts the humanist assumption about representational knowledge. For Deleuze and Guattari there is a significant distinction between knowledge and thought:

Knowledge is the recognition and understanding of identities. /---/
Thought, by contrast, does not identify and so does not give us knowledge. It moves beyond what is known to the difference beneath, behind, within it. And, since difference outruns thought, thought can only palpate a difference that lies beyond its grasp. There is always more to think. (May, 2005:21)

For Deleuze and Guattari, maps are for thinking. And “analysis is thinking” (St. Pierre, 2011a:7). Thinking is constantly on the move and the map and map making are there to illustrate and to create and produce thinking.

**Research- and researcher-in-becoming**

The following section offers a way to document, systemize, and organize the context of on-site data production and data analyses and reporting strategies and my individuation as a researcher into written formats and
public knowledge – a “becoming, and a difficult, uncertain becoming” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987:482). First I describe dynamic and sometimes contradictory reflections on and experiences of designing the research and conducting the on-site activities, i.e. *Lines of becoming with the research*. I exemplify how these reflections and experiences create new ways of thinking and doing what conventionally are referred to as data, data collection and data analysis. Second, *Lines of Nomadic writing* folds and unfolds various aspects of the ongoing and transformative process of writing research throughout the fieldwork and throughout the reporting of data.

While the earlier section, *Transcendental empiricism*, conceptually explicated data as transgressive, analysis as nomadic, and reporting as mapping, this section describes how these concepts influence the present inquiry. Various lines of rethinking research refer to the emergence of the inquiry, *research-in-becoming*, and the emergence of me/the researcher constituted in the event, *researcher-in-becoming*. Epistemological and theoretical arguments of transcendental empiricism are linked with illustrations of the transformative and untimely potential of processes of becoming to emphasize the connections between theory, and practice, and epistemology, and method (cf. Lenz Taguchi, 2010). This assemblage allows for fluid and in-flux processes to turn visible and their effect acknowledged; processes that I a priori cannot tell how they will unfold. Research- and researcher-in-becoming are processes that blend subjective, empirical, and theoretical ways of knowing. Continually transforming themselves, these processes have the capacity to invoke the complexity and openness of conducting a poststructural ethnographical research and to expand the limits of understanding the design and conduct of research as research-in-becoming and the conceptualization of the researcher as researcher-in-becoming. This means describing how the research, or the researcher, is an effect of relations between various on-site activities, readings of transcendental empiricism, and affects. What is of interest is hence the research event(s), i.e. what happens when various factors come into relationship and what it offers the potential for. These events are interconnected through analyses and reflections and allow for experimental forms of writing myself in research, in which new connections and new thoughts may be created, referred to as lines. Some
of these relations are first created as I write this text, e.g. when I carefully choose one adjective in preference of another to describe the explanations. Because writing research is part of producing research, I will sometimes describe my research process in the present tense.

**Lines of becoming with the research**

In my research, I am part of the dynamic relationships between the participants and other non-human entities, such as words in children’s text-like writings, talks and thinking about writing development, and readings of transcendental empiricism in which affect is powerful (i.e. a power to affect and be affected, becoming-other). These relationships take many forms, from observations to conversations of shared educational procedures and emotional experiences. I noticed how these dynamic and transforming relationships create different ways of thinking, doings and being in the research; research becomes “a mode of becoming” (Waterhouse, 2011:106), a becoming with the research.

The following excerpt in my research journal, produced on the fifth day of the pilot study, will serve as an example of how various lines of becoming with the research are created.

> I'm confused - I have spent hours, days, and years teaching and observing children [as a teacher and as a teacher educator]. Suddenly it is so hard. What to observe? Things happen all the time. At different places. In different ways. Some are expected. Some “just happen” as the children say. How will I know I won’t miss the good part?

Research journal, 2009-11-06

This event maps a turning point in the larger assemblage of research. It folds and unfolds conflicting thoughts between the conceptualization of data, of data collecting methods and of becoming researcher that create new lines of thinking, doings and being with the research.

**Lines of rethinking data in practice**

First, the excerpt from of the research journal connects to a line of disruption of what counts as data. As I was troubled over missing “the
good part” in collecting data, I expressed an assumption of data as if it would have predefined and even hierarchical identities with corresponding predetermined capacities (e.g. of being good or bad). Although data was talked about as if it had more or less stable meaning in my doctoral courses on method, it is not how I experience the on-site data and the process of data production. The data were not there, waiting for me, the researcher, to observe them or document them on the video. Instead data happened. Data came into existence in the course of the inquiry. Along readings of poststructuralist research and the works of Deleuze and Guattari and on-site activities, I came to problematize the notion of not only data as fixed and stable entities, but also my search for something more like a universal, good writing or writer. For example, early in the research process I had an ambition to write a method book aiming to support teachers on how to best address young children’s writing development drawing on scientific evidence. However, I could not distinguish a “universal” good writer, writing or writing method. Instead, I came to believe in situatedness and to look for what potentialities the studied writing event can create rather than supporting the most common discourses of young children’s writing development. So, my ambition to write an educational book may still live but in a different reading, focusing on multiplicities of processes of writing.

Second, the statement in the research journal, “Things happen all the time. At different places. In different ways. Some are expected. Some ‘just happens’” links to a line that disrupts the predictability of data production processes. My experiences of on-site activities relate to a strong feeling of being unsure in how to address the unintentional and unexpected on-site moments. My uncertainty did not concern a doubt of what and how to collect the unexpected as much as it concerned me abandoning the idea of the researcher as a rational, knowing subject who is required to master the research process. I can feel both emotional and cognitive relief when connecting to transcendental empiricism and ethnography of poststructuralism through readings (see Eakle, 2007; St Pierre, 1997b); a framework in which the unexpected (that occurs through an affective force), as well as affects, are valued in the processes of research. Such unexpected on-site moments are illustrated and discussed in the following writing event.
On the fourth day of the on-site data production, Elisabet, a six-year-old, writes the text, “Niklas, the fireman”. I note on the left side of my field notebook that Elisabet writes alphabetic sentences, turns pages in the notebook, uses colored pencils when making a picture of Niklas, his fire equipment and a house on fire, and that she stands up on the chair in the middle of writing the sentence: “High up it is warm“. I get a feeling that these bodily movements are not just anything and make a star in my notebook. But at this time I am not able to articulate how it relates to the research question. Next day at the on-site data production my attention goes directly to Elisabet, who once again stands on her chair. This time she holds her text-like writing in her hand and talks to her classmate. She looks at her friend and declares, “if the house should catch fire, one should not be a bird”. “Niklas (the fireman), he crept out”, she continues and jumps to the floor (because it is warmest high up). I walk over to my notebook and write, “What does the ‘standing up’ create?”

Back at the office in the same afternoon I re-read my field notes. I notice how the unexpected moment of Elisabet’s standing on a chair when creating her text, troubled my thinking of what to document as data. From this day I observe and document not only the bodily movements and the physical material in much more detail than before, but also the unexpected moments and affect. For example, the star I made in the field notes connected to feelings of surprise, which are an effect of intensity and affect. Affect does not express what something is. Instead it describes various forces that drive becoming (Massumi, 1987:xvi), here, becomings of the research and the researcher. The affect connected to Elisabeth’s writing of “Niklas, the fireman”, thus created a rethinking of what to observe. From primarily documenting what Elisabeth writes or says, i.e. words as being the primary data, I turned to view, hear and feel the entire event, contextually situated.

The example of Elisabet also suggests that intuition (feeling but not knowing how the standing up and Elisabet’s writing connect) is a valuable component that may be part of a researcher’s work in becoming with the research. Marks (2006) explains that “intuition’ offers a route into a richer understanding of the mobility that characterizes the /…/ world” (p. 8). Similarly, following my intuition, in this example, creates a line of analysis and a new way of thinking about what to observe. Following lines of
intuition produces also a sense of consistency with the epistemological focus on processes and differences, openness and experimentation, in this thesis.

**Lines of rethinking methods of collecting data**

The conceptualization of what counts as data in the current inquiry is strongly connected to a second line of disruption that concerns what counts as the methods of collecting data. The field note excerpt of Elisabet writing “Niklas, the fireman” illustrates a taken-for-granted face-to-face method of observation. I observed the young children’s educational writing practices by making video- and audio recordings and taking field notes (see *On-site activities*, p. 57). However, I came to acknowledge that the writing and the results of the article *Images of Writing and the Writing Child* (AI) became data that I used in the large assemblage of the research. For example, how the idea of a “young adult writer”, i.e. a writer who needs to be taught and trained to become the competent adult writer (see AI, pp. 95-113), was part of the contemporary early childhood educational writing practices. Similarly, I collected data when reading educational research and transcendental empiricism parallel with the on-site face-to-face methods of on-site data production (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

In conceptualizing readings, *and* writings, *and* face-to-face observations as methods of collecting on-site data, I acknowledge that most of the exemplified reading in the thesis is separated from the data and their analysis by being placed in chapter 2, *Mapping the territory*. This separation creates an occasionally uncomfortable fit between the readings and the on-site data and analysis. However, by utilizing the separation and produced tension in illustrating the transformative and unpredictable process of research-in-becoming and researcher-in-becoming, my ambition is to exemplify both connections and disconnections that I have experienced when moving between different subjectivities and perspectives, and between various texts and discourses, related to theory, methodology and practice.
Lines of rethinking researcher in practice

Earlier in this section I described how my doubts of what to observe (presented in the excerpt from the research journal, p. 68) provided lines of disruption in relation to what counts as data and in relation to the predictability of on-site data production processes. In the same excerpt I write, “How will I know”, which indicates a researcher who gives priority to “know” and who gets the constituent role in the observation. This statement links to a third line of disruption in rethinking research that troubles the conceptualization of “I”, “me”, the researcher. My on-site experiences raised doubts about my emergence as an autonomous thinking researcher that “knows”. Rather, I experienced the power in the event of observation. Things happened. But how did they happen? What part did I as a researcher play? And how? In relation to poststructural readings I began to articulate the process of “being there”, of observing, and of becoming researcher, as effects of various relations. For example, the lens of the video camera framing what to see, and my judgments of what to record, and the teachers’ writing instructions, and memories of my own teaching experiences were all part of the event. I as a researcher was thus only one of many parts in the event that created the act of on-site activities, such as observation.

Consequently, questioning the “I”, the autonomous thinking researcher, also involved questioning my values and expectations. I noticed how I problematized the view from which I conducted the inquiry. In the beginning of the on-site research process, I noted that I viewed the researched through a lens of a teacher and a teacher educator, with an interest in exploring, and with knowledge and experiences of development, processes and learning within the educational context. It was not a deliberate action. Instead I realized that I, at this point, wanted to be both a researcher and a teacher. I struggle with various questions like: “What goes into observing as a researcher and what goes into observing as a teacher?”; “Why is it I want to be both a researcher and a teacher?”; “What does it do to my on-site performance or to the research?” and “How is research meant to be?” These questions may be a result of thinking about my search for one identity, the researcher (my commitment when doing research). However, exploring the multiple “I”
(e.g. the teacher and the participant research observer) allows me to give account of different conceptualizations, and thus reading the research “in interested and untimely ways” (Masny, 2009:15) from the view of a teacher and a researcher. Throughout the inquiry I noticed that forms of difference are an important component that drives my process of researcher-in-becoming. Difference is created and re-created as I question diverse ideas, beliefs and my values. It is an ongoing series of doings: doing field notes, doing video recordings and doing on-site interviews.

In summary, the insights that begin to surface in writing the section research- and researcher-in-becoming not only have implications for acknowledging and valuing my becoming in the research process but also implications for the research project. It offers a way to conceptualize the productive potentiality of values and beliefs in the research process. Rather than trying to control or refute its influence, I engage in acknowledging the differences created when “being there” or when writing research. Also, writing this section (Research- and researcher-in-becoming) via transcendental empiricism offers a way to fold and unfold the parts of my experience of the research project as intertwined in complex relationships.

**Analysis in practice**

Taking a post-structurally-oriented framework involves an inductive approach for analyzing and reporting data. It also includes creative work with concepts and methods commensurable with the epistemology of transcendental empiricism that calls for an experimentation of events.

**Analysis as nomadic connections**

Earlier in this chapter I outlined how affect and difference are important components that drive the processes of research-in-becoming and becoming researcher (see Research- and researcher-in-becoming, p. 66). These components came to be vital also in the processes of data analyses. In these processes there is an interplay between coding and finding ways to map new lines of thinking (i.e. lines of flights), in which affect and
difference are important components. Following Deleuze, “[t]hinking would then mean discovering, inventing, new possibilities” (Deleuze, 1962/1983:101). Inspired by Eakle’s (2007) creative translation of Deleuze and Guattari into a nomadic research practice, I will illustrate the moving, transforming and ongoing processes of data analyses in which the concepts of traces, walking through the data and mapping are used (Eakle, 2007:483). These concepts serve as an aid to describe what connections happen and what potentialities they may create.

In doing the analysis I map the data, the traces, produced in the writing event, i.e., that which is “left behind, the past, the prints and remains” (Eakle 2007: 483). Although these data, traces, involved video and still images and sound, they were sooner or later reduced to words for the sake of analysis. Initially I map these traces in relation to three areas, or territories: the content of writing practice (e.g. exploring letters, creating alphabetic text or text-like writing), the social process (e.g. individual or collaborative writing), and the context (e.g. children or teacher initiated work, material, time and place) using qualitative analytic software. Data and analysis were closely entangled in this research process. I transcribed and coded the data, which of course entailed a degree of interpretation. But within this process I was troubled when reducing data to words and struggled indeed with how to represent data. For instance, how can I reduce becomings to words that are fixed with a single identity? Or, how can I present the relations, flows and connections between various human and non-human elements? I started to explore with words and concepts to create explanations of the data and elaborated on how to represent the context of on-site inquiry (see AII & AIII, Chapter 5). In transcribing, coding, analyzing and reporting the data, I noticed how the words I used influenced and was influenced by not only the research design and practice, but also by, for example, memories connected to my own experiences of teaching writing. Every time I looked at my data I realized how thinking happened differently as a result of different connections taking place. This recognition, together with St. Pierre’s work on transgressive data (1997a) and others experimenting with the thinking of Deleuze and Guattari (cf. Eakle, 2007; Waterhouse, 2011), created supplementary ways of conceptualizing data. Indeed, my experience is that data are never transparent or neutral. Instead, I think of data as fluid
and in flux, and in nomadic terms I read data in relation to what connections are created and what is produced.

Mapping the traces produced in the writing event and the related thinking made in my research journal (as previously described) is, according to Eakle, one aspect of doing analysis. Another aspect of analysis involves walking through data “which is an exploration of data as if you were an open and receptive traveler in a new and unknown territory that you want to make familiar before designing an itinerary” (Chavez, 2004, as cited in Eakle, 2007:483). In walking the data I read, listen and watch through the various data documentations (e.g. transcripts of video-recordings and field notes) again and again. This exploration of data creates a process of map making, which refers to a third aspect of analysis (Eakle, 2007). I color words and text sequences in different colors. The coloring creates data chunks. I draw lines between data within and across writing events. My office is wallpapered with data on large pieces of paper, a work that resulted in fragmented montages, or maps, of words, colors, lines and signs. When taking a step back and looking at the map on the walls, I notice that certain chunks of words come forward due to, for instance, the color (e.g. red) while other colors make the words recede (e.g. blue).

Early in the process of analysis my research maps depend strongly on on-site research traces of the writing events at the South School and the North school. However, in the ensuing analysis the maps come to involve my expression of these data through the lens of transcendental empiricism focusing connections, multidirectionality and transformation. Lines, signs, arrows and colors create multi-directional relations between different data within and between the documented educational writing events. Accordingly the mapped data are assembled with regard to their relations with other data. I further elaborated with the nomadic maps creating what is presented as flow charts in the article Children’s Text-Like Writing as Nomadic Writing (AII, p. 127; 164).

The various maps suggest how sense happens (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987), rather than being a static representation or an absolute description of how the young children’s writing events were created. These nomadic maps not only made the connections between data with relevance to each other visible, but they also made visible the multiple
interpretive lines of analysis. I enter the maps time and time again and most often I create new thinking. Mapped data might connect up with readings or discussions of mine and thus provide potential to create new lines of analysis. I find that the map I look at has no beginning and no end; just a middle from which several lines of analysis take off in different directions. For example, in an early stage of the process of data related to the article *Five Days and a Story: The Emergence of an Educational Writing Process in a Swedish Early Childhood Classroom* (AIII) several different lines were created. One line linked to how the interaction between the two children created potentialities or limitations for writing and becoming writer. Another line of analysis connected to how the teacher interactions created potentials for writing. And a third line of analysis took off in relation to how the writing process was produced over time. Accordingly, the data have no stable identity that can be coded and categorized in ways that stays the same across time; rather the data and the analysis are produced in the larger research event.

In walking through data my thinking of what is subtle but significant not only involves the empirical traces, but also theoretical concepts, emotions and memories in what I at times experience as a total mishmash. St. Pierre states that “analysis is thinking” (2011a:7). Although I agree with St. Pierre I would like to add see, hear and feel, because thinking is hard to explain. What do I actually do when I think? Analysis is a hard form of thinking. At times I wish I could just read a handbook of how this thinking is done, that is, how the analytical work in which the nomadic connections are taken seriously is made. My walk through the data is often a solitary and time-consuming work, but in the production of the articles (AII & AIII, Chapter 5) the data were collaboratively discussed between the authors and in research seminars of video analysis. Things that struck us as interesting, changes that raised questions, or movements that surprised were discussed and collated. This collaborative work created opportunities for clarifying the emergent idea.

In sum, the process of analysis in the research crisscrosses conventions (e.g. an initial coding) and new territories (e.g. map making, see *flow charts* in Article II, p. 127; 164) in which tracing, walking the data and map making are three interconnected, performative and transformative ways of collecting, assembling, and analyzing data. These
processes of analyses are creative endeavors that emphasize the thoughts and ideas folded, unfolded and refolded by the event.

**Nomadic writing and reporting in practice**

Although the written format of this text asks for a beginning and a chronological order of presentation, I must accentuate that I am not able to pinpoint a particular starting point in my process of becoming researcher. Was it the first day at the on-site data production? Or, was it when I write the method in my application of dissertation? Or, was it when I as a teacher observe the children? Or, when I myself as a child explored and struggled with letters and texts? Instead, the process takes me in what feels like a web in which, for instance, on-site observations connect to past reading, which connects with new readings, which links to new observations etcetera. As I am trained to have a beginning, and an end when writing, I got frustrated when not being able to pinpoint an actual beginning of this thesis. It resulted in difficulties writing anything, before creating a line of writing the thesis as an effect of the larger research event in which various experiences of disruptions are explored and exposed.

Already in writing these words new relations are created and my perspectives change. It means that the text I create should not to be seen as an accurate reproduction of pre-existing “truths”. Instead, it is an effect of relationships between beliefs, re-read field notes, methodological scholarly literature, feelings, and other forces (e.g. social, economic and political). Taking a poststructuralist viewpoint via concepts as laid out by Deleuze and Guattari, challenges not only the notion of being able to reveal exogenous truths, but also the sometimes taken-for-granted notions of the writer as an autonomous, thinking agent (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

Moreover, writing the thesis unfolds and enfolds fixed and creative lines of how to report research. I write “fixed”, because this text links to “acceptable” strategies of reporting research. I say “creative”, because I explore ways of reporting research in which processes, feelings, material and knowledge are in focus. Just in that I use the written mode and create
a text adjusted for the printed page, I follow the dominant way of reporting academic work. This printed construction of the thesis is a result of a process involving readings, discussions and investigations about what modes to use when constructing the thesis and how to present the connectivity, the movement and change of the researched processes of writing. For example, I discussed with a computer educationalist, a software engineer, a communicator and an advertising agent about possible ways to present the analyses. Was it possible to build a virtual world that takes the form of a computer-based simulated environment? The outcome of these discussions, and discussions with my supervisors, was that the thesis should follow the conventional way of reporting academic work in absence of time, knowledge and money. However, still the question live with what credibility and reliability I can acknowledge moving, shifting relations between different modes and media when the thesis do not of any note use the potentials of different multimodal resources and when the chosen written mode fixates the relations. Accordingly, the present thesis plugs into methodological discussions surrounding the problem of representation outlined by international researchers like St. Pierre (2011b) and Leander and Rowe (2006). My methodological troubles in relation to the problem of representation may connect with research projects not yet imagined.

A second line of nomadic writing is linked to the responsibility of the writer in writing. I explore the boundaries of academia, creativity, and self-indulgence in relation to the participants and the data. I edit as I write in order to seek more descriptive ways or a more richly nuanced exploration of what I want to say. The words are important components in understanding my becoming ways allowing me to take responsibility for my authorial power over the relations between me as a researcher, the participants, the data production, the analysis and the reporting strategies. The words transform in relation to the event and sense emerges as part of that unique assemblage.

Understanding writing as nomadic writing thus displays the researcher and the writer, and the research process and the processes of writing, and the product (the thesis and the articles) as deeply entwined. All are in focus. This means that I as a writer and this product are continuously and mutually produced in relation to different elements. It is a trying path to
rethink how to approach research in poststructuralist ethnographic context. However, the concepts of Deleuze and Guattari, such as lines, nomadic, and becoming, offer a way to understand complexity, and to comprise flows and intensities. There is thus a risk that the text, here the thesis, might “become so multidimensional, turning around and around on itself, that it will be impossible to take in” (Ellis, 2001: 614). Keeping this risk in mind, the structure of the writing is an important aspect. For example, reporting processes of data production indicates approval of the academic conventions of writing. And, reporting these processes as lines means acknowledging how it happens in an ongoing process of transformation.

In sum, the section *Analysis in practice* demonstrates how the concepts tracing, walking the data and mapping via transcendental empiricism can function and what they can create. Hence, “putting theory at the center of analysis/…/shows how theoretical approaches radically influence what can be found in the data and how it can be found there” (Honan et al., 2000:9). Transcendental empiricism offers possibilities to think about the processes of analyzing and reporting data as produced by assemblages. These processes invert binary categories such as individual and social data production, human and non-human data, and creative and theoretical reporting of data. Transcendental empiricism also allows a way to create tools for addressing questions of quality in qualitative research.

**The trajectory of research quality**

Questions surrounding issues of how to legitimize and validate qualitative research practices and representations have been constructed and articulated in different ways, not only between modern and post-informed research (e.g. poststructural and postmodern research) but also within, for instance, poststructural research. Some qualitative researchers have argued that the term validity, with roots in a positivist tradition, is not applicable to qualitative research (cf. Lather, 1993; St. Pierre, 1997a). However, still with a need to evaluate the quality of qualitative research researchers have adopted terms such as trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (cf. Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and
created new constructions of validity (cf. “transgressive validity” (Lather, 1993), “positional validity” (Macbeth, 2001), and “immanent reflexivity” (Waterhouse, 2011)).

There are thus various terms used to evaluate the quality of the research and a variety of ways to conceptualize these terms. Generally, researchers construct validity of their work from negotiations of theoretical and epistemological assumptions (Koro-Ljungberg et.al, 2009; Pillow, 2003). Consequently, “paradigmatic consistency” (Waterhouse, 2011:148) becomes an important marker of quality in qualitative research. Related to the thesis, the paradigmatic consistency implies a construction of a conceptual vocabulary and a research design that is consistent with the on-site writing events and with transcendental empiricism and with the nomadic thought of Deleuze and Guattari. In this thesis, the aim, to analyze, describe and discuss how processes of writing are constituted in the educational writing event, resonates strongly with the nomadic thought of Deleuze and Guattari and transcendental empiricism in that it addresses how processes of writing emerge, continue and transform in the early childhood educational writing practices. Exploring how writers, writings and educational writing processes are constituted in the writing event are done through analysis of audio and video recording, field notes, small interviews and document collections of children’s text-like writings, which open up to multiple lines of analysis. Together the three articles put forward multilayered accounts on how writers, writings and educational writing processes, such as a teaching method of writing, are created in the relations, flows and connections constituted in the writing events. Finally, rather than developing conclusions from the inquiry with a notion of absolute truth, the objective of the thesis is to create different thinking and doings.

Connecting paradigmatic consistency to quality of research is a marker of quality that can say something about how quality is produced and how to evaluate quality. Paradigmatic consistency works similarly to what Lather (1993) demonstrates when describing how quality is constructed from within the larger research assemblage, or thesis assemblage, in which its paradigm, its participants, its author, and its readers are involved. She offers categories of validity and posits
“rhizomatic validity” aiding to evaluate poststructuralist research. Moreover, she highlights that rhizomatic validity values that which

“generate new locally determined norms of understanding/…/proliferates open-ended and context-sensitive criteria/…/supplements and exceeds the stable and permanent/…/puts conventional discursive procedures under erasure. (Lather, 1993:686-687)

In this thesis, Lather’s criteria on rhizomatic validity (e.g. “exceeds the stable and permanent”) are not only useful in attempting to evaluate the quality but also in guiding the strategies used to shape and direct the research during its emergence. One example of such strategies is linked to the paradigmatic consistency of the thesis. As described earlier in this chapter, the research process involved looping backwards and forwards between design and implementation to ensure consistency between literature, research question, on-site activities, data analysis and reporting. For example, in the section On-site research activities, I expose how the data and on-site data production came to be treated differently (pp. 57-60), to involve physical and bodily elements and to focus on the relations, flows and connections, which expanded or changed the on-site activities. Also, in the later part of the onsite-activities, when the conceptual framework was laid down, the relationship between data and the conceptual work of analysis were continuously monitored. For instance, at one point when I experienced no new thinking of specific events emerging from the on-site data (or traces), my supervisor reminded me to keep looking for intensities and the unexpected. Hence, paradigmatic consistency is a non-linear, on-going and situated process throughout the entire research process.

Another aspect of quality in research connects to the value of the completed research. Partly this is actualized in reporting the findings and partly it will be actualized in relation to how sense emerges as the reader engages with the thesis assemblage and thus creating potential for immanent assessment. Moreover, issues of validity are strongly connected to reflexivity. Various forms of reflexivity are forefronted as a methodological tool to assess legitimacy and validity in qualitative research (cf. Lather, 1993; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). In this chapter,
The Nomadic inquiry, I have put forward multilayered, conceptual and empirical accounts and reflections related to the design and the carrying out of the inquiry, i.e. the assemblage that was created when I collected and analyzed the data while reading Deleuze and Guattari. Although the construction of my inquiry unfolds and enfolds in relation to the systematics constructed, my examination and re-examination, and my exploration of concepts, I realize I am just one part of many, but a central one, in this construction. Rather than highlighting my role (the researcher’s) in the construction of the inquiry, the accounts and reflections in this section aim to accentuate the connections between the researched and researcher, and theory and practice, in the inquiry. Thus, the reflective work in the research was not undertaken to attain a more objective interpretation of the processes of writing in the two classes, or an attempt for self-transparency. Instead, in emphasizing the ongoing processes, transformations, assemblages and trajectories of the research, this reflective work is an attempt to invite the reader to conversations about the contingent, evolving and messy doings of the present research, in which, for example, the doing of deconstructing subjectivity and representation is stressed. However, although subjectivity and representation are disrupted in the examples and reflections described in The trajectory of rethinking interpretation (pp. 60-79), I realize that also this reflective work is neither transparent nor innocent. For example, my doings and reflections as well as the selected examples show only limited possibilities of how to respond to such research assemblages. Moreover, it is impossible to step outside myself, or to step outside the research event, to examine my subjectivity or how the event is made. As a consequence, the reflective work in the thesis creates a process of accepting the limits of the partiality of my (the researchers’) understandings and the limits of the knowledge (e.g. as transparent, generalizable, and as the “truth”). Accepting these limits implicates a responsibility for me (the author), as well as for the reader, “to analyze, question, and re-question her/his own knowledges and assumptions” (Pillow, 2003:189) achieved in the writing and the reading. Consequently, the reflexivity related to the current research project is a continuous and situated work that opens up to multiple thinking, of which present thesis is only one. Reflexivity, then, is,
as Waterhouse states, “an immanent process, a becoming, that is reinvented in each research event” (Waterhouse, 2011:144).

The methodological trajectories of the three articles

In describing some of my “walks” through the processes of inquiry, as described above, I have moved along points such as research question, on-site data production, data analyses and data reporting. Describing inquiry as nomadic affirms the process as dynamic and creative; a process that follows transforming and unpredictable trajectories that resulted in three articles within this research project.

The process of creating the three articles lasted from 2009 to 2012. These articles are here organized chronologically as they happened in the research process. Each article is an effect of a complex network of, for example, readings, analyses, experiences and ontological and epistemological assumptions. As such, each article is a compound of processes. Consequently, the production of the three articles have not moved sequentially from basic to more advanced, although I have become more confident with the chosen discursive, relational and nomadic perspectives over the years.

All three articles aspire to respond to a call for an expanded approach to early childhood writing research (Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Hagood, 2009; Juzwik et al., 2006). Each article contributes various conceptual and analytical tools for understanding how processes of writing are constituted in the writing event and what the event offer potentials for, an understanding that corresponds with the demands of a society where media, digital technology and new forms of communication and literacy are celebrated and conceptualized as important in education.

In the upcoming section I describe the preparation particular to each article and provide a brief background to their origins. Moreover, I describe the processes of analyses. By this description I illustrate how the ontological and epistemological stance and the research processes of collecting, selecting and analyzing data evolve and thus lead to three articles. I also identify how these processes happen under mutual
influence of each other. The following questions have been a compass for explicating the opening processes of the three articles:

- What directed the orientation of the article?
- How was the data collected?
- How was the data selected?
- What methodological observations were made?

The complete articles are in Chapter 5, followed by a summary of its content and specific findings.

**Article I**

**Images of Writing and the Writing Child**

*The orientation of the article*

Undertaking the review of literature was an essential part in developing my understanding of what has already been done in the research field of early childhood writing, how it has been researched and what the key issues are. At the same time as I was doing this literature review, I parallely collected data for my empirical study. In this process I explored several connections and discontinuities of ideas about children as writers and their educational writing practices that were visual in the on-site data as well as in the review of literature. In considering these relations, the purpose of Article I was to describe and problematize different ideas (referred to as images) of writing and the writing child.

*The process of data production and selection*

In order to gain perspective on contemporary ideas about children as writers and their educational writing practices I produced not only data of scholarly literature including research within the fields of writing, early childhood education and childhood studies, manuals for teachers, national curriculums and the Education Act, but also log books, reports, and journals of the national union.
As for the issue of demarcation, there were a few problematic aspects to consider. The first aspect concerned how far back in time I should collect data. In the reading and analyzing process it became important to include thoughts about writing and the child as a writer, described from the time when the first Swedish schools (‘folkskola’) were established. Therefore I decided to go as far back as 1842 because that was when the ‘Folkskola’ (elementary school) was prescribed by law.

A second aspect concerned the problem of collecting data conducted in different contextual settings, in particular different national settings. I started out to re-search peer reviewed articles in Sweden in order to map the national research within the field of writing related to early childhood. However, remarkably few articles were published within this field, which called for several changes in the search process. The scarcity of research also called for the need to include relevant articles and texts from countries other than Sweden. As a result I extended the research to include Anglo-Saxon research since early childhood writing research has been lively in those countries as well as influential within the Swedish research context. I was mindful of the problematic aspects of including research conducted in a social, cultural and educational context other than the Swedish. Consequently, it became important to describe contextual aspects, not only in relation to international cultural variations but also to differences relevant to the purpose of the article.

The Analytical approach

I focused on the talking and thinking about educational practices, theories of writing, societal conceptions and subject-specific teaching models in the selected documents and consequently these categories worked as an analytical framework and an aid for an otherwise inductive approach. The resulting constructions of the child as a writer and writing based on these understandings were reinforced by beliefs and ideas, i.e. images of the writer and writing. In this work I was inspired by the way the new social studies of childhood (cf. Hultqvist & Dahlberg, 2001) used the concept images. It worked as an analytical tool and helped me to document, analyze and map repeated and generalized sets of materialized ideas about
writing, children as writers and children’s writing practices. Another analytical tool was the concept formation. Inspired by genealogy as described by Foucault (1969/2002), I used this concept to describe a field where specific questions relating to educational practices, theories of writing, societal conceptions and subject-specific teaching models came together. In this way, the analytical concept formation refers to how these factors are constructed. Each formation is based on a mapping of historical regularity of thoughts and ideas, which are received from the talking and thinking about writing and the writing child in a multiple of written texts.

Analyzing this talking and thinking through a historical lens had a specific analytical purpose. The purpose of history was not to discover the roots of writing, but, as previously said, to make visible the connections and discontinuities that cross current educational writing practices.

**Article II**

*Children’s Text-Like Writing as Nomadic Writing*

*The orientation of the article*

The starting point of this article emerged partly from the findings of the previous article, Article I, that indicated a need to develop a more inclusive and multidimensional way of conceptualizing children’s educational writing practices, and partly from experiences of on-site data production. As I was talking to the children about their writings they often explained the emergence of their writings by saying: “It just happens”. This affected me and created an interest in exploring how the children’s writings are actually made. Consequently, the research process of Article I and the children’s statement: “It just happens”, were some of the elements that inspired an interest in researching how text-like writings are made. This meant researching the multi-contextuality, the exploration and the multiplicities of writing. In this article I addressed the following research questions:
• What elements and relationships of elements are brought into play in the three writing examples?
• How do these elements and relationships of elements combine and transform?
• What writings and writers do the three writing events provide as potentialities?

On-site data production and selection

In the project reported in this thesis, approximately 70 hours of video recordings and 30 hours of audio recording from educational writing events have been documented. In addition, I took field notes, collected examples of children’s written products as well as conducted informal talks about the children’s products and activities during educational writing practices. These data collected at the on-site inquiry together with the reading and thinking in relation to Article I, and its results, made up all the data in the production of the article.

The purpose to explore how text-like writings are made implies a focus on sequences that constitute a very large portion of the data collected at the on-site inquiry. A key issue was to decide what instances to select. In light of the purpose, I decided to focus on events rather than individuals and to include different types of writing events and different pedagogical settings. I selected three examples that exemplify common writing practices as shown by the research data. These examples were characterized as: (1) A collective production of a screen-based “letter jingle”, which refers to the exploration, training and experimentation of alphabetic letters. (2) An individual event of making a “pirate book”, which relates to the pedagogical practice of authoring a pictorial story. (3) A teacher-framed production of an “animal riddle”, which refers to the pedagogical practice of children copying a collectively made text.

Analytical approach

In order to document how young children’s text-like writings are made, it was important to make detailed analyses of the processes of writing as
they happen. Inspired by the thinking of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987), I adopted a nomadic perspective, which offered a way to analyze how the processes of writing emerge, continue and transform by focusing how the ongoing relationships between human (e.g. bodies), non-human (e.g. paper or computer) and other bodies (e.g. bodies of knowledge) are constituted in the children’s educational writing events. Consequently, the analysis starts, not with the subject, but with the relations, or the in-betweens, between human and non-human elements. This meant that I could analyze both the product, i.e. the text, the modes and other factors, and the writer – not as separate entities, but as continuously entangled relations creating new processes of writing and writers.

The Deleuzian-Guattarian concept of assemblage was an essential analytical concept. It enabled me to document and analyze the networks of movements, i.e. assemblages in which the text and the young writer are produced in a mutual and continuous interactivity between various factors, flows and forces. The following concepts were used as analytical tools: turning points, bordering and becoming-writer. Turning points and bordering are concepts that refer to how movements may be broken at some points (Lenz Taguchi, 2010:37) and thus create a break in the course of events. This may lead to other ways of conceptualizing the situation. These concepts gave me the opportunity to observe how assemblages of writing continually proceed, combine, change directions and follow new trajectories i.e., to observe how the text and the write emerged. The concept becoming aided me in analyzing what the text and the writer can do, i.e. what happens to the assemblages. With the concept becoming I explored what affects the assemblages brought about and how the relationships limited or extended the becoming of the text and the writer, a continuous process of becoming.
Article III

Five Days and a Story: The Emergence of an Educational Writing Process in a Swedish Early Childhood Classroom

The orientation of the article

After article II, which had a focus on how text-like writings and writers are made, I realized the need to explore the constitutive role of different pedagogical framings and teaching in the processes of early childhood educational writing. From the beginning I addressed questions of how and when the teachers’ activities were most intense, and together with what, within the writing events. However, as the analytical work continued, I was repeatedly puzzled over the unpredictability and how it changed over time both in relation to when the activities became intense, and in relation to what, e.g. the computer, desk interactivity, or instructions. It became clear how completely the activities were situated in a particular event and how the teachers’ activities were one of many performative agents in the production of a writing method articulated by the teachers. The transformation and emergence of an educational writing process over a period emerged as interesting to explore.

On-site data production and selection

The empirical material in the long-term ethnographic study and its first analysis opened not only for the mapping of how young children’s text-like writing events are created, described in article II, but it also generated new questions related to how the processes of writing transform and develop over a certain period. These questions resulted in a change of the design of on-site data production. It was changed from a general design where it was not possible to follow either specific individuals or particular writing events over time to a design aimed to include documentation of processes of writing that develop over time (see Tracing the empirical setting, pp. 49-53). I documented consecutive lessons that were related to each other by belonging to the same writing event. The particular writing event, “My Story”, is selected from this data corpus and illustrates how the processes of writing are articulated, developed and produced as a...
teaching method of creative writing during a work period of five days. “My Story” is notable for allowing the study of the emergence of processes of writing over time in relation to a specific writing method and specific individuals. The process of this writing method is also notable for the many and various ways in which the process of creative writing emerged and changed over a certain time.

**Analytical approach**

In this article, as in article II, I based the analysis of the creative writing process, “My Story” on the rhizomatic perspective, drawing on the philosophical work of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987). The rhizomatic perspective allowed me to take the relations between assemblages, factors and flows into account and thus to analyze how the writing process emerge, continue, and change. The concept of assemblage was therefore a crucial component in the analysis and description of how the educational writing process is produced. Likewise, the concepts of affect and lines of flights turned out to be essential to the interpretation as they provided a language to articulate the shifting ways in which the creative writing process unfolded and emerged over time.
5. Appended Articles: Findings and analyses

Chapter five consists of three appended articles. A summary of the context where the specific findings are highlighted and reflected upon follows each article. The chapter ends by discussing some aspects of considering the three articles as entangled becomings.
Summary and reflections on Article I: Images of Writing and the Writing Child

Young children’s educational writing practices are deeply connected to beliefs and ideas formulated in history – both the history of writing itself and the context of children as writers and their educational writing practices. This first article of the thesis provides an account of how sets of materialized beliefs and ideas about writing, children as writers as well as their educational writing practices are embedded in different images and how these images transform over time. Also, formations are portrayed as assemblages of the talking and thinking about writing and the young writer in relation to educational practices, theories of writing, societal conceptions and subject-specific teaching models (see AI, p. 85 for further clarifications of image and formation).

The purpose of the article was to describe and problematize certain aspects of images and formations of writing and the writing child in order to gain perspective on contemporary ideas about children as writers and their educational writing practices. The discursive lens of this article reveals how these images produce formations defining how to practice, articulate and understand writing as well as aspects of the writing child. Four formations were identified: The formation of writing as skills; The formation of writing as developmental; The formation of writing as social phenomenon and The formation of writing as semiotic activity. The production of these four formations was inspired by Foucault’s double methodological approach (1969/2002), reflected in the concepts of archaeology and genealogy. On one hand, it entails historicizing, i.e. describing the thinking and talking about writing and the writing child in a specific historical context. On the other hand, it involves an exploration of the effects of the formations in the form of supplementary ways of conceptualizing writing and the writing child. Rather than criticizing or standardizing images of writing and writers, this article offers an exploration of the circumstances regarding a formation within which different images are created.

Using images and formations as analytical tools facilitates the understanding of how certain aspects of writing and the writing child are emphasized within and across the formations, whilst others become less meaningful and important, even though they might be as fruitful or as
“true” in their own ways. The findings suggest how the formation of ‘writing as skills’, originating in the early 20th century, order and emphasize the image of a young adult writer as a writer who needs to be taught and trained and given basic skills in preparation for future work. In the process of becoming an adult writer, it was therefore important to master more and more advanced writing tasks. The dominant image in the formation of ‘writing as developmental’ involved knowing where the child was in relation to developmental stages in order to make the right educational moves, and for this reason writing abilities were emphasized. When preparations for adult writing-life are stressed and projected onto the young child (i.e. an image of the young adult writer), educational writing practices tend to be framed by rules and expectations of what is conceptualized as the normal writing behavior. This means that the young writer with agency, expressing his or her own thoughts, wishes or experiences, was not emphasized in the talking and thinking about educational writing practices, subject-specific teaching models, theories of writing, or in societal conceptions. However, in the third formation, the formation of ‘writing as social phenomena’, the dominant image had the quality of illustrating a competent and active young writer embedded in the social world, i.e. a writer articulating his or her own thoughts and experiences. In this formation the dominant image of writing focuses on the meaningfulness and usefulness of writing to children and may also be seen as a stage to some future state. The image of the writing child relates both to being a writer and to becoming a writer. Finally, the formation of ‘writing as semiotic activity’ arranges and emphasizes a young writer that is willing and capable to act flexibly in a constantly changing environment and society, which means that both structure and agency are highlighted.

The key finding implies that the image of the young adult writer has lived on through the various formations although other images may transform across the formations. For example, the dominant image of how writing is conceptualized has changed from one formation to another. However, the young adult writer (taught and trained in basic skills to become a competent adult writer) is foregrounded in all four formations.

In taking a critical child perspective (cf. Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Saar, Hägglund & Löfdahl, 2009), I end this article by discussing the
possibilities to weave new images. I also emphasize the importance to critically engage in the talking and thinking about writing and the writing child as well as in the ongoing collisions between and within different images and formations.

The insights into how various social constructed images of writing and children as writers coexist and in some ways form and structure children’s writing practices of today were essential for the continued process of the research project. In hindsight, I understand that this study contributed greatly not only to gaining perspective on contemporary ideas about children as writers and their educational writing practices as described above, but also to the direction of my continued research processes. For example, the readings in relation to the production of this article and the findings of the article provided an orientation for the on-site research activities towards exploring how writing and the writing child are constructed and transformed within and across the writing events. The readings and the findings of AI are thus part of the data used in AII and AIII. Moreover, exploring the multidimensional processes of young children’s educational writing practices called for a need in the research process to theorize and describe how writing and the writing child are produced in the ongoing struggles between and within different images in order to address the full complexity of the field of early childhood writing.
Summary and reflections on Article II: 
Children’s Text-Like Writing as Nomadic Writing

This article discusses how educational writing events produce various processes, trajectories, of writings and writers. Three examples of writing practices (*The Letter Jingle*, *The Pirate Book*, and *The Animal Riddle*, pp. 133-144) were selected and analyzed. Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987), this interpretative study explores the six- to seven-year-old children's educational writing practices from a nomadic perspective.

The analyses describe how text-like writing takes place in the “in-between” as an effect of creating and recreating interactive connections between children, affects, talk, bodily movements and materiality, and against a background of the new media world and a changed childhood. Taking a nomadic perspective and using concepts of Deleuze and Guattari challenge the conceptualization that seems to take the notion of the flexible and competent writer, a social agent, for granted. The nomadic perspective does not by consensus privilege the autonomous individual as has been commonly accepted. Rather, it allows for an exploration and description of the ongoing and transformative relations between different elements constituted in, and constituting, the events of the two Swedish early childhood classrooms.

Research building on understandings emphasizing agency, interaction and social practice are important contributions within the growing body of early childhood writing research in that they highlight multidimensional processes of writing and issues involved in studying young children’s paths into writing and their way into a community of writers. This article moves along such a trail of researchers emphasizing the importance of research on multidimensional processes of writing (cf. Björkvall & Engblom, 2010; Masny, 2009) in which various elements, such as talk, bodily movement, computer, alphabetic letters, experiences of adventure and popular media, instructions, educational discourses, and economic and social forces, are intertwined in complex relationships. The specific contribution of the present study to this growing body of research on writing involves an exploration of children's writing as nomadic, which
means putting the focus on the flow of change and relations between
elements (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987), a flow in which the writer, the
writing and different elements are mutually interacting in the text-
production. I posit nomadic writing as a way to account for the
connective, transformative and ongoing processes constituted in the event
in early childhood educational writing practices. Accordingly,
conceptualizing writing as nomadic writing points toward a shift of focus
from the competent writer as an autonomous text maker, to the event and
its intertwined relationships of elements as the nodal point of production.

The analyses illuminated how these relationships, or writing
trajectories, allow for the production of diverse texts, in which verbal and
written words are mixed with symbols and colored pictures (i.e., text-like
writing), and for becomings of diverse writers (e.g., becoming sign-
processer). In specific ways, the findings suggest how the writing
trajectories may turn into an experiment with conventional alphabetic
letters and the construction of iconic text and the exploration of becoming
a school-conforming writer. Interconnectedness and transformation are,
from a nomadic perspective, contained in the “and” (Deleuze & Guattari,
1980/1987:25) and are vital to children becoming writers.

The writing trajectories described in the article may be seen as
expressions of children’s active exploration of learning to write in relation
to context, tools and norms as shown by, for example, by Vygotskij
(1978:118), or as expressions of scholastic immaturity or general stages in
the development of the competent writer (Lundberg, 2008). I argue,
however, that the analyses connote that these coexisting exploratory,
creative and associative trajectories are effects of the interconnectedness
and the transformations, i.e., that which happens or the dynamism of
writing events. It is these continuous connections that form, transform
and create the writer and the writing. Hence, the creative non-linear
processes create the potential for a variety of relations to the text and the
writing, and consequently for the ways in which the writer becomes in a
process with the world. Moreover, the findings describe how becoming
with the world is an effect of relations between different experiences (e.g.,
experiences of educational writing exercises and leisure-time experiences);
not as a dichotomy between, for example, stable educational structures
and unpredictable out-of-school experiences, but as assemblages that
“perform actions, produce effects, and alter situations” (Bennett 2004:355). The analysis illustrates how experiences from, for example, the children's computer games are materialized in a writing event at school (see the example of The Letter Jingle, p. 133). Practices of looking, graphic designs, bodily co-ordination, speed and collective tension are elements that flow from digital resources and computer games into the writing exercises at school, where they change and alter the situation. These processes generate flexible ways of relating to signs, for example, by using them in a variety of ways (e.g., an alphabetic text and/or an iconic text), thus producing new meanings in different contexts.

Using the concepts assemblages, turning points and becomings as analytical tool actualized the question of “how do I present the data?” Analyzing the data from a non-linear and non-representational nomadic perspective created a process of troubling the notion of representation. I was confused in how to write the data as words often are ascribed fixed meaning (see Chapter 4, p. 63, for further elaboration). I was also confused in how to present the continuous movements, the transformations and the unpredictability constituted in the event. Inspired by the work of Leander and Rowe (2006), I created diagrams called flow charts of the various writing trajectories. These flow charts attended to open ways for illustrating how movement, change and flux were created within each particular writing event (see AII, p. 127; 164). In the article I combined these flow charts with narrative descriptions and sequentially and temporally organized transcriptions in order to provide opportunities not only for an illustration of the ongoing movements, but also to provide for a detailed and a temporal description. Together the various ways of presenting the data aim to offer potential to deconstruct the dynamic and evolving character of young children's writing events.

In sum, the three educational writing events analyzed in this article illustrate how the writing event produces potential for training predetermined knowledge and creates potential for new thinking, new doings and new texts that are not yet imagined. Put differently, the findings of the research project contribute to the knowledge in early childhood writing research by applying a set of conceptual tools with the capacity to enable researchers and educators to describe how the text and the writer are constituted in contemporary educational writing practices.
The described findings of how the writing event produce different processes of writing and writers created a further interest in exploring writing, the text and the young writer in relation to different pedagogical framings and teaching.
Summary and reflections on Article III:
Five Days and a Story: The Emergence of an Educational Writing Process in a Swedish Early Childhood Classroom

This study investigates how an educational writing process is made over time. Based on the long-term ethnographic study in a Swedish early childhood classroom, the purpose of this article is to explore and describe how an educational creative writing process, My Story, by the teacher referred to as a teaching method of creative writing, changed and emerged over a period of five days. The questions that guide the study are: (1) What is the creative writing method an effect of? and (2) How does the method emerge and transform over time?

Instead of understanding the institutionalized creative writing method as a way to implement a predicted sequel of knowledge, this article conceptualizes the educational creative writing practice as a nomadic process, i.e., as an ongoing process of transformation and unpredictability. In particular, I was interested in the use of the concept of assemblage, and the analyses of writing processes as assemblages, as formulated in the works of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) (see Chapter 4, p. 90 for further clarifications of the analytical approach). The concept assemblage is useful in that it helps to draw attention to how the educational process is assemblaged, how it changes and emerges, and what potentialities it creates. In that connection, disruptions came to be an essential component in that it created new assemblages, forces and flows or linked up to old assemblages.

This article provides a detailed analysis of how an educational creative writing process, My Story, is articulated, developed and constructed as a teaching method of writing. Eight examples illuminate in various ways this production, from the teacher’s planning and implementation to the six- to seven-year-olds’ presentations of their texts. Taking a nomadic perspective creates openings for an understanding of how the educational creative writing process creates multiple pedagogical trajectories. The analyses illuminate two parallel pedagogical trajectories constituted in the described writing process, My Story. One trajectory, termed “doing method”, related to how the method was created as a process and how it emerged over time. The other trajectory, “doing creativity”, linked to how
the writing process was articulated, developed and constructed. The trajectory of “doing method” referred to a vision and the ideal objective of how both the product and the process should develop from start to end. For example, the teachers assigned, instructed and assisted the children in planning their story in a mind map before starting the construction of their text, and then editing and rewriting. On the other hand, “doing creativity” emerged in moments of affects, i.e., moments in which the children were either expanded or restricted in their capacity to act, which is registered as feelings (e.g., joy and intensity or passivity and sadness). The analyses show that moments of affects were a vital component in the trajectory of “doing creativity” and thus also in the transformation of the writing process as it opens up to new differences. The findings also show how these two trajectories were created concurrently. They moved parallel. They overlapped. They opened up to something and they came to dead ends.

Moreover, the analyses illustrate how creativity in creative writing can be described and understood as an enactment of forces and differences. The findings connote that creativity cannot be detached as a separate entity from the development of writing skills. Rather they are mutually produced in a concurrent and interwoven relationship.

The article concludes with a discussion on the implications for pedagogy. I suggest that understanding educational writing processes, here the teaching method of creative writing, as nomadic, calls for teacher sensitivity in recognizing and exploring a range of possibilities of becomings of writing and writers. Listening, seeing and creating will be important abilities for teachers to recognize moments of change and to turn them into learning events that are as yet unimagined.
The three articles as entangled becomings

In accordance with poststructuralism and the nomad though of Deleuze and Guattari, there is no complete and independent unit in the world. Hence, the three articles cannot be separated from each other, the thesis process, the larger research project or the world. Rather, they are part of and results of intricately intertwined relationships. In the following section I will discuss some aspects of thinking about the three articles as entangled becomings.

First, the three articles unfold and entangle in that they explore different ways of how writing, the text and the writing child are produced, emerge and transform in early childhood educational settings. The historically discursive analysis of the first article (AI) illuminated how the talking and thinking about writing and the writing child has emerged and been transformed in various written texts since the 19th century. Also, the second and third article (AII & AIII, Chapter 5) concerned how writing, the text and the young writer emerged and transformed, that is, how they unfolded within and across educational writing practices in two contemporary Swedish early childhood classrooms. In terms of the production of early childhood educational writing events, the how came to be the research focus around which the articles unfolded as entangled becomings.

Second, the three articles can be understood as entangled becomings within and between the processes of their own production. Although the articles to some extent were produced in a chronological order, they are not considered as separate entities that add up to produce the thesis. Rather, the three articles and the thesis are entangled in a mutual production throughout the research process. As described, the readings and the findings of AI influenced the direction of AII, and AIII, and the thesis (see Chapter 4, p. 86; 89). Concurrently, the thesis process influenced the production of each article, for example, in discussions of the overall purpose and the specific contribution of each article. Also, the readings and the findings of AI came to be part of the data used in AII and AIII and thus created strong connections between them. Similar processes of entanglement were produced between and within all three articles and the thesis (and the larger research project and the world).
Third, the three articles are entangled becomings in relation to the formations constructed in the article *Images of Writing and the Writing Child* (AI). For example, the three examples in the article *Children’s Text-Like Writing as Nomadic Writing* (AII) connect in various ways to the four formations of writing, i.e. the formation of writing as skills, as developmental, as social phenomenon, and as semiotic activity. At first glance, each of these examples can be associated to a certain formation. For instance, the collectively-made and screen-based text-like writing event of the letter jingle (see Example 1, p. 133) at first sight link to the formation of ‘writing as semiotic activity’ as it involves a creative writer using various semiotic resources. However, the analysis illuminated how several flows of writing interact in this event and which, each one in its own way, connect different formations. One flow, in which the sound of a letter is explored and associated with “correct” letter, can connect to the formation of ‘writing as skills’ emphasizing skills such as correlating sound and sign. This writing flow territorializes towards a text-centered writing event, each which in its own way connecting to the fact that he did not write “kladde-kludd” (scribble-scrabble). This flow links to the formation of ‘writing as social phenomena’ in the focus on how writing is negotiated between the children. Yet another flow, a deterritorializing flow, creates a joyful affect that keeps the event going and disrupts the text-centered and school-centered flows.

Moreover, the method of creative writing, in the article *Five Days and a Story: The Emergence of an Educational Writing Process in a Swedish Early Childhood Classroom*, may directly be associated with the formation of ‘writing as social phenomena’, promoting creativity and self-expression. But the findings suggest that the institutionalized creative writing method unfolds and enfolds various writing trajectories producing multiple becomings. Two trajectories were identified, the trajectory of “doing method” and the trajectory of “doing creativity”. The findings illuminated how these trajectories emerge and transform, and thus unfold connections to a variety of the described formations in shifting and unpredictable ways. For example, the trajectory of “doing method”, territorializes towards the story structure “a beginning, a plot, and an end”. As such, “doing method” can refer to a vision and an ideal objective of how both the product and the writing process should
develop from start to end; thus it associates to the formation of ‘writing as developmental’. The trajectory of “doing method” also created a line of flight in which the cozy writing den was constructed (see AIII, p. 196, which can be associated with ideas of using various semiotic resources, as focused in the formation of ‘writing as semiotic activity’.

Fourth, in exploring some ways of how the educational writing event produce processes of writing, I argue that the three articles are entangled through drawing attention to the relations between various forces and flows opening up to multiple becomings. As the three articles illuminate potentialities and limits of what is thinkable, they also (e.g., by positing the concept of nomadic writing) offer different ways of thinking about writing, writers and educational writing processes, which may create different doings in the classroom, or becomings with the world. For example, the findings in AI suggest that writing in becoming-sign-processer (see The Letter Jingle, AII, p. 133) opens up to an understanding in which the exploration of the smallest parts of words (e.g., the relationship between phonemes and printed letters) coexist with a production of joy. Practicing the relationship between phonemes and printed letters and affect (actualized as joy) cannot be done separately. Neither was the act of writing separated from the fixed entity on the screen. Instead, letters, bodily movement, laughter, and talk were intricately intertwined, transforming in unforeseen and unexpected ways. “The Letter Jingle” example also provides potential for a creative writer who together with the computer creates an iconic forest of V’s and a writer who explored the correlation between sound and sign. Furthermore, becoming-illustrator (see The Pirate Book, AII, p. 138) unfolds possibilities of becoming with the world in which writing is used to make things visual and to make demarcations of writing the world. Here the pirate book unfolds as an effect of relations between the conventional writing system, color, layout, signs and drawings. In this example becoming-writer may be viewed as creative, exploring what, when and how to use various modalities. Moreover, the analysis of the third example in AII (see The Animal Riddle, AII, p. 141) illuminates that writing in becoming-copyator opened up to a projection and identification with the writing system. Finally, the creative writing process discussed in AIII (pp. 175-202) unfolds becomings involving an
exploration of how to build a character, and identifying letterform with sound of letter, and how to come up with a writing idea, and how to create a writing place. Accordingly, this specific writing process constructs a young adult writer who is training and practicing the structure of a story, and a creative writer using out-of-school experiences of the French language and knowledge about Paris.

These multiple becomings suggest a conceptualization of writing as linguistic and social and multimodal, of the text as alphabetic and multimodal, and of the writer as creative, and social, and flexible, and someone who trains basic and advanced skills. This does not mean that the writing events open up to everything anytime. Instead, the findings of the three articles imply that each becoming is a particularity of writing the world, created as an effect of locally constructed relationships between various elements (e.g. children’s copying and exploration of signs in a specific context, global discourses of what it means to learn to write, and material entities like computers).

In summary, all three articles provide the potential to try to understand the productive force produced in the event and thus they contribute to an understanding of processes of writing in various ways. AI illuminates and discusses how pedagogical discourses about writing and the young writer are constructed over time in order to gain perspective on contemporary ideas about processes of writing in early childhood education. While AII explicates, in detail, how processes of the writer and the text-like writing are constituted in the event, AIII explores how processes of writing are produced, emerge and transform in contemporary pedagogical framings and teaching of the method creative writing over time. I argue that the understanding of writing as nomadic is an effect of a mutual production between the three articles as entangled becomings and the larger research process. The conceptualization of writing as nomadic writing is crucial in understanding contemporary educational writing practices in that it offers a way to describe the complexity, the transformation and the contingency of the writing event by describing, in detail, the interconnectedness and interdependence between different elements, within and across the variety of flows of writing that unfold and transform in unpredictable ways in it.
6. Nomadic writing
and potential connections

“It just happens”, Zilan said in response to how writing is made (see the introductory example, p. 11). This statement and several more create in various ways potential connections to the analyses illustrated and discussed in this thesis and to the conceptualization of nomadic writing. Writing that happens in the two Swedish early childhood classrooms has been the guiding star throughout the whole research project, in particular, in relation to how processes of writing are constituted in the educational writing event, and what these processes offer potentials for. Given the poststructuralist ontology via the nomad thought of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987), the thesis has illuminated and discussed how processes of writers, text-like writings and writing methods emerge, continue and transform in the educational writing event. In specific ways, the results suggest that the mutual production of stabilizing processes of writing and processes of experimentation are vital components for multiple becoming of writers and writing, independently of educational framing. For example, the result illuminates how the educational creative writing process creates pedagogical trajectories of “doing method” and “doing creativity” (pp. 196-198). I have put forward the concept of nomadic writing as a response to what emerged from the analyses of how processes of writing happen in the two early childhood classrooms studied.

The analyses of the inquiry, and the larger thesis assemblage, have implied what nomadic writing is “about”, and perhaps more importantly, what it is not “about”. The statement, “It just happens”, links to the most significant aspect of the analyses of how the processes of writing are made – the event - and its ongoing connective and transformative power. Correspondingly, movement, connectivity and change are vital components in the conceptualization of nomadic writing.
Zilan’s statement, “It just happens”, can give rise to the thought of the unpredictable and unexpected created in all writing events in the inquiry. All of a sudden the writers hatched the plot in their story or unexpectedly they created a writing den decorating it with writings (p. 188). The analyses showed that these processes of writing did not just happen anyhow anytime. There were potentialities and limits to how, for example, the process of creating a plot could be produced and what it could open up to. The analysis also illustrated how a young writer’s experience of French and of Paris joined other experiences of the teaching instruction and the spinning of his pen case around the pen (p. 187). Further, the analysis showed how these entangled relations make way for the plot “Erik in Paris” to take off. The young writers were concurrently embedded in, regulated by, and eager to break the code that makes them members of a writing society. Their story, and their act of writing, could in this event not be anything anytime. The writing was determined by the relations constituting the event.

On the one hand, educators and researchers know that the processes of writing often take unpredictable and unexpected directions. On the other hand, these messy ways are rarely acknowledged as an essential component in young children’s educational writing practices (Leander & Rowe, 2006). One of the main results of my study suggests how various explorative and stabilizing processes of writing are intricately intertwined creating multiple becomings, independently of pedagogical setting. For example, becoming-sign processor involves training letter-sound relation and creating a playful image of the letter ‘V’ (pp. 133-137). Connectivity, movement and change constitute the vital forces in these processes of becoming and they are also the crucial components in the conceptualization of nomadic writing. To acknowledge the and…and…and is a subject-specific teaching and learning challenge of the same kind that Bergöö (2005) and Skoog (2012) discuss and which is consistent with the view on schoolwork in the Swedish national curriculum:

[Teaching] should promote the pupils’ further learning and acquisition of knowledge based on pupils’ backgrounds, earlier experience, language and knowledge. (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011a:10)
Emphasizing that schoolwork should be related to various experiences, languages and knowledge opens up for a view on writing “where language development and the school’s dual tasks of promoting democracy and knowledge are held together” (Bergöö, 2005:328, my italics). Also Skoog’s (2012) research work in the classroom of six-and seven-year olds discusses an inclusive view on literacy development and on teaching literacy. However, her ethnographic research in two educational classrooms shows that writing practices mainly are directed towards processes of coding and decoding and that play is not included in the activities. Understanding writing as nomadic writing supplements Bergöö (2005) and Skoog’s (2012) arguments of an inclusive view on literacy schoolwork by acknowledging the mutual and simultaneous production of stabilizing processes of writing (e.g. processes of coding and decoding) and processes of experimentation. In troubling the separation between various processes, as processes of decoding and processes of play, the conceptualization of nomadic writing provides potentiality for pedagogical activities that take account of what Olsson (2009) denotes “the relational field” (p. 19), which involves multiple processes of writing and the productive power for becomings of writers and writing. I follow Olsson in her argument that early childhood educational practices, and here early childhood writing practices, could thus be viewed as sites of experimentation.

Accordingly, the thesis suggests that the conceptualization of nomadic writing should not to be regarded as a method, as something that we can apply to writing practices or to the making of texts. Nomadic writing occurs. And, its conditions can be exposed and assemblaged by teachers and students. From this perspective, movement, connectivity and change are vital tenets of the processes of writing constituted in the writing event, thus creating a multiplicity of becomings. For those working in the dynamic early childhood writing classroom this may sound reasonable, but still it may not sound particularly concrete in relation to what would follow. Given that nomadic writing happens suggests that the critical work that follows should involve identifying the happening of nomadic writing in local settings, as described, and in a wider perspective.
Nomadic writing in a wider perspective

Paying attention to the happenings involved in nomadic writing can be seen as a response to questions regarding how knowledge, values, and the curriculum are presented in writing education. Traditionally, writing education is understood as goal-oriented just as education in general. Today, also the preschool class is expected to provide goal-oriented education (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011a). Curriculum, teachers and students basically work to define the endpoint and then strive to get there. In writing practices teachers try to realize possibilities, preparing, supervising and evaluating according to the goals. Also, edupolitical discourses in Sweden, such as the dominant discourse of accountability and assessment, put effort into predicting and evaluating writers and student writing. By measuring student success across the nation and around the world, national and international tests provide conditions for equitable education systems. At the same time, critique is raised that such edupolitical discourses are “designed as being closed or finite” (Masny & Cole, 2009:2). Building on assumptions that knowledge, and thus writing, can be understood in terms of representation, i.e., what knowledge is, the discourse of accountability and assessment creates a thinking of writing and of teaching that fixes and defines what writing is and what is presented in writing education (see Skoog, 2012). What happens when this effect connects with the transformation of writing in contemporary digital out-of-school activities? What potential becomings of writing, writings, and writers are created and what becomings are limited? In what ways may the described effect influence becomings of writing in a long-term perspective? What potentialities and limitations do an understanding of writing as nomadic open up to?

In a goal-oriented presentation of writing education there is a search for presenting the realizable ideal, the ideal writing and the ideal writer, which would be possible to realize. The findings of the first article of this thesis show that although the notions of the ideal writing and ideal writer have changed over time, between an emphasis on skills, developmental gains, the social dimension and multimodality, these movements are simultaneously employed in contemporary educational writing practices. While the tendency in understanding writing, according to Meacham and
Buendia (1999), has been for educators to divide into different camps, according to different regulating forces (e.g., curriculum and/or their own advocacy), conceptualizing writing as nomadic writing suggests that the simultaneous preeminence of all the movements are of importance for young writers’ becoming with the world. The productive processes of becoming writer emerge in the complex sets of relationships between, for instance, processes of letter forming, multicultural and digital experiences that connect, run parallel, combine and transform. Conceptualizing writing as nomadic writing provides the capacity to explore and expose the multiple processes of becomings and thus a kind of presentation of knowledge and values that celebrate difference and thinking differently. This is therefore a way to take diversity and difference as emphasized in the national curriculum into account (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011a). The productive processes of becomings must thus be acknowledged in writing education and in research, independently of the dominating discourse. Such an understanding could make space for writing and learning where children, teachers and researchers learn from divergent angles, modes and media. The crucial question is what writing pedagogy that takes the productive processes of becoming into account might look like. Olsson (2009) and several others (cf. Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Lenz Taguchi, 2010) suggest that listening, seeing, and creating will be important competencies for teachers, researchers and children in order to recognize moments of change and connectivity, processes of becomings. I would add that perhaps the most crucial aspect lies in turning the moments of change and connectivity into learning events as yet unimagined.

As just mentioned, conceptualizing writing as nomadic writing creates the potential to explore and expose multiple processes of becomings. Consequently, it also provides a way to continue questioning what patterns and systems that will be created in the educational discourse of diversity and difference and on the understanding of writing as nomadic in relation to the understanding of writing and writers.

The concept of nomadic writing also adds an important perspective on the traditional perception of the child as a young writer. Although the findings of the first article of the thesis suggest that the ideal writing and writers have changed over time, it is notable that the idea of a young
writer preparing for future life has lived through different movements of understanding writing. Conceptualizing writing as nomadic troubles this idea. The idea of the young writer directs the mind towards the future, future goals and future adult writing life. Consequently there is a risk that the lived moments turn into off-guard moments. By not being observant to what constitutes these moments, there is a danger of not recognizing the moments opening for potentialities not yet imagined and thus failing to catch these potentialities and turn them into learning events. To understand writing as it happens, turns the focus to these lived moments and their productive force of becoming. Moreover, conceptualizing writing as nomadic writing turns attention to the myriad of relations that children, like Zilan and Sara, are already plugged into in the writing classroom. Focusing on writing as it happens suggests a more collective subject who is part of the domain of connections. Connectivity, Olsson (2009) argues, comes with inherent risks of creating new actions or thinking that may challenge our rules, patterns and conventions. However, she argues that it is a risk worth taking, because it is not always bad.

With a specific interest in the young children’s processes of writing, this research suggests that it is particularly productive to use the understanding of nomadic writing when children like Zilan and Sara simultaneously experiment the not yet imagined and eagerly train conventional writing in order to break the code of writing that will make them members of a writing community. Similarly, the entangled connections between children’s experiences of popular culture and learning out-of-school and dominant educational discourses on children's writing development constitute the event in which the young writer is one part of many. In this respect, processes of becoming writer do not belong to a subject that is the origin of acting and thinking, but to the collective event.

**Concluding remarks**

This thesis entered the midst of life in the early childhood writing classroom. As a result of my research, writing practices in such
classrooms can be understood as a relational field (Olsson, 2009) of dynamic and messy sites of intricate intertwined processes of writing – expectable, and unpredictable, and intense, and systaltic, and disorderly and stabilizing - processes of becomings. If researchers and educators judge these becomings too much by their results rather than by how they emerge, continue and transform, there is an inherent risk that we will miss opportunities to understand contemporary and future processes of writing. Following the work described in the three articles and the thesis, I argue that conceptualizing writing as nomadic writing provides the potential for an inclusive and empirically grounded understanding of processes of writing in educational settings. And so I exit this particular thesis assemblage by repeating the gist of my conclusion: Processes of writing and processes of writing research do not just happen – they happen in the event.
References


Appendices

Letter of consent  Karlstad, 8 January 2010

Would you like to contribute to young children’s language development?

I am writing to you in connection with a research project on young children’s language development, more precisely on what children do when they create a text. Today, children grow up in a society where different kinds of texts are important elements of daily life. Signposts, newspapers, text messages, and computers are only some examples of texts in children’s lives. So, what do children do when they make their own texts? Children’s language development and their linguistic creativity in the classroom is an important research area.

I am a doctoral student at Karlstad University and responsible for organizing and conducting this study. I am a parent, a school teacher, and a teacher educator, and this study is my doctoral thesis project. As a researcher, I will be present in the classroom one day a week for a school year. I will document different activities when the children write and draw, and when the teacher and children interact in text-making. On occasions, I will also talk with you and the children about the activity. In a notebook I will write down my observations of what children do when they make a text, how they do it, what they talk about when they produce their text on their own, together, or with you. On occasions, I will also audio video record the children’s writing activities.

Participation is completely voluntary and the information collected will be treated in accordance with the national guidelines on the ethical principles applying to research of this nature.

All aspects of children’s language development are worth studying, and to date very little has been done in Sweden on what actually happens when children learn to write. There is more information of the study at the back of this letter. Enclosed is also a form of consent. Please indicate whether you give consent or not to participating in this study. Do not hesitate to contact me for any question.

Yours sincerely,

……………………………………………………………………...
Carina Hermansson, PhD student in Educational Work Ph
Ph: 0000-000000  E-mail: Carina.Hermansson@kau.se
Information of the study

Thank you for considering participation in the study. This is to inform you of your rights and how ethical issues will be handled in the process of the study.

I, the undersigned, will carry out a research project on how children make a text. The reason for the study is that preschool and school today are increasingly exposed to the influences of the outside world. This also applies to language development since children encounter texts in diverse contexts: TV, film, the computer, newspapers and advertisements. This means that children may create their texts with drawings and letters, or with various signs and gestures. But what do they do when they produce texts to communicate with others? We can learn more about children’s early language development by exploring such questions.

Two preschool classes at different schools in Sweden will participate in the study, and now I would like to find out if you are willing to partake in the study. Participation is completely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the project at any point in the process without giving a reason. Material already collected will, however, be used in the study.

The research involves documenting different writing activities in the classroom. I will then analyze the material and write a doctoral thesis consisting of three-to four articles on the basis of the analysis. My aim is to describe and discuss children’s activities when they produce texts in the classroom and the communication that takes place in relation to their text making. Your anonymity is guaranteed in several ways. There is, for example, no focus on the participants as individuals but on the text making, interaction and talk about it. All direct quotations will be attributed to fictitious names in the thesis. The schools and their locations will remain unidentifiable. On completion of the project, all participants will be given the opportunity to read the results.

All persons involved in processing the collected material will sign a confidentiality agreement. Notes, video films, texts, drawings and other material will be kept inaccessible to unauthorized persons.

Karlstad University has the overall responsibility for the study, which is supervised by Tomas Saar, senior lecturer. Contact person and responsible for carrying out the study is me. Tomas Saar and I will be at your disposal throughout the process to answer questions or to deal with any issue that may come up.

Yours sincerely,

Carina Hermansson
PhD student in Educational Work, with emphasis on children’s early language development. Ph: 0000-000000 E-mail: Carina.Hermansson@kau.se

Tomas Saar, senior lecturer in Educational Science
Ph: 000-000 00 00; E-mail: Tomas.Saar@kau.se
Answering sheet: Participation in research study

I have been informed orally and in writing about the research project “Children Make Texts”.

Name:  _________________________________________________

School:  _________________________________________________

Class/group:  _________________________________________________

Date:  _________________________________________________

Participation in the research study:

☐ I DECLINE  ☐ I CONSENT

Video recordings in the classroom when I am present:

☐ I DO NOT CONSENT  ☐ I CONSENT

For research purposes showing recording clips of situations where I am present

☐ I DO NOT CONSENT  ☐ I CONSENT

_________________________________________________
Signature

Thank you!
Carina Hermansson
Nomadic Writing
Exploring Processes of Writing in Early Childhood Education

How is writing made? How do processes of writing emerge, continue and change in educational writing events? And what kinds of writers and writings can potentially emerge from the writing event?

In this thesis Carina Hermansson explores how writing is produced in early childhood education, partly through analyses of the thinking and talking about writing and the writing child provided in scholarly literature since the 19th century, and partly through analyses of ethnographic documentation of six- to seven-year-olds’ writing activities in two early childhood classrooms.

The research identifies how the processes of writing are an effect of many elements assembled in the writing event, such as computers, learning outcomes, bodily movements, children and teachers, and experiences based on children’s popular cultures. Hermansson posits nomadic writing as a way to account for the connectivity, the movement and change in the processes of writing, thus contributing to an understanding of how the processes of writing create potentialities for multiple becomings of writers and writing. The findings show that the mutual production of stabilizing processes of writing and processes of experimentation are vital components for becomings of writers and writing, thus offering a way to view early childhood writing classrooms as sites of experimentation.

*Nomadic Writing: Exploring Processes of Writing in Early Childhood Education* is a thesis about children’s writing and writing development in a society where media, digital technology and new forms of communication and literacy are conceptualized as important in education. It provides researchers and teachers with a conceptual framework for understanding the dynamic processes of writing.