

# AN ARCHEOLOGY OF THE ENTRANCE EXAM WRITING TEST OF THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF SANTA CATARINA (1978-2024)

UMA ARQUEOLOGIA DA PROVA DE REDAÇÃO DO VESTIBULAR DA UNIVERSIDADE  
FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA (1978-2024)

UNA ARQUEOLOGÍA DE LA PRUEBA DE ESCRITURA PARA EL EXAMEN DE INGRESO A LA  
UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA (1978-2024)

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**ABSTRACT:** The present article presents a discursive analysis of the statements in the essay section of the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina entrance exam (1978-2024), which we denominate as archeology, in light of Foucault (2022 [1969]). Thus, in the section *The metaphor of the metaphor*, we seek to establish an understanding of the theoretical foundation coined by Michel Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, through which we aim to present the methodological aspect of archaeological practice. In the second part, in the section *The archive of the exam papers*, we emphasize the work with the archive, demonstrating the inquiries that were necessary for the comprehension of our object. In the final section, *Delimitation of enunciative series in the UFSC entrance exam essay*, we present some of the results of the excavations conducted in our enunciative field. We believe that the identification of the systems that govern and impact our object allows for the establishment of necessary and important reflections on the effects of the essay exam in the classroom.

**KEYWORDS:** Entrance exam essay. Archaeology. Dissertation. Textual/discursive genres.

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RESUMO: O presente artigo apresenta uma análise discursiva dos enunciados da prova de redação aplicada no Vestibular da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (1978-2024), para qual atribuímos a denominação de arqueologia, à luz de Foucault (2022 [1969]). Dessa forma, na seção *A metáfora da metáfora*, buscamos estabelecer a compreensão da base teórica cunhada por Michel Foucault em *A Arqueologia do Saber*, com a qual procuramos apresentar o aspecto metodológico da prática arqueológica. No segundo momento, na seção *O arquivo dos cadernos de prova*, destacamos o trabalho com o arquivo, demonstrando as incursões que foram necessárias para a compreensão de nosso objeto. Na seção final, *A delimitação de séries enunciativas na prova de redação do Vestibular da UFSC*, apresentamos alguns dos resultados das escavações promovidas em nosso campo enunciativo. Acreditamos que o trabalho de identificação dos sistemas que regem e impactam nosso objeto permite o estabelecimento de reflexões necessárias e importantes também sobre os efeitos da prova de redação em sala de aula.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Redação de vestibular. Arqueologia. Dissertação. Gêneros textuais/discursivos.

RESUMEN: Este artículo presenta un análisis discursivo de los enunciados de la prueba de redacción aplicada en el Examen de Ingreso de la Universidad Federal de Santa Catarina (1978-2024), al cual atribuimos la denominación de arqueología, a la luz de Foucault (2022 [1969]). De esta forma, en la sección *La metáfora de la metáfora*, buscamos establecer una comprensión de la base teórica acuñada por Michel Foucault en *La Arqueología del Saber*, con la que buscamos presentar el aspecto metodológico de la práctica arqueológica. En el segundo momento, en la sección *El archivo de los cuadernos de prueba*, destacamos el trabajo con el archivo, mostrando las incursiones que fueron necesarias para comprender nuestro objeto. En la sección final, *La delimitación de series enunciativas en la prueba de redacción del Examen de Ingreso de la UFSC*, presentamos algunos de los resultados de las excavaciones promovidas en nuestro campo enunciativo. Creemos que el trabajo de identificación de los sistemas que rigen e impactan nuestro objeto, permite establecer reflexiones necesarias e importantes sobre los efectos de la prueba de redacción en el aula.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Redacción del examen de ingreso universitario. Arqueología, Disertación. Géneros textuales/discursivos.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Writing as a test in writing the entrance exam is a passing writing. By the end of high school, students, faced with the guidelines that guide the teaching-learning processes, write texts that are guided by the most diverse contexts of social uses of the word, however, there seems to be a limit there. Admission to the university will open a new horizon of texts. Thus, the entrance exam writing test symbolically marks the possibility of entering a sphere of circulation of highly specialized texts, socially valued for conveying the discourse of knowledge, science, and truth.

The entrance exam writing test involves a specific moment of writing, in which the granting of the right to speak and the discursive exercise are implied. Discourse, in this place, can be recognized as the object for which one fights, as a power that one wants to seize (Foucault, 2014 [1970], p.10). In this perspective, the education system projects a political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, with the knowledge and powers that these discourses carry with them (Foucault, 2014 [1970], p. 41).

In the Brazilian education system, the operation of the machinery that alludes to the selection system for higher education vacancies did not always count on the use of a specific piece: the written test. As an official origin, the requirement of writing as a skill to be evaluated for admission to higher education was identified in 1911, with the institution of *entrance exams* (Brasil, 1911, p. 7). In 1915, the so-called *vestibular examination*, the written test involved translating works written in a foreign language-French, German, or English (Brasil, 1915, p. 8). From 1971 to 1977, however, a period was identified in Brazil when the written test was not mandatory in the entrance exams (Brasil, 1971, p. 1).

As part of the selection system for higher education vacancies, in the currently recognized molds, the writing test stems from Decreto n. 79.298, of February 24, 1977, promulgated by the president of the Republic, Ernesto Geisel, who amended Decreto n. 68.908/1971 to include the *test or question of writing in Portuguese language* entrance examination of the federal institutions and individuals that made up the federal higher education system (Brasil, 1977, p. 1). The official inclusion of the writing test in the entrance exam competitions in Brazil brought impacts on teaching, with the increase in classes focusing on the entrance exam writing test.

From this historical trajectory, a period of restricted access to more favored classes to an opening movement for other social classes is identified (Soares, 2012, p.151-152; Lelis, 2013, p. 28). The writing test, therefore, represents an element that projects important discussions and effects that reach school practices and impact the subjects involved in them. The enunciative field on which we focus, the writing test of the entrance exam of the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), is demarcated by the obligation arising from the normative instrument of 1977 and impacted by the history present in the course of its existence.

In 2024, the essay test applied in the UFSC entrance exam turned 46 years old. Since its establishment, the socio-historical-discursive context that surrounds it has undergone changes. From the dictatorial period to the democratic regime, social movements and transformations stand out, many of which were selected themes for the newsrooms. The importance of these transformations is not limited to the possibility of the emergence of themes for writing, but, above all, points to the movement of theoretical conceptions of text and writing and the impacts of these changes on the way we produce texts in the entrance exam and/or in other spheres of circulation of the word.

When we set out to research the writing test applied by the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, we started with a fact that would significantly mark the history of the entrance exam of this institution: the non-request of the essay as a genre of the writing test of the entrance exam UFSC/IFSC 2023. To understand what was at stake with this apparent rupture in the request of the essay genre, our first step was to gather the notebooks of the writing tests applied in the contexts of the UFSC entrance exam. Faced with the almost integral meeting of the test books, we formed our archive, and an enunciative field was revealed.

The recovery of the archive and the panoramic and initial analysis of the surface of these tests, in which other points of view of the field were projected, led us to a perspective of Foucault-based discursive analysis, using the artifacts of the so-called *Archeology*. In this article, we propose to outline our path, in which the basis of the research, the points of encounter with the theory, and of departure from it will be highlighted.

Therefore, at first, in the section *The metaphor of metaphor*, we will seek to establish the understanding of the theoretical basis coined by Michel Foucault in *The Archeology of Knowledge*. In this section, we will approach the “general theory of discontinuity”, based on Fernandes (2023), with which the methodological aspect of Archaeological Practice is presented. In a second moment, in the section *The archive of the proof books*, we will highlight the work with the archive, demonstrating the incursions necessary for the understanding of our object. In the final section *The delimitation of enunciative series in the UFSC entrance exam writing test*, we highlight some of the results of our excavations promoted in the enunciative field of the writing test applied by the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina in the context of the entrance exam applied by it.

## 2 THE METAPHOR OF METAPHOR

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (2022 [1969]) highlights the displacement present in the great units of thought (epochs, centuries) for the phenomena of ruptures in the histories of ideas. He seeks to identify the interruptions and recognizes the displacements and transformations of the concepts that are extracted from the fields of constitution and validity and the successive rules of use, moving away from the analysis of the conception of evolution and progressiveness.

In it, he also evokes the recurrent redistributions, in which historical descriptions are reordered in the current state of knowledge, which can lead to their rupture; the architectural units of systems, for which internal coherences, deductive chains, and compatibilities are of interest, and the scissions, that is, the cuts made by a work of theoretical transformation. From the history of ideas, thought, and Sciences, he questions the possibilities of totalization, triggering the individualization of different series, which juxtapose, succeed, overlap, and intersect, but which do not configure a linearity. Therefore, there is an assumption of discontinuity, of rupture, as a relevant point in historical disciplines (Foucault, 2022 [1969], p. 5-10).

Foucault involved the modalities of the existence of discourses, present in the modes of circulation, valorization, attribution, and appropriation of them, which undergo variation according to the involvement of each culture. In this movement, the normative is

not sought, the temporal ordering of chaining and recurrences from a given rationality. Archeology reaches the level of knowledge and seeks controversies in practices and discontinuities. The very construction of the term 'archeology' underwent important modifications in Foucault's intellectual production, which rejects the forms proposed by the history of ideas and discusses discursive units, seeking those that would be invisible (Gomes, 2018, p. 21-23).

The enunciative description in Foucault, according to Fernandes (2023), starts from the philosophy of materiality and is not limited to the blocks of truth of logical analysis, of the speaker's competence concerning the system, or of the intentional and creative acts that words would exercise. In this place, "language is the point that anchors the subjects and the subjectivization processes that constitute them" (Fernandes, 2023, p. 2).

The idea of *archeology* in Foucault brings the understanding of beginning and archive and its object is the present, the actuality. Archeology involves the reconstitution of a field in which different dimensions are mobilized, such as philosophical, economic, scientific, and political, among others. With it, the totality is not sought and other fields can also be explored (Revel, 2011, p. 10-11).

To the detriment of a "global description", Foucault is interested in the project of a serial story, present in the space of a dispersion, which *monumentalizes* the documents (Fernandes, 2023, p. 4).

It is necessary, according to this other perspective, to determine the forms of relationship, the games of correlations, the various modes of pregnancy, and permanence in different temporalities that bring together the 'series of series' of utterances. Disintegrating 'the reassuring form of the identical', as Foucault asserts, is not a process without consequences: it is necessary to resume the corpora, the 'shreds of evidence', the materialities from which our analytical gesture finds its foundations.

That is why a first principle dear to analytics is that serial history monumentalizes documents. Global (or traditional) history memorizes the documents of the past, seizing from them the 'inert traces' that would compose the true description of the world. (Fernandes, 2023, p. 4)

In this sense, Fernandes highlights that, for Foucault, the assumption of language materials as monuments requires a reflective attitude, a gesture, and above all, appreciative (Fernandes, 2023, p. 4). According to the author, Foucault's *general theory of discontinuity*, with which he conducted an alternative analysis to traditional history:

Foucault, in the 'Archaeology of Knowledge' (2008), in response to the criticism he received in previous works, explains how to conduct an alternative analysis to "global history", called by him 'serial history'. The initial premise of the project of a 'general theory of discontinuity' - which relates to sophistry and the philosophy of non-essentialist language - is that the analyst must disentangle himself from fetish-concepts (which say nothing) such as tradition, influence, evolution, and mentality, book, and work. The reason is that these terms-concepts are finished syntheses and accepted as such, before any examination. As we discussed, the documents, which would keep the truth about things, must be 'monumentalized'. That is: if this truth (which is not obvious or even complete, since it occurs in "regimes of sayability") is present in historiographic sources, there is no passive attitude of the researcher, who consults a treatise to apprehend the answers from it. Foucault (2008) proposes an investigative attitude like those who go to the museum and carefully examine the pieces of the exhibition, seeking to understand in/from them the 'game of their instance', revealing the 'fracture of manifest words'. (Fernandes, 2023, p.5-6)

Based on the above, we recognize that there is a boldness in the appropriation of the term 'archeology', coined by Foucault, since "the Archaeology of knowledge" is a response to critics, the path he has traveled and does not refer to a manual to be applied. In our archeology, however, we seek a dialogue with the Foucaultian way of doing things, the work of analyzing other knowledge through a field that is built with each incursion, revealed or re-signified, regardless of the incessant search for Origin or linearity.

The allusion to an archeology, specifically, goes through this movement of vertical analysis of the historicity of the text production proposals present in the examination books of the writing test applied in the entrance exam of the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina and the description and analysis of the archive that involves these examination books. We recognize that the constitution

of the method to make discourse analysis is constructed each time the analyst comes across the object of analysis in the beat between the description and the analysis itself.

Nevertheless, given the actuality and nature of our object, in some aspects, what is revealed is its history, in the traditional sense. To analyze it, we resort to the identification of its origin and identify a linear trajectory that delimits it, characterizing it in time and space. This emerges from the fact that a test, in itself, represents an institutional element and not an institution. In addition, there is a metalanguage that identifies and constitutes our object. In it, language, teaching, and writing are involved in processes of subjectivity and subjection. It is therefore in this sense that we can recognize that our work involves a *metaphor of metaphor* of Foucault.

### 3 THE ARCHIVE OF EXAMINATION BOOKS

In response to what was determined by Decreto n. 79.298, of February 24, 1977, the first writing test in the context of the unified entrance exam of UFSC<sup>2</sup> was implemented on January 8, 1978. Thus, the archive of this research consists of the entrance exam examination books from 1978 to 2024, except for the examination books from 1980 and 1981 that were not recovered.

- The examination books applied in the UFSC entrance exams from 1998 to 2024 were downloaded from the page of the Comissão Permanente do Vestibular (COPERVE) on the internet<sup>3</sup>.
- The examination books of the UFSC entrance exams from 1982 to 1997, physically archived at COPERVE, were digitized;
- The examination books from 1978 to 1979 were retrieved by consulting the journal *o Estado* (Português [...], 1978; Prova Azul, 1979);
- In 2021 there was no specific test for the selection of candidates, for this reason, there was no examination book<sup>4</sup>.

The initial movement to gather the examination books led us to a horizon to be explored. However, as highlighted by Guilhaumou, Maldidier, and Robin (2016, p.116), “The archive is never given; at first glance, its functioning regime is opaque”. The archive, according to the authors, is not a passive reflection of an institutional reality, it is not a simple document from which referents are extracted. Through it, it is possible to perform a reading that reveals devices, and significant configurations (Guilhaumou, Maldidier, Robin, 2016, p.116).

Thus, from the horizontality of the examination books gathered, we recognize the opacity of this documentary archive. In form and structure, the test examination books are essentially made up of instructions and writing commands from topics. However, to understand this archive other incursions and “excavations” were necessary.

Essential to the work with archeology, the notion of archive, in Foucault, underwent transformations. In the first aspect he highlights that *a priori* of the positivities, it represents the transformable set itself, not being reduced to a system of temporal dispersion, leading to a complex volume in which practices that cannot be superimposed are revealed.

<sup>2</sup> The single and unified entrance exam was instituted through the notice of the “Concurso Vestibular para 1970”, of November 7, 1969, according to the notice, the test would be held in four stages. The written test, the essay, did not compose the stages of this selection (UFSC, 1969, p.7).

<sup>3</sup> You can search the pages of previous Vestibulars on the Coperve website.

<sup>4</sup> Due to the pandemic context faced. Under the terms of notice N. 01/COPERVE / 2021: “The selection in UFSC undergraduate courses in the 2021 school year, 1,801 of these places will be filled using the grades of the Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio (ENEM) of the years 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020, and the other 715 places will be filled using the number of correct answers obtained in the entrance exams 2018, 2018.2, 2019, 2019.2 and 2020 of UFSC” (COPERVE/UFSC, 2021, p. 1).

The archive is, at first, the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of utterances as singular events. But the archive is also what ensures that all things said do not accumulate indefinitely in an amorphous mass, do not inscribe themselves in an unbroken linearity, and do not disappear at the mere chance of external accidents, but are grouped into distinct figures, composing themselves of each other according to multiple relations [...] (Foucault, 2022 [1969], p.158)

In this approach, the file is not describable in its entirety and is given in fragments, regions, and levels. It is through this element that in *archeology* discourses are described as practices in the file specified.

The revelation, never fully achieved from the archive, forms the general horizon to which belongs the description of discursive formations, the analysis of positivities, and the demarcation of the enunciative field. The right of words – which does not coincide with that of philologists-authorizes, therefore, to give to all these researches the title of archeology. (Foucault, 2022 [1969], p.161, author's emphasis)

From the beginning of the 70s, however, a change in the status of the archive for Foucault is identified. In this way, the archive comes to be considered “[...] more as the trace of existence than as a discursive production, which is also a sign of its priority interest in the notion of subjectivity in its reflection” (Raffin, 2020, p. 65).

Despite the almost integral gathering of the examination books, it took new incursions, reaching other archives, discourses, and fields. Thus, we gathered notices, student guides, and programs of the subjects of the UFSC entrance exams, as well as bibliographies and news about our object. Thus, at the initial moment, in the year-by-year beat of the examination books, the test commands present in the instructions were described and analyzed. In the search to understand them, we seek to involve other enunciative fields in the analysis, establishing the possible relationships between them. News from newspapers, scientific articles, and books published at the time allowed us to understand the discourses and the (not) hidden and (not) visible conceptions of our field. Throughout the course, we identify groupings and series.

This discursive grouping that mobilizes what can be said and what can be conceived as legitimate in a given domain is in the enunciative field on which we dwell. In the entrance examination contest, the subject of the speech, in his candidate-position, is subordinated to the explicit limits in the notice of the contest and to the instructions of the test, which establish the conditions under which the essay will be evaluated.

In the comparison between the writing proposals that were presented year by year, on the horizontal surface of our field, the statement that marks the non-presence of the essay as a genre in the UFSC entrance exam writing test needed to be clearly revealed. This is because, for many years, the term ‘dissertação’ was not marked in the test commands, however, it was understood as a way of conceiving the text. In their place, terms with general markings were introduced, such as ‘redação’ and ‘texto’.

To broaden our field of vision, a table was prepared with the terms and expressions mobilized in charge of the writing test to demarcate the work with writing throughout these 46 years of entrance exams:

TERMINOLOGY	ENTRANCE EXAMS
TRABALHO	1978, 1979
DISSERTAÇÃO	1982, 1983, 1984, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2018-2, 2019, 2019-2, 2020, 2022
REDAÇÃO CRÍTICA	1985
REDAÇÃO	1986, 1987, 1988, 1993, 1994, 2001
REDAÇÃO EM FORMA DE DISSERTAÇÃO	1989, 1990, 1991
REDAÇÃO EM PROSA	1992
TEXTO	2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2009-suplementar, 2014
NARRATIVA	2009
NOTÍCIA DE JORNAL	2010
CONTO OU CRÔNICA	2010, 2011
EPISÓDIO	2012
CARTA	2009, 2009-suplementar, 2011, 2023, 2024
TEXTO NARRATIVO	2009, 2012
ARTIGO DE OPINIÃO	2013
RESENHA	2013
TEXTO DISSERTATIVO	2009, 2013
DESFECHO	2014
CRÔNICA	2015, 2016, 2017, 2023, 2024
LENDA	2016
CONTO	2019, 2019-2, 2020
CARTA ABERTA	2019, 2019-2
TEXTÃO	2020
MANIFESTO	2022, 2023
CARTA AO LEITOR	2022
RELATO DE MEMÓRIA	2024

**Chart 1:** terminologies and expressions associated with the writing command in the UFSC entrance exam

**Source:** prepared by the authors from the UFSC entrance exam examination books (1978-1979; 1982-2020; 2022-2024)

The opaque nature of this part of the documentary archive did not present us with many clues to the meaning non-presence of the term ‘dissertação’ in certain exams. It was only from the historicity of the essay in the context of the entrance exam, which is the event held by UFSC, in 2023, that it was possible to deduce the statement: *the essay, for the first time, was not there*<sup>5</sup>.

In addition to the movements related to the presence or absence of the essay, other parts of the field were revealed for analysis. From the incursion carried out, it was possible to recognize current conceptions of text and language, the incidence of the history of the Portuguese language discipline, which reflects the history of Linguistics in Brazil, and the socio-historical-discursive context that involved it.

Fernandes (2023) teaches that the enunciative description in Foucault puts linguistic doing in suspension and this occurs at the level of methodological delimitation and understanding of the phenomenon itself.

In the first case, because it is not restricted to a specific word, document, or portion of text, given that certain terms, phrases, laws, regulations, literary texts, and even architectural provisions may constitute the file to be scrutinized by the analyst. In the second case, by not paying attention to the formulas that organize the syntax and semantics of the language, but to the interstices, the margins establish several relationships from a rule of enunciative formation. Rule that concretizes, strictly speaking, discursive and social practices. (Fernandes, 2023, p. 2)

However, we cannot remove from the analysis the recognition that linguistic doing is constitutive of our object. In each analytic movement, in addition to the interstices and margins, the analysis can be directed specifically to a word or a syntactic structure present in writing formulas.

Many traces and traces are presented in the form of words, and syntagmatic expressions in our enunciative field. It is in this sense that the use of *written code* (COPERVE / UFSC, 1993, p. 6) it refers us to the notions of communication theory, language as an instrument of communication, politically marked by the dictatorial period faced by Brazil. The use of the term ‘correto’ (COPERVE/UFSC, 1985, p.87), associated with communication or language, present both in examination books and in normative acts, mirrors normativism and structuralism, the teaching of traditional grammar, delimited especially by LDB 5692/71, based on the historicity of Portuguese language teaching in Brazil (Lorenset, 2016).

Similarly, faced with the option of registering a word as ‘Redação’ or (‘textual production’) (COPERVE/UFSC, 2011b, P.2), we performed other gestures of analysis. In this sense, the candidate’s formulation is delimited by the proposal(s)/writing commands. The use of the terminology ‘redação’ is a regularity that is presented and is marked even in the decree that made the written test mandatory in the entrance exams.

With the essay test, it is evaluated, approved, classified or eliminated. It takes place under strict conditions. From instructions of the essay test, the candidate writes *for* the entrance exam. Its nature is evaluative. On the other hand, the use of the expression ‘produção textual’, in parentheses, expresses another conception, to which the search for a writing process also refers *no* in this specific production condition (Geraldi, 2014, p. 217).

In addition, the identification of the use of *Variedade Padrão e Gêneros textuais/discursivos* (COPERVE / UFSC, 2022, P.5-6) present marks of the new perspectives of teaching the Portuguese language, established by the guidelines of the Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais (PCNs). Language, therefore, should be recognized as a “social insertion device” (Lorenset, 2016, p.210). The involvement of textual/discursive genres and the marking of writing possibilities, depending on the genre, of other sociolinguistic varieties refer us to this plural conception of language to be identified in this field.

In addition to these traces and vestiges, from movements, accumulation systems, continuities, and discontinuities, our archeology has allowed the identification of a series of evidence, part of which will be delimited in the section that follows.

<sup>5</sup> This statement is a metonymic reference to posts that circulated on social networks, such as UFSC’s Instagram, shortly after the essay test was taken.



#### 4 THE ENUNCIATIVE SERIES EXTRACTED FROM THE EXAMINATION BOOKS

Initially, it is necessary to state that the accumulation concept is fundamental to identifying enunciative series.

'Accumulation' is a keyword. According to the metaphor of Archaeology, discontinuous layers of language cover heterogeneous zones, in the multiplicity of social practices: from the insignificant, absolutely everyday act, to the regulations that build historical (and historiographical) memory. Multiple layers of sediment invest the objects, covering them with a given perception of the past that, due to erosion processes, can find daylight again. It is up to the analyst, that is, the archaeologist (of knowledge) to excavate these sediments to describe the (ir)regularities that conceive discursive practices, the rule that maintains them, the positivity that relates them to other fields, these also irregular. (Fernandes, 2023, p. 3)

In a specific context, we recognize an accumulation system that can contribute to understanding the movement from the deterministic indication of the essay to the molds of an essay to the absence of it as a genre in the last two contests of the UFSC entrance exam (2023, 2024). Of this analysis, in terms of conditions of indication or not of the writing of an essay, therefore, we can initially delimit three series of tests in this enunciative field:

- Indication of writing without gender-specific marking and/or mentioning only the term 'essay' (UFSC entrance exams 1978-2008 and 2018-2);
- Indication of essay among other possible genres (and example of a letter, a chronicle, a short story, news, an opinion article, a review, a legend, a text, a report, or manifesto (UFSC entrance exams from 2009 to 2022, except 2018-2);
- No indication of essay as a genre (UFSC entrance exams 2023-2024).

As highlighted in the previous section, the use of the term 'essay' in the writing commands of the essay, of the corpus under analysis, does not represent a unique regularity. In the first 24 years of the exam, based on extracts of News published in newspapers of the time, manuals and books published by the Comissão Permanente do Vestibular (Soares; Campos, 1978, p.167; Miranda, 1986; Rodrigues, 1996; COPERVE/UFSC, 1997; Redação [...], 2001, p.1), we recognize that there is, in this period, a synonymy relationship between the terms 'writing' and 'essay'. Thus, marking or not the word 'essay' in the proposition of the exam did not imply a change in theoretical conception at that first moment. We will not enter, in this article, a discussion of the theories surrounding the teaching of the text in this period, however, it is noticeable that the essay is taken as a form of structure of the organization of the text with a view to the argumentative development of textual compositionality.

From the UFSC entrance exams 2003 to 2008, from the COPERVE publications, it can be seen the attempt to remove the so-called "straitjacket" from the essay (standard; Ferraro, 2008, p.16). Thus, in this period, through the theme, the use of the verb 'elaborate' is mobilized to indicate to the candidate that he should write a text. For all the historicity that involves the essay in this context, this movement, through accumulation, helps us to observe the discontinuity in continuity, that is, if on the one hand we always have the proposal of an essay, on the other, the way of proposing its production is put in tension. There appears a historical moment in which the essay is questioned/problematised, however, it does not fail to configure among the possibilities of the candidate to the entrance exam to develop its text.

In addition, from the UFSC 2009 entrance exam to the UFSC 2022 entrance exam, various genres of essay (such as letters, chronicles, short stories, news, opinion articles, reviews, legends, texts, report, manifestos) appear next to the writing (sometimes called dissertative text<sup>6</sup>) as a possibility of choice for the candidate to develop his essay. It is noteworthy to note how at this time the term 'writing' moves away from a synonymy relationship with 'essay'; in addition, the treatment given to the essay as a genre is evident

<sup>6</sup> We understand the phrase 'argumentative text' taken as 'essay', even more, as a essay genre, given the context of solicitation of the writing of the essay and the plurality of other genres that begin to be proposed in parallel to the essay. It is interesting to note that the Chronicle, for example, depending on how the candidate produces it, can be developed within the scope of a essay text, now considering the term "essay" as a synonym for "argumentative", both linked to textual typology, in the most contemporary theories that take the text as relatively stable statements in socio-historically situated interaction processes.

when such a nomination appears next to other genres as already mentioned. At the same time, in the system of norms, the evaluative criteria made the observance of the textual/discursive genre as a determinant for the final grade.

In the 2023 entrance exam, followed by the 2024 entrance exam, the essay does not appear in the list of genres requested in these competitions; however, the candidate is allowed to choose one of three genres: letter, manifesto, and chronicle (2023 entrance exam) and memory Report, letter and chronicle (2024 entrance exam). At this moment, an effective break with the essay is identified. It is interesting to point out that we are synchronically marked in the year 2024, that is, our work intends a history of the present. We do not have here, yet, a historical series that can point us to the trend concerning the way the writing test works for the entrance exams that will follow. However, if we understand that the essay, since 2009, appears explicitly as a genre, since it began to be requested in parallel with other genres, the possibility of it appearing again as a writing proposal is effective.

Up to this point, we present a macro analysis of how the essay is/was taken in the entrance exams writing tests object of our research, which can lead us to a false idea of clearly delimited series and their ruptures. However, a more detailed analysis may point to an even stronger tension in these movements. It is possible to identify the coming and going that tries to adapt the writing test to the theoretical conceptions of text in force in each era. Thus, the injunctive commands of the writing tests left marks, erasures, and ruptures and the analysis of this path led us to recognize moments in which:

- the essay, marked or not marked in the exam, is recognized as the form, the type of text, and the macrostructure of writing mobilized in them (UFSC entrance exams 1978-2002);
- the use of the verb elaborate focuses on the theme and diverse writing possibilities of the essay type are identified. However, in a preponderant way, there are no other textual forms that could erase the essay from the writing possibilities (UFSC entrance exams 2003-2008);
- an intermediate position is revealed, in which a proposal in the previous molds and another proposal with three propositions coexist, two with textual typologies and one with gender (UFSC entrance exam 2009); and three proposals are presented: a typological one, one with marked gender and another of text production, without other specifications (UFSC entrance exam 2009-supplementary);
- genders are marked in the test, in addition to typologies, next to the essay, which seems to be linked to the stature of a specific gender (UFSC entrance exams 2010-2022);
- three genres, different from the essay, are presented in the test command, so that the essay, despite the historicity of its presence, does not appear as a writing possibility to the candidate (UFSC/IFSC 2023 entrance exam; UFSC/IFSC/IFC 2024 entrance exam).

The archaeology of the writing tests proposed by COPERVE, from 1978 to 2024, points out, in summary, the movements through which the conceptions of text passed and this makes us reflect on the importance of the presence of this test in evaluative processes such as the entrance exam. If, on the one hand, the test seeks, in some way, to evaluate the student's training process during the school years until his application to the university, therefore based on the contents taught by the school, on the other, how these contents are charged also reverberates to the point of marking and even guiding didactic-pedagogical programs and contents. Considering this, we highlight the movement that was most evident in our analysis, that is, the path that goes from the hegemony of the essay<sup>7</sup>, as a synonym for writing, the non-explicit marking of the genre or type of text<sup>8</sup> and then it is linked to the perspective of textual production by genres<sup>9</sup>. In this approach, from 2010, in a marked way in the test notebooks, next to the essay or in place of it, genres such as short story, Chronicle, letter, legend, text, manifesto, and report composed the mosaic of writing possibilities presented to the candidate for a position at the University.

<sup>7</sup> UFSC entrance exam 1978-2002.

<sup>8</sup> UFSC entrance exam 2003-2008.

<sup>9</sup> UFSC entrance exams 2010-2023 (in the UFSC entrance exams 2009-2009-supplementary, an intermediate position is identified, between the non-marking and the presentation of propositions with types and gender).

Since the compulsory institution in 1977 and the application of the first writing test in the unified entrance exam of UFSC, in 1978, the analysis of the themes, and other movements related to the writing process can also be verified. In this sense, from opinionated writing to argumentative writing, reconfigured with the presentation of data to be analyzed by the candidate, the writing perspectives are also expanded with the involvement of the *Literature* in the proposals present in the notebooks of the writing test and the level of *narrativity* as one of the evaluation criteria.

In this sense, even strongly marked by the historicity that involves the essay in the context of the entrance exam, the UFSC entrance exam writing test also opens space for other textualities with the proposals of *narrative text*<sup>10</sup>, from motivating texts that reflect the artistic-literary spheres and everyday life. In addition, the argumentative aspect is mobilized in other genres, such as the manifesto and the open letter, not restricted to the essay, therefore.

From the 2006 UFSC entrance exam to the 2014 UFSC entrance exam, the use of literary works was marked, which made up the list of readings indicated for the Portuguese language test, in the proposals<sup>11</sup> of the essay test. This feature was again resumed in the UFSC 2024 entrance exam. In the UFSC 2023 entrance exam, proposal 1<sup>12</sup> also involved literature, but more broadly, inquiring about readings made by the candidates, extracted from their own repertoires, not restricted to the list of works indicated for that event.

In this context, it was in the UFSC 2006 entrance exam that, for the first time, proposals were presented that involved the literary works that had the reading indicated for the Portuguese language test. For COPERVE (2006, p. 105), “the proposals provided the opportunity to practice reflection from the literary universe without the imposition of a particular genre, allowing the candidate to express themselves creatively and safely.” (Our Translation). The use of works whose reading was indicated for each event is identified in the writing test from the 2006 entrance exam to the 2014 entrance exam and in the UFSC 2024 entrance exam.

Proposals that mobilize genres from the artistic-literary and/or everyday spheres, in turn, have been presented regularly since the UFSC 2009 entrance exam. The level of *narrativity*, however, was included as one of the evaluation criteria of the essay only from the UFSC 2018 entrance exam<sup>13</sup>.

From the official reports of the entrance exams published by COPERVE at each entrance exam, notably from the comments to the essay test, it is possible to extract that the proposals that involved the list of reading books indicated by the Commission<sup>14</sup> and the

<sup>10</sup> According to the official report of the UFSC 2009 entrance exam, “[...] the indication of narratives suggests to the school the need to invest in the practice of creative writing, and not merely in writing as a production line, that is, a merely linguistic object. (Our translation). Therefore, it is necessary to pay more attention to the linguistic richness of the narrative, thus avoiding standardization in terms of essay as a traditional and unique form in Brazilian entrance exams” (COPERVE/UFSC, 2009, p.6-7).

<sup>11</sup> In its most up-to-date configuration, the UFSC essay test is divided into proposals. Since 2019, a generating theme, presented in support texts, makes up the first part of the test. In the second part, the writing proposals are presented, each with a specific genre. In the UFSC 2023 entrance exam, the generating theme was *reading*, presenting itself reflected in the possibility of writing genres such as letter, manifesto and Chronicle (COPERVE/UFSC, 2023, p.241-243).

<sup>12</sup> UFSC entrance exam 2023-writing test: “**PROPOSTA 1** Produza uma carta à COPERVE, sugerindo a leitura de um livro de literatura para o próximo vestibular” (COPERVE/UFSC, 2023, p. 241).

<sup>13</sup> (Cf. COPERVE/UFSC, 2017, p. 4 e COPERVE/UFSC, 2018a, p. 4).

<sup>14</sup> As an example, we highlight Proposal 3 of the UFSC 2011 entrance exam essay test notebook, which involved the list of books, whose reading was indicated, and the essay genre. Based on the comments to the test, COPERVE pointed out that “[...] The scarcity and excess of water were visible in at least three major works of those listed for the 2011 entrance exam: *Morte e vida severina*, *Vidas secas* e *O guarda-roupa alemão*. Therefore, the third proposal pointed out the theme present in them, very current, given the discussions about the precious liquid at the planetary level. An easy topic and easier because it was indicated for the essay genre, the one for which candidates are best prepared by their high school teachers. However, the proposal required familiarity with the three works indicated, since it required the candidate to have knowledge of the characters in the face of the adversities caused by the theme in question. Therefore, the candidates were surprised by the importance of the annual list of literary works indicated by COPERVE for the entrance exam. The practice has differentiated the entrance exams of UFSC concerning other institutions in the last eight years and is therefore not new for Santa Catarina high schools. Even so, unfortunately, the number of candidates in the choice of the third proposal was not significant. But those who chose it, as well as those who chose Proposal 2, raised the level of quality of the essays in the 2011 entrance exam” (COPERVE/UFSC, 2011a, p. 241-243). (Our Translation).

genres of the artistic-literary sphere were those that, as a rule, had the lowest adherence of applicants. On the other hand, the evaluation results were quite positive<sup>15</sup>. These results Project necessary discussions.

## 5 FINAL WORDS

The past interested Foucault in what limited a discourse; the past is the identification of what is dead. In his writing process, Foucault recognized himself as a doctor, a diagnostician. For this reason, death interested him, because it is from it that one could say “absolutely serene things, completely analytical and anatomical, not directed to a possible repetition or resurrection. Also for this reason, nothing is further from me than the desire to find in the past the secret of origin.” (Foucault, 2016, p.49). (Our Translation). It is at this point that we recognize a fragility in our movement, after all our element is alive, active, produces social effects, and is not immune to resurrections. In any case, our research allowed us access to the history of our object and to a diagnosis of the enunciative systems present in this field, which directly evaluates the candidate who takes the exam, but indirectly, and not least, measures the entire teaching-learning process concerning Portuguese Language Teaching and textual production.

The movements identified in the examination books show us that, along with genres that project the argumentative typological aspect, the place reserved for narrative writing has been presented as a new regularity in the UFSC entrance exam. The level of argumentation has also undergone transformations. From the UFSC 2019 entrance exam, a generator theme is presented. In the supporting texts, infographics and excerpts present data and information that seek to displace writing from mere opinion and subsidize the construction of a point of view to the involvement of a reasoned argumentative perspective.

Of all the above, it is not the absence of the essay in the last two entrance exams (2023 and 2024) that is the most important factor extracted from our archeology, but this displacement of the writing process.

Given this path, we hope that other incursions will be carried out in this field, in which there will be the involvement of other theoretical fields since this research a fruitful field is lacking in new perspectives. It is also necessary to investigate something that we pointed out at the beginning of this text, but we did not develop it for the sake of scope: the writing of the entrance exam as a passage writing. What changes, in terms of writing, then, when and if the applicant becomes in fact a student of Higher Education?

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<sup>15</sup> In this sense, based on the official report of the UFSC 2010, 2011, 2015 and 2018 entrance exams, respectively, the following comments presented by COPERVE are extracted:

- a). “In fact, Proposal 3 would have been carefully relegated by less prepared candidates (only 6.08% of candidates dared to choose this proposal) or, contradictorily, prepared to only score high and use the writing test as mere input. Even though it was the least chosen, it was the proposal that brought a large number of excellent texts and, if it ended up making the evaluators party, on the other hand, it demanded greater intellectual effort from the evaluating team” (COPERVE/UFSC, 2010, p. 3); (Our Translation).
- b). “Much less than the previous proposal and much more than the third, this one opened the range for the ability/Ability of the candidate to tell a story, as long as it made a connection with situations presented in the excerpts of Proposal 1. Short story or Chronicle – to choose - the candidate should show his ability to hold the reader/evaluator through two techniques normally employed by the good narrator: suspension and expressiveness. For such proposals, as a rule, the best candidates in writing appear. The highlight of the good narrative fabric is not in the flower of the lines but between them. It should be noted, above all, that this type of proposal allows the best candidates to always leave the solution and surprise for the conclusion of the text. It is up to the appraiser to determine the accuracy of the discovery. The evaluation board did well and it was not for nothing that the number of excellence grades grew in this entrance exam, especially for the texts originated from proposal two” (COPERVE/UFSC, 2011a, p. 1). (Our Translation).
- c). “It should also be noted that, despite a smaller number of candidates opting for Proposal 2, due to the higher degree of stylistic traits indicating authorship, deepening of reflection, and aesthetic use of cultured language, the ten grades of the UFSC/2015 entrance exam were attributed to Chronicles about aging” (COPERVE/UFSC, 2015, p.4). (Our Translation).
- d). “Looking now at the good texts, it was found that the highest concentration of grades above 7.0 (seven) occurred in proposal 2. It seems that the candidate who opts for the Chronicle genre has security in dealing with this type of text” (COPERVE/UFSC, 2018B, p. 5). (Our Translation).

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