



The Text between Openness and Constraint: The Dialectics of Pleasure and Normativity in Roland Barthes and Robert de Beaugrande: A Comparative Analysis of Two Approaches

Sidibe Ousmane

A doctoral researcher at the College of Arabic Language and Human Studies, the Islamic University of Madinah. (sidibe122@yahoo.fr)

Abstract:

This study seeks to explore the dialectical relationship between the concept of openness, embodied in Roland Barthes's notion of the pleasure of the text, and the concept of discipline, represented by Robert de Beaugrande's standards of textuality. It does so by examining the intellectual foundations and methodological premises upon which each approach constructs its conception of the text. De Beaugrande's textual theory is grounded in the centrality of the text, positioning it as the primary locus of analysis and communication. To this end, he formulates a set of standards that confer textual status upon discourse and establish a framework within which textual analysis operates. By contrast, Barthes's conception of textuality is founded on the centrality of the reader and the openness of meaning. In his view, pleasure and enjoyment constitute the ultimate aims of reading, attainable through resistance to prescriptive structures and liberation from conventional interpretive models and established reading practices.

The study adopts a descriptive-comparative approach, describing the theoretical foundations underlying each perspective and comparing them in order to identify their points of convergence and divergence. The findings indicate that the relationship between the two approaches is not one of opposition or incompatibility; rather, it is characterized by methodological tension and complementarity. The study demonstrates the possibility of integrating both perspectives within a comprehensive textual framework that combines textual coherence and cohesion on the one hand, and the aesthetic dimension of semantic openness and the stimulation of readers' interpretive engagement on the other.

The study further concludes that synthesizing Barthes's openness-oriented aesthetic-critical approach with De Beaugrande's linguistically grounded, norm-oriented framework yields a more comprehensive and nuanced conception of textuality. Such a synthesis brings together aesthetic, structural, and communicative dimensions, thereby enhancing the procedures of textual analysis and interpretation while providing clearer methodological guidelines for the systematic examination of texts.

Keywords: Pleasure; Jouissance; Normativity; Openness; Textual Discipline.



Introduction:

In recent decades, text-linguistic studies have undergone profound transformations and significant developments across a wide range of areas that view language as a dynamic and evolving phenomenon, shaped by the changing conditions of human life and communication. Within this intellectual context, scholars have increasingly recognized the limitations of linguistic approaches that confine the study of language to the analysis of isolated sentences. Consequently, attention has shifted beyond the boundaries of sentence-level analysis toward the investigation of language within the broader domain of texts, conceived as open structural, semantic, and communicative systems.

These theoretical developments have given rise to diverse linguistic trends and methodological orientations aimed at explaining the nature of textuality, the functions performed by texts, and the mechanisms through which meaning is generated and global textual significance is constructed. Among the most influential contemporary approaches in text linguistics are the openness-oriented approach, which emphasizes the plurality of meaning and interpretive freedom, and the norm-oriented approach, which seeks to define textuality through a set of regulating standards and criteria.

The first of these approaches is most prominently associated with literary criticism, particularly the work of the French theorist and deconstructionist critic Roland Barthes in his seminal work *The Pleasure of the Text*. The second is represented by scholars of modern text linguistics, most notably Robert de Beaugrande—widely regarded as one of the principal founders of text linguistics—whose contributions, in collaboration with Wolfgang Dressler, were instrumental in establishing and systematizing the foundational concepts of textuality. Each of these approaches advances a distinct conception of the reader's relationship to the text, as well as of the processes through which meaning is generated and interpreted, reflecting their respective orientations toward textual openness and normative constraint.

Barthes's conception of textuality is grounded in the view that the text constitutes a space in which linguistic structure and communicative meaning converge within a framework of openness and interpretive plurality. Accordingly, interpretive authority derives from the reader's hermeneutic competence and capacity for textual pleasure. Barthes thus assigns the reader a central and decisive role in the production of meaning, granting considerable interpretive agency in accordance with the text's vitality, productivity, and capacity to generate multiple significations.

For Barthes, the concept of the text is intrinsically linked to the notions of pleasure and readerly enjoyment, which serve as the primary determinants of the interpretive process. Meaning, in this



perspective, emerges through the reader's engagement with the text, and interpretation remains fundamentally contingent upon readers' perspectives, experiences, and interpretive dispositions rather than upon fixed or universally applicable rules. The text is therefore conceived as an open and dynamic structure, one that accommodates a plurality of readings and invites diverse interpretive possibilities.

By contrast, Robert de Beaugrande and Wolfgang Dressler maintain that a coherent global meaning cannot be derived from a text unless it satisfies a set of standards that regulate its organization and communicative functioning. Such standards serve to constrain interpretive indeterminacy, ensure textual unity, and bring the various components of the text together within an integrated semantic and communicative framework. In this view, textuality is not merely a matter of interpretive openness but also of adherence to principles that govern the production, organization, and reception of texts.

However, it is necessary to distinguish between textual normativity and the prescriptive normativity that characterized traditional grammatical studies, particularly within sentence-based grammar. Textual normativity is characterized by flexibility; it functions as an organizational and regulatory framework that allows for variation and deviation, rather than as an absolute, rigid, and binding set of rules that cannot be transgressed, as was often the case in classical grammatical traditions. Within this framework, attempts have been made to formulate seven standards of textuality that render the text a communicative linguistic event that is both interpretable and comprehensible, while also endowing it with the dynamism and interpretive flexibility sought in contemporary linguistic studies.

From this perspective, a dialectical tension emerges between two opposing orientations: one that grounds its theoretical outlook in interpretive freedom based on subjective impressionism, manifested in the notions of textual pleasure and *jouissance* experienced by the reader; and another that strives to establish theoretical frameworks capable of regulating textual progression, constraining its communicative functioning, and rendering it accessible to interpretation and comprehension within a structured and delimited interpretive pathway.

Objectives of the Study:

This study aims to uncover the dialectical relationship between the openness-oriented approach and the closure- or norm-oriented approach, where the former grounds its conception of textuality in pleasure and *jouissance*, while the latter bases its theoretical framework on the seven standards of textuality. Within this perspective, the study seeks to:



- Clarify how textual theory can reconcile text-centred and reader-centred perspectives, and examine the implications of this reconciliation for defining the concept of text in contemporary linguistic studies.
- Demonstrate that textual success cannot be achieved without the presence of governing standards that regulate textual structure and coherence, whether these standards are implicit—such as pleasure and textual enjoyment in Barthes’s theory—or explicit, as in the seven standards proposed by Beaugrande and Dressler.
- Show the capacity of Beaugrande’s normative framework to accommodate texts characterized by semantic deviation or grammatical transgression, on the basis that the relationship between the two approaches is one of complementarity rather than contradiction or opposition.

Significance of the Study:

The significance of this dialectical inquiry lies in its capacity to elucidate the relationship between the aesthetic dimension implied by the openness-oriented approach and the functional dimension advanced by the norm-oriented approach, as well as to explore the extent to which these ostensibly opposing orientations—the openness-based and the closure-based approaches—can be reconciled. This is particularly relevant given that both perspectives conceive of the text as a space for the realization of their respective theoretical frameworks and as a fertile ground for articulating their linguistic and conceptual orientations.

Within this context, the significance of the study can be summarized as follows:

- It bridges literary-critical perspectives and text-linguistic approaches.
- It reveals the relationship between the aesthetics of critical reading and the vitality and effectiveness of communication.
- It provides a fertile ground for practical application in the field of language teaching for non-native speakers.

Statement of the Problem:

The research problem lies in the fact that both approaches conceive of the text as a field through which their respective theoretical perspectives are enacted, which implies that the text is a linguistic event that cannot be fully reduced to a single, fixed theoretical vision. Accordingly, the central question of the study concerns the extent to which it is possible to reconcile Barthes’s aesthetic approach with Beaugrande’s communicative and normative approach in order to establish a clear textual perspective that integrates both openness and closure.

This main question gives rise to the following subsidiary questions:



- Is textuality measured by the fulfillment of specific standards?
- Or is it measured by the extent to which a text entertains the reader and stimulates interpretive pleasure and aesthetic engagement?
- Is it possible to integrate textual normativity with readerly pleasure and literary-aesthetic experience?

Research Methodology:

The study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach to account for the foundational principles underlying each of the two perspectives in framing their respective conceptions of textuality. It also employs a comparative method to examine both approaches, with the aim of identifying their points of convergence and divergence, as well as exploring possible ways of reconciling them within a framework that contributes to the development of textual formation and analytical procedures.

The Intellectual Foundation of the Openness-Oriented Approach (Roland Barthes):

The theoretical framework of the openness-oriented approach in the work of Roland Barthes is grounded in several epistemological and intellectual premises. Central to this perspective is the rejection of the view of the text as a consumable product governed by pre-established ideological templates. From this standpoint, any text that does not conform to such rigid frameworks is not necessarily excluded from textuality; rather, textual authority is no longer monopolized by fixed structural or ideological constraints.

Instead, interpretive and hermeneutic authority is relocated—either primarily to the reader or, at the very least, distributed between the reader and the producer of the text. The text is thus conceived as a dynamic and flexible field of practice, open to interpretive plurality and shaped by the reader's cognitive and experiential engagement. This engagement generates what Barthes terms *jouissance*, a form of interpretive and aesthetic “rupture” or “shock” that produces textual pleasure and transforms the act of reading into an active and productive experience, thereby rendering the text a fluid and continually reactivated textual space.

These are the foundational principles upon which Roland Barthes builds his openness-oriented perspective, which can be outlined as follows:

1- The text is a dynamic, non-static product; it is characterized by productivity and generativity. This quality has led to the interpenetration of texts, a phenomenon that Robert de Beaugrande refers to as *intertextuality*. In this regard, Barthes states: “Le texte est un tissu de citations, d'échos,



de langages culturels... Tout texte est un intertexte ; d'autres textes sont présents en lui" (Roland Barthes, 1973).

2- A pleasurable text—one that produces readerly enjoyment (*jouissance*)—is a text that resists reduction to established ideological templates and refuses to function as a consumable product governed by rigid linguistic or structural norms. In this regard, Barthes states: “Le texte subversif est celui qui conteste les structures mêmes de la langue et de l'idéologie, refusant de se laisser réduire à un produit de consommation” (Roland Barthes, 1973).

3- The reader of the text is viewed as the sole authority in determining textuality and non-textuality, based on the pleasure the text produces or, conversely, the semantic rupture and intellectual shock it generates. This conception is partly informed by the linguistic dualism inherited from Ferdinand de Saussure. In line with this orientation, Barthes distinguishes between *plaisir* (pleasure) and *jouissance* (bliss). “Pleasure” refers to a text that is comfortable, reassuring, and capable of producing readerly satisfaction and interpretive ease. Such a text is typically grounded in the reader’s cultural background or, at the very least, remains closely connected to the cultural horizon of its interpretive community. As Barthes explains: “Texte de plaisir : celui qui contente, remplit, donne du confort, de l'euphorie ; celui qui vient de la culture, ne rompt pas avec elle, est lié à une pratique confortable de la lecture” (Roland Barthes, 1973).

By contrast, *jouissance* designates a text that subverts expectations rather than confirming them. It confronts the reader with unexpected meanings, producing a form of cognitive and interpretive shock that intensifies attention and deepens engagement. Barthes defines it as follows: “Texte de jouissance : celui qui met en état de perte, celui qui déconforte, fait vaciller les assises historiques, culturelles, psychologiques du lecteur, la consistance de ses goûts, de ses valeurs, met en crise sa relation au langage” (Roland Barthes, 1973).

4- The reader is regarded as a genuine producer and co-creator of the text. This principle is inspired by the well-known critical notion of the “death of the author.” In this context, Barthes states: “Si je lis ce texte avec plaisir, c'est que je le co-écris... Le texte que vous écrivez doit me donner la preuve qu'il me desire” (Roland Barthes, 1973).

Within this framework, the text is conceived as a living entity endowed with the capacity to attract and engage the reader. Accordingly, the reader is not a passive consumer whose role is limited to examining textual mechanisms and uncovering their hidden structures; rather, the reader is elevated to the status of a co-author and original creator of meaning, actively participating in the production and generation of the text itself.



5- The pleasure, sensuality, and textual eroticism do not reside in the text's structural coherence or formal cohesion. Rather, textual eroticism emerges from the gaps, fissures, and ruptures intentionally or unintentionally left by the writer, which activate the reader's vigilance, interpretive acuity, and ability to engage with what remains unsaid. These interpretive movements, driven by the text's inherent incompleteness and its structural "openings," are what Barthes refers to as the *body of the text* (*le corps du texte*) and *textual eroticism* (*l'érotisme du texte*). As Barthes states: "Le lieu le plus érotique d'un corps n'est-il pas là où le vêtement bâille ? [...] c'est la faille, la coupure, la déprise, la collision" (Roland Barthes, 1973).

These principles can be summarized as follows:

- The intertextuality of texts—referred to by Robert de Beaugrande as *intertextuality*—along with grammatical and semantic deviation, contributes to the production of textual pleasure and aesthetic enjoyment.
- The text is open to multiple readings and diverse interpretations; it does not yield to a single fixed interpretation.
- The reader is the sovereign of the text and the primary producer of its meaning; therefore, pleasure arises from the reader's interaction with the text rather than from any predetermined or fixed meaning.
- The reliance on linguistic dualism, from which the distinction between *plaisir* (pleasure) and *jouissance* (bliss) emerges, serves as a key criterion for evaluating texts and constitutes a foundational concept in Barthes's critical approach.
- Language is conceived as a form of play and creative activity, shaped by the inclinations and aesthetic preferences of its users; hence, the use of unconventional or innovative stylistic forms is a major source of textual production and vitality.
- Textuality is not governed by rigid ideological or structural templates as proposed in norm-oriented textual approaches.

The Intellectual Foundation of the Norm-Oriented Approach (Robert de Beaugrande and Wolfgang Dressler)

It has been previously noted that the notion of normativity or closure in the work of Robert de Beaugrande differs significantly from the concept of normativity found in earlier structuralist linguistics, such as the works of Firth, Saussure, and Roman Jakobson. The standards proposed by Beaugrande are essentially organizational and regulative in nature, rather than rigid or strictly prescriptive rules that cannot be transgressed (Saeed Bahiri, 1997). In contrast to the rigid and



restrictive orientation typically associated with structuralist linguistics, Beaugrande's framework moves beyond such constraints by introducing a set of criteria that expand the interpretive and explanatory scope of textual analysis, including intentionality, acceptability, situationality, intertextuality, among others.

Together with Wolfgang Dressler, Beaugrande sought to establish seven standards of textuality that govern textual progression, ensure coherence, and prevent semantic fragmentation. These standards are: cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, situationality, informativity, and intertextuality (Robert de Beaugrande, 1998; Wolfgang Dressler, 2003).

In formulating these seven standards, Beaugrande and Dressler draw upon five fundamental linguistic domains of knowledge:

1- Structural linguistics: Beaugrande draws on structural principles in organizing the relations among the constitutive elements of textual structure. This orientation leads to the formulation of two key standards of textuality: *cohesion* (al-sebk), which refers to the interconnection of surface linguistic forms and their grammatical and referential ties across sentences, thereby ensuring syntactic continuity and formal linkage; and *coherence* (al-ḥabk), which refers to the logical and conceptual connectivity of ideas within the text and their orderly progression.

Accordingly, the maintenance of both formal cohesion and semantic coherence constitutes a fundamental principle of textuality. A sequence of linguistic units can only be considered a text insofar as it exhibits both structural interdependence at the surface level and conceptual unity at the level of meaning.

2- Cognitive linguistics: Within the expansive perspective of text linguistics, Beaugrande seeks to involve the recipient in the process of constructing and shaping the text by linking textual meaning to the reader's cognitive, intellectual, and experiential background. This orientation gives rise to the standards of informativity and acceptability.

Informativity refers to the degree of newness or unpredictability of information presented in the text, while acceptability concerns the extent to which the text is perceived as relevant, coherent, and appropriate by the recipient within a given interpretive and cultural framework.

3- Pragmatics: Pragmatics has played a significant role in shaping the epistemological foundations of text linguistics. This influence is particularly evident in the standard of acceptability, as well as in one of the cohesive devices, namely exophoric reference (external reference), and also in the standard of intentionality. These standards primarily depend on the ways in which linguistic discourse is produced, directed, and received, highlighting the pragmatic



dimension of meaning as negotiated between speaker/writer and addressee within a communicative context.

4- Psychology: The processes of text production and text comprehension are cognitive operations that require interpretive openness and semantic deviation, particularly through the activation of prior texts and ideas within a new textual environment. This intermental and associative activity contributes to the formulation of the standard of *intertextuality*, which accounts for the presence of other texts within any given text and the cognitive mechanisms through which readers recognize and integrate them into the process of meaning construction.

5- German text linguistics (Text Grammar): Beaugrande develops his expansive conception of linguistics, known as text linguistics, on the basis of the work of a group of scholars, including Teun A. van Dijk and Wolfgang Dressler, who advocated moving beyond the narrow structuralist approach to language analysis that had dominated earlier linguistic studies. This earlier approach was largely confined to the sentence as the largest analyzable linguistic unit.

In contrast, text linguistics extends the scope of analysis beyond the sentence to the level of the text, treating it as a higher-order communicative and semantic unit. This shift constitutes a fundamental reorientation in linguistic theory, emphasizing textual structure, coherence, and communicative function as central analytical categories.

As for the main ideas and theoretical frameworks upon which Beaugrande grounds his norm-oriented conception of textuality—namely, the formulation of seven standards that regulate textual progression, ensure coherence, and prevent semantic dispersion—they can be outlined as follows (Zdzisław Wąsik and Orziniak, 2003; Izzat Shibl, 2009):

- The sentence is considered a textual unit; however, it is not necessarily a text in itself. Rather, it constitutes one of the components of a larger textual whole. Text, in this sense, is a macro-communicative unit, since genuine communication is not achieved through isolated or fragmented sentences, but through texts or sequences of texts embedded within a communicative context. Given that the text is not delimited by rigid boundaries, it necessitates a set of standards that define its nature, determine its boundaries, and clarify its textual identity.
- Building on this premise, text is conceived as a communicative event. The communicative dimension thus occupies a central position in defining textuality. A text is not merely a collection of linguistic structures; rather, it is a communicative act involving the producer (sender), the receiver and their cultural and intellectual background, as well as the broader contextual conditions of communication.



A close examination of the seven standards reveals the prominence of the communicative dimension within them, particularly in *intentionality*, *acceptability*, *situationality*, and *informativity*, as well as in the deictic and referential aspects of *cohesion*.

- Text is a structurally and semantically cohesive unit; therefore, adjacent sentences cannot be regarded as a text unless they are interconnected at both the formal and semantic levels. Based on this assumption, two core standards were established: *cohesion* and *coherence*.
- Text is also an “inferentially dependent” unit, meaning that it relies on extra-linguistic elements. It does not convey complete meaning in isolation but draws on the prior knowledge and cultural and intellectual background of both participants in the communicative process. It is therefore a joint process between the producer (sender) and the receiver (or between the receiver and the text). As a result, Beaugrande introduces the standards of *intentionality* and *acceptability*.
- The communicative value of a text lies in its ability to balance expectation and novelty in the information it conveys. A text that offers no new information loses its communicative effectiveness, which constitutes a fundamental pillar of textuality in Beaugrande’s framework.

Methodological Comparison between the Two Approaches:

A close examination of the theoretical foundations upon which Barthes builds his openness-oriented perspective reveals that he approaches the text from an aesthetic and interpretive freedom-oriented standpoint, granting interpretive authority primarily to the reader and positioning pleasure (*plaisir*) and bliss (*jouissance*) as its ultimate aim. Accordingly, a text does not produce pleasure and enjoyment unless the following conditions are fulfilled:

- Epistemic openness.
- Openness to multiple interpretations.
- Non-submission to closed or rigid systems.
- Granting interpretive freedom and authority to the reader.

By contrast, Robert de Beaugrande grounds his norm-oriented (or semi-closure-oriented) approach in the seven standards of textuality, which serve to protect the text from formal fragmentation and semantic dispersion. He conceptualizes the text from a functional-communicative perspective, according to which the presence of these standards is a prerequisite for textual existence, while their absence calls into question the very status of a linguistic sequence as a text. In this sense, textuality is constituted through the following conditions:

- Communication.
- Cohesion and coherence.



- Prior knowledge.
- Context.

Accordingly, Barthes provides tools for analyzing the text and understanding how it produces pleasure, whereas Beaugrande explains how a text is constructed; in other words, he accounts for the foundational stage of text formation and analysis.

Pleasure and bliss, in this sense, are relative phenomena grounded in readerly openness, whereas normativity governs the trajectory of the text, regulates its flow, and confines it within a structured and delimited framework from which deviation is not permissible. From this standpoint, a methodological dialectic emerges between the freedom of reading and the regulated, constrained movement of the text within a closed system.

Barthes conceives the text as transcending fixed, enclosed systems of knowledge; it is a vast discursive space and an expansive semantic unit. It is precisely this semantic openness that generates pleasure and enjoyment, rendering textual meaning fluid, dynamic, and potentially unlimited.

By contrast, Beaugrande maintains that a sequence of discourse cannot be regarded as a text unless it satisfies the seven standards of textuality. In this sense, the text is framed within a defined epistemic boundary and governed by specific regulatory principles that cannot be transgressed without undermining its textual status; deviation from these standards thus constitutes a departure from the “textual domain” itself.

Accordingly, Barthes may be considered one of the pioneers of the openness-oriented approach and interpretive freedom, whereby any text that does not generate pleasure or *jouissance* in the reader is not fully realized as a text within the literary-interpretive perspective. Beaugrande, on the other hand, represents a norm-oriented or semi-normative approach. From a linguistic standpoint, he is often regarded as a moderate figure, insofar as he moves beyond the strict structuralist normativity associated with earlier structural linguists toward a more expansive view of language and text. This perspective integrates formal and semantic structures with contextual factors, including situational context, the psychological states of discourse participants, and intertextual relations among texts.

The Conflictual Tension between the Two Approaches:

A close examination of the two approaches reveals the extent to which text-linguistic studies are characterized by a degree of complementarity. Both orientations seek to move beyond the inherited linguistic ideology that attempted to impose rigid standards constraining any form of textual



analysis or linguistic production. However, a closer investigation of the scientific foundations underlying each approach, as well as the principles they seek to establish for interpreting or constructing texts, reveals a certain degree of conceptual and methodological tension between them.

In fact, the philosophical premises from which each approach departs in its understanding of the text and its interpretation are markedly different and, at times, divergent. A number of these points of divergence can be outlined as follows:

❖ **Imposing constraints on the text that govern its trajectory.**

- Beaugrande maintains that a text must be governed by a set of standards and constraints that regulate its structure and communicative trajectory.
- Barthes, by contrast, argues that the text does not require restrictive constraints, but rather constitutes an open space of signification.

For Barthes, the sources of textual pleasure are multiple and varied. They include cultural familiarity, the fluency and smoothness of the linguistic code employed, and the absence of contradiction with the reader's values and beliefs, all of which contribute to a sense of comfort and interpretive ease. More significantly, pleasure may also arise from a deliberate departure from linguistic familiarity, that is, from breaking conventional patterns and expectations—what can be described as the “violation of expectation” (*jouissance*).

These principles are, however, largely at odds with Beaugrande's perspective. In fact, many of them may be viewed as incompatible with his conception of textuality, as he considers such deviation—particularly the disruption of expectation—to pose a potential threat to textual coherence and communicative unity.

❖ **Interpretive reference framework.**

- Text-centredness in Beaugrande's framework: Beaugrande positions the text as the central focus of analysis and the primary basis for interpretation. Accordingly, he develops a set of mechanisms designed to integrate its components, ensure coherence, and make it accessible to interpretation and comprehension. These mechanisms guide understanding and regulate the textual flow in terms of coherence and cohesion.
- Reader-centredness in Barthes's framework: Barthes grants interpretive authority primarily to the reader, effectively marginalizing the role of the author or producer. The reader becomes the central axis of analysis, and meaning is thus variable and contingent upon readers' differing interpretive capacities, aesthetic sensibilities, and experiential engagement with the text.



❖ **Pleasure (*plaisir*) and bliss (*jouissance*) emerge from the transgression of rules, whereas normativity is grounded in coherence and regularity (Rachid Abdelkhalek, 2013).**

- Beaugrande's theory of text is grounded in an organizational normativity based on cohesion, coherence, communicative function, and the continuity and flow of meaning.
- In contrast, Barthes's theory of text is based on pleasure (*plaisir*) and bliss (*jouissance*), which arise from deviation from established rules and normative constraints, particularly through the violation of expectations and departure from conventional linguistic usage.

There is no doubt that departing from linguistic norms or deviating from conventional usage may, at times, lead to a breach of normative rules, thereby reducing the text's acceptability to the recipient and even weakening its informativity and coherence. From this perspective, the two approaches—or two scientific paradigms—appear to be in tension. However, this tension should be understood as a complementary rather than a purely oppositional or mutually exclusive one.

❖ **Pleasure (*plaisir*) and bliss (*jouissance*) are transient and contingent ends that resist fixity and stability, whereas normativity refers to a set of rational and regulatory principles that counter disorder and the absence of governing structure.**

- Beaugrande argues that effective communication and productive analysis cannot be based on chaos or the absence of systematic organization. Rather, rules and constraints are what define textuality and shape the trajectory of meaningful and effective communication. Accordingly, communication, coherence, and cohesion necessarily depend on semantic organization and structural-formal integration.
- Barthes, by contrast, holds that textual reading and analysis do not primarily depend on rule-based organization, which he considers secondary in the act of interpreting texts. Reading varies from one reader to another and is therefore not characterized by stability or fixity. It is precisely this variability that renders the text open to multiple interpretations and makes its meaning fluid and potentially unlimited.

The Outcome of the Dialectical and Conflictual Tension between the Two Approaches:

The relationship between the two approaches is not one of absolute opposition or mutual exclusion; rather, it is fundamentally complementary. Beaugrande's text-linguistic theory answers the question of how a linguistic product can be constructed in a way that ensures textuality. Barthes's theory, on the other hand, is grounded in the question of how a text produces pleasure and *jouissance*.



The first question establishes the foundational principles and structural premises of textual construction, whereas the second defines the methodological principles used in textual analysis. In other words, Beaugrande is primarily concerned with the conditions of textual formation and organization, while Barthes approaches the text as a pre-constituted object of analysis, focusing on its capacity to generate readerly pleasure.

From this perspective, Beaugrande's framework addresses the "principles" or initial schemata that govern textual production and structure; consequently, any interpretation that ignores these principles risks falling outside the boundaries of systematic textual analysis. In contrast, Barthes does not prioritize textual genesis or structural origin; instead, he treats the text as a ready-made analytical object, asking whether it produces pleasure and *jouissance* for the reader. If it does, it is considered a text; if it fails to generate such effects, its textual status becomes questionable within his interpretive horizon.

Beaugrande, therefore, emphasizes adherence to foundational principles both at the level of textual production and at the level of analysis, since such adherence ensures methodological objectivity. By contrast, Barthes tends to privilege the suspension or transgression of such constraints, arguing that deviation from normative frameworks is precisely what produces textual pleasure and interpretive vitality in the reader.

It is at this point that the dialectical and seemingly oppositional dimension between the two approaches becomes evident: one orientation seeks to ground textual analysis in systematic rules and constraints at both the level of construction and interpretation, while the other resists such constraints, viewing their disruption as a source of aesthetic and interpretive enjoyment.

However, it is possible to integrate the two approaches on the grounds that Barthes did not call for a complete abandonment of normativity. Rather, his textual orientation is primarily concerned with granting interpretive authority to the reader, a position commonly associated with the notion of the "death of the author." From this perspective, textual analysis is regarded as a subsequent stage that follows the process of textual construction. A text is not produced *ex nihilo*; instead, it is built upon clear methodological schemata and well-defined structural plans.

Moreover, the methodological frameworks proposed by Beaugrande should not be understood as entirely closed or rigid systems. On the contrary, they take into account factors that extend beyond strictly linguistic structures, such as the psychological states of discourse participants. Beaugrande also assigns an active role to the reader in the processes of textual construction and meaning-



making, particularly through the standard of *acceptability*. This point represents one of the most significant areas of convergence between the two approaches.

Accordingly, this dialectical relationship reveals two complementary orientations within contemporary linguistic studies.

Conclusion:

This study concludes that both approaches represent a significant advancement in the development of text-linguistic studies and the refinement of its key concepts and theoretical formulations. The distinction between Barthes's notions of *pleasure* and *jouissance* and Beaugrande's concept of normative textual regulation reflects an evolving and increasingly sophisticated understanding of textual theory and its conceptual apparatus.

From Barthes's critical perspective, the text is conceived as an open space for the production and construction of meaning. Textuality, in this view, is closely linked to the text's ability to generate pleasure and interpretive uncertainty through the violation of readerly expectations, while simultaneously granting the reader a central role in the production of meaning.

By contrast, Beaugrande assigns interpretive authority to the text as a communicative event governed by seven standards that ensure coherence and cohesion, while also securing its communicative effectiveness and interactive capacity.

The study ultimately finds that the relationship between the two approaches is not one of absolute opposition or contradiction, but rather one of complementarity. The epistemological tension observed between them generates a more integrated perspective, indicating that both approaches operate within a shared intellectual trajectory and pursue a common methodological goal. Beaugrande is primarily concerned with the functional organization of the text, its structural and semantic coherence, and the conditions that ensure its communicative effectiveness. Barthes, on the other hand, focuses on the aesthetic realization of the text and its semantic openness, as well as the conditions that produce interpretive pleasure and readerly engagement.

Accordingly, while Beaugrande's norm-oriented approach seeks to explain how a text is constructed and how a linguistic product acquires textuality, Barthes's openness-oriented perspective aims to establish principles through which the text is transformed from a static product into an active reading practice, a dynamic interpretive exercise, and a form of conscious reception. Textuality, therefore, is not manifested solely through normative regulation, nor exclusively through interpretive openness. Rather, it emerges from the interaction between both dimensions. Normative regulation ensures coherence and structural integrity, whereas interpretive openness



endows the text with vitality, aesthetic value, and the capacity for multiple readings and semantic fluidity. This openness is what stimulates readerly engagement and enhances the text's appeal to diverse audiences.

From this standpoint, the dialectic of pleasure and normativity appears as a textual mechanism that achieves a balance between aesthetic-critical dimensions and structural organization, as well as between openness and constraint, thereby contributing to the advancement of contemporary theories of textuality.

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