

## Abstract

Interpretation is an old-new topic. While it was used in the past to fathom out religious texts in search of what is hidden and covert, it is back nowadays after undergoing expansion to be one of the approaches of poststructuralism. It attracts the attention of both Western and Arabic critical discourses. Since there is no exhaustive study in the theory of interpretation in Nassir Abu Zeid, it is decided that his contribution would be what this thesis discussing under the title (Interpretation in the Arabic Critical Discourse in Nassir Hamid Abu Zeid in Particular).

Interpretation in the modern Arabic critical discourse is about searching for what the text hides in relation to the linguistic & non-linguistic, the internal & external, and among the poles of communication (the author, text, and addressee). This approach works as the text gets more profound; this profundity increases in the texts that are highly poetical. It is an approach capable of absorbing other social, psychological, symbolic, artistic, stylistic, structural, and deconstructionistic approaches. It makes use of structuralism and poststructuralism though it belongs to the latter.

Abu Zeid's text has chosen interpretation as its reading and understanding approach due to the deficiency of classical methods, which neglected the creator of the text, romanticism which neglected reality, and Structuralism which called for the death of the author. Since the interpretative approach has its historical roots and not a novelty, it is objective to read the previous contributions, the task that Abu Zeid shoulders up concentrating on a number of Western and Arabic figures as well because of his belief in the argumentative relation between Arabic and Western thinking. The effect of Western thinking is more obvious in Abu Zeid's interpretive theory in addition to other modern Arab intellectuals. The reason lies in the fact that the Westerners – especially those whom he has read – are inclined towards theorization whereas theorization used to appear less in Arabic writings. Their prime interest is in the clarification of the concept and the fields that interpretation embarks upon not to mention the practical nature of most Arabic resources.

Interpretation for Abu Zeid is a mental, intellectual movement towards the origin or the end in order to realize. This concept results from understanding the meaning of interpretation linguistically and morphologically. Abu Zeid is interested in the mind as the means of creating interaction between a past full of experiences and cultural richness and a present in need of writing rules that handle its problems that are changeable with the change and development of the world. He sees exegeses as the first step towards interpretation criticizing giving exegeses priority on the ground of its absolute objectivity since the abolition of the distance between the addressee, the text, and its author has no existence.

Therefore, he calls for ignoring the different terminology between exegeses and interpretation. Abu Zeid specifies the two evidences that elicit the text from the surface to the deep internal which are the author's intention and the linguistic evidence (linguistic devices) especially the metaphorical among them. Though interpretation for Abu Zeid is open to all fields and though it expands endlessly in the single text, still not all interpretations are acceptable. He puts such limits and rules as the nature of the branch of knowledge, benefiting from all the analytical

methods and tools, the context, the purpose and meaning, the intention, the surface meaning, and the text nature.

Interpretation relies on a continuous circular movement represented in Abu Zeid by the movement between the end and meaning. This movement starts from the purpose/ the end in reality or the movement towards the origin/ the meaning in the text then it comes back to the origin/ the meaning within the text towards the purpose which represents the outside of the text and then the addressee and so on. It is a movement between the reader's reality and the text and vice versa. It contributes to the innovation of the meaning and opens the way before interpretation to do its job in revealing the hidden meaning in the text, which Abu Zeid terms as "passed in silence." He interprets it in terms of two factors: one is external that concentrates on culture, reality, the author's intention, and the reader's purpose. The second represents the text internals including the text nature, language, images, and intertextuality. These two factors represent the techniques (from accumulated readings of Arabic and Western writings) that Abu Zeid adopts in interpretive theorization.

Though Abu Zeid admits the openness of the interpretive approach to all other fields, what he has really read is the written texts on top of which is the religious text, then the mystical, rhetorical, linguistic, and literary texts. He applies his techniques clearly to the religious text. His interpretations of other genres do not reveal his techniques in their complete forms. Upon examining his practical efforts, his types of interpretation- if the notion that every understanding is an interpretation is taken for granted – are: the text interpretation and interpreting interpretation. The former represents his reading of the Quranic text and the prophetic saying; the latter represents the other fields in addition to his interpretation of Al-Shafa'ai's contributions.