THE PLURALITY OF AUDIENCES AND THE POLYPHONY OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT IN BRUEGGEMANN'S THEOLOGY

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Abstract: The author of this article, (The Plurality of Audiences and the Polyphony of the Biblical Text in Brueggemann's Theology) discusses about the relationship between multiple audiences and the polyphony of the biblical text as it may be observed in Brueggeamann's interpretation of the Old Testament text. The paper discusses two important aspects, which are present in the interpretative paradigm proposed by Brueggemann. In the first part it is presented the relationship between the diversity of audiences, who are reading the biblical text, and the polyphonic character of it. In the second part, it will analyzed the way Brueggemann tries to reconciliate the polyphonic character of the text with its normative function for the community of faith. The author uses the courtroom language to demonstrate the internal tendency of the sacred text, to impose a certain alternative, from the multiple divergent testimonies which are present in it. It is what Brueggemann calls: the process of "adjudication".

Key words: Brueggemann, polyphony, rhetorical criticism, Yahweh, audience, adjudication

In order to understand why we chose Walter Brueggemann to discuss a mixed subject about plurality of audiences, which belongs to the area o sociology, and the polyphonic caracter of the biblical text, which belongs to the area of rhetoric and theology, there is necessary to offer some information about the author. He was born in 1932, in the town Tilden, Nebraska, United States of America.[1] In 1955 he obtained a BA degree in Sociology from Elmhurst College. New York. In 1974 Brueggemann received a Ph.D., in education from Louis University. This explains why Brueggemann was interested to apply a sociological method in interpreting the sacred text of the Old Testament. In 1958 he received his B.D., in the area of Old Testament studies from Eden Theological Seminary, and in 1961 he obtained the degree of Doctor in Theology (Th.D.) in Old Testament, from Union Theological Seminary.

We may say that his interest in sociology was determined also by the historical period during which he activated. At the social level America passed through the Vietnam War. In the same time, this society was characterized by turmoil from inside, because the civil rights movement (Parrish, A 1998, 570).

On the other hand in the theological area, the leading scholars, such as James Barr, Brevard Childs, James Muilenburg and Langdon Gilkey, started to criticize the so-called Biblical Theology Movement.[2]

The famous lecture entitled "Form Criticism and Beyond," held by James Muilenburg,[3] who was one of Brueggeman's teachers at Union Theological Seminary, which was held at the opening of the academic year in 1968, was decisive for determining the

1 See the article of V. S. Parrish, entitled "Brueggemann, Walter," from the volume, McKim, Donald K., editor, Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), p. 570-75.

2 See James Barr, The Semantics of Biblical Language, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), Brevard Childs , Biblical Theology in Crisis, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), and Langdon Gilkey Gilkey, Langdon, „Cosmology, Ontology, and the Travail of Biblical Language" in Journal of Religion, vol. XLI, (Chicago, Illinois: The Universitiy of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 194-205.

3 James Muilenburg with his article "Form Criticism and Beyond, " în Journal of Biblical Literature, editor: Morton S. Enslin, vol. LXXXVIII, (Philadelphia: The Society of the Biblical Literature, 1969).

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radical shift from the traditional paradigm used till then in the area of biblical theology, toward the so called rhetorical criticism.

Brueggemann published an impressive number of articles and books, which were decisive for convincing the scholars about an alternative approach to the sacred text, different than the traditional historical critical method.[4]

He had an important contribution to the downfall of the critical historical method, while being in the position of general editor to the Fortress Press from Philadelphia. Here he helped other young theologians to publish their books, in which there were proposed new directions in interpretation (Barr; 1999, p. 540-541).

Brueggeamann was also interested to promote the cooperation between the Church and the Academy, in the proces of Old Testament interpretation. He considers that the writing of an Old Testament theology must be done in an ecclesial context (Brueggemann; 1997, p. 743). Brueggemann had in view the audience. Therefore, he intended to offer to the ministers, commentaries which will help them to compose biblical messages.5

Brueggemann asserts that between '60s and '70s, for a period of twenty years, biblical theology research passed through a time of confussion. He is not too much disturbed by this confussion as long as it is allowed to different voices to express themselves in the interpretation of the Scripture (Brueggemann; A 1999, p. 108-109; Brueggemann; A 2002, p. 415).6

In the present, Brueggemann is considered the main reprezentative in the area of Old Testament interpretation in the last part of the 20th century. His main concern was to discover the relatioship between the bibical text and the real life of the interpretative community (Moberly; A 1999, p. 472).

He is a strong defender of pluralism. Even though he is opened to the polyphony, Brueggemann refrains to go to the extreme in biblical interpretation.[7]

Concerning the structure and the content of Brueggemann's paradigm of interpreting the Old Testament, we will refer to his main book, which was published in 1997.[8] Here the author concentrates on the testimonies about the Yahweh, the God of Israel, formulated by different voices from the text. In order to explain the text, by using this perspective, Brueggemann applies the model of the trial court in order to include the competent voices which speak in the Old Testament (Brueggemann; 1997, p. 63-64). Under the concept of testimony, Brueggemann includes the most common testimonies of Israel about God, which he calls them "the core testimony" (Brueggemann; 1997, p. 120-133). Another kind of testimony is called "the counter-testimony," which describes those texts which challenge the assertions included in the common testimonies.[9]

In this article we will analyze two important aspects, which are present in the interpretative paradigm proposed by Brueggemann. First of all we will see the relationship between the diversity of audiences who are reading the biblical text and the polyphonic character of the sacred text. In the second part, we will try to understand how, Brueggemann

4 Till 1998, Brueggemann published over twenty volumes with essays, and books, and over eighty articles in different important magazines. See Atla Vista, CD. See also the article "Brueggemann, Walter..."by V. S. Parrish, from Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpretation, ed. McKim, 1998, op.cit., p. 570.

5 Walter Brueggemann, 1 Kings, din Knox Preaching Guides, editor: John H. Hayes, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), p. 78.

6 The article of Walter Brueggemann, "The ABC's of Old Testament Theology in the US," from Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentlische Wissenschaft (ZAW), edited by: Hans-Christoph Schmitt şi Gunther Wanke, (Berlin şi New York: Walter de Gruyter) vol. 114 (2002).

7 See Walter Brueggemann, Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), p. 99-101.

8 See Walter Brueggemann, 1997, op.cit.,

9 Ibid., p. 319-410.

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tries to reconciliate the polyphonic character of the text with the normative character of it. In this way, using his courtroom language, we will speak about the so called process of "adjudication", as a way of explaining the authoritative dimension of the text for the community of faith.

1. The audience and the polyphonic text

Brueggemann shows that the pluralism of the audience, fits very well with the polyphonic caracter of the biblical text. Here he mentions Colleridge Mark's article "Life in the Crypt or Why Bother with Biblical Studies"[10], where it is asserted that any totalitarian metanarative, including that of the Bible, has long been discarded in the contemporary world. But now researchers from the academic circles, trying to oppose any kind of deconstruction, which ultimately lead to solipsism, are heading back to the Bible in order to seek a metanarative, other than totalitarian.

He observes that, what is specific to the Bible, is its polyphonic character. The Bible supports a common metanarative, but one that includes a diversity of voices. "many stories comprise *the* story. God's story is both single and several. It also insists upon a narrative which at times is most disjoined and the connectedness of which is perceived only by way of struggle"(Brueggemann;1997, p. 88). In his theology, the glue that connects diverse voices together in the biblical text is "the struggle".

He argues that the interpreters neglected the role of audience in the biblical text. In his book, *In Man We Trust: The Neglected Side of Biblical Faith*,[11] Brueggemann investigates an aspect less discussed, namely, the "faith" God has in his believers. He observes "quite specific cases in which the hope of God is affirmed or discerned in processes of historical interaction" (p. 2). It is stressed man's contribution in the process of witnessing in favor of God. In this sense, he speaks about the importance of the lament, in keeping the covenant. In his article "The Costly Loss of Lament,"[12] he says that the Christian life is threatened, if the complaint of the believer disappears. For example, the removal of the the psalms of complaint, would result in loss "of life and faith incurred, when the lament Psalms are no longer used for their specific social function" (p. 57). We would assist to a "loss of genuine covenant interaction" (p. 60), "the *shifting of the question of theodicity*" (p. 61), and "the normal mode of the theodicy question is forfeited" (p. 66).

He accepts different voices to dialogue in interpreting the same sacred text, allowing too much freedom for expressing their point of view, without establishing a clear criteria of evaluation of the authenticity of those voices.

There is also a problem in the way he sees the relationship between ontology and speech in biblical theology. Brueggemann says that there is no need to make a clear separation. This clear mark between ontology and rhetorics will be necessary only in the case of systematic theology (Brueggemann; 1997, p.17-18). He does not offer a satisfactory solution to the relationship between rhetoric and the reality behind the text (the metaphysics).

Brueggemann suggests that we have to appeal to a simply rhetorical approach to the sacred text, without taking into account the metaphysical dimension of the text. However, he is criticised because of neglecting the ontological dimension in biblical interpretation. This

10 Published in Biblical Interpretation 2 (July 1994), p. 139-151.

11 Walter Brueggemann, In Man We Trust: The Neglected Side of Biblical Faith, (Richmond: John Knox Press, f.a).

12 Walter Brueggemann, "The Costly Loss of Lament," din Journal for the Study of the Old Testamet, 36 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), p. 57-71.

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does not do justice to the Old Testament theology, because the text cannot be limited to rhetoric.

Brueggeamann uses the rhetorical and sociological approach in order to explain the meaning of the biblical text, which involves the metaphysical dimension of the reality to which the text bear witness.

There are also, some dangers of an interpretation that focuses on the audience. One, is to make normative, the experience of the interpretative audience, when trying to extract the meaning of the text. We may see this in Samartha's article,[13] when speaking about the salvation event. She argues that Scripture supports multiple interpretations of the same event from the Bible. For example,

> the story of the exodus, the liberation of the people of Israel from bondage in Egypt, their journey through the wilderness, and later on their crossing the Jordan to enter the promised land, has become for Christians 'salvation history.' It has been interpreted in an exclusive way to mean that God's liberating work was revealed only in the history of Israel and, later on, in the history of the other peoples and nations to be related to God's saving work in history (Samartha; A 1994, p. 352).

She continues by saying that there are several possible interpretations of the same event from Scripture, and they will apply differently from case to case. "Different interpretations of the same event are possible within a particular scripture itself, and that therefore no single interpretation, or the self-perception of *one* people in relation to their God, can be made the *norm* to judge God's relationship to other people in history" (Samartha; A 1994, p. 353).

In this case we assist to *a radical change in the interpretation of the text*. This change is based on the postmodern presupposition, namely, that *my own opinion is normative*, and that the other's stories or intepretations are opressive stories.[14]

We have to keep in mind that the community of Israel has been privileged among the other partners of Yahweh from the biblical text. It is placed as a model for the other nations. Therefore, to say that *God's relationship with other nations is seen as equal to Israel's relationship with Yahweh, contradicts the core testimony of the text, which is seen as normative for understanding its message.*

Another danger of focusing on the audience, is *to treat the text as being independent of its author.* In one of his chapters, entitled "Beginning from the Audience," Goldingay observes this shift in interpretation, from focusing on the historicity of the events, described in the text, *towards a rhetorical approach, which, ultimately, is leading to the autonomy of the text.* In this way the meaning of the text is dependent of the audience, to which it is addressed.

Goldingay believes that even though we use different methods in interpretation, we do not have to give up the historical approach. It would be a sign of naivety, to jump up from the historical method, and embrace approaches that focus on the text, thinking that we have found the ideal solution. "As if we have, at last, found interpretation's long-sought dream bride. The era in literary criticism that sought to understand poems and novels, on the basis of their background in history and in their author's experience, was indeed followed by an emphasis on the autonomy of the literary work, but that has in turn, been

13 S. J. Samartha, "Religion, Language and Reality: Towards a Relational Hermeneutics," in Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology, vol. 3, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994).

14 See J. Sire, The Universe Next Door; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004 (Romanian translation), p. 224.

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supplemented by further critical approaches, in particular, ones that focus on the readers or audience who receive and respond to works."[15]

From this perspective, Brueggemann makes important observations concerning interpretating the biblical text. However, when speaking about different voices present in the text, and in the interpretative community, the way he is stressing diversity, affects the basic testimony.

We understand that the interpreter cannot situate himself outside of a particular interpretative community. On the other hand, a faithful intepreter will support the core testimony as normative for every community of faith, that shares the same sacred text. It is necessary to maintain a balance concerning the methods used to approach the text. The context of the audience is important, in order that the message of the text to be relevant. In fact Brueggemann recommends, to those who write biblical theology, tot interpret the text respecting its polyphonic character, "centered enough for its first listerning community...(but also) open enough to be compelling for its second listerning community, which may be drawn to its truthfulness, but is fearful of any authoritarian closure or reductionism" (p. 89).

He observes, too, that the core testimony of Israel, form the Scripture "is not a dictator. It will not impose its will. It can only issue its summons and its invitation, and await a decision that is always to be made yet again. When an affirmative decision is made, a real world of onthological substance follows" (p. 725). The core testimony is not a dictator, because always it is respected the free will of man, but in order that a real world to open up, it is necessary to comply to this testimony of the biblical text.

He observes well "the relevance of the Biblical tradition for our kind of world."[16] From his own perspective, the polyphonic sacred text is interpreted in the ecclesial community, which is rooted in a specific life situation, characterized also by polyphony. It

is interpretation done in an idiom of the testimony of the text...the combination of core testimony and counter-testimony constitutes the idiom of Israel's faith. It is, then, this idiom that may be practiced in an ecclesial community of interpretation...in contemporary ecclesial communities...that idiom is recoverable when the community accepts that its own cadences and dialect are derivative from that idiom...such a community of interpretation moves past the Cartesian dilemma - now aware of the great suspicions of Freud and Marx, fully present to the great ruptures of Auschwitz and Hiroshima to buoyant 'second naivete' in the end convinced that no cadence of speech, no dialect of cummunication, no idiom of self-discernment is as powerful, as compelling, as liberating, or as tranformative as this one (p. 746).

As we see *Brueggeamnn accepts that the interaction of the audience with Yahweh requires that the audience to accommodate to the requirements of the divinity*. He says that recognizing Yahweh, requires the reorganization of all things, by the audience. The testimony about Yahweh, from the text, has a great impact over the life and the identity of Israel, which is the people of this text. This testimony is always seen from two perspectives, namely, "one to reorder the internal life of the community in ways faithful to Yahweh, the other to invite the world out beyond this community, to reorder its life with reference to

15 John Goldingay, Models for Interpretation of Scripture, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1995), p. 35. See also Anthony C.Thiselton, „The New Hermeneutic," from New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods, ed., I. Howard Marshall, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 63-4.

16 Walter Brueggemann, Tradition for Crisis: A Study in Hosea, (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1968), p. 12.

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Yahweh... the acknowledgment of Yahweh at the center of life ...requires a reordering of everything else" (p. 747).

He offers two texts, in supporting this idea, namely: Joshua 24 and Isaiah 43. Scenarios in these two passages are paradigmatic for every generation who engages into a dialog, about God, as it is modeled here. The question is: "Whose testimony can be trusted?"; of those who support Yahweh, or of those who support the gods beyond the river, or gods of the empire. Finally, the witnesses who will be believed "will determine the shape of the world" (p. 750).

2. The adjudication in the polyphonic sacred text

Brueggemann observes also that the reader can identify in the text, the tendency to eliminate the confusion created by the presence of multiple and divergent voices from the text, by finding out an authoritative voice, which impose itself over all the other. The author uses a law court language to say that there is a tendency to "*adjudecate*" in the text.

Speaking about recent developments, Bruegeemann says that the Old Testament studies, are trying to show that in the theological discourse, we find out conflicting tendencies. His opinion concerning the picture of Yahweh in the biblical text, is a tendency to give up the process of adjudication. Brueggemann considers that the changes of the state of affairs described in the biblical text are determined by the very character of Yahweh, who is seen as contradictory (Brueggemann; 1997, p. 64).

He provides a summary of the conflicting trends which are present into the text. The first trend relates to the iconic and aniconic texts. He reminds Partick Miller, who considers that the predominant trend in Israel is aniconic ("suggestive rather than literally representational" (Webster)), as a distinctive feature of the Old Testament. This is evident in the contrast existing between the culture of Israel and other cultures. Israel is characterised by extreme radicalism.[17] The iconic texts are "tendencies toward consolidation and stability, based on a need for social order."[18] In the Old Testament text there are also, iconic texts. He gives as an example, the section from 1 Samuel 7-15, where such a conflict exists between those who reject and those who support the monarchy (p. 72).

The second contradictory trend, refers to the so-called bipolar type schemes and consolidation release. He offers the example of Israel's legal traditions, which contain a path of liberation, showing concern for debt cancellation, and a path of consolidation, which is particularly concerned with purity.[19] There is mentioned a third contradictory tendency, called the continue unresolved struggle. He says that for a responsible interpretation, it is necessary to maintain the struggle into a friendly atmosphere. This "is the real work of interpretation" (p. 73).

Frequently, the interpreter can distinguish different voices which decide "adjudicate" in the text. Brueggemann reminds Rainer Alberts claim, that the canon itself represents a compromise between different communities of believers, in which none is silenced or excluded from this process. "*The canon itself is an exercise in adjudication.* Much that the scholarly community has regarded as editing or redaction, is in fact that ongoing mark of

17 Patric D. Miller, "Israelite Religion," din The Hebrew Bible and Its Modern Interpreters (editori D. A. Knight şi G. M. Tucker; Chicago, Californinia: Scholars Press, 1985), p. 211-213.

18 See Charles H. Cosgrove, from "Toward a Postmodern Hermeneutica Sacra: Guiding Considerations in Choosing between Competing Plausible Interpretations of Scripture," from Charles H. Cosgrove ed., The Meanings We Choose: Hermeneutical Ethics, Indeterminacy, and the Conflict of Interpretations, London and New York: T&T Clark International, 2004, p. 53.

19 Brueggemann mentions the book of Fernando Belo, A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1981).

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adjudication, in which any unsettled point, is reached only provisionally, and is in turn subject to reconsideration." This unsettledness is applied even "to the very character of Yahweh, the God of Israel... to wish for a more settled interpretation process is to wish for something that is not available in the Old Testament, and no amount of historical criticism or canonical interpretation can make it so... interpretation in the end cannot overcome the irascible pluralistic character of the text" (p. 64).

He observes that at first sight, there is a certain tendency towards uniformity in the Old Testament. He explains that this uniformity is due to the hegemonic trend showed by the community that has preserved the text. In his article "Bodied Faith and the Body Politic,"[20] he says that this uniformity was observed only later, by theologians. "Only lately have we noticed that the single voice of the Bible was possible and credible only because there was a hegemony of interpretation, a small, homogeneous community of interpreters who spoke from the same perspective and for the same vested interests" (p. 67). We recognize here the postmodern principle of the will to power, found in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche.[21]

Looking from outside, there are many voices who struggle to impose themselves in the text. These different voices inside the text, represent different perspectives on the reality. But, there is not struggle, from the point of view of the audience, to which the text it is addressed. The struggle is done by that community, only for the implementation of the core testimony in the real life.

We observe that among the multitude of voices, who wanted to be heard into the text, there was one who imposed itself over the others. Brueggemann says that this was possible by the process of adjudication.

Concerning the ending of the canonization process, he says that the standard testimony, resulted by the end of this process, did not fully succeeded as the normative testimony for the readers of the sacred text. The testimonies from the biblical text "were often in profound dispute with one another, disagreeing from the ground up about the 'truth'...it is clear 'the final form of the text,' in its canonizing process, did not feature a complete hegemonic victory for any interpretative trajectory" (Brueggemann; 1997, p. 710).

Brueggemann insists upon allowing the voices from the text, to speak freely, but he speaks also about the importance of adjudication in the text. For example, even though, the image of Yahweh in the text is contradictory, Israel can trust his God. Israel reached to the conclusion that Yahweh "is stronger than the babylonian gods... Yahweh is the only God who has demonstrated power...(as a result) the other gods merit no obedience or defence."[22] Bruggeman talks about the need to trust God, regardless of circumstances. It is recalled the advice given by Yahweh to Judah, in the face of the babylonian invasion. He concludes that the God who "can be trusted in the face of Babylonians is the same God who must be obeyed in a season of Israel's self-indulgence."[23]

The adjudication is thus seen as a relativistic process. Adjudication is a partial solution applied for a limited audience, namely for Israel. The process of adjudication realized by a certain community may not be valid for another community. This perspective supports the extreme relativism in the process of applying the biblical text.

In order to preserve this relativity, he cautions against an excessively systematization of the Old Testament theology. "It is a temptation and a bane to try to thematize and

20 Walter Brueggemann, Old Testament Theology: Essays on Structure, Theme, and Text, editor: Patrick D. Miller, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

21 Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future, transl., Mariane Cowan, (Chicago: Gateway Editions, Inc., 1955.

22 Brueggemann, op.cit., p. 1997, p. 150.

23 Brueggemann, op.cit., p. 1997, p. 153.

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skematize data excessively, and I have no wish to impose a pattern on the material... I suggest this pattern only as a rough perspective, which has to be adjusted for each partner" (p. 552-553). He speaks about the ways Yahweh relates to his partners. The partner is created to obey, then he is abandoned, and finally he is rehabilitated for a new beginning. None of Yahweh's partners have their own resources, therefore, "in the end they are summoned outside themselves, in order to rely on this One whom Israel confesses to be uncompromising in sovereignty, but moved to always new measures of fidelity"(p. 556).

Based on his conclusion, we observe that different voices from the text, and outside it, must conform to Yahweh's expectations – that is, to the core testimony of the sacred text. The coherence of the core testimony was possible trough the process of adjudication.

In fact he acknowledges that "Yahweh is deeply enmeshed in a tradition of textuality, is committed to what has been previously claimed, and is held accountable for the chance for life together (between Yahweh and Israel. Thus the offer of Yahweh is not sheer capriciousness)" (p. 282).

This means that there is possible to explain logically Yahweh's behavior. Brueggemann's silence concerning adjudication, in certain sections of his work, can mislead the reader, by considering that in the text, there are statements (counter-testimony), which contradict the core testimony of the sacred text, such as those formulated by liberation theology, etc.

Concerning *the contradictory perspectives, which the theologians* have discovered into the biblical text, Goldingay[24] says that, it is an exaggeration to name "contradictions" the different perspectives present into the text. Because of the multitude of viewpoints "it will be a tour of force to interrelate its various viewpoints. But the statement is an exageration, arising partly out of a rather loose use of the word 'contradiction'...(better) the Bible is highly diverse, and they (the diverse perspectives) invite the interpreter to take up the challenge of relating them to each other, as part of the task of their theological explanation" (Goldingay; 1987, p. 15).

In fact Brueggemann himself concludes that "a coherent portrayal of Yahweh is the proper work of an Old Testament Theology" (p. 267).

3. Conclusion

In this article we have analyzed two important aspects, which are present in the interpretative paradigm proposed by Brueggemann. Concerning the first aspect, we saw the relationship between the diversity of audiences who are reading the biblical text and the polyphonic character of the sacred text. In the second part, we saw Brueggemann's endeavor to reconciliate the polyphonic character of the text with its normative character. He used a courtroom language, to say that the process of "adjudication" demonstrates the authoritative character of the text for the community of faith.

Brueggemann argued that the pluralism of the audience, fits very well with the polyphonic caracter of the biblical text. He observed that, what is specific to the Bible, is its polyphonic character.

However, we said that he allows too much freedom to the divergent voices, to express their point of view, without establishing a clear criteria of evaluation of the authenticity of those voices.

We showed that there are some dangers by focusing too much on the audience. One, is to make normative, the experience of the interpretative audience, when trying to discover

24 John Goldingay, Theological Diversity and the authority of the Old Testament, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), p. iii-v.

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the meaning of the text. We assist to *a radical change in the interpretation of the text*. This change is based on the postmodern presupposition, namely, that *my own opinion is normative for me,* and that the other's stories or intepretations are opressive stories.

Another danger of focusing on the audience, is *to treat the text as being independent of its author*. This shift in interpretation, from the historicity of the events described in the text, *towards a rhetorical approach, can ultimately lead to the autonomy of the text.* In this way the meaning of the text is dependent of the audience, to which it is addressed, and independent of the text.

We saw that it would be a sign of naivety, to jump up from the historical method, and embrace approaches that focus on the text, thinking that we have found the ideal solution. When speaking about different voices present in the text, and in the interpretative community, the way Brueggemann is stressing diversity, may affect the core testimony.

We understood that the interpreter is dependent of his own interpretative community. On the other hand, a faithful intepreter will support the core testimony as normative for every community of faith, that shares the same sacred text. It is necessary to maintain a balance concerning the methods used to approach the text.

Brueggemann observed also that the reader can identify in the text, the tendency to eliminate the confusion created by the presence of multiple and divergent voices from the text, by finding out an authoritative voice, which imposes itself over all the others. He uses a law court language to demonstrate that there is a tendency to "*adjudecate*" in the text.

He observes that at first sight, there is a certain tendency towards uniformity in the Old Testament. He explains that this uniformity is due to the hegemonic trend showed by the community that has preserved the text.

We observed that among the multitude of voices, who wanted to be heard into the text, there was one who imposed itself over the others. Brueggemann says that this was possible by the process of adjudication.

In his opinion, even the ending of the canonization process, did not fully succeeded as the normative testimony for the readers of the sacred text. Therefore, Brueggemann insists upon allowing the voices from the text, to speak freely. On the other hand, he underlines the the importance of adjudication in the text. Even though, in his opinion, the image of Yahweh in the text is contradictory, Israel can trust his God.

We said that the core testimony is not a dictator, because always it is respected the free will of man, but in order that a real world to open up, it is necessary to comply to this testimony of the biblical text. Based on our arguments, we said that different voices from the text, and outside it, must conform to the core testimony of the sacred text. In this manner, the coherence of the core testimony was possible trough the process of adjudication.

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