

READING THE TEXT WITH ITS ANCIENT AUDIENCE AS A REFINEMENT OF NARRATIVE CRITICISM: THE AMNON AND TAMAR NARRATIVE AS A TEST CASE

By Jonathon Riley

ABSTRACT: This thesis seeks to demonstrate that the methods of narrative criticism can be employed in a modified way to address two problems. The problems with the Intentional Fallacy that are inherent in Narrative Criticism, and the tendency of Narrative Criticism to ignore historical-critical questions about the text. This modification would employ a new method as follows: One could first use the historical-critical method to reconstruct a text; JEDtrH, for example. One could then use reception criticism to determine the ways in which the earliest audience of JEDtrH could have understood the text. Finally, the interpreter could then use narrative criticism to examine not authorial intent or what is “native to the text” but simply to present one way in which one member of its earliest audience could have understood one pericope within the text.

This thesis will demonstrate this by examining the Amnon and Tamar narrative in the context of a Josianic audience, because this is likely the period when it was placed into a larger text, JEDtrH.

This thesis will do this by

1. Providing context for this approach by giving a summary of some of the major methodologies within narrative criticism,
2. Defining JEDtrH,
3. Examining oral readings of texts in ancient Judah to demonstrate how the Amnon and Tamar narrative within JEDtrH would likely have been experienced by the listener
4. Examining ancient interpretive styles to demonstrate one possible way in which a part of its earliest audience might have understood the pericope through an ancient style of close reading, and
5. Use these methods to examine the Amnon and Tamar narrative as a test case in order to determine one possible way in which one member of JEDtrH’s earliest audience could have understood it.