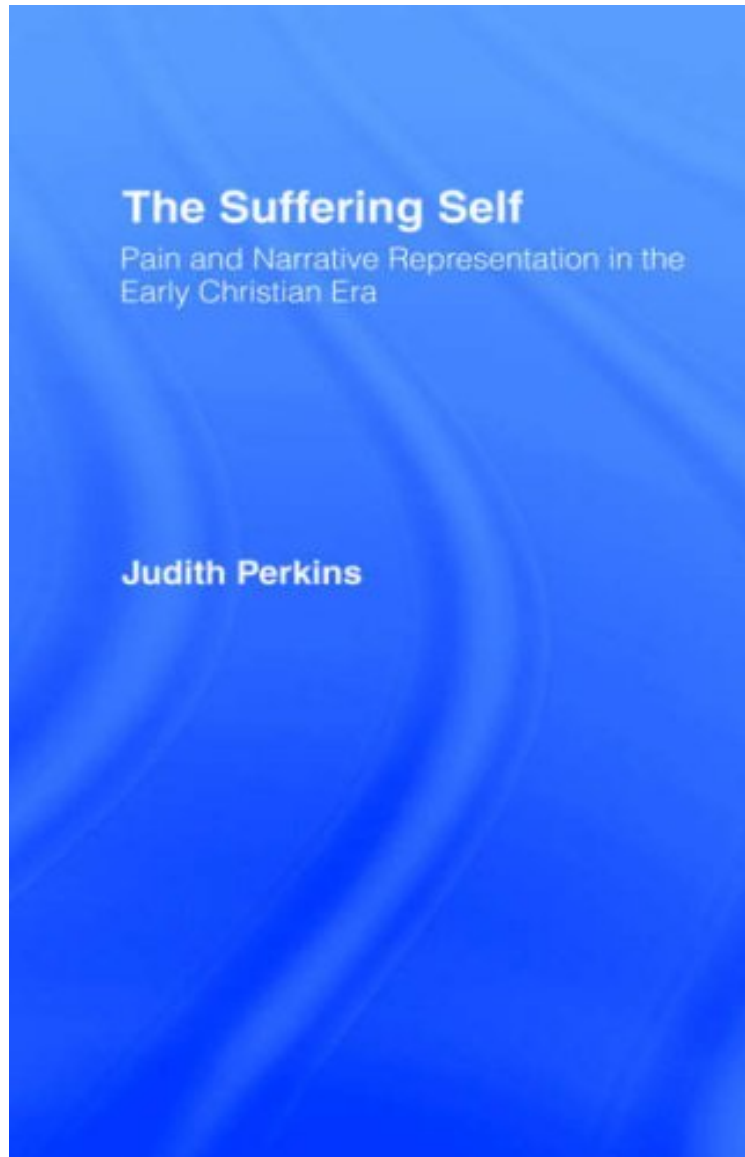


[FREE] The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era

# The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era

*Judith Perkins*

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**Judith Perkins : The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era:

The *Suffering Self* is a ground-breaking, interdisciplinary study of the spread of Christianity across the Roman empire. Judith Perkins shows how Christian narrative representation in the early empire worked to create a new kind of human self-understanding - the perception of the self as sufferer. Drawing on feminist and social theory, she addresses the question of why forms of suffering like martyrdom and self-mutilation were so important to early Christians. This study crosses the boundaries between ancient history and the study of early Christianity, seeing Christian representation in the context of the Greco-Roman world. She draws parallels with suffering heroines in Greek novels and in martyr acts and examines representations in medical and philosophical texts. Judith Perkins' controversial study is important reading for all those interested in ancient society, or in the history of Christianity.

"The sweep of Perkins's assemblage of ancient texts, and especially her apparent willingness to read across apparent religious and genre boundaries, puts her in good company ... [B]y highlighting the roles of healing and charity ... Perkins not only helps us to see how Christianity may have grown in part by creating 'the subject of its concern' but also reinforces her contention that the representational revolution spearheaded by earlier Christian texts continued to give an unusually privileged and sympathetic place to the sick and the poor in the ancient world." - "Church History ..."  
demonstrate[s] a remarkable capacity to capture the sense of pain's expressive function ... Perkins' training as a classicist is employed with vigor and elegance." - Patrick Hayes, Yale Divinity School  
About the Author: Judith Perkins is Professor of Classics and Humanities at Saint Joseph College, West Hartford, Connecticut.