

# Simone Weil’s philosophical scrutinies of the New Testament

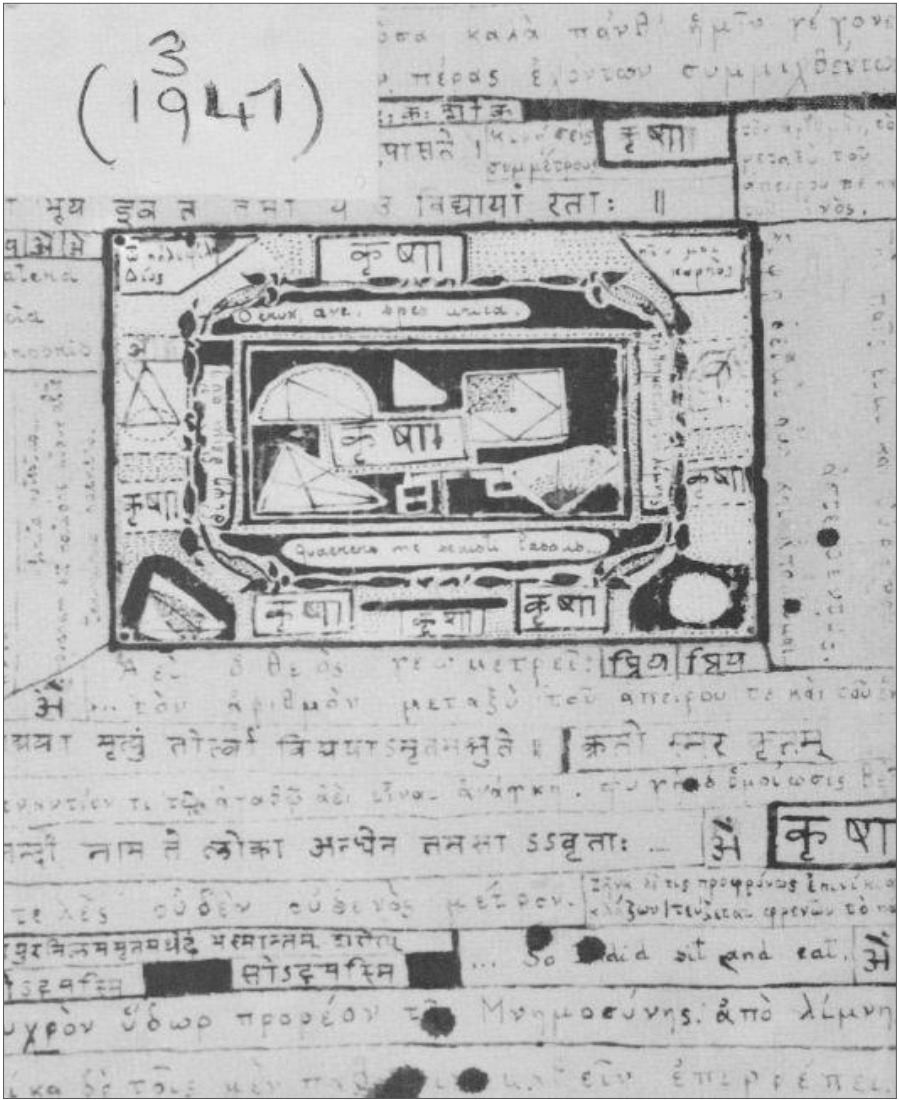
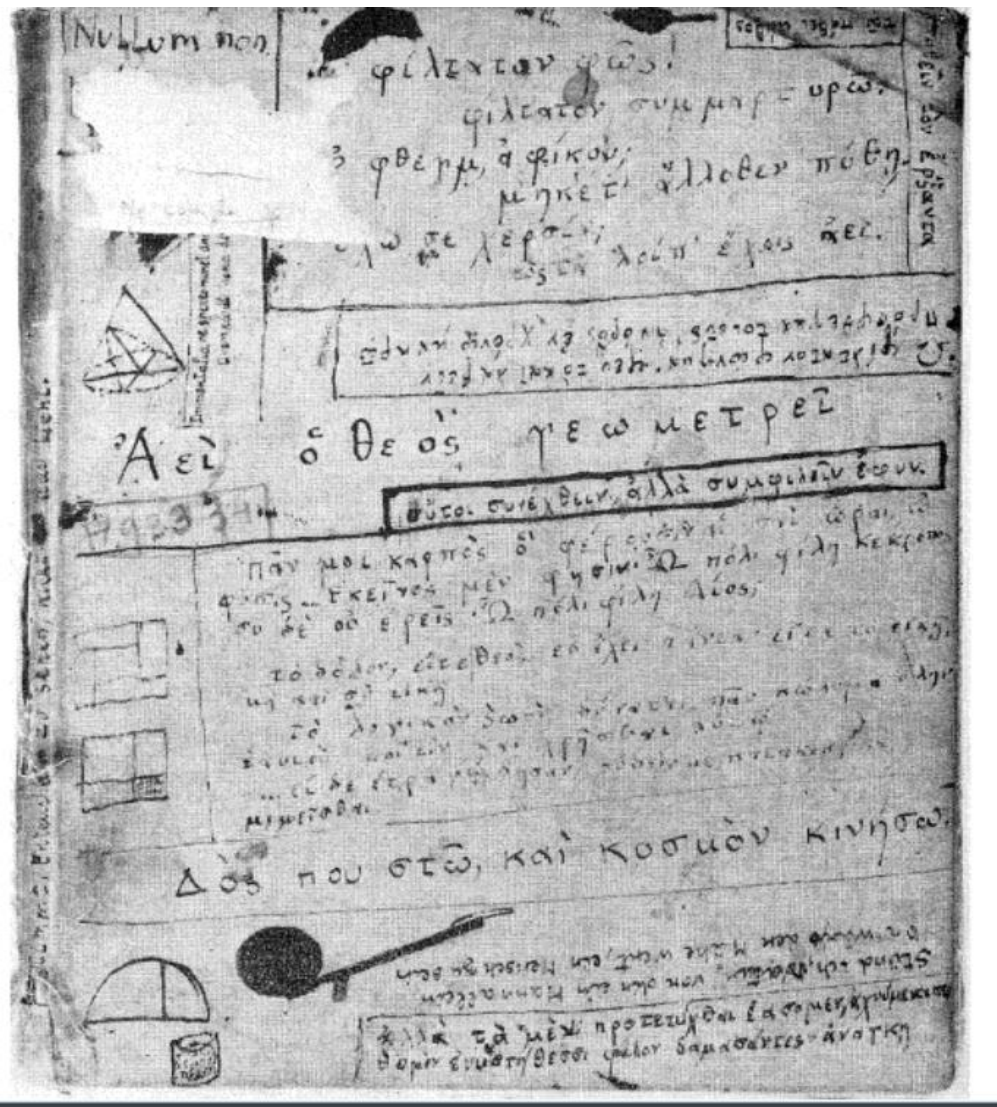
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## Topic

The philosophical conclusions Simone Weil (1909-1943) drew from the New Testament material through her specific practices, methods, and performances of reception and re-appropriation compel contemporary philosophical and ethical debates to depart from fixed imaginaries and interpretations of human suffering, enabling new paths, especially concerning the recent metaphysical turn in materialist thought. This project investigates *how* Simone Weil drew her philosophical conclusions from the biblical Material.



## Theses

- Simone Weil’s engagement with the New Testament material, especially with the death of Christ, is crucial to understand the developement and shape of her philsofphical enterprise as a whole.
- In her practices concerning highly charged texts such as the New Testament, the performative-corporeal dimension of Simone Weil's hermeneutical concept, lecture, becomes particularly evident.

## Material

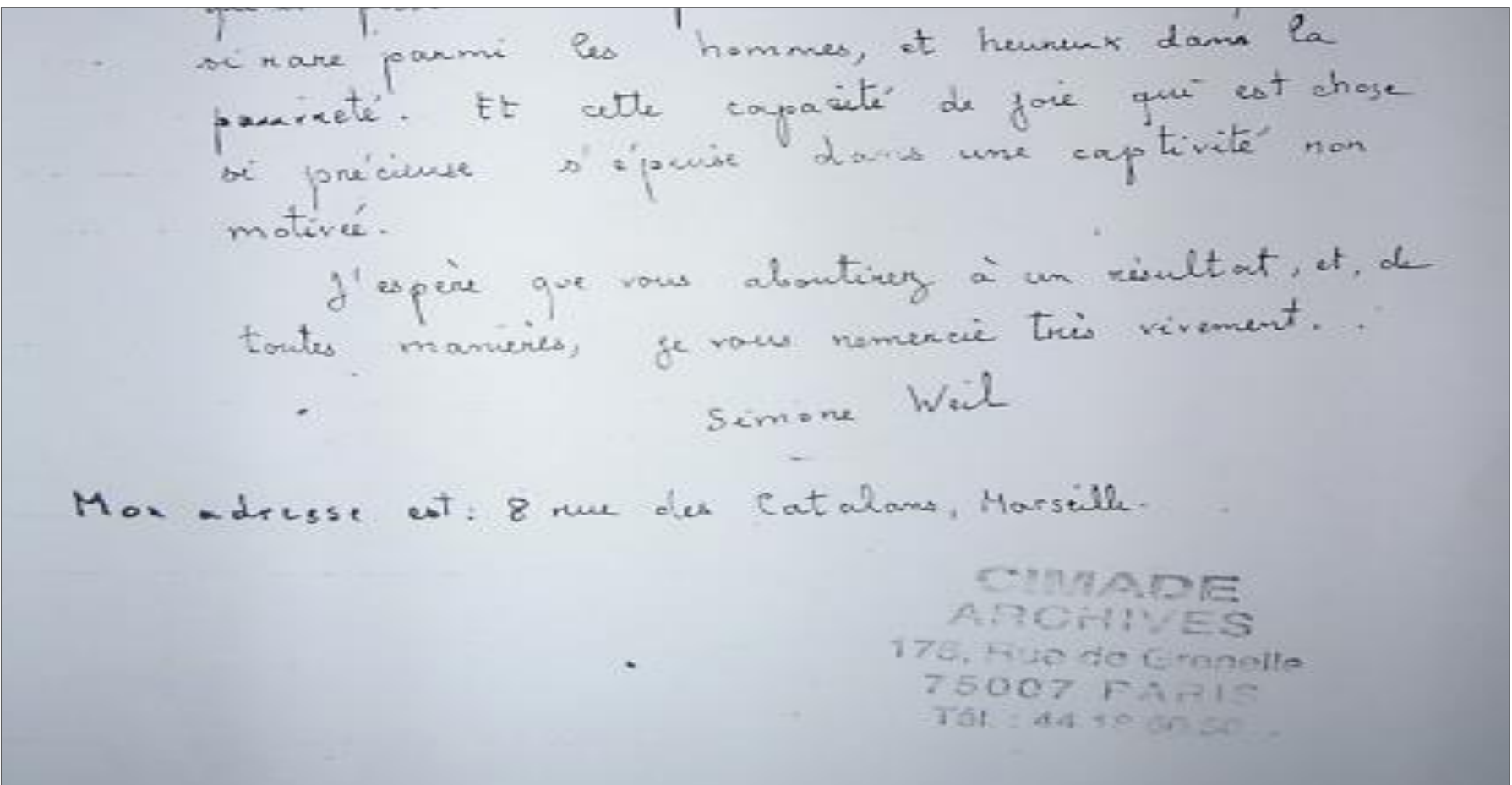
The project uses the generic plurality within the oeuvre of Simone Weil to identify her hermeneutical practices at the heart of her philosophy. Most of the material she left behind was unpublished and of private nature. The majority of manuscripts and personal letters have a strong ephemeral character, whereas other works have been rewritten and edited several times. Function and appearance of New Testament material in the ephemeral, private works are read in combination to works Weil published and considered for a wider audience in order to draw nuanced conclusions.

## Aims

This project aims at understanding Simone Weil's philosophical scrutinies of the death narratives around the Christ figure that the French philosopher found dominant in the New Testament's set of textual material. It reconstructs *how* Weil artistically and performatively created her philosophical enterprise based on intercultural superimpositions of sacred texts from different religions/cultures with philosophy, literature, and mythologies, arranged to play with paradox, fractures, and epistemic voids.

## Methods

A combined methodological approach adds to the philosophical investigation into Simone Weil's scrutinies of the New Testament and employs concepts of literary criticism and reception studies. The close-reading of the female philosopher draws nuanced conclusions about the practices and techniques in the reception of the New Testament in 20th-century French philosophy.



## Next Steps

After a deconstruction of the main philosophical theses on the basis of the critical edition of the complete works, essential passages are re-read in terms of their performative nature and the materiality of the manuscripts using the originals at the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

## Results

The project demonstrates that Simone Weil's thinking about death, which remains largely obscure on a content level, only becomes accessible in terms of performativity. Here it illustrates why, for Weil, the question of the relation to reality turns out to be a question of death by shifting from the content-related to the performative moment.

**Sources**  
Fonds Simone Weil, département des manuscrits occidentaux, BNF Richelieu. Dorénavant FSW.

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