

## The American Weil Society

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Dear Friends and Members of the American Weil Society,

After a period of consultation in October, the American Weil Society has decided to hold its 2021 Annual Colloquy exclusively on a **virtual** platform. We originally hoped to be able to have an in-person or a hybrid event (with some panels online and some participants in person). But after discussing things with the individuals most concerned and in light of the evolving pandemic situation in various countries, we have come to the conclusion that it would be much preferable to have a virtual meeting only. It is not with a light heart that we came to this decision, but we feel that this is the most reasonable decision to make in these uncertain times. We thank you for your understanding.

The conference will still be organized by Prof. Tomeu Estelrich and hosted by Boston College. Many sincere thanks to Tomeu. As announced earlier, the general theme chosen for the colloquy will remain the same (“**Simone Weil on spirituality, beauty and justice**”), as will the keynote speech. Indeed, professor Elaine Scarry (Walter M. Cabot Professor of Aesthetics and the General Theory of Value, Department of English, Harvard University) has kindly agreed to still give the inaugural address to our conference (on Wednesday April 21<sup>st</sup>). The 2021 colloquy will be held on Zoom. Participants will have to register (free registration) and a link for the Zoom meeting will be sent to all registered participants. The conference will be held over four days (April 21-24, 2021) in order to limit the consecutive number of hours attendees have to spend on Zoom (we have thus decided to limit the number of panels to two per day – these will be held mid-day to allow European participants to participate without compromising too much their sleep). More details about the registration will be sent out in our next Newsletter.

Now, given that very few participants originally scheduled to present in April 2020 have decided to withdraw from the conference (something we were delighted about, naturally), we will not reopen a new call for papers this year. However, we will give interested AWS members the opportunity to participate on a roundtable (possibly two) that seek(s) to reflect – with Weil, naturally – on one of the following very broad themes brought to the forefront of public life in the last few months: 1) “Authoritarianism, violence and political resistance”; 2) “Colonialism and anti-colonialism”. Individuals who wish to present a brief series of reflections (5-6 minutes delivery time) on one of these two themes must send a short proposal to me before February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 ([sbourgau@uottawa.ca](mailto:sbourgau@uottawa.ca)), indicating “AWS roundtable proposal” in the title of their email. These proposals must include a provisional title and a brief description of the talk (150-200

words), and be ready for anonymous review. These proposals will be reviewed by the conference organizer Prof. Estelrich, the Vice-President of the AWS Dr. Scott Ritner and myself. Depending on the number and quality of the proposals received, as well as the time available during the Colloquy, we may hold one or two roundtables. More details about the roundtable(s) and about a special book panel on Simone Kotva's book *Effort and Grace* (Bloomsbury, 2020) will be sent to AWS members in the early Winter, along with the link for registration and a draft of the conference program.

And now for news and publications:

. First, a friendly reminder that **you can now follow us on Twitter:** @WeilSociety (sincere thanks to Emily King for her leadership and time here). <https://twitter.com/WeilSociety>

. Philosopher **Kathryn Lawson** is co-hosting (with Josh Livingstone) an online conference on Hannah Arendt and Simone Weil titled "**The Self and the Selfless. Hannah Arendt and Simone Weil on Individual Action in Dark Times**", in the spring of 2021, at Queens' University in Kingston (Ontario, Canada). Dr. Lissa McCullough and Dr. Elvira Roncalli will be the plenary speakers. You can find out more about the conference and their call for papers by clicking on the following link: <https://www.arendtweilconference2021.com/call-for-papers>. See also: <https://philevents.org/event/show/84838>. Abstracts of 250-500 words are to be sent by December 6, 2020 as a word document cleared of personal data/metadata for blind review to ArendtWeil2021@gmail.com.

. **Robert Reed** successfully defended his doctoral thesis, titled "Decreative Phenomenology: Levinas, Weil, and the Vulnerability of Ethics" on September 22 (2020), at Boston College. **Julie Daigle** also defended with success her PhD thesis this summer (at the University of Ottawa). The title is "Lire la nécessité: obeissance, liberté et décréation chez Simone Weil ». Congratulations to Robert and Julie!

. A review of a new edition (Editiones Alia) of *La personne et le sacré* was recently published by Dr. **Scott Ritner** in H-France Reviews. You can read it here: <https://h-france.net/vol20reviews/vol20no143ritner.pdf>

. Former AWS president **Eric O. Springsted** has a new forthcoming book: *Simone Weil for the Twenty-First Century* (Notre-Dame University Press, April 2021) <https://undpress.nd.edu/9780268200213/simone-weil-for-the-twenty-first-century/>

. See also Dr. **Simone Kotva's** new book, *Effort and Grace. On the Spiritual Exercise of Philosophy* (Bloomsbury, 2020): <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/effort-and-grace-9781350113657/>

. **Robert Zaretsky** recently published *The Subversive Simone Weil. A Life in Five Ideas* (University of Chicago Press, 2020). See: <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/S/bo28025909.html>

. One forthcoming edited volume to which many members of the AWS have contributed: Sophie Bourgault and Julie Daigle eds., *Simone Weil, Beyond Ideology?* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020): <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030484002>

. We also encourage all AWS members who may have missed the great online conference held in July (with keynotes by Simone Kotva and Hartmut Rosa) organized by the **Denkkollektiv** to visit: <https://www2.hu-berlin.de/simoneweil-denkkollektiv/conference/>. Organizers were Martina Bengert (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), Max Walther (Bauhaus Universität Weimar) and Thomas Sojer (Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt).

Bon courage in these uncertain times,

Cordially,

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