

# Introduction

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**F**rom October 1-4, 2014, at the University of Manitoba, *Mosaic* hosted its fourth international interdisciplinary conference, *A matter of lifedeath*. Over the months since the conference, I have come to appreciate, increasingly, just how fine an event it was. In part, my appreciation owes to memory—of the sessions I attended and of the many wonderful people I met. Some 108 presenters (50 of them students) representing 13 different countries participated in the conference, along with five featured keynote speakers: Andrea Carlino, Histoire de la Médecine, Université de Genève; Françoise Dastur, Archives Husserl, École Normale Supérieure de Paris; David Palumbo-Liu, Department of Comparative Literature, Stanford University; H. Peter Steeves, Department of Philosophy, DePaul University; and Elisabeth Weber, Department of Germanic, Slavic & Semitic Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara. Good memories, added to which, given my duties as Editor, I have had the privilege of reading papers that were presented at the conference and submitted for publication in the journal. Despite my apprehension after issuing the conference Call for Papers as to whether the *lifedeath* theme might be too difficult or too specialized, I continue to be astonished at how diverse, intelligent, creative, and important the papers are. *Mosaic* offers readers a treat, then, with the three proceedings issues it is publishing, this special issue being the first.

The issue opens with keynote speaker Elisabeth Weber's "Ages of Cruelty: Jacques Derrida, Fethi Benslama, and their Challenges to Psychoanalysis," an unparalleled essay that treats the theologically informed political-subjective concept of sovereignty as pre-eminently the power to decide over life and death. In the ways that Weber draws on psychoanalysis through the work of Derrida and Benslama, she adds significantly and provocatively to our understanding of sovereignty and its inseparability from today's two "ages" of cruelty. The thirteen additional contributions to this issue are beyond what I can summarize in the few sentences I have at my disposal. Safe to say, this is an issue of which *Mosaic* is proud. Enjoy it, and look forward to the following two proceedings specials.

*Mosaic* wishes to acknowledge the financial support for the conference it received from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which also supports the journal in its quarterly publications. *Mosaic* acknowledges as well the financial support it received for the event from units within the University of Manitoba. Finally, *Mosaic* acknowledges and thanks members of its Editorial Board, faculty members, and students who in various ways participated in and worked at the conference, contributing crucially to its success.

**M**osaic dedicates this issue to Dr. Pleshette DeArmitt, Associate Professor and Chair of the Philosophy Department at the University of Memphis, whose recent death has deeply saddened us all. Among her many scholarly achievements, notably *The Right to Narcissism: A Case for an Im-possible Self-Love* (Fordham, 2013), Dr. DeArmitt published "Resonances of Echo: A Derridean Allegory" in *Mosaic* 42.2 (June 2009), a special issue on *Sound*.