

# *A Sort of Wisdom*

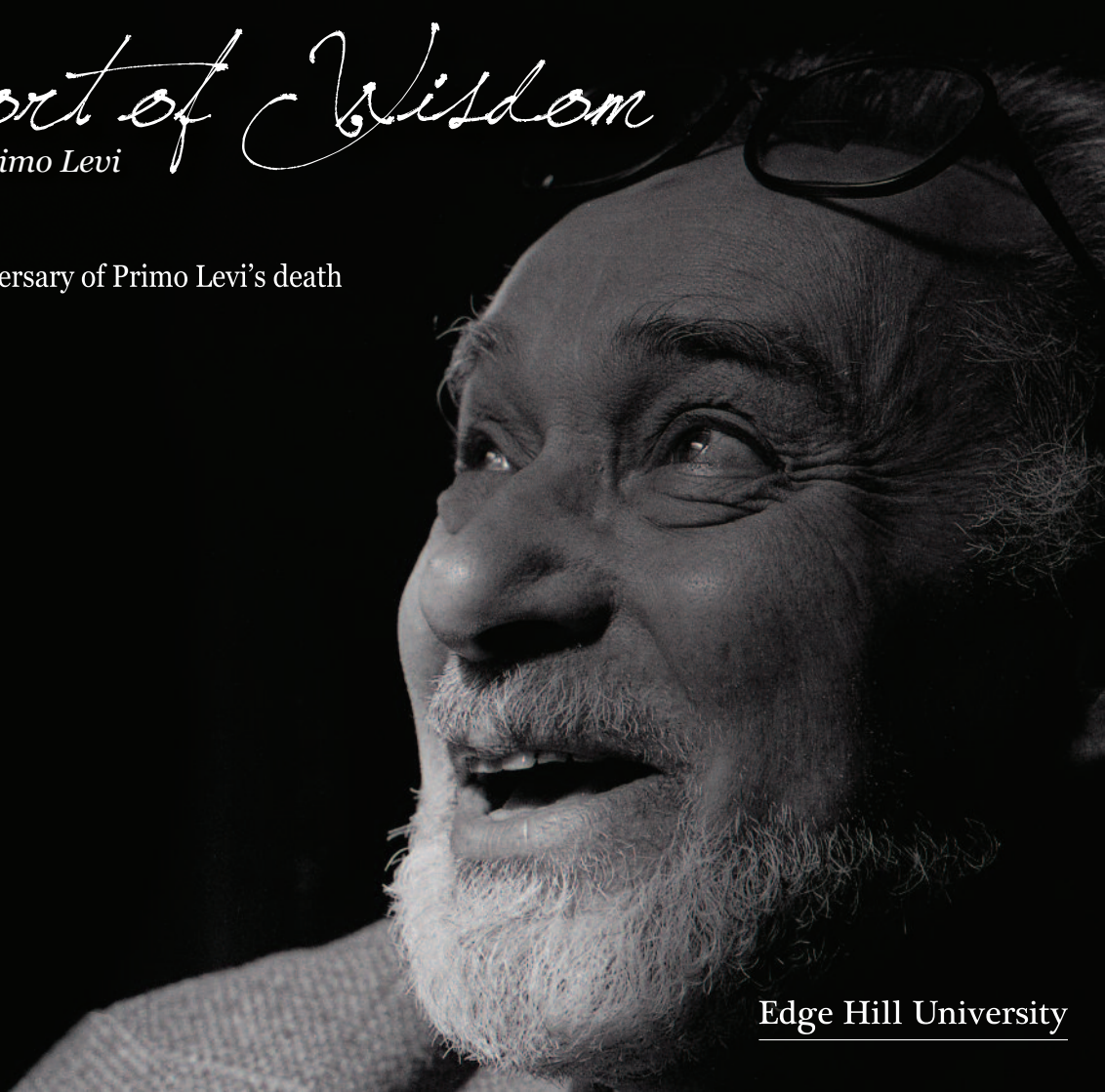
*Exploring the Legacy of Primo Levi*

An international conference  
commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Primo Levi's death

6 – 7 July, 2012

[edgehill.ac.uk/primolevi](http://edgehill.ac.uk/primolevi)

Edge Hill University



# Primo Levi

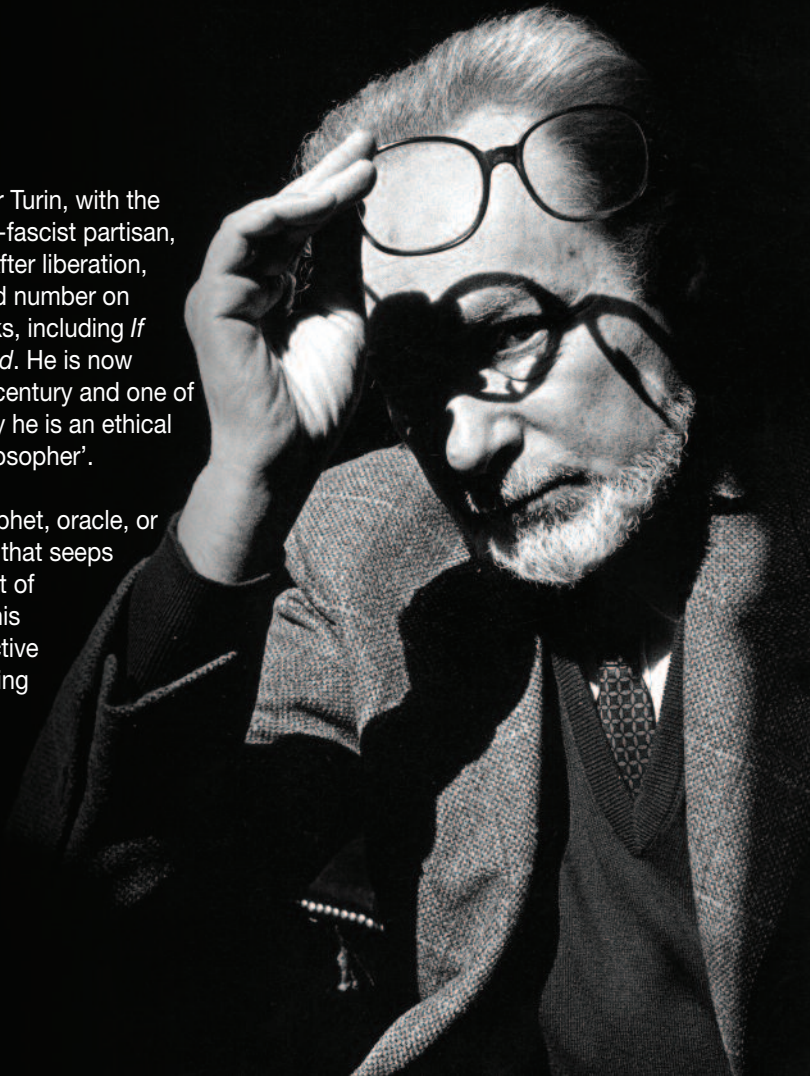
Primo Levi (1919-1987) was born and lived his entire life in or near Turin, with the exception of the years 1944-45, when he was captured as an anti-fascist partisan, deported to Auschwitz, and then released into war-torn Europe. After liberation, with 'a torrent of things to tell the civilised world' and 'the tattooed number on [his] arm burning like a sore' he wrote a series of remarkable books, including *If This is a Man*, *The Periodic Table*, and *The Drowned and the Saved*. He is now viewed as not only one of the key literary figures of the twentieth century and one of the most important survivor-writers of the Holocaust, but for many he is an ethical writer of great depth and even a subtle and humane 'political philosopher'.

Although he famously asked his readers not to treat him as a 'prophet, oracle, or seer,' Primo Levi also suspected that there was 'a sort of wisdom that seeps through from my books which I don't feel within myself.' What sort of wisdom do we find in Levi and how can we critically appropriate his legacy without encouraging what Bryan Cheyette has called 'reductive discourses which have engulfed Levi's life and work' and risk turning him into a 'saint-like figure'?

**A Sort of Wisdom: Exploring the Legacy of Primo Levi**

**An international conference commemorating  
the 25th anniversary of Primo Levi's death**

**Edge Hill University**  
6-7 July, 2012



## Confirmed keynote speakers

### Norman Geras

#### **Hope, Shame and Resentment: Primo Levi and Jean Améry**

Professor Emeritus, University of Manchester, and author of *The Contract of Mutual Indifference: Political Philosophy After the Holocaust*.

### Robert S.C. Gordon

#### **Outrageous fortune: Primo Levi, Luck and the Holocaust**

Reader in Modern Italian Culture and Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, University of Cambridge, and author of *Primo Levi's Ordinary Virtues: From Testimony to Ethics*.

### Anthony Rudolf

#### **Best regards from home to home: Reading Primo Levi through his letters to a UK friend and publisher**

Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, and author of *At an Uncertain Hour: Primo Levi's War against Oblivion*.

### Paul Salmons

#### **True Witnesses? Holocaust Education and the legacy of Primo Levi**

Head of Curriculum and Development at the Holocaust Education Development Programme, Institute of Education.

### Judith Woolf

#### **An Atom of Carbon: Primo Levi and Science**

Senior Lecturer in English and Italian at the University of York, author of *The Memory of the Offence*.

## Proposals

We welcome proposals for 20-minute papers or for conference panels on any aspect of Levi's legacy and from any discipline – including Literature, Cultural Studies, Political Philosophy, Ethics, Educational Studies, Social Theory, History and Holocaust studies. Topics are not limited to, but may include:

- Levi and Ethics
- Levi and Memory / Story-Telling / Witnessing
- Levi and the Holocaust
- Levi and the 'Two Cultures' of Science and Literature
- Levi and Work
- Levi and Friendship
- Levi as Educator
- Levi and Writing
- Levi and Language
- Levi and Violence and War
- Levi and Humour
- Levi and Political Philosophy after the Holocaust
- Levi and Humanism
- Representations and Receptions of Primo Levi

Please send a 500-word abstract (max.) of your paper and a short CV by 1 February, 2012 to:

**Professor Alan Johnson, Edge Hill University,  
Department of Social and Psychological Sciences  
St Helens Road, Lancashire, L39 4QP.**

You may e-mail abstracts to [johnsona@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:johnsona@edgehill.ac.uk).

The conference will be accompanied by a call for papers for an edited collection of essays on Levi's work.

## Conference team

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