

# The Department of Religious Studies

Brown Bag Lunch Colloquium Series  
University of Pittsburgh

*Presents*

## **THE BUTTERFLY'S FACE: ETHICAL ENCOUNTERS WITH THE ANIMAL OTHER**



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**MARCH 14, 2012**

**12:00 NOON**

**2628 CATHEDRAL OF LEARNING**

*Coffee and cookies provided*

Primo Levi (1919-1987) is perhaps best known for his account of the year he spent in Auschwitz, but in fact he was a prolific writer whose poetry, essays, and science fiction extend, revisit, and even contest his Holocaust-focused writing. Levi's is an oeuvre populated with dreamers, scientists, workers, automatons, machines, and an incredible array of fancifully-drawn animal characters. One of the most striking of these is the butterfly, which Levi draws on in a wide range of texts. Building on the recent work of Levi scholars who have begun to sketch out a comprehensive ethical program in Levi's work, this talk will trace Levi's use of worms and butterflies and what lies between them, through which he explored not only the Nazi genocide of the Jews, but also the ethical dynamics at play in the Jew's – and indeed the world's – response to that genocide.

Lina Insana teaches twentieth-century Italian literature, Holocaust literature, the literature of Fascism and resistance, Sicilian writers, and Italian American studies. Her published research has focused primarily on representations of the Holocaust, with particular emphasis on the intersection of Holocaust and translation studies, most notably in *Arduous Tasks: Primo Levi, Translation, and the Transmission of Holocaust Testimony* (U of Toronto Press, 2009) and "In Levi's Wake: Adaptation, Simulacrum, Postmemory" (*Italica* 86.2). Her current research examines Sicilian cultural production and identity.