

## Call for papers

### **At the Limits of Language: Communicating the Unsayable in Cultural Contact** Innsbruck, December 18 – 19, 2009

The aim of this conference organised by the research group *Cultures in Contact* is to investigate the limits of what can be expressed through language in various kinds of cultural contact. More precisely, we will focus on how, from the viewpoint of linguistics, literary studies, and translation studies, this problem of communicating the unsayable is solved.

In doing so, we assume that there are concepts that virtually preclude verbal communication, and that some of these concepts are specific to a particular culture, while others are universal. Certain kinds of cultural contact, such as migration, frequently involve or give rise to traumatic experiences. As a consequence, communicators resort to various strategies and means of expression in order to communicate such experiences.

In this conference, we will not only focus on what appears to be non-communicable, but also on the creativity used to push back, redraw or even abolish limits of language.

#### **Possible topics:**

- difficult communication and mediation in medical and therapeutic situations (e.g., involving migrants)
- individual experiences that are not or hardly communicable (e.g., happiness, traumas)
- investigation of (fictional) dreams
- investigation of translatory figures (e.g., children as involuntary translators/cultural mediators)
- silence as a resource

- linguistic and literary strategies used to describe borderline experiences (e.g., metaphors, analogies, 'simple syntax,' comparisons, paradoxical formulas)
- the use of several languages in a literary text