

## **ADAPTATION AND INNOVATION: LINGUISTIC, CULTURAL AND LITERARY RESPONSES TO A CHANGING WORLD**

**Organised by:** Academic Association for Doctoral Students & Students of English, Department of Anglophone Literature, Culture and Comparative Studies, Institute of Literary Studies, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

**Conducted in:** English

**Took place on:** 22 May 2025

**Took place in:** Toruń (online)

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Throughout the last century, humans have been changing the world at an unmatched pace, necessitating constant (re)adaptation to the new surroundings. Language and culture not only reflect the way that society alters with the passage of time, but also provide space for dealing with these changes. The international conference “Adaptation and Innovation: Linguistic, Cultural and Literary Responses to a Changing World” was organised to draw scholars’ attention to and present an opportunity to discuss the issues of the contemporary world, such as climate change, rapid technological advancement, and political turmoil.

The conference took place on May 22, 2025. Thanks to its online format, representatives from various Polish and foreign institutions were able to participate in the sessions. The conference encompassed a broad range of topics that examined manifestations of changes in media and language and applied novel ways of analysis to cultural texts and linguistic phenomena. The

participants explored such approaches as environmental studies, queer studies, disability studies, feminism, deconstruction, and posthumanism.

The participants had the pleasure to listen to the plenary lecture by Dr Alice Haylett Bryan (Queen Mary University of London), a researcher in the area of contemporary film. Using the example of Thoren Bradley's videos, Dr Bryan discussed the phenomena of thirst traps, male objectification, and experience of female viewers. In addition to the keynote, eighteen inspiring papers were presented by early career scholars. They were grouped into five sessions, each with a consecutive discussion with the online audience.

The conference was opened by Prof. Marzenna Cyzman-Eid, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at Nicolaus Copernicus University, who praised students' interest in academic development and popularisation of the Humanities. The first and second parallel sessions discussed a wide range of issues, such as: the connection between ecology and femininity (Hu Jianmin (Grace), College of Foreign Languages, Huazhong Agricultural University), male gaze in poetry (Marta Struglińska, University of Łódź), linguistic attitudes in queer women's writings (Anna Klimek, Jagiellonian University, Doctoral School in the Humanities), disability sports terminology and social acceptance in the Chinese context (He Xingya, Guangxi Normal University), the issues of modern technological world (Chrysoula Titi, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens), construction of myth and archetypes (Yang Siyu, Jinan University), as well as various approaches to the role of translators (Natalia Chudzyńska, School of Politics and International Relations at East China Normal University; Wang Jinmei, Dalian Minzu University). Papers presented in session 3 and 4 discussed the symbolism of queer resistance (Pratiti Saha, Christ University Bangalore), women's life writing today and in the past (Joanna Porębska, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń), vampiric rituals of becoming (Anna Maria Ronewicz, University of Szczecin), influence of a medical condition and treatment on identity (re)construction (Satvik Tandon, Centre for English Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University), young women's narrative accounts of

sexual assault in contemporary young adult literature (Mary-Kate Flanagan, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick), objectification of emotions in a dystopian society (Zuzanna Sanecka, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń), facial self-disfigurement as act of rebellion (Agata Rupińska, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń), and representation of Trump's neocolonial politics in the media (Klaudia Antkowiak, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań). The last session focused on topics such as the culture of exhaustion (Gabriela Iwanowska, University of Białystok), and posthumanism in Stephen King's writings (Julia Borkowska, University of Siedlce).

The international conference "Adaptation and Innovation: Linguistic, Cultural and Literary Responses to A Changing World" proved to be a successful event that sparked discussions. What is more, the conference demonstrated both the ubiquity of adaptation and innovation and the diversity of the scholarly research in this area.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Endnotes**

1. Additional details concerning the event can be found at <https://adaptationinnovation25umk.wordpress.com/>.