

# Preface

How can we characterize originality and innovation in authors or texts? How can we reveal universal features of language? The aim of this volume is to address these questions by confronting different quantitative approaches to originality and universality in language. New methods have shown to be increasingly successful in addressing the traditional problems of authorship attribution and document classification. These results provide insights on how to quantify the unique features of authors, composers, and styles. Such features contrast, and are restricted by, universal properties of texts, such as scaling laws in word-frequency distribution, entropy measures, and long-range correlations. This interplay between innovation and universality is also an essential ingredient of methods for automatic text generation and of models of linguistic innovations. This volume collects contributions from scientists with different backgrounds interested in quantitative analysis of variations (synchronic and diachronic) in language. The aim is to obtain a deeper understanding of how originality emerges, can be quantified, and propagates.

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