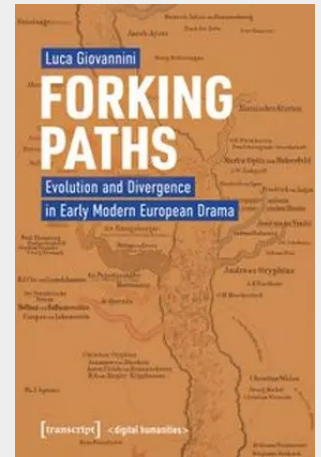


Forking Paths

Evolution and Divergence in Early Modern European Drama

1. Why did you choose this topic? On one side, I was unsatisfied with some theses on the evolution of European drama which remained influential to this day but were never empirically tested. On the other, computational literary studies seemed to me still overwhelmingly monolingual. Therefore, I wanted to bring both problems together, building a prototypic multilingual corpus and using it to put a foundational claim to a quantitative test. 2. What new perspectives does your book offer? It introduces formal vectorisation (i.e. representing plays as vectors of structural features) as an efficient method for comparative literary analysis, which allow systematic, cross-linguistic comparison of dramatic form. The key finding is that European traditions did not simply diverge but specialized, each consolidating a distinct identity within a shared formal space. This process would then looks less like a branching tree and more like a sorting mechanism. 3. What makes your topic relevant for current research debates? In my opinion, it addresses three actual conversations: the push for genuinely multilingual computational literary studies, the debate on how cultural evolution models apply to literature, and the methodological question of how to operationalize literary form. 4. Choose one person you would like to discuss your book with! Boris Yarkho (1889-1942), a largely forgotten Russian Formalist scholar. He pioneered the quantitative study of dramatic form almost a century ago, working in isolation and sometimes under impossible conditions. His methods anticipate much of what computational literary studies does today. I think he would be happy to know that the path he first trod upon eventually led somewhere. 5. Your book summary in one sentence: Using a purpose-built multilingual corpus and novel computational techniques, this book explores the formal evolution of early modern European drama.

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