

Reading Poetry in the Age of milk and honey: An in-depth text analysis of Rupi Kaur's poetry

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Projection Description:

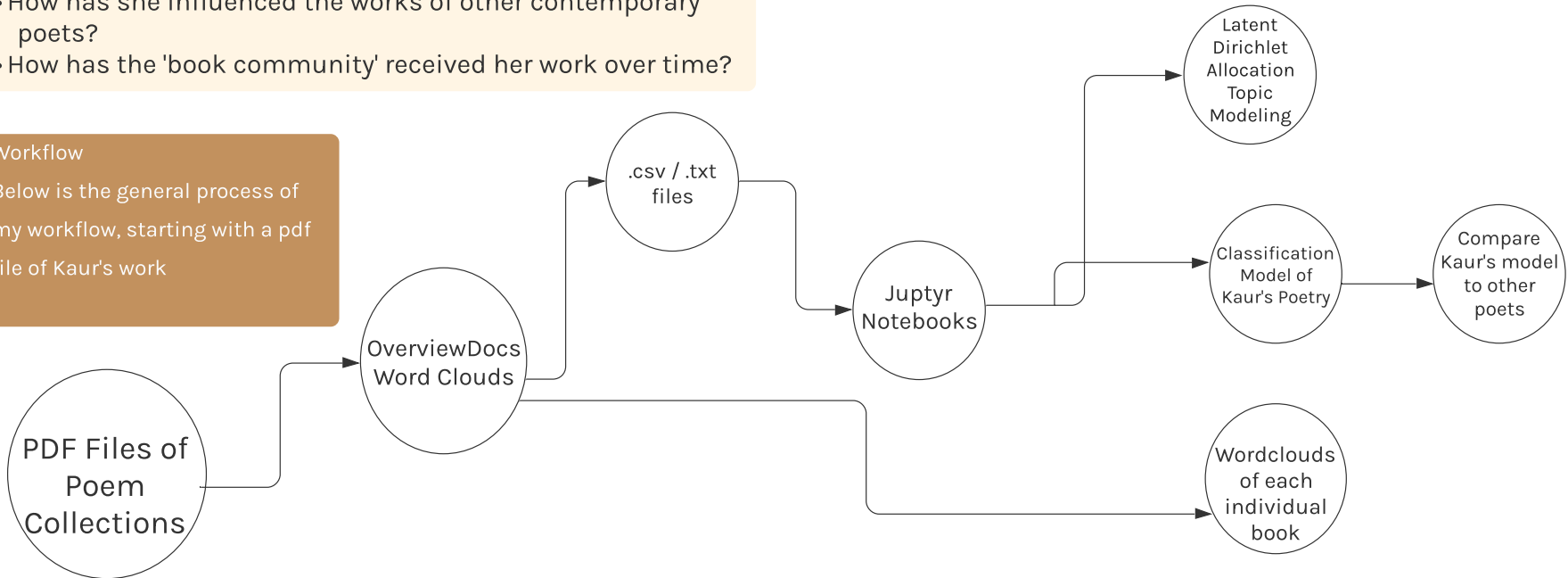
In recent years, poetry sales have increased dramatically, notably after 2014 when *milk and honey*, a poetry collection by Rupi Kaur, hit the shelves and the internet. The goal of this project is to understand what makes Kaur's poetry so popular.

To do so, I am going to be taking a distant reading approach to Kaur's three collections: *milk and honey* (2014), *the sun and her flowers* (2017), and *homebody* (2020). This poster is part of a larger investigation to understand what draws contemporary audiences to poets and their work. The rest of the investigation will focus primarily on community reaction quantified by reviews of Kaur's work on sites like Goodreads and Amazon.

Guiding Questions:

- How has Rupi Kaur's work developed across her three published collections?
- What are the major themes of her work and how are they related?
- What are the unique structural elements of her work?
- How has she influenced the works of other contemporary poets?
- How has the 'book community' received her work over time?

Workflow  
Below is the general process of my workflow, starting with a pdf file of Kaur's work



Process:

Based on interest and popularity, I have identified Rupi Kaur as a particularly influential poet. I am basing influence on social media following, Goodreads choice awards, and the Amazon best seller list.

First, I want to conduct analysis on Kaur's work to see how she presents her poetry and what kind of topics she discusses. I am interested in her incorporation of visuals, the length of her lines and poems and the themes she discusses in her work.

Next, I want to see how her work compares to other poets who have published after her. I am still in the process of selecting collections and works, but I am currently considering Lang Leav, Amanda Lovelace, Halsey, Lana Del Rey, and Lilli Reinhart.

Finally, I would like to analyze how reviews of Kaur's work has developed overtime to see if interest or general atmosphere in the book community has shifted since the publication of *milk and honey*. I am interested to see to what extent other authors or works are mentioned in Kaur's review sections. I will probably use either the Amazon review section or the Goodreads review section.

Sources of Data

- pdfs of Rupi Kaur's poetry (*milk and honey*, *the sun and her flowers*, *homebody*) which sum to over 500 individual poems
- Goodreads web scraped reviews of Kaur's work [TBD]
- Twitter & Instagram follower demographic data extracted using APIs [TBD]

Initial Data Findings: I will probably select the poem collections that were past winners or nominated in the Poetry category for the GoodReads Choice Awards from the past few years. I may select other texts based on popularity on social media (determined by poet following or hashtags, but I still have to do more research on this)

GoodReads Choice Awards Poetry Winners

Year	Poet	Title	Votes	Total Votes
2011	Billy Collins	<i>Horoscope for the Dead</i>	1,260	7,711
2012	Mary Oliver	<i>A Thousand Mornings</i>	5,520	15,905
*2013	J.R.R Tolkien	<i>The Fall of Arthur</i>	15,096	47,441
2014	Lang Leav	<i>Lullabies</i>	9,571	75,474
2015	Trista Mateer	<i>The Dogs I have Kissed</i>	8,725	61,428
2016	Amanda Lovelace	<i>the princess saves herself in this one</i>	22,560	95,646
2017	Rupi Kaur	<i>the sun and her flowers</i>	35,856	118,052
2018	Amanda Lovelace	<i>the witch doesn't burn in this one</i>	25,298	141,883
2019	Laurie Halse Anderson	<i>Shout</i>	18,911	128,340
2020	Margaret Atwood	<i>Dearly</i>	22,811	164,701

\*2013 Amazon acquires Goodreads

Poets and collections chosen for potential comparison\*:

- Lang Leav
  - Amanda Lovelace
  - Halsey
  - Lili Reinhart
- \*subject to change because of access and copyright issues [if I can't get access to a large enough size, I may instead contain scope to just looking at Kaur's work]

**Selection process and justification:**  
I disregarded both Margaret Attwood and Laurie Halse Anderson since they are already acclaimed novelists. I was particularly interested in looking at popular collections published by poets or influential non-writers who published collections.

