

Reading Poetry in the Age of *milk and honey*: A computational text analysis of Rupi Kaur's poetry

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Projection Description:

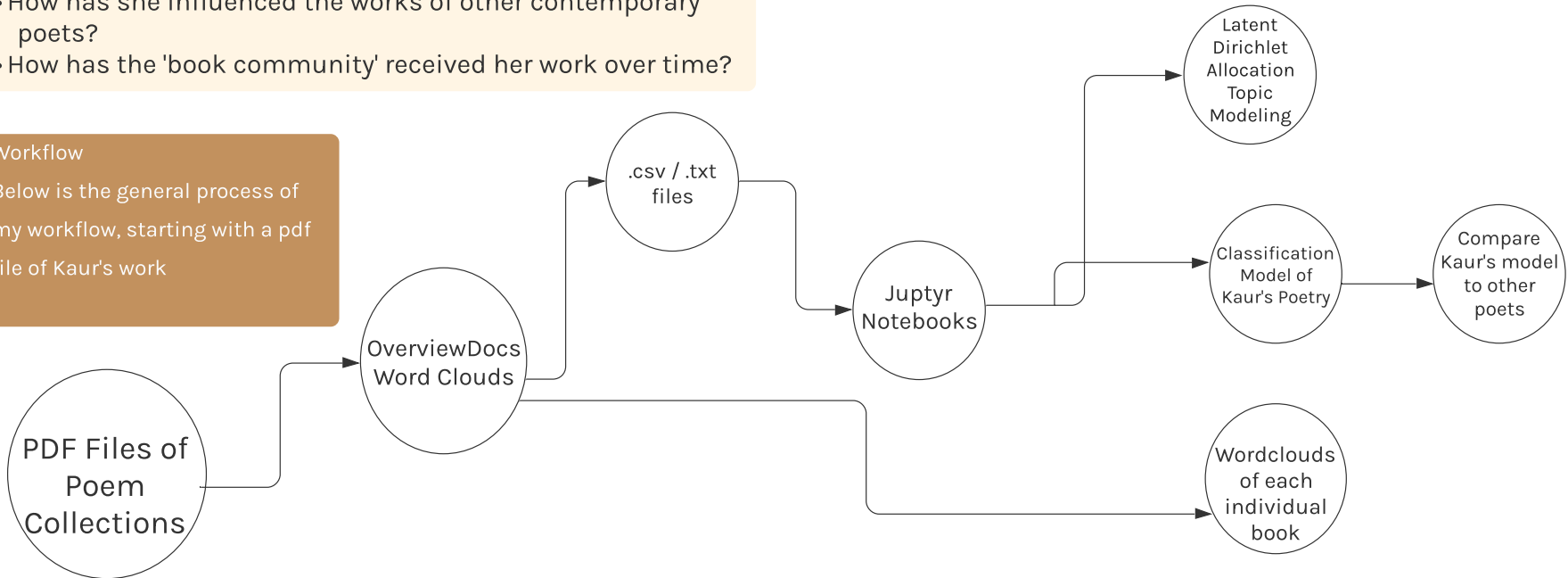
In recent years, poetry sales have increased dramatically, notably after 2014 when *milk and honey*, a poetry collection by Rupi Kaur, hit the shelves and the internet. The goal of this project is to understand what makes Kaur's poetry so popular.

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:

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* .

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

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 o 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.

