The Language of Petrarch

NLP as a window into the mechanics of Petrarch's blaring misogyny

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Roadmap

- Introduction to Petrarch & Petrarchism

- Applying word2vec to Petrarch's *Canzoniere*

- Visualization with Tensorflow's embedding projector

Avignon, Petrarch's hometown

Petrarch

Petrarch

Born July 1304

22 HITS BIG SHOT STATUS

Starts obsessing over Laura and writing sonnet after sonnet after being rejected (*Canzoniere* is ~11k lines long)

Petrarchism

SONNET III.

'Twas on the morn, when heaven its blessed ray
In pity to its suffering master veil'd,
First did I, Lady, to your beauty yield,
Of your victorious eyes th' unguarded prey.
Ah! little reck'd I that, on such a day,
Needed against Love's arrows any shield;
And trod, securely trod, the fatal field:
Whence, with the world's, began my heart's dismay.
On every side Love found his victim bare,
And through mine eyes transfix'd my throbbing heart;
Those eyes, which now with constant sorrows flow:
But poor the triumph of his boasted art,
Who thus could pierce a naked youth, nor dare
To you in armour mail'd even to display his bow!

Victimizing the self

"Love" (cupid) is violent

Love is male

SONNET III.

This is how Petrarchism functions

First did I, Lady, to your beauty yield,
Of your victorious eyes th' unguarded prey.
Ah! little reck'd I that, on such a day,
Needed against Love's arrows any shield;

Victimizing the self

"Love" (cupid) is violent

It's inherently "male". Women are objects of desire; they rarely speak, they rarely act, except crucially in denying the satisfaction of their suitors.

On every side Love found his victim bare,
And through mine eyes transfix'd my throbbing heart;

Love is male

Can we further understand this language of misogyny using NLP?
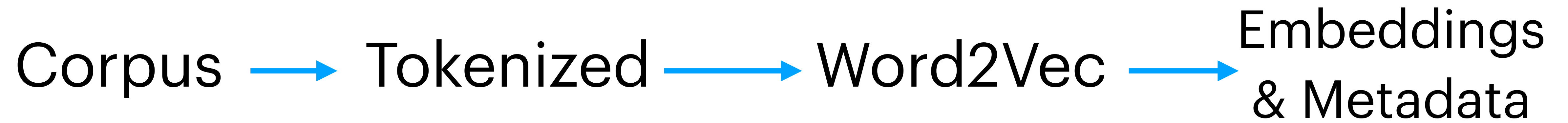
But poor the triumph of his boasted art,
Who thus could pierce a naked youth, nor dare
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TensorFlow projector

Prepping for TensorFlow

Corpus $\longrightarrow$ Tokenized $\longrightarrow$ Word2Vec $\longrightarrow$ Embeddings & Metadata

Future Work

Applications in Literary History

- Build accessible tool to help literary historians

- We can try to quantify assertions like "Shakespeare's sonnets are examples of Renaissance humanism"