Synthesizing Nostalgia: How an AI-Generated 'Ejaje 1981' Polish Hit Rewired Memory, Virality, and Copyrights

Andrzej Buda
Interdisciplinary Research Institute,
ul. Oriona 15/8, 67-200 Głogów, Poland
E-mail address: andrzejbuda@wp.pl
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2492-5580

Andrzej Jarynowski
Interdisciplinary Research Institute,
ul. Oriona 15/8, 67-200 Głogów, Poland.
Division of Healthcare Innovations, Department of Public Health,
Faculty of Health Sciences, Wroclaw Medical University,
50-367 Wroclaw, Poland
E-mail address: ajarynowski@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0949-6674

Abstract

Background. The 2025 Polish viral song "Tak kocha się tylko w filmach – Ejaje 1981" was wholly generated by artificial intelligence (AI) to emulate a fictional 1981 pop-disco hit, got a few million views in streaming media in May/June 2025 making it an ideal case for studying AI's impact on music creativity and reception.

Method. Using an interdisciplinary approach, we conducted (i) a musicological analysis of Ejaje 1981, (ii) legal and phonographic market perspective (iii) a sociological analysis of ~1200 social-media comments and sharing patterns across platforms. (iv) foresight, is this viral event an outlier or indicative of a larger shift in music culture?

Results. The AI track blends disco-pop and retro timbres convincingly, yet copies protected lyrics and creates melody. Virality was driven by TikTok remix culture, cross-generational nostalgia, and a "false-memory" effect wherein older listeners believed they had heard the song decades earlier.

Discussion. Findings align with prior AI-music precedents (i.e. Suno-GEMA dispute) indicating that generative AI is reshaping perceptions of authenticity, authorship, and market entry barriers. Hit single cessation was previously associated with a "divine spark", now it was engineered. We show specificity of the Polish phonographic market and local tastes as an example of probably the first fully AI-generated single hit here.

Conclusions. Ejaje 1981 exemplifies a broader cultural shift: AI now influences how music is created, circulated, and remembered.

Keywords: AI music; nostalgia; copyright; viral media; generative creativity

Introduction

In May 2025 a YouTube upload by user Balti 390 entitled "Tak kocha się tylko w filmach – Ejaje 1981" ("One only loves like that in the movies") began circulating on Polish social and streaming platforms, quickly amassing hundreds of thousands of views (EjajeOfficial, 2025) and surpassing five million cross-platform plays by mid-June 2025 (TikTok Data, 2025). Ejaje is Polish slang pronunciation of AI's (Artificial Intelligence). Posted by the channel EjajeOfficial, the song was presented as a rediscovered classic: the description even included a fictional concert scenario—"Koncert w Ejownikach Dolnych, lider zespołu Leszek Ejański w formie - Concert in Lower Ejowniki willige, the band leader Leszek Ejański in top form."—and noted parenthetically that the song was "performed via AI". There are already multiple spin-offs—an analog-style mix with subdued bass, a hardcore remix, a karaoke track, and more. Listeners were captivated by its catchy disco-pop melody and retro production quality, leading to viral spread on YouTube and TikTok, a new phenomenon of itself (Jarynowski, Maksymowicz, Ślósarz, 2023). Framed as a lost 1981 hit, the recording was in fact generated by AI and released by an anonymous hobbyist, tapping into the retro-pop aesthetic of Poland's late-1970 / early-1980s so called "new wave" scene (Buda, 2006; Reynolds, 2011).

The episode followed a series of international milestones in AI music, from OpenAI's Jukebox demonstrations (OpenAI, 2020) to Google's text-to-music system MusicLM (Google Research, 2023) and the "Fake Drake" deep-vocal controversy (Snapes, 2023). It also paralleled Germany's charting AI single "Verknallt in einen Talahon," which entered the German singles chart at #48 and sparked rights-holder alarm as well as licensing proposals (Dalugdug, 2024; WELT Kulturredaktion, 2024). No other fully AI song has pierced the recognised Top 100 chart in Global North. Drawing on foundational music-AI literature (Briot et al., 2020; Agres et al., 2021; Sturm & Ben-Tal, 2019) and quantitative studies of phonographic market cycles (Buda et al., 2019), we situate Ejaje 1981 as more than a one-off novelty.

This article addresses following research questions on our case study:

- **Music-related:** In what ways can generative AI reproduce the distinctive sound palette and song architecture of past decades, and how much creative guidance or post-editing must humans supply to achieve that effect?
- **Legal and Market:** How do existing copyright frameworks handle AI-generated remixes that reuse protected melodies and lyrics?
- **Sociotechnical:** What does audience reception reveal about changing attitudes toward AI creativity, authenticity, and nostalgia (Loftus, 2005; Jenkins, 2009)?
- **Foresight:** What is the trend and future in AI gendered music (Kowalski, 2024)?

This article turns to an emerging – at least in Poland – phenomenon: within three weeks of its online release, the track surpassed five million plays across

platforms and attracted thousands of comments, which we analyse below. Fan-made offshoots already include an "analog-master" mix with muted bass, a hardcore version, a karaoke backing track, and more. Although computers have been composing algorithmic music for decades, the practice remained a niche curiosity even among music-school audiences and academic composers (Wyrzykowska, 2015). What we are witnessing now, however, is a genuine game-changer: a generative model that seamlessly blends the statistical signatures of thousands of past hits, producing a song that feels both novel and instantly familiar.

Background and Literature Review

Deep-learning music generation has advanced rapidly (Briot et al., 2020). Early symbolic models such as MuseNet produced multi-style MIDI compositions, while later raw-audio systems like Jukebox generated vocal tracks yet struggled with long-range form (Stephen, 2020). OpenAI's Jukebox took a leap to raw audio generation and was trained on a dataset of 1.2 million songs to produce new music complete with lyrics and vocals in the style of specified genres or artists. Research into human–AI co-creativity (Brinkmann et al., 2023) underscores AI's utility for ideation rather than full autonomy (Agres et al., 2021). Folk-music experiments reveal community ambivalence toward "machine folk" and highlight AI's limitations in cultural nuance (Sturm & Ben-Tal, 2019). Amateurs outside the industry tend to apply AI in two ways (Gałuszka, 2025): first, to create cover versions of existing songs, and second, to experiment with generating new music for personal, non-commercial use. By contrast, professionals or industry-affiliated creators deploy AI both to restore or clean up archival recordings and to help with songwriting and production when crafting brand-new tracks meant for commercial release. Longitudinal analyses show that the analogue-to-digital transition in the phonographic market follows regular life-cycle curves – pre-digital, digital, and post-digital— offering a baseline for assessing AI disruption (Buda et al., 2019). Plagiarism (usually partially fragments of music line or lyrics) and influencing each other has a long history in the phonographic industry (Jarynowski, Buda, 2016). By 2024 fully AI-generated songs have not been charting, however within the last 2 years (since ~mid 2023) they become part of the phonographic market starting from USA/UK and recently reshaped European culture too. AI now excels at mash-ups, effortlessly isolating a song's vocal, retuning and time-stretching it, and then layering it seamlessly over an entirely different backing track.

"Now and Then" is an AI-assisted Beatles single completed in 2023 by Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, who used machine-learning audio separation to extract John Lennon's 1979 home-demo vocal and then added new instrumental and vocal parts from the surviving members (and contribution by George Harrison) to finish the track that went to number one in the UK, Austria and Germany (AI-assisted, but not AI-generated).

The Fake Drake incident in 2023 – an unauthorised AI-generated track featuring vocals imitating Drake and The Weeknd – garnered 15 million views on social media and 600,000 Spotify streams in a matter of days (Agrawal, 2025). According to critics polls and reflections, currently text authors are very often using LLMs (Large Language Model) for creating/updating lyrics. However, music created by AI autonomically has never reached wide commercial success yet, because professional compositions created on demand (like Metallica in 2023) are imitations only. The real record industry based on physical sales may function with profits with original materials only. Imitations created by human beings have been usually ignored by customers too.

AI outputs lacking meaningful human authorship are typically ineligible for copyright protection (U.S. Copyright Office, 2023), while training on copyrighted corpora may infringe the reproduction right (Sunray, 2023). European collecting societies, led by GEMA (Gesellschaft für musikalische Aufführungs- und mechanische Vervielfältigungsrechte - Society for Musical Performing and Mechanical Reproduction Rights), have proposed licence schemes that remunerate rights-holders when their works feed generative models (GEMA, 2024). Similar debates now engage international forums such as WIPO (Agrawal, 2025). As AI-music tools such as Suno and Udio let amateurs generate thousands of songs—prompting the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America.) to sue both startups in early 2024 for alleged copyright infringement—Germany's collecting society GEMA responded by unveiling a licensing framework at the September 2024 Reeperbahn Festival to guarantee ongoing royalties whenever members' works train or inspire generative models. When negotiations stalled, GEMA filed a suit in November 2024 in Munich against OpenAI, asserting that "our members' songs are not free raw material" and demanding formal permission for AI-derived lyrics. The dispute crystallises a global tension: labels and rights holders view AI tracks as derivative uses requiring payment, whereas the tech firms insist their systems merely learn genre "building blocks" to create new works.

These developments in Germany are instructive for the Ejaje 1981 case. While Poland has its own authors' society (ZAiKS) and legal framework, as an EU member it shares similar copyright principles with Germany. The GEMA model suggests that even AI-generated songs that are "wholly original" in audio might still owe a debt to the human works in their training data. In Ejaje's scenario, as we will see, the AI song is not entirely original – it's essentially an AI-mediated cover/remix of a known composition ("Filmowa miłość" by the band Domino, 1996). This raises straightforward copyright issues. But even if it were completely original, European law and proposals are trending towards acknowledging contributions of training data creators. Moreover, with AI songs charting (Germany) and going viral (Poland), we are witnessing a tipping point where legal clarity is urgently needed, as also echoed by registering single Ejaje as single in DistroKid, the U.S.-based distribution platform (℗ 8984126 Records DK).

Pic. 1) Marta Frej's signed graphics (on left) and AI generated photo (on right).

Source: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/marta-frej-b22641346_po-lewej-grafika-stworzona-przez-mnie-kilka-activity-7349394036870234112-NDG3?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAABfftGMBhNHEsWg6XCUlJCYs70i_dSC6Z8A

Additional example (visual art) of Marta Frej's "stolen" graphic turned into an AI "photo" [Pic. 1]. Polish artist Marta Frej reported that an AI-generated, photorealistic image based on her earlier illustration went viral on social media without permission; multiple works were allegedly copied, leaving her angry and powerless. Commentators debated authorship, liability, and enforceability of IP (intellectual property) law in the AI era—some urging legal action, others normalising appropriation—while parallels were drawn to cases like the Studio Ghibli/AI dispute.

Methods and Analytical Approach

In methodological terms, our study is anchored in Computational Social Science (CSS) and Digital Sociology (Dyczek, 2025): we deploy platform scraping, automated text mining, and then interpret those quantitative signals through sociological lenses that attend to nostalgia, authenticity, and cultural memory in online communities. We employed four complementary methods:

- **Musicological analysis.** We transcribed melody, harmony, and arrangement to compare Ejaje 1981 with Domino's 1996 hit "Filmowa miłość," focusing on structural form and timbral emulation (Briot et al., 2020). How does an AI model manage to capture the structure and timbre of a bygone music era, and what hybrid aesthetics result from combining AI algorithms with human retro sensibilities?

- **Doctrinal copyright and phonographic market analysis.** We examined EU, Polish, and U.S. statutes alongside current AI-music litigation (U.S. Copyright Office, 2023; RIAA, 2024), assessing authorship, neighbouring rights, and licensing proposals (GEMA, 2024). The market perspective (critics polls, prestige distribution and commercialisation potential) is discussed.
- **Qualitative content analysis.** We collected >1200 public comments from YouTube, TikTok, Twitter/X, and Facebook using netnographic procedures (Jenkins, 2009) to map themes of nostalgia, irony, and technological wonder. We gathered data on how the song was shared and discussed online (Jarynowski, Buda, Nyczka 2014). This involved collecting YouTube comments from the original video, and sampling reactions on TikTok (via videos using the song's audio and their comment sections). We also looked at Twitter/X posts and Facebook shares where available (some public posts simply shared the YouTube link with brief remarks). Using qualitative coding, we categorised reactions into themes. Standard Agents such as Artists and Fans are included into a new ecosystem of streaming platforms and their algorithms (Dyczek, 2024). What does the virality and public reaction tell us about the evolving relationship between audiences and AI creativity? In what ways did social media algorithms and community participation fuel the spread? How did different generations respond – e.g. youthful TikTok users versus older listeners who might experience a "false nostalgia" or even believe the song to be a forgotten hit from their youth?
- **Comparative case review.** We contrasted Ejaje 1981 with earlier viral AI tracks such as "Heart on My Sleeve" (Snapes, 2023) and "Talahon" (WELT Kulturredaktion, 2024) to gauge whether the Polish example signals a broader trend.

Analysis

Pic. 2) Background picture of "Tak kocha się tylko w filmach – Ejaje 1981".
Source: https://youtu.be/6EfQeGUjzcI?si=Sy59c6sUKYhm2LOb

Music-related Findings

Ejaje 1981 preserves the entire chorus melody and lyric hook of Domino's "Filmowa miłość," but sets them inside a freshly generated, early-1980s synth-pop soundscape. Clocking in at just over four minutes, the track follows a classic radio-pop blueprint—intro, verse, chorus, verse, chorus, bridge, chorus, outro—thereby showcasing a long-form, repeating-chorus design that earlier autonomous models struggled to reproduce (OpenAI, 2020). Musically, the verses and bridge are subtle AI "variations" on the original material: they keep the I–V–vi–IV chord loop familiar from 70s ballads yet tweak melodic rhythm and contour enough to feel newly written. The text of the new "created" song is the same as in the original (with one logic/grammar correction "rozstanie->wyznanie", Farewell – Confession).

The production leans into unmistakable retro cues: chorused rhythm guitars, a gated-reverb snare, and a brief sax-solo interlude that channels movie-theme schmaltz (Sturm & Ben-Tal, 2019). There is also a brief saxophone solo after the second chorus – an element that strongly evokes 1980s pop ballads. The saxophone could have been generated via AI or sampled from an external source, but its appearance reveals attention to period-authentic arrangement. The timbres are somewhat "lo-fi," possibly intentionally. A warm but deliberately lo-fi drum kit evokes early Linn and Oberheim machines, while lush string pads and a rubbery fretless-style bass anchor the harmony. These period touchstones likely reflect both prompt engineering ("Polish 80s movie-soundtrack love song") and post-generation mix work: the vocals sit slightly recessed under heavy plate reverb, and a gentle tape-saturation filter glues the master, implying human hands polished the stems in a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation).

The lead line—delivered by a Polish male voice model—sounds convincing yet faintly uncanny: occasional vowel smudges, mechanically perfect vibrato, and near-identical syllable lengths hint at synthesis artifacts (Kowalski, 2024). Whether the creators used a text-to-song system or re-voiced a human guide track via style-transfer, the diction is precise enough to pass casual scrutiny while still betraying spectral "metal" on close listening.

Harmonically simple but hook-laden, the piece nests disco-polo energy inside softer Italo-disco textures. At ~110 BPM, it opts for a laid-back four-on-the-floor groove, augmented by syncopated hi-hats and hand-claps that feel sampled from era-correct drum machines. String-pad swells reminiscent of ABBA ballads and a Bonnie-Tyler-style sax flourish round out the cinematic palette. Vocal phrasing and melodic contour at times recall mid-century pop crooners such as Paul Anka and the early rock-and-roll vitality of Ritchie Valens. These echoes situate the track's affective delivery closer to U.S. pop archetypes than to Polish vocal traditions of the 1980s. The end result is a hybrid artifact: a song that plausibly could have spun on Polish FM radio in 1982 (It was a special time in Poland due to the Martial Law set by communist regime) yet also satisfies 2020s meme aesthetics (Tatarkiewicz, 1960).

The project demonstrates co-creative workflow in practice (Agres et al., 2021). AI carried out melody reharmonisation, instrumental rendering, and vocal synthesis; humans appear to have curated structural markers, selected instrument patches, and applied retro mixing treatments. The track therefore clears the "style Turing test" for many listeners (Sroka, et al., 2025)—dozens of YouTube comments profess that "they don't make songs like this anymore"—while still revealing faint digital seams to trained ears. Its success underscores how AI-assisted production can blend authenticity and novelty, raising legal questions given its near-verbatim chorus lift from Domino's original.

Legal Assessment

Because Ejaje 1981 reproduces protected melody and lyrics, it constitutes an unlicensed cover under EU and Polish law (European Commission, 2001). The Ejaje case, hypothetically, could push local entities like ZAiKS (Polish Society of Authors and Composers) to think about AI. If more Polish AI songs emerge, ZAiKS may need to issue guidelines (like GEMA did) or provide avenues to license training material and covers. No ZAiKS mechanical licence was documented. The lyrics were lifted wholesale from Domino's earlier track, so any publishing royalties should flow to that songwriting team. Thus, there is no doubt about text authorship. What remains unclear is the scope of the human creator's contribution—Balti 390 may have acted merely as a curator, selecting style prompts and hitting "publish," or may have fine-tuned parameters, edited stems, and exercised decisive creative control over the final mix. The case parallels GEMA's 2024 action seeking remuneration for training use (Dalugdug, 2024) and exemplifies Sunray's (2023) critique that generative systems risk systematic infringement. On an EU level, ongoing policy discussions (the EU Commission and WIPO are both studying AI and copyright intensely) will be informed by such real-world cases. We might see, for example, an EU exception for text and data mining (already in place) balanced with new licensing schemes – e.g., a compulsory license that AI music platforms pay into, distributing royalties to rightsholders whose works were used in training. For Ejaje, had such a system existed, Domino's authors might automatically get a micro-royalty from the AI platform that generated the music, plus from the usage of the actual composition (cover song) – ensuring they are not cut out. AI-generated elements lack human authorship, leaving the new arrangement in a "rights vacancy" (U.S. Copyright Office, 2023). Policy-wise, the aim is to balance innovation and creator rights. The Ejaje phenomenon demonstrates innovation – arguably a creative new product – built on prior creators' work. It warms up debates, which can help policymakers craft more informed solutions (e.g., many proposals suggest a new neighboring right for AI-generated content to vest in the producer, but still requiring remuneration to original datasets). Internationally, differences will persist (the U.S. might lean towards fair use defenses or keep AI works unprotected, while China might allow more AI work protection as hinted by a court case). For global plat-

forms like YouTube and TikTok, they may have to adapt content policies – perhaps eventually tagging AI songs or handling claims differently when an AI cover is uploaded (maybe content ID could recognise the composition and pay the original, while allowing the new recording to exist as user-generated content, akin to a cover license scenario). Polish "right of quotation" or European "fair use" concepts do not fit here. Listeners quickly clamoured for the track to be uploaded to Spotify, Shazam and Apple Music (iTunes), demonstrating bottom-up demand rather than label-driven promotion. Users create mirrors, adopt it etc. Thus, the actual reach of the song is not captured by standard tracing mechanisms (sells or non-social music streaming platforms). Lack of interest in this phenomenon among critic polls is not surprising as the artist lobby has been reluctant to new ideas and average people's views (Buda, 2017).

Sociotechnical Dynamics

TikTok remix chains amplified virality through algorithmic surfacing (Bauman, 2025). Older users often claimed to "remember" the song from their youth, manifesting the false-memory phenomenon (Loftus, 2005). Younger users embraced the track ironically, consistent with Jenkins's (2009) spreadable-media paradigm. Musicians' commentary mirrored Gen Z surveys on AI music acceptance (Kowalski, 2024), praising production quality while expressing labour-market anxiety (Wyrzykowska, 2015). Its success rests on four reinforcing mechanisms.

- **A halo of novelty:** viewers share the track precisely because they know it is machine-made—AI functions here like a new exotic instrument, boosting curiosity clicks and algorithmic reach (Brinkmann et al., 2023). Virality stemmed from short-form video remixes and a novelty "halo effect" tied to AI creation, paralleling earlier deep-fake music spikes (Snapes, 2023).
- **Radical democratisation:** the usual "studio + label" gatekeeping vanishes when a laptop prompt can yield radio-quality audio; fans root for Balti 390, the anonymous hobbyist behind Ejaje, because "he could be any of us," and each new remix—analog-lo-fi, hardcore, karaoke—proves the barrier to iteration is near zero (Buda, 2017).
- **Engineered nostalgia:** the mix sounds modern yet scratches the melodic memory of Boomers who danced to disco-polo ballads, satisfying both sonic polish and emotional throwback.
- **The disco-polo paradox:** lyrics drawn from a genre Polish elite dismiss as kitsch gain unexpected cultural capital when wrapped in higher-brow 80s synth-pop orchestration, making the old text feel fresher than today's chart fare (Domański, 2022). Simplified dance pop is dismissed as kitsch by cultural elites, yet nearly everyone can sing the lyrics. When those same disco-polo words are dressed in a more "high-culture" synth-pop arrangement, the result proves unexpectedly compelling—even to audiences that usually shun the genre (Cebula, Pilch, 2020, Wyrzykowska, 2025).

Table 1. Topic analysis of Comment revealed three dominant themes:

Topic	Core Reaction	Interpretation
1. "This definitely played at my wedding!" – False-memory nostalgia	Dozens of Gen X / Boomer listeners insist they remember hearing the "1981" hit at weddings or Jarocin festivals and even claim to own it on cassette. Older users claimed to "remember" the song from youth, illustrating suggestibility when AI convincingly imitates retro cues.	A textbook false-memory effect: once the algorithm supplies familiar chords and a love-song refrain, the brain fills autobiographical gaps. Nostalgia does the rest, making it easier to believe the track is a lost gem than to accept it was coded by AI.
2. Gen Z knows it's fake—and turns it into a meme - Meta-humor and irony	TikTok users jokingly write, "Grandparents' first dance to this banger!" or "Yeah, I saw them live in '83," deliberately role-playing "remembering" the non-existent band. younger TikTokers spoofed archival footage and boomer reactions, embracing the fake history as a meme.	This is ironic participation: a prank on older audiences and a "story-time" game that tests who falls for the gag. The humor is detached, leaning into meme culture rather than nostalgia.
3. "Don't care it's synthetic—sounds amazing" Technological wonder over authenticity	Under the label "song generated with AI" there is little outrage. Most comments are aesthetic: "On repeat." Only a handful call it "creepy." most commenters praised the track's quality, expressing indifference to its machine origin, echoing patterns seen after the "Fake Drake" removal (Snapes, 2023).	Listeners treat AI like an '80s synthesiser: just another tool. The track may be "fake," yet many report stronger emotions than with current human-made pop, suggesting AI recreated an authenticity some feel modern music lacks.

Those design choices primed the song for today's algorithmic mediascape. Short-form platforms – especially TikTok and YouTube Shorts, Facebook Rolls – served as launch pads: users clipped the chorus into videos tagged #retro and #aicover, and the recommendation engine quickly identified overlap between nostalgia-seekers and Polish-language audiences, amplifying the track far beyond the channel's subscriber base. YouTube, meanwhile, acted as a repository of "digital nostalgia bait" that Facebook users could post with heart-emoji captions, reinforcing affective sharing loops.

Reception split along generational lines. Older listeners (Gen X, Boomers) repeatedly commented, "I swear this was played at my cousin's wedding in '84," exemplifying the false-memory effect: given familiar chord loops and sentimental Polish lyrics, the brain writes missing autobiographical pages (Dolinski & Grzyb, 2022) or is affected by the Mandela Effect (Brown, et al., 2012). Younger TikTokers instantly knew the track was synthetic and turned that fact into a prank—posting mock testimonials like "First dance for my grandparents!" The meta-humor tests who will fall for the hoax and functions as a meme engine that further boosts circulation. Musicians and tech-savvy

commentators delivered mixed appraisals—praising the craftsmanship while noting robotic vowels—but such critiques barely dented the song's momentum. As Poland was under martial law from 1981 to 1984, the production, distribution, and broadcasting of music (including radio and live concerts) was severely disrupted. Consequently, the memories of teenagers and young adults from that period were significantly shaped by these cultural constraints (Niziołek, 2021). One may raise the question of whether the author of Ejaje 1981 deliberately chose this particular historical moment as part of a socio-technical strategy, or whether the effect emerged more spontaneously.

The case also illustrates the double-edged democratisation of AI music. On one hand, anybody with text prompts can summon a virtual singer, period-correct drum machines, and mix-bus glue; that empowerment fuels a blossoming "AI-nostalgia-core" niche. On the other hand, professional players voice job-security fears: if an algorithm can spit out a flawless disco-polo pastiche in minutes, what distinguishes human craft? Yet even sceptics acknowledged the track's role as a "proof-of-concept" that will push more indie producers to experiment with generative tools. Thus, in the spirit of assemblage art, we should view collective memory as an open constellation—an ever-shifting mix of historical facts, competing interpretations, popular imagery, haunted or "contaminated" landscapes, lingering spectres of the past, nostalgia, resentment, and a shared longing both to remember and to be remembered (Nizołek, 2021).

Ejaje 1981 spawned a participatory mythos. Fans fabricated archival photos, bogus concert posters, and even a back-catalogue stretching to "Jesteś Szalona 1970," blurring history and fiction. Such community storytelling shows how easily AI artifacts can colonise collective memory, posing archival challenges for future historians. Whether Ejaje 1981 is a one-off curiosity or the first brick in an all-AI retro-band fandom, it demonstrates that in 2025 the winning recipe for virality is equal parts algorithmic nostalgia, participatory humor, and friction-free creation.

Comparative Approach

Comparing Ejaje 1981 with "Heart on My Sleeve," Talahon, and the AI-generated Polish remake of the Beatles' "Help!" (complete with two fresh Lennon-style verses) confirms a pattern: AI songs explode via novelty, controversy, or nostalgia (Snapes, 2023; WELT Kulturredaktion, 2024). Each trigger is different—celebrity deep-fake scandal, national-chart shock, fabricated "lost classic," or heritage resurrection—yet all converge on lightning-fast, multi-platform spread that bypasses A&R (Artists & Repertoire) gatekeepers. What we are witnessing is a game-changer: generative models now recombine the statistical DNA of thousands of past hits into perfectly tailored hooks, creating tracks that feel simultaneously new and instantly familiar. The stylistic orientation of Ejaje 1981 can also be explained by the composition of the training

corpora. Because contemporary generative music models are predominantly trained on vastly larger datasets of U.S. and Western popular music—where digital archives, licensing catalogues, and streaming metadata are most abundant—the system naturally internalises stylistic elements from these repertoires. By contrast, Polish or regional music, which are underrepresented in globally available datasets, do not emerge in the generated output. This imbalance does not indicate an intentional omission but rather reflects the structural dominance of Anglo-American repertoires in digital music libraries, which in turn biases AI generations toward Western motifs at the expense of local or national stylistic nuance. At the same time, other releases by the same hobbyists or engines still fall well short of this benchmark, so it remains unclear whether such successes are "one-hit wonders" or the first wave of a durable trend. The quartet also exposes a shared legal vacuum – derivative status is murky when AI revives dormant catalogues or inserts new lyrics for deceased composers – leaving takedowns and chart bans inconsistent across jurisdictions. Polish radio stations didn't play this song in the air for some reason (Buda, Jarynowski, 2015). Audience sentiment, however, is remarkably forgiving; comment threads show listeners embrace synthetic origins if the emotional payload lands. These episodes collectively foreshadow a recalibration of cultural memory: AI artifacts that convincingly masquerade as historical embed themselves in collective nostalgia, demanding stronger media-literacy tools and new royalty models. The arc aligns with Reynolds's (2011) "retromaniac" recycling thesis and with phonographic life-cycle data forecasting that algorithmic supply will fuel the market's next growth curve (Buda, Jarynowski, Kuźmicz, 2019).

Conclusion

Musically, AI now reproduces the surface grammar of past genres so faithfully that most listeners hear authenticity rather than pastiche (Kowalski, 2024). Ejaje 1981 proves the point: its hook-writing, timbres, and period-correct mix pass the casual "style Turing test," yet the song still needed humans to impose macro-structure, polish the stems, and craft a retro back-story – evidence that co-creativity, not full autonomy, remains the optimal workflow (Agres et al., 2021).

Legally, the track occupies a double bind: it infringes an existing composition while lacking a clearly defined author for the AI-generated layers. Current regimes—from the U.S. Copyright Office's "human authorship" rule to GEMA's proposed AI licence—are scrambling to close that gap (U.S. Copyright Office, 2023; GEMA, 2024). Unless lawmakers recognise both the value of training data and the legitimacy of AI-assisted outputs, similar works will linger in a rights limbo—discouraging distribution and denying revenue to all parties. A pragmatic fix would combine compulsory, data-set levies for rightholders with a new neighbouring right for producers who steer generative models, as already floated in WIPO forums (Agrawal, 2025).

Sociotechnically, the song's viral path shows audiences care more about affect than provenance: nostalgia, novelty, and meme-play outweighed qualms about machine authorship, though pockets of authenticity anxiety remain (Loftus, 2005). This readiness to embrace synthetic pop signals that the next growth curve of the phonographic market could be powered as much by algorithms as by artists (Buda, Jarynowski, Kuźmicz, 2019). Democratised access means hobbyists can now mint "radio-ready" tracks, spawning new micro-genres – yet the same ease of creation threatens to erode the scarcity that once underpinned musicians work.

Looking ahead, charting singles partially or wholly generated by AI will likely become routine; the line between virtual and human acts will blur into a continuum of curated models, avatar performers, and hybrid bands. For fans, narrative focus may shift from who wrote a song to how the model–producer partnership achieved a particular feel. For policymakers, urgency rises: clear, harmonised rules are needed before a flood of derivative – but legally unclassifiable – works overwhelms existing systems.

The case invites reflection on cultural memory (Niziołek, 2021). When an algorithm can mint "new oldies" that listeners cherish as real artefacts, authenticity itself becomes negotiable. Used judiciously, generative AI could complete unfinished master tapes or furnish bespoke accompaniments for archival vocals, enriching heritage. Used indiscriminately, it risks saturating the market with formulaic nostalgia, dulling the very past it celebrates.

Thus "Ejaje 1981" is not a curiosity but an early icon of hybrid human–machine music culture (Brinkmann, et al., 2023). It spotlights both the creative promise of generative models and the policy vacuum surrounding them. The public's embrace of an algorithmic love song shows that emotional resonance, not origin, now decides value—a reality that creators, platforms, and regulators must quickly learn to navigate. However, the real record industry based on physical sales may function with profits with original materials only. Imitations created by human beings have been ignored by customers too. Therefore, the profits of AI in the music industry may depend on viral (not physical) autonomic success or cooperations with the original, unpredictable and emotional human beings.

References

Agrawal, A. (2025). US Copyright Office on AI: Human creativity still matters, legally. *WIPO Magazine*. https://www.wipo.int/wipo_magazine/en/2025/02/article_0003.html

Agres, K., Herremans, D., & Bigo, L. (2021). Interactive contexts and affect in generative music systems. In *Proceedings of the 2021 International Workshop on Musical Metacreation* (pp. 1–8).

Baumann, F., Arora, N., Rahwan, I., & Czaplicka, A. (2025). Dynamics of algorithmic content amplification on TikTok. *arXiv preprint* arXiv:2503.20231.

Brinkmann, L., Baumann, F., Bonnefon, J. F., Derex, M., Müller, T. F., Nussberger, A. M., ... & Rahwan, I. (2023). Machine culture. *Nature Human Behaviour, 7*(11), 1855–1868.

Brown, A. D., Kouri, N., & Hirst, W. (2012). Memory's malleability: Its role in shaping collective memory and social identity. *Frontiers in Psychology, 3*, 257. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2012.00257

Briot, J.-P., Hadjeres, G., & Pachet, F.-D. (2020). *Deep learning techniques for music generation*. Springer.

Buda, A. (2006). *Historia rocka, popu i hip-hopu według krytyków, 1974–2000* [History of rock, pop and hip-hop according to critics, 1974–2000]. Wydawnictwo Niezależne.

Buda, A. (2017). Truth and post-truth according to annual music critics polls. *E-methodology, 4*, 75–82.

Buda, A., & Jarynowski, A. (2015). The global phonographic market: Record labels, artists and fans in the internet era. *E-methodology, 2*, 96–104.

Buda, A., Jarynowski, A., & Kuźmicz, K. (2019). An attempt to unified approach to the evolution of products in the entertainment industry. *E-methodology, 6*, 80–93. https://doi.org/10.26881/emem.2019.06.05

Cebula, M., & Pilch, S. (2020). Społeczne zróżnicowanie gustu muzycznego [Social differentiation of music taste]. *Studia Socjologiczne, 1*(236), 73–104.

Dalugdug, M. (2024). GEMA proposes licensing model for AI-generated music. *Music Business Worldwide*. https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/gema-proposes-licensing-model-for-ai-generated-music/

Dolinski, D., & Grzyb, T. (2022). *100 effective techniques of social influence: When and why people comply*. Routledge.

Domański, H., Przybysz, D., Wyrzykowska, K., & Zawadzka, K. (2022). *Dystynkcje muzyczne: Stratyfikacja społeczna i gusty muzyczne Polaków* [Music distinctions: Social stratification and music tastes of Poles]. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.

Dyczek, B. (2024). On the need for integrating social sciences and engineering–technical disciplines in studying contemporary social phenomena. *Media i Społeczeństwo / New Directions in Digital Sociology, 20*(1/Zeszyt 1), 240–256.

Dyczek, B. (2025). *Nowi aktorzy społeczni. Rola sztucznej inteligencji w redefinicji struktur sieciowych w kontekście teorii ANT Latoura* [New social actors. The role of artificial intelligence in redefining network structures in the context of Latour's ANT theory].

EjajeOfficial. (2025). *Tak kocha się tylko w filmach – Ejaje 1981* [Only in films does one love like this – Ejaje 1981] [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUz-leZGPIE

European Commission. (2001). Directive 2001/29/EC … ["InfoSoc Directive"]. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32001L0029

Galuszka, P. (2020). *Made in Poland*. Routledge.

Galuszka, P. (2025). The influence of generative AI on popular music: Fan productions and the reimagination of iconic voices. *Media, Culture & Society, 47*(3), 603–612.

GEMA. (2024). GEMA files model action to clarify AI providers' remuneration obligations in Europe [Press release]. https://www.gema.de/en/newsroom/press-releases/ai-model-action

Google Research. (2023). Turn ideas into music with MusicLM [Blog post]. https://blog.google/technology/ai/musiclm/

Jarynowski, A., Buda, A., & Nyczka, P. (2014). Obliczeniowe nauki społeczne w praktyce [Computational social sciences in practice]. WN: Głogów.

Jarynowski, A., & Buda, A. (2016). Diffusion paths between product life-cycles in the European phonographic market. *Control and Cybernetics, 45*(2), 321–339.

Jarynowski, A., Maksymowicz, S., & Ślósarz, L. (2024). The future of AI in medicine and education – 10th anniversary of E-methodology community. *E-methodology, 10*(10), 9–14. https://doi.org/10.15503/emet2023.9.14

Jenkins, H. (2009). *Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media education for the 21st century*. MIT Press.

Kowalski, M. (2024). Music generated by artificial intelligence—the perspective of Generation Z representatives. *Com.Press, 7*(1), 6–21. https://doi.org/10.51480/compress.2024.7-1.703

Loftus, E. F. (2005). Planting misinformation in the human mind: A 30-year investigation of the malleability of memory. *Learning & Memory, 12*(4), 361–366. https://doi.org/10.1101/lm.94705

Niziołek, K. (2021). Assemblage of memory: On the structure, process and creativity in collective memory. *Creativity Studies, 14*(1), 271–294.

OpenAI. (2020). Jukebox: A generative model for music [Blog post]. https://openai.com/research/jukebox

Recording Industry Association of America. (2024). *Complaint, Universal Music et al. v. Suno AI Inc.* (U.S. Dist. Ct., S.D.N.Y., No. 1:24-cv-5520).

Reynolds, S. (2011). *Retromania: Pop culture's addiction to its own past*. Faber & Faber.

Snapes, L. (2023, April 18). AI song featuring fake Drake and Weeknd vocals pulled from streaming services. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/music/2023/apr/18/ai-song-featuring-fake-drake-and-weeknd-vocals-pulled-from-streaming-services

Sroka, T., Sidorczuk, D., & Modrzejewski, M. (2025). Evaluating fake music detection performance under audio augmentations. *arXiv preprint* arXiv:2507.10447.

Stephen, B. (2020). OpenAI introduces Jukebox, a new AI model that generates genre-specific music. *The Verge*. https://www.theverge.com/21243038/openai-jukebox-model-raw-audio-lyrics-ai-generated-copyright

Sturm, B. L., & Ben-Tal, O. (2019). Folk-rnn: Artificial folk-music creativity and community. In B. L. Sturm & O. Ben-Tal (Eds.), *Music generation with deep learning* (pp. 123–145). Springer.

Sunray, E. (2023). Why AI music generators may infringe the reproduction right: A U.S. copyright analysis. *Catholic University Journal of Law & Technology, 31*(2), 1–26. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4332375

Tatarkiewicz, W. (1960). *Historia estetyki* [History of aesthetics].

TikTok Data. (2025). Posts using audio "Tak kocha się tylko w filmach – Ejaje 1981" [Dataset captured 15 June 2025].

U.S. Copyright Office. (2023). Policy statement: Registration guidance for works containing material generated by artificial intelligence. https://copyright.gov/rulings-filings/ai-policy

WELT Kulturredaktion. (2024). Darum sorgt das erste KI-Lied in den Charts für Aufregung [Why the first AI song in the charts is causing a stir]. *Die WELT*. https://www.welt.de/kultur/article252974900/

Wyrzykowska, K. (2015). Od kontestacji do estetyzacji życia codziennego [From contestation to the aestheticisation of everyday life]. *Pogranicze. Studia Społeczne, 26*, 131–149. https://doi.org/10.15290/pss.2015.26.08

Wyrzykowska, K. (2025). „WSZYSCY LUDZIE SĄ RÓWNI, A JA NIE JESTEM SNOBEM…" O strategiach różnicowania i oceny w obszarze muzyki ["All people are equal, and I am not a snob…" On strategies of differentiation and evaluation in the field of music]. *Kultura i Społeczeństwo, 69*(1), 185–201.