

## Synthetic Heritage: Eminescu's AI Doppelgänger in Romanian Digital Dreamscape

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### Abstract

*As AI-generated talking avatars have gained popularity on platforms driven by short-form video, they reshape how cultural heritage is accessed and interpreted. This study investigates the reception of an AI-generated avatar of Mihai Eminescu, Romania's national poet, reading one of his poems. Bringing together perspectives from Internet linguistics and digital cultural studies, the paper examines the Romanian viewers' perspectives as expressed in the comment sections. Through a qualitative analysis of user responses, we identify recurring frames. The findings reveal that AI-driven literary impersonation generates a hybrid reception space as a site of public folklore in which cultural memory, national identity, and digital creativity intersect. The study contributes to debates on AI literacy, authenticity, and cultural transmission, suggesting that AI avatars can complement, but not replace traditional humanities education when accompanied by critical pedagogy. The article concludes with implications for responsible AI use in cultural heritage contexts, and sheds light on the audience engagement with AI-generated content in Romanian culture.*

**Keywords:** AI-generated talking avatars, synthetic media, participatory culture, public folklore

### INTRODUCTION

There has been an increasing tendency to develop AI-generated talking and singing avatars that mimic well-known authors and historical figures, and even to produce AI entities that do not correspond to any real person. The impersonation of well-known figures can be viewed as impressive because it enables a form of cultural reconstruction, granting everyone access to experiences they would have otherwise never encountered, while requiring them to apply critical thinking and analytical skills to understand and interpret a synthetic media avatar that has a real historical counterpart. In this study, we examine an AI-generated avatar of Mihai Eminescu reciting *Atât de dulce...* (*So Sweet...*), a poem written in 1878 and published posthumously, which we selected because it portrays Romania's national poet and demonstrates how AI can revive literary figures in culturally meaningful ways. The avatar's updated styling brings the historical figure to life for modern audiences. There are only four known photographs of Eminescu and the digitally animated one is the one taken in Prague in 1869 by photographer Jan Tomás, when Eminescu was

twenty years old. This photograph is the most popular one, and it also appears on the 500 lei banknote, the highest value denomination of the Romanian currency. Interestingly, the influencer who posted it on Instagram is not a microcelebrity, as most of her content has roughly 2,000 views; yet this particular video reached 507,000 views and 20.9k likes in less than a month.

We analyse the comments produced within the designated timespan (15th of January 2026 – 10th of February 2026), considering the comment section as a form of public folklore, a space where users collaboratively construct meaning. We claim that these reel formats could be tools for cultural transmission, enabling renewed engagement with national heritage and inviting audiences to interact critically and creatively with reimagined cultural icons.

### AI: LITERARY IMPERSONATION AND SYNTHETIC HERITAGE

A three-layer framework for AI has been articulated to capture the evolution from core generative AI (GAI) models and bots to Digital-to-AI tools and to new generative AI applications (Pratschke, 2024). The first layer of core GAI models and bots are the foundational general AI models and conversational agents that provide base intelligence and reasoning. The second layer is represented by the new capabilities of Digital-to-AI tools, which are tools that translate digital inputs into AI-usable formats and extend core model functionality (e.g., workflows, orchestration, augmentation). The third layer, New GAI tools, refers to emerging applications and platforms built on top of underlying AI capabilities. This layered perspective is useful because it conceptualises AI not as a static technology but as an expanding ecosystem in which capabilities, modes of interaction, and use contexts evolve. These layers have continued to grow in a systematic manner,

shaping educational, cultural, and communicative practices.

As these layered frameworks should be adapted to incorporate emergent dimensions and trends, the AI ecosystem may be understood as part of what Singh describes as ‘accelerated media ecosystems’ (2016: 208). Within such a context, technological innovation does not add new tools but reshapes the conditions under which media is produced, studied, and experienced. It can be stated that:

while the contemporary media ecosystem is both an extension and continuation of more traditional media forms, it has also redefined the discipline of media studies in terms of thinking about how innovations in technology and their relationship with end-user behaviours shape the world of media and communications as we know it. (Singh, 2016: 208)

Our study points to AI literary impersonation as an emerging phenomenon that highlights specialised capabilities in emulating personas. While our analysis is based on one case, it constitutes an example of a growing trend of AI-driven impersonation that needs systematic conceptualisation. We therefore propose AI literary impersonation as a potential layer within the AI ecosystem. This new layer could explain how accelerated media environments show new forms of authorship, creativity, and user engagement (see fig. 1 below).

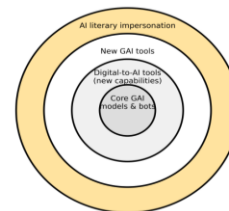


Fig. 1 The AI Ecosystem – New Layer: AI Literary impersonation (adapted from Pratschke, 2024: 26-27)

AI literary avatars can be seen as part of the broader trend of synthetic media, defined as ‘audiovisual content often generated or modified by AI’ (Nieto McAvoy & Kidd, 2024: 4). Also, AI and its synthetic function support ‘the creation of new (parallel, posthumous and technologically connected) memories’ (Nieto McAvoy & Kidd, 2024: 2) in which cultural memory is no longer limited to preservation and documentation but is actively reconstructed through algorithmic means. In this sense, ‘the true impact of AI is more nuanced and oblique than usually acknowledged’ (Natale, 2021: 2). By modelling the voices, styles, and rhetorical patterns of canonical or historically situated authors, AI systems enable the simulation of literary identities that belong to shared cultural traditions. We are witnessing how heritage allows authorial presences to be extended and reinterpreted. Such practices signal a shift from material and textual conservation towards computational re-enactment. Moreover, AI literary impersonation transforms heritage into a performative and participatory experience, inviting users to interact in different manners with the literary canon. That is to say, this reconfiguration activates new modes of perceiving cultural memory, ‘creating and re-creating a sense of past, present, and future of ourselves in relation to others’ (van Dijck, 2017: 21) where authenticity is negotiated. Synthetic media challenges traditional theories on authorship and authenticity, positioning AI as an instrument in reshaping how literary heritage is experienced within media ecosystems, which needs to be critically evaluated.

### **FROM PARTICIPATORY CULTURE TO PUBLIC FOLKLORE DIALOGISM**

The limitations of the AI ecosystem are transformed into forms of empowerment in the case of AI literary impersonations because they allow the creation of impossible narrative scenarios. AI ‘does not posit any causal mechanisms or physical

laws’ and is ‘incapable of distinguishing the possible from the impossible’ (Chomsky, 2023). Entropy is irrelevant in the case of AI-generated narratives, which explains why these systems can be used to create synthetic media which defy the laws of physics.

AI-driven literary impersonation could offer a way to motivate younger generations to connect with diverse forms of heritage through digital platforms and could provide learning experiences unknown before. Through short-form visual feeds, AI literary impersonation ensures continuity between traditional storytelling and digital narratives, cultural immersion and real language use. The role of AI in education could bring some advantages and the multimodal learning could be upgraded, when used responsibly. Users (including instructors and students) who engage with this type of content become co-creators of meaning in participatory cultures, understood as forms of community involvement. As Jenkins, Ito & boyd highlight,


we can define participatory culture in opposition to various forms of culture that limit access to the means of cultural production and circulation, that fragment and isolate the public rather than providing opportunities to create and share culture, and that construct hierarchies that make it difficult for many to exert any meaningful influence over the core decisions that impact their lives. People participate through and within communities: participatory culture requires us to move beyond a focus on individualized personal expression; it is about an ethos of ‘doing it together’ in addition to ‘doing it yourself’. (2016: 181)

This ethos of doing something together, as opposed to experiencing it individually, is reflected in the comments sections of reels on social media, which are potential spaces for reflection and dialogue. Through these interactions, users shape a

new form of public folklore. It is a form of modern Romanian folklore which reflects the familiar urge to argue, to advise, and to tell stories. It represents a digital re-creation or a surrogate of the Rom. *șezătoare*, which is a small, close-knit gathering in villages on winter evenings, where participants work while also socializing by telling stories, jokes, and riddles (see DEX, *s.v.*; definition translated by the authors). In this new type of public folklore, each voice adds a new thread, creating a digital Romanian Scheherazade of collective narration, where poems, tales, and opinions unfold story within story. This ‘inherent dialogism of *public folklore* diminishes power asymmetries and fosters participation’ (Baron, 2016: 589).

Our qualitative study has two complementary dimensions: the first examines the Instagram reel that depicts Eminescu reciting the poem *Atât de dulce* (see Fig. 2 below), while the second analyses discursive patterns emerging within the comments section. We selected this reel, showing Romania’s national poet, because it drew a high reach of engagement (20.9k likes and 598 comments). The caption of this reel reads as follows:

*Acum 176 de ani se năștea un mare poet: Mihai Eminescu. Astăzi, tehnologia ne permite să ne imaginăm cum ar fi arătat, cum ar fi vorbit, cum ar fi recitat. Dar există ceva ce niciun algoritm nu poate recrea: talentul, geniul, sufletul din spatele cuvintelor.*

 Voice Over: [@mihai toma official](#)  
[#mihaieminescu](#) [#poezieromânească](#) [#aivideo](#)  
[#autoriromani](#) [#literature](#)

[176 years ago, a great poet was born: Mihai Eminescu. Today, technology allows us to imagine what he might have looked like, how he might have spoken, how he might have recited. But there is something no algorithm can recreate: the talent, the genius, the soul behind the words.]



Fig. 2 Eminescu’s AI Doppelgänger

The reel was posted on Eminescu’s birthday, serving as an homage to the poet. The caption, along with the keywords used in the hashtagged section, credits AI and highlights the role that synthetic media plays today, acknowledging its limitations. Together, these elements reflect an ethical and responsible approach.

## CORPUS DESCRIPTION

The video presents an AI-generated talking avatar, representing a stylish, modern, and charismatic Doppelgänger of Eminescu. His nonverbal and paraverbal language align with the rhythm of the poem. The voice of a professional actor is synchronised with lip movement. The reading of the poem *Atât de dulce* (see the text below) unfolds in standard Romanian, delivered with warmth. The combination of visual and vocal expressiveness creates the impression of a filmed performance rather than that of a generated one. Through this multimodal blend, the reel highlights its ‘artistic and educative possibilities, potentials for audience engagement and for the (hyper-)personalisation of experience’ (Nieto McAvoy & Kidd, 2024: 2).

*Atât de dulce*

*Atât de dulce ești, nebuno,  
Că le ești dragă tuturor,  
Cunosc femeii ce după ochii  
Și după zâmbetul tău mor.*

*Femei frumoase și copile  
Te-ar îndrăgi, te-ar săruta.  
Tu ai iubirea tuturoră –  
Și numai eu iubirea ta.*

*Un farmec blând de fericire  
Tu răspândești oriunde-i sta –  
Ești fericirea tuturoră  
Și eu sunt fericirea ta.*

*De râzi, se desprimăvărează,  
Învie totul unde-i sta,  
Căci tu ești viața tuturoră  
Și numai eu viața ta.*

*De dragul tău și flori și oameni  
Și stele să trăiască vor.  
Pe mine mă iubești tu numai  
Și numai eu doresc să mor.*

(See the translation  
<https://lyricstranslate.com/en/mihai-eminescu-atat-de-dulce-english>)

## DATA COLLECTION AND DISCUSSION

We analyse the comments produced between 15 January 2026 and 10 February 2026, as this one-month window captures the period when the post was still recent and when social media reach and the metrics of engagement were at their highest. Within this period, the post gathered 20.9k likes, 510k views, and 598 comments. Out of the total number of comments, 220 were only emojis, that is why they were placed into the category of low engagement. For the other 378 comments, we

identified nine thematic categories, as outlined below. For each category, we mention the total number of comments along with a short explanation and verbatim examples to illustrate its specificity (see Table 1 below). These examples are translated by the authors of this study into English. The complete corpus with the nine categories can be accessed on Zenodo (see the Corpus section below). We kept the spelling, punctuation and idiosyncrasies of the commenters.

| Category                                     | No. of comments | Explanation  | Examples  |
|--|-----------------|--|---|
| 1. Romanian Heritage and Folklore References | 10              | Comments invoking cultural heritage, traditions, folklore, or national identity. | <p><i>Sentimente profunde, descrieri minunate, versuri alese, unice și de neuitat... poeziile lui Eminescu sunt o comoara de nepretuit a poporului roman</i> ❤️❤️❤️</p> <p>[Deep feelings, wonderful descriptions, carefully chosen, unique, and unforgettable verses... Eminescu's poems are an invaluable treasure of the Romanian people]</p> <p><i>Cât de frumos și firesc curge poezia din acest om. Și mai mult decât atât, trebuie să fii român ca să înțelegi pe deplin versurile lui.</i></p> <p>[How beautifully and naturally poetry flows recited by this man. And more than that, you truly have to be Romanian to fully</p> |

|  |    |   |  |                         |    |   |
|--|----|---|--|-------------------------|----|---|
|  |    |   | <p>understand his verses.]</p> <p><i>M. Eminescu, Luceafărul poeziei românești are o adevărată capodopera a creației sale, a fost și va rămâne în inimile tuturor celor care iubesc și simt cu sufletul natura! O poezie superba!</i> [Mihai Eminescu, the guiding light of Romanian poetry, has given us a true masterpiece of his creation. He was, is, and will remain in the hearts of all those who love and feel nature with their soul. A magnificent poem!]</p>                            |                         |    | <p>beautiful, but surely Eminescu didn't have a Wallachian accent, rather a Moldavian one! 🗣️ He certainly didn't recite with this accent.]</p> <p><i>la Botoșani nu avem accentul acesta 😂👉👉❤️ dar este ok 🙌</i><br/>[In Botosani we do not have this accent, but it is ok]</p>  |
|  |    |   |  | 3. Educational Comments | 12 | <p>Comments expressing learning outcomes, curiosity, or a desire for further knowledge.</p> <p><i>Pentru că prin așa modalitate ai putea învăța această poezie</i> [Because in this way you could learn this poem.]</p> <p><i>Eu abia am învățat literatura ... păi dacă aveam așa ceva eram la litere 😂😂😂</i> [I barely learned literature... well, if I had had something like that, I would have gone into literature studies.]</p> <p><i>Frumos și vocea și recitarea! dar de ce șoptit? Ar fi interesant in licee la un mega-receptor sa se auda din cand in cand în pauze și ai altor poeți și/ sau fragmente frumoase din opere 🙌</i><br/>[Beautiful voice and recitation as well! But why whispered? It would be interesting if, in</p> |
| 2. Identity-Based Comments: Moldova and Local Patriotism | 10 | Comments that express identification with Moldova or highlight Moldovan cultural belonging. | <p><i>nu uita de vecinii basarabeni, noi la fel am crescut cu Mihai Eminescu. Eu și i-am dedicat un vers când eram la școală. La fel de important pentru noi ❤️👉</i><br/>[And don't forget the Basarabian neighbors, we also grew up with Mihai Eminescu. I even dedicated a verse to him when I was in school. He is just as important to us.]</p> <p><i>Foarte frumos, însă sigur Eminescu nu avea accent de muntean, ci de moldovean! 🗣️ Cu siguranță nu recită cu accentul ăsta.</i> [Very</p> |                         |    |   |

|                           |    |  |   |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------------|----|--|---|--|--|--|--|
|                           |    |  | high schools, this could be played from time to time during breaks over the main speaker system, poems by him and by other poets as well, and/or beautiful excerpts from literary works.]   |  |  | personal stories, memories, or contextual anecdotes. | școală, dar am învățat să citesc singură, de dragul poeziilor lui... aveam o carte veche, un volum cu poeziile marelui poet.. Acela a fost Abecedarul meu 🥰🥰🥰.<br>[Since I was a little child, I have loved Eminescu. I wasn't even in school yet, but I learned to read just for the sake of his poems... I had an old book, a volume of poems by the great poet. That was my first primer.]  |
| 4. Factual Comments       | 19 | Comments that mention concrete facts, historical details, or informational clarifications. | <i>Nu. Cea mai cunoscuta fotografie a lui este o prelucrare după o fotografie retusată. (Pe vremea aceea photoshop se făcea chiar în studio) [No. His most well-known photograph is a reworking based on a retouched photograph. (Back then, Photoshop was done right in the studio.)]</i><br><br><i>Sunt 4 fotografii cu el, la 19, 32, 34, respectiv 37 ani. [There are four photographs of him, taken at the ages of 19, 32, 34, and respectively 37.]</i><br><br><i>This is an AI impersonation of one of Romania's greatest and most brilliant poets, Mihai Eminescu. It's reciting one of his poems. This year marks 176 years since his birth. The voice belongs to the person tagged in the title 😊</i> |  |  |  | <i>Nu mi-am imaginat vreodată că am să-l văd recitând atunci când tânăr fiind l-am descoperit pe Eminescu, acum la șizeci de ani este exact cum mi l-am imaginat la acea vârstă. Mulțumesc mult pentru această postare minunată 🥰 [In my youth, I never imagined that I would see him reciting one day. Now that I am in my sixties, he looks exactly how I imagined him at that age. Thank you very much for this wonderful post.]</i><br><br><i>A fost "un bărbat" frământat de..f multe probleme existențiale...A iubit, cu toată ființa lui, și nu</i> |
| 5. Storytelling Sequences | 22 | Comments in which users narrate  | <i>De mic copil, l-am iubit pe Eminescu. Încă nu eram la</i>  |  |  |  |  |

|                           |    |  |  |                                 |    |   |
|---------------------------|----|--|--|---------------------------------|----|---|
|                           |    |  | <p><i>numai pe Veronica M...A iubit pământul, pădurea, lacul, suferii și o ființă de lumea asta plina de defecte.."</i><br/> <i>Luceafărul</i> [He was 'a man' tormented by many existential problems... He loved with his whole being, and not only Veronica M... He loved the land, the forest, the lake, the water lilies, and a being of this world, full of flaws... 'The Guiding Light']</p>   |                                 |    | <p>involvement in shaping future content.</p> <p>Which AI model was it made with?]</p> <p><i>Nu băgați un Ai și cu Veronica? Curioasa cine l-a cucerit pe cuceritor!</i> 🥰🤖<br/>         [Why don't you add an AI version with Veronica too? Curious to see who won over the conqueror!]</p> <p><i>Sounds so beautiful and romantic. Any possibility for English subtitles??</i> ❤️</p>   |
| 6. Humorous Comments      | 47 | Comments using humour, jokes, or playful remarks.    | <p><i>Doamnele de romana, ADUNAREA!</i> [Ladies of Romanian literature, ASSEMBLE!]</p> <p><i>vezi-ți de treabă, Eminescu e al meu!</i> 😂😞 [Mind your own business, Eminescu is mine! 😂😞]</p> <p><i>Ok, toate ca toate, dar parul ăla... am văzut ca e noul trend pe '26. Sper sa prinda rpd ca m-am saturat de mopuri</i> [Okay, okay, but that hair... I've seen it's the new trend for '26. I hope it catches on fast, because I'm tired of mop hairstyles.]</p> | 8. Critical AI-related Comments | 54 | <p>Comments raising concerns about authenticity, accuracy, ethics, or the implications of AI.</p> <p>♥️ <i>Doamne, ce frumos recita acea voce! AI ul ăsta câteodată face și lucruri bune!</i> 🙏<br/>         [Oh my God, this voice recites so beautifully! This AI sometimes does good things too!]</p> <p><i>Vreau să rămân cu amintirile mele curate. Mie personal nu îmi place treaba asta. Cu adevărat îl iubiți pe Eminescu dacă încă îi citiți operele, îi știți parcursul, dacă le insuflați copiilor voștri să îl citească, să îl înțeleagă, nu dacă apreciați frumusețea lui generată de AI. Ce e ireal, rămâne ireal.</i> [I want to keep my memories untainted. Personally, I don't like this kind of thing. You truly love Eminescu if</p> |
| 7. Participatory Comments | 50 | Comments that include requests, suggestions, or user | <p><i>Buna. Foarte bine realizat. Cu ce model AI este făcut?</i> [Hello. Very well done.</p>   |                                 |    |   |

|                             |       |   |  |   |
|-----------------------------|-------|---|--|---|
|                             |       |   | <p>you still read his works, know his life journey, and inspire your children to read and understand him. This does not happen if you only appreciate his AI-generated beauty. What is unreal remains unreal.]</p> <p><i>eu cred că ne-o dezvoltăm nu ne-o distrugem, fără lucrurile pe care și „le-a imaginat” omenirea de-a lungul anilor nu ar fi existat evoluție. Televiziune, internet, telefon etc. Ca orice lucru nou, sperie, dar e inevitabil. [I believe we are developing it, not destroying it. Without the things humanity has ‘imagined’ over the years, there would have been no progress. Think about the television, the internet, the telephone, etc. Like anything new, it can be frightening, but it’s inevitable.]</i></p> | <p><i>pune viața în poeziile lui Eminescu. [Mihai, you have an extraordinary voice. What a wonderful initiative to bring life into Eminescu’s poems.]</i></p> <p><i>Atât de emoționant moment...M-ai făcut să plâng... 🥰❤️</i><br/>[Such an emotional moment... You made me cry...]</p> |
| 10. Low engagement comments | 220   | Emojis, GIFs and 2 trolls   | Comments which include only emojis and GIFs  |   |
| 9. Affective Comments       | (154) | Comments showing admiration, appreciation, or emotional connection. | <p><i>Acum îmi dau seama că Eminescu a fost mereu crush-ul meu ❤️ [Now I realise that Eminescu has always been my crush]</i></p> <p><i>Mihai, ai o voce extraordinara. Minunată inițiativa ta de a</i></p>   |   |

Table 1. Categories of Comments

The comments included for Category 1 (Romanian Heritage and Folklore References) express national pride and cultural identification, presenting the poet as a symbol of Romanian identity, language, and collective memory. The contributions present Eminescu as a genius and function as affirmations of national belonging. This view coincides with the generally accepted view of the poet’s work as part of the canonical list of authors taught in Romanian general education. This highlights the poet’s lasting value, embedded in the collective memory of Romanians through constant exposure in the educational system. It also attests to the profound impact of Eminescu’s writing on shaping perceptions of poetry.

Category 2 (Identity-Based Comments: Moldova and Local Patriotism) consists of comments written by Moldovan users and users coming from Bucovina. Users debate the correct accent attributed to Eminescu, using it as a marker of cultural ownership and local pride. The exchanges reveal a playful negotiation of belonging between Romanians and Moldovans, highlighting

shared heritage and regional distinctions. This debate is reinforced by the fact that Eminescu has been part of the educational canon in Moldova as well, where he is taught in schools as a central literary figure. This reveals embedded geopolitics, where attention to details such as accent signals symbolic ownership and belonging.

Comments in Category 3 (Educational comments) show an engagement with Eminescu's poetry shaped by prior school experiences, where his work has been anchored in the curriculum and is associated with exam-oriented expectations. Many users recall difficulties related to memorisation and comprehension. In this context, alternative modes of presentation contribute to reframing Eminescu as a source of enjoyment, and several comments point to innovative ways of integrating these perspectives into educational practice. These comments suggest a range of possible outcomes in research and practical applications, particularly in educational settings. They invite investigation into how multimodal formats may reshape literary reception and may be effective tools in classroom pedagogy.

The factual comments in Category 4 focus on providing and correcting information about Mihai Eminescu's life and work. Users engage in biographical clarification (e.g., dates, details about photographs, or personal relationships) and debate the authenticity of the voice and the use of AI. This dynamic highlights the limitations and the shallowness of AI-generated content, as these interactions function as a mirror reflecting the need for critical thinking, the verification and completion of information, and the active human role in interpretation. Without human intervention, the experience remains incomplete.

The storytelling sequences in Category 5 represent personal narratives that connect Eminescu's poetry to life moments such as childhood, schooling, experiences of love and loss, and the shaping of artistic vocation. Many users acknowledge the ways in which Eminescu has

inspired them. These comments are rooted in affective memory because Eminescu's presence spans over generations. There are also cultural practices such as commemorations of his birth, which have left a lasting imprint on collective and individual experience. For readers passionate about poetry, his work functions as a benchmark of literary value. These stories illustrate the emotional resonance of Eminescu's poetry across a broad timespan.

In Category 6 we gathered 47 comments using humour and exaggerations. Users joke about the poet's appearance and romantic life. References to Veronica Micle, an important woman in Eminescu's life, appear frequently and need deeper knowledge in order to be understood. Moreover, many comments portray Eminescu as a handsome poet that made Romanian Literature teachers fall in love with him, and female users admit their admiration for Eminescu in a humorous manner. This shows Romanians' cultural inclination towards humour and joking as a mode of engagement. By playfully exaggerating Eminescu's physical appeal and romantic aura, these humorous portrayals can be read as forms of admiration.

The comments selected for Category 7 (Participatory Comments) consist of different types of requests. Users ask for translations, titles, technical details, further recitations, and new AI-generated avatars. This category illustrates how the comment sections function as conversational hubs because they generate engagement and collective meaning-making.

We found 56 critical AI-related comments, which we included in Category 8 (Critical AI-Related Comments). All these contributions tackle the fast development and the use of AI, expressing both enthusiasm and concern toward synthetic cultural reconstruction. Some users consider AI a creative tool; others criticise it for distorting historical truth, authenticity, and even for having the potential of influencing collective memory in

the long term. These comments reflect an ongoing societal debate surrounding AI technologies and emphasise the need for discernment and critical thinking when engaging with such content. In this sense, users appear aware that AI-generated representations require careful evaluation, comparison with verified sources, and, where necessary, correction. These perspectives also point to the necessity of establishing verification protocols and regulatory frameworks for AI-generated cultural content, ensuring transparency and reliability in its dissemination and use.

Category 9 (Affective comments) constitutes roughly one fourth of the total comments (154 comments) and includes short reactions that express admiration and fascination for the idea of creating such an avatar. The interventions in this category usually include emojis and exclamations, unlike category 10, which contains comments that are only emojis or GIFs.

The distribution of comments reveals emotional attachment and cultural identification with Eminescu. It also shows a shift in how we engage with literary figures in digital spaces, as we no longer passively consume but actively reinterpret, negotiate, and co-create meaning. Beyond the expected categories of admiration, education, and critique, what emerges is a hybrid mode of reception, where users simultaneously treat Eminescu as a canonical figure, a relatable persona, and a digitally reconstructed presence. This convergence suggests that AI-mediated content transforms cultural heritage into a participatory and dynamic experience, where authority over meaning is distributed among users, and where authenticity is debated.

Through the lens of users' reception, the digital reconstruction of Eminescu may be understood as a reverse articulation of the classical *ut pictura poesis* principle, evolving into a form of *ut poesis pictura*, where poetry is re-embodied through technological means. Like cinematic or artistic adaptations, these AI-generated representations mediate between

original text and contemporary audiences. These representations have an immediate and participatory nature, allowing users to interact with and reshape dynamic, co-created cultural artefacts. This perspective situates AI-generated avatars within a renewed model of reception and interpretative practices.

### FINAL REMARKS

Our study shows that AI literary impersonations and the affordances of such tools reconfigure AI's epistemic limitations and are able to influence collective narration. AI does not distinguish between the possible and the impossible and remains unconstrained by entropy. Still, its features enable literary symbols to go beyond temporal, material, and causal facts. AI impersonations reproduce heritage and reactivate history as an experiential, dialogic space. Eminescu's AI avatar enables users to engage with collective memory. That is why we state that the absence of causal grounding in AI systems could be perceived as a deficit. Nevertheless, in this particular example, AI tools could be seen as the engine for narrative reconstruction. Authenticity is redefined for most of the users, who perceive it as a form of participation rather than as the key to accessing historical facts.

The dynamics in the comment section represent a form of public folklore, where meaning and authenticity are collectively negotiated. Across the categories of comments identified, there is a complex and multifaceted engagement with Eminescu that blends cultural reverence, personal memory, humour, and critical reflection. Users express national identification (Category 1) and negotiate regional belonging (Category 2), while educational experiences (Category 3) continue to shape reception. Factual corrections (Category 4) and storytelling practices (Category 5) highlight the need for critical engagement and the lasting emotional resonance of his work across

generations. Humour (Category 6) and participatory interactions (Category 7) demonstrate an active, playful, and collaborative digital culture, whereas critical AI-related comments (Category 8) reveal a growing awareness of the limits of technology and the necessity of human discernment. Affective comments (Category 9) underline the immediacy and intensity of user responses and confirm Eminescu's relevance in contemporary digital environments.

Users engage in a communal narration similar to the Rom. *șezătoare*, in which individual interventions are transformed into shared stories available to anyone. They reconstruct cultural value through dialogue, humour, and storytelling. This dialogue erases power asymmetries between canonical culture and the audience, replacing hierarchical modes of cultural transmission with shared meaning-making. This new trend signals a potential transformation of tradition and canon into a participatory cultural practice typical of contemporary modes of collective meaning-making.

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### Corpus

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