

= Mitic? =

Mitic? (Romanian pronunciation : [mi?tik?]) is a fictional character who appears in several sketch stories by Romanian writer Ion Luca Caragiale . The character 's name is a common hypocoristic form of Dumitru or Dimitrie (Romanian for Demetrius) . He is one of the best @-@ known figures in Caragiale 's 1901 collection Momente ?i schi?e , as well as in Romanian humor at large . Mitic? is a male resident of Bucharest whose background and status are not always clear , generally seen as an allegory of the average Bucharester or through extension , inhabitants of Romania 's southern regions ? Wallachia and Muntenia . According to accounts , he was based on a resident of Sinaia , whom Caragiale had befriended .

Caragiale used Mitic? as a stock character to feature in satirical contexts ; the biographical insights he provided are short and often contradict each other . Among Mitic? 's traits are his tendency to generate sarcastic comebacks and sententious catchphrases , a Francized speech , as well as inclinations to waste time and easily find his way out of problematic situations . His existence is connected to events in the history of Bucharest which he occasionally references in his jokes . Like Lache and Mache , who are present in Caragiale 's fiction , the character is usually portrayed as a civil servant who has a hard time making ends meet , but who is well liked by his peers .

On account of his caricature @-@ like nature , Mitic? survived in common reference beyond Caragiale 's age . The character was portrayed by several actors , and most notably by ?tefan Iordache in the film De ce trag clopotele , Mitic? ? . In contemporary Romanian , his name was turned into a common noun , and often pluralized under the form mitici . During and after the 1990s , the terms surfaced in polemics surrounding Romania 's centralism and the alternative projects for Transylvania 's regional autonomy . In this context , it was used in reference to administrators from Bucharest or the Old Kingdom . In parallel , the term was adapted into a stereotype of modern Bucharesters and inhabitants of other regions over the Southern Carpathians , who are often portrayed as belonging to the Balkans , as opposed to the Central European traditions of Transylvania . Under these definitions , Mitic? and mitici were notably present in essays authored by the Transylvanian activist Sabin Gherman .

= = Eponymous sketch = =

Ion Luca Caragiale first introduced Mitic? to his readers in an eponymous sketch of 1900 , where he evidenced the character 's universal traits and indicates that the first name is enough to define the character . The opening passage notably draws a parallel between Bucharest and Paris (at a time when the Romanian capital was colloquially known as " little Paris " or " Paris of the East ") , and mentions Gambrinus , a pub owned and managed by the writer himself :

" Of course we all ought to know [Mitic?] : we bump into him so very often ? in shops , in the trolley , in the tram car , on a bicycle , in the train wagon , at the restaurant , at Gambrinus ? in short , everywhere .

Mitic? is the Bucharester par excellence . And given that Bucharest is a little Paris , Mitic? himself is , obviously , a little Parisian .

He is neither young nor old , neither handsome nor ugly , he is so so ; he is a lad whose features are all balanced ; but that which sets him apart , that which makes him have a marked character is his original and inventive spirit . "

With sarcasm , Caragiale proceeds to indicate that the character 's main trait is his inventive use of Romanian and his tendency to coin terms and make jokes , with which " First and foremost , our little Parisian astounds the provincials " . The remainder of the sketch lists Mitic? 's remarks , part of which are platitudes or clichés . Some of them are isolated observations , which the author defines as " sentimental , lyrical , and melancholic " : " The most beautiful girl can only offer what she has to offer " , " Life is a dream , death is an awakening " , and " Every rose has its thorn " .

Most of Mitic? 's lines are comebacks in dialogue , and Caragiale notes that his character takes pride in " being unrivaled " when it comes to these . The writer implicates himself in the story , portraying himself as his character 's good friend and a main target for such remarks ? for instance ,

he recounts that , soon after New Years ' Eve 1900 , Mitic? pretended not to have recognized him because " it 's been a century since we last saw each other ! " He writes how , when he was ordering a ?uica in the presence of Mitic? , the latter jokingly asked the bartender not to comply , " for [Caragiale] is likely to drink it " .

The character 's lines offer glimpses into his financial and social status . Thus , he claims that he does not carry change because the metal might attract lightning , refuses to listen to his friends ' confessions because they did not pay the revenue stamp for complaints , and , when told that cabs are available , he sarcastically tells the drivers that they may go home . In one instance , he publicizes his goal to run in elections , but explains that he is going to contest a non @-@ existing seat ? at a time when the Romanian Kingdom made use of the census suffrage and had established electoral colleges to stand for the three wealth @-@ based categories , he claims his intention to enlist in the fourth college , for the sparsely @-@ populated area of Bucure?tii @-@ Noi . The sketch shows him to be married and to resent his mother @-@ in @-@ law , but to be courting a young female telegraph @-@ operator .

In this context , Mitic? is shown to have developed a series of jargon @-@ like expressions . When recounting this to his friends that a clerk has been fired from office , refers to this " a promotion " , elaborating that the new office involves " chasing flies out of [the park in] Ci?migiu " . Caragiale provides some of his character 's one @-@ liner jokes , which include references to garlic as " Serbian vanilla " , and to Romanian leu banknotes as " Trajan 's pictures " (alluding to their design , which , at the time , featured a portrait of the Roman Emperor) . His absurd requests include asking a shopkeeper to sell him " a few centimeters " of yogurt , and telling friends to drink their beer " before it cools itself " or to " climb on top of a sheet of paper " in order to reach for clothes placed higher on a stand . Several of his puns refer to the switch from horse @-@ drawn trams to trolley poles , for instance showing him blaming unexpected stops on horses not having been properly fed .

= = Other texts = =

Mitic? was again present in Caragiale 's Tot Mitic? (" Mitic? Still ") , a sketch which only comprises sections of dialog . It begins with an exchange of lines between an unnamed character and Mitic? , which was to become one of the best known puns in this sequence . When asked the general interest question De ce trage clopotele , Mitic? ? (" What are they sounding the [church] bells for , Mitic? ? " , which , in the Romanian original , may be interpreted as " What are they pulling the bells by ? ") , the protagonist answers De frânghie , mon?er (" By the string , my dear ") .

Tot Mitic? offers other glimpses into the character 's financial problems , showing him complaining that he has been " pulling the devil 's tail " ? using a traditional proverb to indicate that he has had a hard time getting by . To this , he adds that the devil would be suing him for injuries . He claims that he is going to spend his vacation in the mountains , and elaborates that he is talking about the pawnbroking institution known as muntele de pietate (from the French for " Mountain of Piety " ; see Mont de Piété) . Mitic? enters a restaurant to order only things which he knows are free (" a toothpick , a match , a glass of water and a newspaper ") . In other such sequences of events , he is shown eating in a pub as a means to " defend himself from death " , and borrowing money which he promises not to return .

When , in order to converse with a friend in a different compartment , he is traveling second class on a first class train ticket , Mitic? asks the conductor to pay him the difference . He is shown anxiously walking about in the Bucharest Tribunal hall , and asking to see a lawyer for his defense , jokingly claims that he wants to be defended " from flies " . When invited for a walk in the Her?str?u Park , which was heavily forested at the time , he pretends to have understood this as an invitation to chop trees , and stresses that he buys his firewood .

Mitic? still frequents the beer garden , and one of the dialogs mentions that he spends entire nights there . He is shown to be flirting with women , including the telephone operator , and boasts that several ladies visit him in his home .

The sketch includes several references to well @-@ known characters of the day , including the

Conservative Party leader Petre P. Carp , the archaeologist Grigore Tocilescu , the Royal administrator Ioan Kalinderu , the actor Ion Niculescu (as Iancu Niculescu) , as well as the dentist Kibrik . The character reveals his tendencies toward political satire , with a one @-@ liner introduced by Caragiale 's definition of " Mitic? as a chauvinist " ? Mitic? is shown announcing that the only song he wants to have played at his funeral is the nationalist tune De?teapt? @-@ te , române ! (which translates as " Awaken Thee , Romanian ! ") .

In addition to the main sketch and Tot Mitic? , Caragiale introduced a character of this name in a longer piece , titled 1 Aprilie (" The 1st of April ") , which centers on an April Fool gone wrong . Late in the evening , this Mitic? decides to hide in Ci?migiu while his lover Cleopatra pretends to court their common friend Mi?u Poltronul ? with simulated indignation , he takes Mi?u by surprise as Cleopatra embraces him . Mitic? dies hours after Mi?u , who reacts out of instinct to his threatening voice , hits him over the forehead with a cane . Another Mitic? ? " Mr. Mitic? the haberdasher " , whose family name is probably Georgescu ? is present in the 1900 sketch La Mo?i (" At the Fair in Obor ") , where he is shown accompanied by his family and ridiculing his mother @-@ in @-@ law in public . In another such piece , titled Ini?iativa ... (" The Initiative ... ") , Caragiale recounts another dialog with " my buddy Mitic? " , who is shown to be unnerved that the Romanian state " is indifferent " to the fact that infants , his daughter included , do not have wet nurses assigned to them , and that breastfeeding has to rely on the private sector . Another or the same Mitic? makes a brief appearance in Inspec?iune (" An Inspection ") , where he is one of the clerks investigating the bizarre suicide of the civil servant Anghelache .

A Mitic? is present in the piece called ?al ! ... ? the title comes from a face ?al (" to make ?al ") , an antiquated expression which , as Caragiale explains in the beginning of his story , means " to make a payment " (from the German zahlen) . The writer illustrates this concept by invoking a meeting between him , Mitic? , and Mitic? 's wife Graziella . Caragiale recounts how his friend served him and others a copious dinner in his house , and then made them sit through Graziella 's reading of her own lengthy essay on women as portrayed in Romanian folklore . To this goal , Caragiale explains , Mitic? discreetly claimed that it was ?al and added , using a quasi @-@ official parlance , that " all bills are to be paid " . The piece ends with Caragiale exiting Mitic? 's house in haste and : as the latter shouts " to be seeing each other " , he exclaims " to be left alone , Mitic? " .

= = Background themes and sources of inspiration = =

Despite Mitic? 's association with Bucharest and his usual most common career as a state employee , several commentators have recounted that he may have been based on Gheorghe Matheescu , an entrepreneur from the town of Sinaia (located on the Prahova Valley , in northern Muntenia) . Matheescu took pride in this supposed connection , and , around 1939 , argued in its favor in front of literary historian ?erban Cioculescu . Cioculescu recorded the rumor , and indicated that it was backed by information received from Caragiale 's daughter , Ecaterina Logadi . Her father reportedly enjoyed Matheescu 's company , and , in 1901 , even authored short advertisements for his store .

Mitic? and Lache and Mache have often been seen as three manifestations of a main type in Caragiale 's work ? the petty clerk who spends his time off in lively company . Literary historian Garabet Ibr?ileanu , an adherent to the left @-@ wing trend known as Poporanism , was among the first to stress that Mitic? 's name , like those of Lache and Mache , was actually supposed to enhance his everyday nature , while arguing that the character stood for the first generation of commoners with access to education . Ibr?ileanu , who criticized Caragiale for his satirical overview of the social process , believed that the clerks in his work are unnecessarily cynical , and stressed that Inspec?iune was the only one of his works were " one sees at least one glitter of kindness in the souls of the mitici " .

Literary historian George C?linescu saw Mitic? as a main representative of Balkan subjects in Ion Luca Caragiale 's prose , and listed among the character 's other traits his pessimism in respect to historical developments , as well as his interest in rallying people off the street and imposing his ideas on them . He defined the latter aspect as " southern " , and noted that , like other heroes of

Caragiale 's sketches , Mitic? is " at the antipode of Romanticism " , and inhabits a place where " Gothic meditation does not flourish " . In his history of the Junimea literary society , Z. Ornea argued that there was a link between Mitic? 's personality and Caragiale 's strong rejection of nationalism :

" Caragiale 's mitici are jovial , good @-@ natured characters , easy @-@ going in their thought and behavior . Solemnity does not suit them and fanatical monomanias are unimaginable in this context . An ecstatically nationalist Mitic? is a contradiction in terms , since his formula in life is accommodation , adaption to the situations . "

The character and his counterparts have been understood as purveyors and exponents of moft , a concept treasured by Caragiale . The word , meaning " trifle " or " nonsense " , refers to pretentious and often ridiculous expectations of people caricatured in his work , but is uttered by such characters in reference to each other (as their tendency to dismiss events they are confronted with , no matter how important they may be) . Moft was notably present in Caragiale 's own satirical magazine , Moftul Român (which he issued at intervals in the 1890s and after 1900) . Two mentions of , respectively , moft and the magazine itself are made in Tot Mitic? (in reference to Petre P. Carp and to a woman courted by Mitic? 's friend Costic?) .

Mitic? 's voluble nature has itself been considered to have negative implications . An assessment of this was offered by C?linescu , who rejected the popular take on the character as boorish :

" Mitic? is a gossip , a scoundrel , an intriguer , in general on account of his garrulous nature , and a generous and confusing mystifier , agreeing to render services without having the strength to complete them , which in turn permits him to ask services from anyone else [...] . He is easy @-@ going , with a horror for suffering and is most of all a well @-@ mannered man . The impression that Caragiale 's heroes are vulgar is false and mostly arises from the fact that , wishing to seem distinguished , they have not yet cultivated their speech and gestures . "

Caragiale created Mitic? at a time when the Romanian culture as developed in the Old Kingdom was the recipient of French influence , and the Romanian language was open to Francization . The character himself partakes in the process , and is shown to have adopted several of the manners and pastimes associated with the French Third Republic .

= = Modern uses and influence = =

= = = Cultural and political symbol = = =

The literary critic Paul Zarifopol , who was Ion Luca Caragiale 's good friend , made several references to Mitic? as a prototype of ignorance . He thus used the character to define the most ignorant of journalists and newspaper readers , and , in his lengthy essay titled Din registrul ideilor ginga?e (" From the Register of Gentle Ideas ") , argued that Mitic? 's traits survived in the manners and morals of state employees and journalists after Caragiale 's death , throughout World War I and after the creation of Greater Romania .

Political interpretations of Mitic? 's status were present at an earlier stage : in his influential essay Neoioib?gia (" Neo @-@ Serfdom ") , the Marxist thinker Constantin Dobrogeanu @-@ Gherea , himself a friend of Caragiale , used Ini?iativa ... ' s protagonist to illustrate the interventionist policies of the National Liberal cabinets . He contended that the two terms of his comparison shared " a mania for [state] intervention " , and argued that the National Liberals had a tendency to overregulate the economy .

Commentators such as Constantin Am?riu?ei have proposed that there is an intrinsic connection between Mitic? and Gore Pirgu , one of the protagonists in the novel Craii de Curtea @-@ Veche , authored by Ion Luca Caragiale 's son and rival , the Symbolist Mateiu Caragiale . Pirgu , who enjoys a successful career during the interwar despite having a shady past and coarse manners , has been defined by Am?riu?ei as " the eternal and real Mitic? of the Romanian world " .

Constantin Am?riu?ei was noted for defining Mitic? 's character (Miticism) through ontologic terms borrowed from the German philosopher Martin Heidegger . He thus argued that , for all their mundane motivations , the character and his peers illustrated a search present with all individuals ,

identifiable with Heidegger 's concepts of Being @-@ in @-@ the @-@ World and Being @-@ toward @-@ death (see Heideggerian terminology) .

In 2000 , several essays by literary historian Laurențiu Ulici were published posthumously , under the title Mitică ?i Hyperion (" Mitică and Hyperion ") . This name drew a direct comparison between the voluble Mitică and an equally famous character in Romanian literature , the aloof , rational , and god @-@ like protagonist of Mihai Eminescu 's poem Luceafărul (" The Morning Star ") . Ulici attempted to synthesize the two conflicting natures in the Romanian identity , and viewed the two as terms in " an oxymoron " standing at the center of Romanian culture .

In his essay on the history of drunkenness in Romanian culture , Mircea Bălan defined Mitică as :
" The Bucharest wise guy , a haughty rascal , a swindler doubled by a thief and a boor giving himself airs , deplorable , awkward and discredited from the get @-@ go , in reality an aborted « dastard » , an aborted « wanton » . "

Literary critic Ioana Pârvulescu agreed that there was a link between Mitică and other characters in Caragiale 's sketches ; she subsequently argued that formed an integral part of the writer 's caricature of Romania in its entirety , and that the measure to which they reflected reality is impossible to detect . In her 2007 volume of essays , titled În țara Miticilor . De țapte ori Caragiale (" In the Land of the Mitici . Seven Times Caragiale ") , she stressed that the character was both more human and more artificial than his usual interpretations in 20th century commentary .

A particular definition of Mitică and mitici was adopted by many inhabitants of Transylvania , who used the terms in reference to either Bucharest @-@ based politicians or inhabitants of the city at large , and contrasted them with their counterparts to the northwest . The character has thus evolved to include a stereotypical view of contemporary Bucharesters or Wallachians , one which depicts them as sciolist , arrogant , aggressive and cunning . In other contexts , the mitici may be seen as not having an adequate familiarity with the culture of Transylvania , and are associated with the Balkans (whereas Transylvania is identified with Central Europe) .

In September 1998 , the Transylvanian journalist and essayist Sabin Gherman issued a pamphlet titled M @-@ am săturat de România (" I 've Grown Tired of Romania ") , which was at the center of a scandal over its radical tone and demands for regional autonomy in Transylvania . In its first lines , the message drew a parallel between Mitică and " politicians in power " , identifying centralism and the politics of Romania with , among other things , disorganization and statism . Gherman went on to contrast " the seriousness , the elegance , the discipline " which he attributed to Transylvania with the invasion of " miticisms , ordinary Balkanisms , the civilization of pumpkin seeds " . The latter sentence comprised a reference to the habit of consuming seeds as snacks , in which he saw evidence of rudimentary behavior :

" Here [that is , outside Transylvania] , one doesn 't have rights , but complaisances . Here they eat pumpkin seeds , they use « there is many » in their speech , and , in general , people get born , multiply themselves and die . "

= = = Portrayals and tributes = = =

One of the best @-@ known references to the character is the 1981 film De ce trag clopotele , Mitică ? ? (translated as " Why Are the Bells Ringing , Mitică ? ? ") , directed by Lucian Pintilie . Titled after the opening dialog in Tot Mitică , the film was actually structured around Caragiale 's play D @-@ ale carnavalului , and included portions from several other writings ? including 1 Aprilie . Mitică , who makes a brief appearance before dying at the hands of Mișu Poltronul , is portrayed by Ștefan Iordache . De ce trag clopotele , Mitică ? ? was noted for its subtle undertones , through which it expressed criticism of the Romanian communist regime (at a time when the country was led by Nicolae Ceaușescu) .

In 2003 , the Luceafărul Theater in Iași hosted a dramatized version of Momente ?i schișe . Titled În lumea lui Mitică (" In Mitică 's World ") , it was directed by Constantin Breghnescu and starred Dionisie Vitcu .

The national television channel TVR 2 produces a weekly show titled D 'ale lui ' Mitică (roughly : " Mitică 's Stuff ") , whose title is inspired by Caragiale 's hero . Hosted by the actor Mitică Popescu ,

the show groups reportage pieces from the Romanian countryside , recording unusual events which , the editors believe , serve to illustrate the problems faced by small communities in the post @-@ 1989 transition period .