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### The Author's Heroes: Bulgakov Writes Alongside Molière and Cervantes

Unable to publish any original work after 1929, in order to survive physically and intellectually Bulgakov turned to adapting world classics to the stage. The move made sense for many reasons, not least of which among them being the fact that Soviet readers and authors were obsessed with world literature during the 1920s and '30s. As B. Eikenbaum observed in 1924, "Just now it turns out that Russian writers have not become translators and editors of translations in vain, and Russian readers have not begun to read only "international" literature in vain. What is happening is nothing other than what happened in Russian literature of the [18]30s." The trend continued into the 1930s, which led to the emergence of important vehicles, such as the Gorky Institute of World Literature (founded in 1932), for the distribution and study of foreign literature in Russia. My presentation situates Bulgakov's adaptations in that context and examines his uses of the currently benevolent reception of Western classics, in order to explore his complex engagement with carnivalization and dramatic authorship as World Literature. It aims to reevaluate the significance of such plays as Molière, *The Follies of Jourdain* and *Don Quixote* in Bulgakov's continued development of the central theme behind his oeuvre as a whole: the fate and role of the creative artist in society. The Russian playwright's re-working of Molière's and Cervantes's source texts highlights the theatrical nature of any creative effort to combat reality, and the ultimate impossibility of dramatic expression to secure the survival of the author as hero. This conclusion may be at odds with the more hopeful interpretation of the powers of Art in his magnum opus *The Master and Margarita*, but it seems to be his most realistic and personal message for the contemporary audiences.