

Boston University
The Department of Romance Studies

Reconstructing the Original:

Translating Trotsky's

Literature and Revolution

When translating Russian texts, we are faced with a number of unique challenges. On the one hand, in the Tsarist as well as in the Soviet Russia, censorship became a determining factor in the process of creation, circulation and reception of ideas. In the West, however, translations of Russian works were quickly incorporated into the local debates, without looking at either the conditions in which they were created or the possible interventions made by those in power. The debates stayed blind to the elements that made the translations refractory to those very debates. A Russian literature translator, thus, is urged to doubt both the existing versions of a text in foreign languages, as well as the original Russian editions. It is this doubt that foments a translator's need to research and reconstruct the original sources, which oftentimes leads to surprising findings. Lev Trotsky's *Литература и революция* (*Literature and revolution*), undoubtedly presents one of the remarkable examples of such a case.

How many *Literature and revolution* are there in European languages? Why do the versions in which it has been circulating diverge to such a great extent? Why is there still no complete edition of the original work in English, French or other languages in the West? Answers to these questions will allow us to apprehend the magnitude of the role translation has played in the dissemination and canonization of this classic book of the 20th century.

**A Talk by
Alejandro Ariel
González
(in Spanish)**

March 17, 5pm
725 Commonwealth Ave
Boston University
Room CAS 533B

Alejandro Ariel González is a prominent Argentine Slavicist and a prolific literary and scientific translator. His translations comprise more than thirty titles, including the works of Bulgakov, Turgenev, Chekhov, Dostoyevsky, Gogol, Lenin, Tolstoy, Trotsky, Vygotsky, among others, published in Argentina, Chile and Spain. Alejandro González is also the author of numerous articles on Social Theory, Translation Theory and Russian Studies published in Russia, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. He is the Grand Prize winner of the 2015 *Teatros del Mundo* Competition for his translation of Turgenev's *Complete Plays* and the First Prize winner of the 2014 Second International Translation Award "Read Russia" for his translation of Dostoyevsky's *El doble*. He also received the A.L.I.J.A.'s (*Asociación de Literatura Infantil y Juvenil de Argentina*) First Prize for his translation of Turgenev's *Primer amor* in 2008. Alejandro Ariel González is a Russian Literature Professor in the *Lectura Mundi* Program at the University of San Martín and in the Master's programs in Literary Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Buenos Aires. He is also the President of the Dostoyevsky Society of Argentina.