What constitutes a canon? A question formulated in this way can provoke a variety of answers. A canon may be defined as a collection of key works of literature; it can refer to philosophical, political, and religious texts that a particular society has come by consensus to regard as foundational. Today the term canon has come to signify authors and works that either used to be included in literature syllabi or textbooks, or those works that repeatedly appear in standard volumes of the history of literature, bibliographies, and literary criticism. The canon has become an issue of much contention in the humanities. The purpose of the debate, interestingly enough, has not been (as one might have assumed) about alterations, but instead about comprehending why the canon is as it is, how it was formulated, and how circumstances can alter and condition its supposedly timeless content. The canon has come to be viewed by some as "the expression of cultural authority created by other people influential in the past"; it has been defined as "the space of cultural conflict" and as "debatable ground, the ground of the battle between various groups, practices and institutions". This ongoing "hermeneutics of suspicion" can produce one of two consequences: either a new canon is established, or the very notion of a canon is called
into question. As Jeremy Hawthorn noted: “When feminist critics started to construct a rival canon or canons, not always as a replacement for the ‘official’ canon but also as an alternative to it, then this struck at the claim to universality that lay behind the idea of a single canon. For, in a traditional sense, if there were several canons then there was no canon.”

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About

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How far can canon and language be sources of (dis)continuity in literary history? Continuity and discontinuity are concepts of such complexity that only philosophers can hope to make a successful attempt to define them in general terms. All I can offer is a tentative analysis of their significance for literary history. Since even such an investigation would ask for a lengthy treatment if conducted on an abstract level, I shall limit myself to reflections on how continuity and discontinuity are related to the concepts of canon and language. This essay attempts to illustrate this process by taking A History of Foreign Literature edited by Professor Nie Zhenzhao as an example in hope of seeking an approach to the writing of literary history.

Literary studies have always, explicitly or implicitly, presupposed a certain notion of `literariness' with which it has been able to delimit its domain, specify, and sanction its methodologies and approaches to its subject. This notion of `literariness' is crucial for the theoretical thinking about literary translation. The recent developments in the literary studies have radically questioned the traditional essentialist notion of `literariness' and the idea of canon from various theoretical perspectives. In the case of translating poetry, it is vital for a translator to decide whether the verse should be translated into verse, or into free verse or into prose. Literary translation bridges the delicate emotional connections between cultures and languages and furthers the understanding of human beings across the national borders. In the case of translating poetry, it is vital for a translator to decide whether the verse should be rendered either into verse form, or into free verse or into prose.

The Central idea of this conception is that the study of literary translation should begin with a study of the Western intellectual tradition that goes from, say, Socrates to Wittgenstein in philosophy, and from Homer to James Joyce in literature. The word canon is derived from ancient Greek κανών, kanón, National literary canon under translation. A b s t r a c t . This study focuses on problems of literary translation and of national literary canon trans-K e y w o r d s: formation in a target culture, and, as a result, the fate of the original text in the receiving culture. Case studies of classical Russian literature (A. S. Pushkin, N. V. texts; displacement Gogol, M. Yu. Lermontov, etc.) in translation, its reception and evaluation in the West, as well as the British regularities. (J. Austen, J. K. Jerome, O. Wilde, etc.) and American (M. Mitchell, etc.) literature in Russian, are studied and explored. No doubt, canon can be and is often viewed as a constant competition that should result in designing special institutional, educational, and cultural policy.