

**Ying Liu**

*Sichuan University*

*Sichuan, China*

**Imagination, Spirit and Daemon:**

**English Interpretation of 神 *Shen* in Ancient Chinese Literary Thoughts**

神 *shen* is a key word frequently used in the Ancient Chinese Literary Thoughts with multiple meanings. The character was originally related to primitive belief. Later, the literati during the Six Dynasties (around AD 220–589) began to use it in aesthetic criticism, as in discussion on the temperament and personality of the painters and writers, the classification of works, or even the process and methods of creation. Different schools of thoughts viewed the term differently, which has shaped the understanding about it. Generally speaking, the term acquired the meaning of subtle change and variation from the original reference of spirits and gods, later indicates the spirit, temperament, personality, minds and such human elements, and finally becomes a key term related to imagination in writing in the field of arts and literature. In the west tradition of imagination, one sees a different but not without common route. Translators and critics use terms such as Imagination, Spirit and Daemon to interpret *shen*, each focusing on different aspects of this term. A comparative study of these interpretation shows how people view the author's role and the process of literary creation in history.