The Chinese used 'wei' (味) to appraise poems and this later developed into a theory known as 'Shi Wei Shuo' (诗味说).

This dissertation attempts to examine the formation and development of the theory, and discusses the similarities and differences of the theory through the years.

Structurally, this dissertation is divided into eight chapters. Chapter one covers briefly the approach and the range of the topic. Chapter two examines the original meaning of the word 'wei' and its implication. Chapter three studies the formation of the theory and chapter four analyses its development. Chapter five explores the metamorphosis while chapter six investigates the re-birth of the theory. Chapter seven takes a macro view of the changes throughout the dynasties, and how scholars contributed to the theory. The final chapter sums up the entire exercise stressing the importance of the theory in Chinese literary criticism and its influence.

Shi Wei Shuo has a great influence on Chinese poetry where the art of poetry favors ambiguity and spontaneous reaction from the readers.