

## Abstract

The Study of “Home Garden : Consumption of Symbolic Value and Construction of Social Distinction” illustrates how the middle class maintains their social status via their home gardens. Theoretical frameworks used in this thesis are consumption of ‘Symbolic Value’ (Baudrillard, 1968) and ‘Social Distinction’ (Bourdieu, 1984). Main questions of this study are : 1) How does home garden, as symbolic commodity, construct the owners’ identity ? and 2) How does home garden reflect the owners’ taste and construct social distinction ?

Using qualitative research method, I conduct in-depth interview with 10 garden owners and employ visual observation. In order to increase my garden “cultural capital”, I discussed with the landscape architecture, attended the gardening seminars and read the garden magazines to update garden trends.

The study found that garden is a space of symbolic value consumption where the owners consume value, meaning and life-style. Difference garden decoration express difference owners’ identity. Like other commodity consumption, the garden owners do imitate their consumption pattern from the other middle class. At the same time, in order to make this distinction from other, they add in their own idea to decorate the garden. By doing that they name the garden distinctively as English Vintage, Luxurious Modern Garden, English Cottage.

To maintain the social status, middle class garden owner accumulate many capital. Economic capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital of middle class construct specific taste and life-style which cause distinction class. According to diversity and of middle class, ambiguity and contradictory class location, I found that Bourdieu’s concept of social distinction can explain the ‘old rich’ group who inherits economic and cultural capital from their families. Their taste has a solid ground. However, this concept can not apply to the ‘new rich’ who do not have cultural capital and need to develop their own.