

## ESSAY 2 PHASE 1

Student 2 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

The subreddit r/campingandhiking is an online community found on the website Reddit, with a focus on outdoor activities such as the ones in its namesake. On the subreddit, there are many artifacts with a cultural significance to the community. The most commonly found, and most exemplary form of these are the pictures of views found on the subreddit. These typically consist of a picture taken by the user of a scenic view, with a short caption giving context. There is no shortage of these pictures on the subreddit and they can be found very quickly when scrolling through. There are other artifacts as well that have significance like boots, tents, trail foods, and other kinds of gear. However, to the online community the pictures of views appear much more frequently and have much more room for analysis. Pictures of views on the subreddit r/campingandhiking hold a deep cultural significance through their purpose, message, exigence, and circulation, and enforce the community values of sharing outdoor experience and knowledge, and helping to determine hierarchy in the subreddit.



This post from r/campingandhiking shows a landscape from an area of wilderness in Idaho. The specific area is the sawtooth wilderness area. The taker of the photo was in the area to fly fish for 5 days. The landscape features a river,

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mountains in the background, and the photographer is surrounded by shrubbery and brush. There are some features that many of the pictures on the subreddit have in common, like sunrises and sets, and freshwater either still or running. The sun is rising in the back of the picture, which means the user woke up early enough to see the sun rise. Early rising is a determinant of hierarchy in the community, because it displays a fortitude and drive to accomplish outdoor activities no matter the hour. This particular one showcases a river which is running fresh water. The water is an iridescent orange-yellow color reflecting the sunrise. There is a tree line a few hundred yards in front of the user, contrasting the barren look of the frosty landscape. The frost on the shrubbery and grass conveys temperature to the viewer, by eliciting thoughts of the cold.

The intended audience is people on the subreddit, however the actual audience included the user, the members of the subreddit, people viewing the subreddit, and anyone who saw the picture IRL. The image is generally visually appealing and the viewer does not have to be a member of the subreddit to enjoy the grande vista. Because of this, the image may be shared by members of the subreddit to people who are not a part of it so they may enjoy the picture, adding to the overall actual audience. The image was circulated by posting it to [r/campingandhiking](#) and it is now a trending post on the website. It could have possibly also been circulated on alternate forms of social media the user may possess. These posts have become popular, because more people are going and doing outdoor activities. Because of the lockdown and quarantine caused by the novel coronavirus, people have sought ways to keep busy while staying away from population centers, creating a popularity of camping and hiking, and by extension artifacts like this. The purpose of this photo was for the user to share their experience with the people on the subreddit, and to validate himself as a member by showing his outdoor prowess. He mentions that he is fly fishing for 5 days, which shows that he is a member of the community through his hobby. The length of his trip, the cold atmosphere conveyed in the picture, and his early wake up come together to show that the user has developed abilities in the community's areas of interest. This artifact serves to inspire community members to take similar trips, and enforces the community value of sharing experience by allowing other users to experience a place they may not have seen otherwise.

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Some popular posts display the night sky without any light pollution, which is ambient light that artificially dulls star light allowing the viewer to see the stars well. With no light pollution, it is sure that the user is far away from city lights, and must be deep into the wilderness. This is a determinant of hierarchy because it shows that the user made a successful outdoor trip, which shows knowledge of the subreddit's subject.

### Works Cited

u/humanimalien111, "Camped for 5 days solo through Idaho last week for fly fishing and some alone time. This was sunrise and an early frost. (Sawtooth Wilderness, Idaho, USA)", *Reddit*, 1 Oct. 2020, [Reddit.com,https://www.reddit.com/r/CampingandHiking/comments/j2empq/camped\\_for\\_5\\_days\\_solo\\_thru](https://www.reddit.com/r/CampingandHiking/comments/j2empq/camped_for_5_days_solo_thru), 1 Oct. 2020