ESSAY 2 PHASE 2
Student 3 ● Prof. Mani ● Fall 2020

In the subreddit, r/cozyplaces, images reflect cozy elements as coziness is created in various areas. Cozy balconies frequently appear on the subreddit and portray the necessary features to create a cozy place. These characteristics include but are not limited to a comfortable couch, mattress, pillows, fuzzy blankets, or fairy and candle lighting. Other critical elements that commonly appear in cozy balconies are cats, dogs, plants, or even the occasional human. Status is reinforced by using these characteristics as they can be applied to all cozy balconies. As a result, anyone can emulate the original cozy place, essentially creating their own cozy area.

Additionally, posts with more upvotes exhibit status, as members of the community believe a particular photo best suits the subreddit's values. If someone can create a cozy balcony of their own that others also view as cozy, the content creator becomes more than just a commenter and community member. They have adopted the subreddit's values into their life, signifying a full immersion and commitment to the principles of r/cozyplaces. Wealth is even expressed through the use of colors, objects, and backgrounds. Ultimately, both the subreddit's characteristics and emphasis on status and wealth or lack of, show members how they can create their own cozy balcony with both expensive and inexpensive items.

The first image of a cozy balcony, "Eye-Catching Balcony," has the typical characteristics associated with cozy balconies. A cream-colored couch with matching back pillows and black legs rests against the white brick wall. There are also two small ivory accent tables with a twisted figure-eight bottom composing their legs. On the accent table closest to the couch, there is a bright orange pot. This orange contrasts with the black and white patterned rug under the accent table. Underneath the sofa is a clear plastic storage bin. On top of the couch, there is a sleeping cat that blends in with the cream color. Above and behind the sofa, against the white brick wall, are four wall-mounted flower pots. There are two on each side of the window, first a space grey and then a bumblebee yellow. They all appear to be filled to the brim with different green, leafy plants. To the left of the couch are two pillows: one a mustard yellow and the other a crimson red. On the

chair rests a small orange and white lower back pillow with four orange tassels on each corner. The black banister has several plants hanging in red and green pots.

The layout and color of "Eye-Catching Balcony" creates a mood of peace and tranquility. There is no overwhelming, singular color dominating the space. The unique color scheme of neutrals and pops of color in the image expresses a desire for wealth. For instance, the balcony's apartment owner tried to create the appearance of wealth with a neutral backdrop, which is associated with modern homes and thus money. However, the unexpected pops of color and the utilization of a rug on the balcony floor suggest that the apartment owner is middle-class. A carpet is much cheaper than buying tiles and paying for someone to install them. Additionally, the user has included a storage bin under the couch, suggesting that the apartment owner has limited space. This creates an issue of accessibility, as the apartment owner does not have enough funds to spare to purchase more space. Therefore, the apartment owner is making the best use of their limited space.

The presence of the cat on the couch is significant as well. The cat sleeping implies that the balcony is ultra-cozy. The cat's presence and action of sleeping also promotes the idea that the balcony is real and livable. The couch must be comfy and soft if a cat is willing to sleep on it. It also allows other members of the community to relate to the photo, as they may have their own pets. This relation is crucial as many humans form special connections with their cats and dogs, whom they love dearly. In many cases, these pets become members of the family whose life and opinion are valued.

The intended audience members of the photo are members of r/cozyplaces, as well as people who appreciate coziness and are looking for ways to implement coziness on their balconies without "breaking the bank." Thus, the image's actual audience includes the intended audience and friends and family of the person who owns the apartment. This photo was well-circulated by members of r/cozyplaces, as it has a total of 654 upvotes and an upvoting rate of about 99%. This evidence suggests that the community is impressed with the user's efforts, who designed a unique cozy place by implementing various seemingly contrasting elements and integrated them with cozy characteristics.

The purpose of the photo is that it signifies an exemplary cozy balcony. The original poster unusually presented coziness by combining both items associated with wealth and every day cheaper goods. This combination notifies viewers that there is a way to create a cozy space on a budget without making it look cheap. As a result, this post exhibits status in the community as the original poster was able to create a cozy place in a beautiful fashion without spending an exorbitant amount of money. Many members of r/cozyplaces find this an incredibly hard goal to accomplish. The exigence of the image is the need to create a cozy, outdoor space where you can feel safe and secure, especially during these uncertain times. Anyone with a balcony during this period is extremely lucky to have their own personal space where they can breathe fresh air and avoid contracting COVID-19.

The second image, "City Rooftop Balcony", consists of a mattress, pillows, food, candlelight, plants, a fuzzy blanket, and fairy lights. On the mattress lies white sheets and a comforter, with two pillows on the left side and one on the right. Hanging over the edge, a grey fur-like blanket rests next to a bottle of wine in a gold ice bucket, presumably with ice in it. To the right are two glasses filled with wine on a honey wood tray with napkins, utensils, and three bowls of food. Next to the tray is a plate split down the middle between green and red grapes and a clear Pyrex of popcorn. Beyond that, one's eyes are met with a nighttime view of New York City and bright fairy lights cast off the left side of the edge. These typical characteristics of coziness are coupled with a projector and screen for watching movies. The word "DreamWorks" appears on the screen along with the play icon and grey bar, indicating the time remaining of the film.

The layout of the rooftop balcony creates a sense of privacy, as you are on top of the roof, preventing nosy neighbors from peering in on you. Also, rooftop access is rare, especially in NYC, as only the building owner or the resident(s) of the top floor apartment has access to it. Thus, you are most likely one of the few people who can utilize this place, consequently indicating status in the neighborhood. The gorgeous view, blurring city lights, and fairy lights create a romantic scene. The carefully placed wine and champagne glasses, pillows on each side of the mattress, and fuzzy blanket reinforces this ideal as it is geared towards couples.

The placement of the mattress outside along with the white sheets signifies wealth. The person utilizing the space does not care about the mattress getting soaked from the rain. The white sheets also signify wealth; the owner of the space does not care if wine or food is spilled. They have enough funds to purchase both a new mattress and new sheets if necessary. The beautiful view of the city is also a signal of wealth, as the apartments below pay extra to wake up and go to sleep with an image of the skyline etched in their minds. The caption accompanying the photo, "My cozy rooftop.", indicates a desire for prestige. The content poster used a capital M and a period at the end of the caption to be respected and taken legitimately. Greater education levels are associated with a higher socioeconomic status, as people who appear well-educated are respected more.
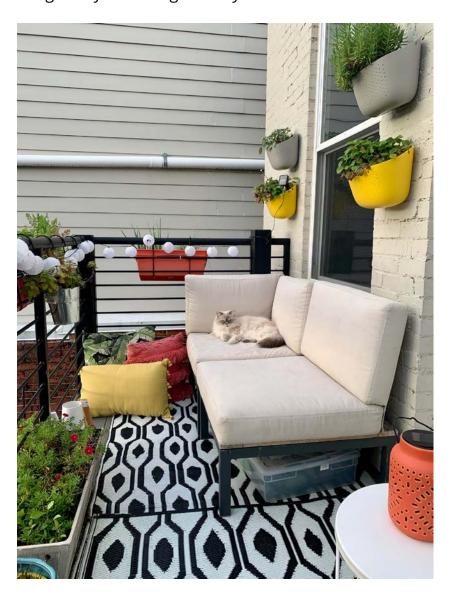
The audience of the image is members of r/cozyplaces, people who want to create coziness in their outdoor spaces, and who are looking for redecorating ideas. Unintended audience members include friends and family of the apartment owner as well as people who visit this Airbnb. Notably, this image is geared towards members of a higher socioeconomic status, especially with the portrayed idea of lounging in bed with a glass of wine outside. Some members of the subreddit took offense from this photo as they criticized its originality as a cozy place, citing its Airbnb status. These users were outraged by the lack of inclusivity of other socioeconomic statuses by the image. They wanted to achieve the specific level of coziness created by the image, inserting jealousy and admiration in members.

The purpose of the photo is to draw renewed attention to this Airbnb by creating jealousy. Notably, the caption "my cozy place" on the subreddit creates envy as it uses the word "my" to create possession over the image. A strong reaction like this is crucial in gaining attention from possible future customers. Besides this envy for such a cozy place, the image functions to inspire community members to create their own cozy place in a similar way. Members seeking to transform a lifeless balcony or patio can reference this image to determine the elements that make the rooftop space cozy. These members may try to buy similar items for their outdoor spaces or think about some universal features they would like to incorporate instead, like, fairy lights, plants, etc. Considering these uncertain times, attention towards this Airbnb must be heavily marketed to receive even a

few customers. COVID-19 has influenced society to travel less, negatively affecting many hotels. Ultimately, by focusing on both the coziness of the photo and jealousy in those who are not experiencing it, the image functions to address r/cozyplaces needs.

Image 1: Eye-catching balcony

Image 2: City Rooftop Balcony

Works Cited

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