

ESSAY 3 PHASE 1

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

Introduction:

The subreddit, r/cozypplaces, is characterized by sharing places deemed “cozy” by community members through the process of upvoting. This creates core values within the subreddit that determine the specific elements needed to establish a cozy place. As a result, cozy places can include almost anything, from bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens, patios, and balconies, as long as certain elements are maintained. Common items that make an area appear cozy are pets, fuzzy blankets, pillows, plants, and fairy lights or candles.

In r/cozypplaces, members seek to connect and relate with original content creators through comments. Typically, members will go out of their way to inquire about the location of a cozy place, the elements that comprise the cozy place and express their thoughts as well as feelings regarding the cozy area. Thus, members seek to relate to one another in any way they can. Significantly, this goal to relate and connect is associated with our socioeconomic levels.

Wealth affects what a person views as cozy, recommends other users to buy to make a place cozier, their physical experiences with cozy places, and awareness of the accessibility of the cozy place. Users’ socioeconomic status affects the content of their comments and their perceptions as to what level of coziness is personally achievable for themselves. This influences member’s ideas in regards to their perfect cozy place. Ultimately, the ideals of members derived from community interactions produce the core values of the subreddit.

Methods and Ethical Considerations:

As I conducted my primary research, I observed threads primarily using non-participant observation. In particular, I looked at three specific threads- one regarding an image of an indoor porch in autumn with a beautiful view of the lake, mountains, and orange leaves; Another involved a small city backyard patio with various plants aligned against the fence. In contrast, the last thread I observed was a meme discussing the values of the subreddit itself, an unusual deviation from the typical posts. I observed each thread for a total of one hour, with thirty minutes each on October 8th, fifteen minutes each on October 15th, and fifteen

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minutes each on October 23rd. After reviewing the posts and their captions, I analyzed the comments and compared their similarities and differences while paying particular attention to emerging patterns as well as commonly shared beliefs. I choose this form of primary observation to limit any possible changes in behavior that may result from my participation. My goal was to examine three distinctive threads and members' interactions with them without any planned interference.

Results:

In the first thread, the image is an indoor porch featuring a royal blue rug with white dandelions, a dark cherry bench and matching chair with cream cushions against the frame, as well as a small white patio table with identical chairs. Beyond the porch's windows is the sparkling lake with mountains and yellow leaves outlining the edge of the water on all sides. The sun is beginning to set in the distance, and fluffy white clouds sprinkle across the light blue sky. There is also a tree branch hanging low towards the porch window, making it appear somewhat secluded. Interestingly, several comments inquire about the location of the cozy place, the animals that live around the area, and some commenters who even shared their personal experiences with wildlife and the location in which the post originates. For example, u/ChongoLikRock stated, "Very jealous of your critter friends. I'm guessing your parents live somewhere in Canada or North-Eastern U.S.?" Another user, u/dimoff, said, "I never liked fall until I spent one in Connecticut." U/kassypassy exclaims, "Ok I am IN LOVE with that beige chair with the wood frame! Any chance you know where they got it?". Lastly, the original poster, u/devilsbronco said in response to a commenter asking about animals seen near the porch, "We've seen bald eagles, great blue heron, muskrats, beavers, turtles, ducks, geese. It's amazing how many creatures the water attracts".

The second thread includes an image of a small city backyard patio, with gorgeous floor stenciling that creates the appearance of a tiled floor, which is usually more expensive. The owners of the cozy space incorporated a neutral color scheme with greys, cream, and honey. The white back fence has some artificial green leaves, and a honey wood table in the middle, parallel to a

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matching honey wood couch with dark grey cushions and white and grey patterned pillows. On the other side of the table are two honey-colored circular chairs with a white fur pillow on each one, a modern-like element. The side fence has a black and white designated plant table, and behind it, there is a honey weaved swing chair with cream-colored cushions. Behind the side fence is a white brick wall stained with black and grey marks, most likely due to time and use. This is also an indicator of a less affluent area and lower socioeconomic status. As previously mentioned, the commenters all seek to relate and identify with one another as well as create their own coziness. They discuss the location of the cozy place and the size of the cozy area. U/skip6235 claimed, "I feel you there. My 'outdoor space' consists of balcony that's about 3 ft by 6 inches."

U/dontcallmewoody said, "What is 'outdoor space' haha. We don't even have a fire escape because we're first floor." Other comments compared the patio to being located in an alley due to the rowboat home located next to the fence with apparent marks of use and age.

U/timk85 said, "Is this in a small downtown alley or something? I'm confused by the surrounding wall textures. Also, is this covered? If not, how do you handle the rain?"

The third thread is a meme consisting of a man with long hair wrapped in a brown and tan robe. The man appears to be looking up with a serious expression on his face, as though he is contemplating or questioning something of importance. Surrounding him is a grey background with pillows, blankets, fairy lights, and plants. On the image itself, the text is in black with quotation marks surrounding it, suggesting that the original poster does not agree with the opinion expressed on the meme. The text reads, "Ugh, r/cozyplaces is just fairy lights, blankets, and plants." The text at the bottom of the screen is white and does not have quotations, indicating that it expresses the original poster's opinion. The text reads, "That's.. why i'm here." The comments below this post express the perceptiveness of the community. Members are implored to reflect on themselves, especially on how they function together in the community. They share their failures in creating their cozy place, or things they wish they could achieve but cannot. U/primarilygreen stated, "I can barely keep one small pot of bamboo alive and well. Those living room greenhouses are gorgeous, but damn that's a lot of

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pressure.” Other users share complaints about other commenters who are never happy with the subreddit and always seem to be complaining.

U/TheClockReads2113 claimed, “Seriously, there is almost no pleasing this sub. Blankets, Candles, Fairy lights, Books, Plants. Sub Response: ‘Ugh! So many blankets. What a fire hazard! Geez, add some more plants, why don't ya?’ Beautiful mountain views, Beachfront properties, Gorgeous libraries or reading nooks with plush leather armchairs, and other elegant interiors. Sub Response: ‘Ugh! Ok, Mr. Moneybags... Money can't buy coziness!

Congratu-frickin'-lations, you're rich. Get out of here, you braggart!...'” This comment reinforces the idea that everyone has their own version of what cozy looks like, but it always has a certain essence. Additionally, it addresses wealthy-looking cozy places, the common characteristics continuously seen in cozy posts that are consistently upvoted for, and expressed a dislike for reposts and sob stories.

Image 1:

[h](#)

https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j9qfsv/intdiy_my_parents_porch_in_autumn/

Image 2:

[h](#)

https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/jc9czt/ext_diy_oc_our_small_city_ba_ck_patio/

Image 3:

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https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j6101m/meme_you_can_pry_my_6_throw_blankets_from_my_cold/