

# FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

## Essay 1-r/cozyplaces

The cool breeze rushes past, leaving little goosebumps on my arm. A salty smell wafts through my nostrils. As the chilled air flows through my dark brown hair, a loud squawk moves closer to me. My toes squirm and stretch across the soft, squishy floor. I take a deep breath of air, allowing the warmth of the bright afternoon sun to run through me. I am in paradise. But just like a sweet dream, it's over too soon. My eyes widen as I realize that I am not on a beach; instead, I'm faced with four baby blue walls and shimmering lights. Disoriented, I roll over and lean towards that obnoxious sound. Of course, it's my phone. The white numbers read, "6:30". Oh my God. Where did the time go? All I remember is lying on my bed for one quick minute... Yet, here I am. My legs are sprawled across my ivory comforter, wrinkling the green palm leaves. I look over to the right window where the sun is peeking through my white blinds. I slide off my bed, causing my fuzzy blanket to fall. As I look around the room, I see the beach-my cozy world.

Social media (thank you, internet) has heightened our awareness of things we never gave second thoughts to. Our ideas of what cozy is or what represents coziness are affected by our experiences and the communities we engage in. Take the subreddit, for example, r/cozyplaces. This particular forum seeks to promote and identify "cozy" places by allowing members to share photos. The community relies on specific terms, such as amazing, awesome, cozy, and lovely. These critical words enable the discourse to uphold its most prominent value, the creation of cozy places. Coziness is defined as any particular place that can invoke a relatable feeling in the viewer. Although the language used in r/cozyplaces seems general and nonspecific, it helps create a community that shares ideas about individuals' unique cozy locations, such as aesthetic, green space, and comfort, allowing users to fully embrace their own cozy place.

The words, amazing and awesome, appear to be a contradiction to coziness. In the English language, amazing typically refers to great surprise, while awesome refers to something impressive or causes great admiration. Redditors like u/Mazon\_Del will compliment the original poster (OP) on their cozy place using such words and include suggestions, "Amazing! The only thing I might consider doing would be to put some form of shroud around the lights for the dart board.

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

The first reason to perhaps make it a little easier to see at night (not so much glare in your face) ..." u/Mazon\_Del is using the word amazing to emphasize his/her appreciation for the content poster's work. The commenter even adds an exclamation point to emphasize how excited they are about the content. This one-character changes the entire tone of the statement, as it creates a more genuine response to the original content. After congratulating the OP on their work, u/Mazon\_Del offers a suggestion to help make the original poster's cozy bar/shed more functional and practical. This reflects the subreddit's goal of helping others create their own cozy places and improve upon them. Another Redditor, u/stecklese, commented, "Awesome!! Perfect dog for the backyard bar." The user expresses their appreciation for the original poster's efforts, adding not one but two exclamation points. The following statement, after awesome, shows the commenter's desire to have a similar cozy place. U/stecklese is excited about this cozy place and wants not only the entire cozy area but also the dog. The word, perfect, (capitalized) indicates this as the Redditor believes that the dog included in the picture adds to the cozy place's aesthetic. Ultimately both words, amazing and awesome, highlight the community's most important value: the creation of cozy places.

Another essential word to the subreddit is lovely. This word has a feminine tone and is generally used to describe items associated with women. For example, u/Kfurt13 commented on a post of a small NYC bedroom apartment, "It's lovely!! I think you need a bigger rug though 😊." The commenter is not only complimenting the OP but also providing users with an insight into his/her fond memories. To enumerate, most mothers and grandmothers do a majority of the child-rearing. They hold us when we're scared of the monsters under our bed, make our favorite dishes, and take care of us. Therefore, by describing this photo using a gendered word, the commenter displays positive emotions towards women, ones that were probably formed while they were a child by a prominent figure(s) in their lives. Significantly, this informs the audience that the commenter associates coziness with femininity. The cat, pink fuzzy blanket, and several plants featured in this post are feminine, even girly. The commenter emphasizes this feeling by adding two exclamation points and suggesting how to make the cozy place better. Adding a larger rug would add more femininity to the room, resulting in a more "cozy" space.

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

U/Honest-Improvement22 commented on a home office, "That's a lovely mirror. Where is it from? Also, liking the motivational sign!" This Redditor also displays a positive outlook regarding women, as they assign a gendered based word to the mirror featured in the photo. The mirror is a unique piece of artwork, as little reflective pieces are joined together with gold etchings. These gold details represent gold jewelry- a luxury that women would wear around their necks, on their fingers, or their wrists to signify their wealth. Additionally, the plants featured in the photo add a colorful pop of green and are typically associated with a woman's image. The letterboard underneath the mirror displays a motivational sign- a signal of femininity as women are viewed as society's caretakers. Women take care of others not only physically, but mentally as well. This mental support may include thoughtful advice, motivational phrases or words, or simply listening to others' woes. U/Honest-Improvement22's comment even questions where the OP purchased the mirror in an effort to create their cozy place.

Arguably the most important lexis in r/cozyplaces is cozy. Each "cozy" photo is radically different from the one before it and can encompass almost anything. One user posted an image of a driveway, causing quite the controversy.

U/felinemoooddisorder commented on the photo, "I love those trees at the end of the driveway. What a cozy peaceful place." The commenter emphasizes the importance of greenery and peacefulness in their perception of coziness. Without vegetation, this user might not have considered this particular place cozy. U/-iamyourgrandma- commented, "It's incredibly beautiful. However, when I think of a cozy place, I imagine a place where I'd like to snuggle up and relax or maybe take a nap. This isn't that. Still, gorgeous driveway and I am very jealous. Good job." This user compliments the OP and expresses their cozy ideal, a place where they can relax and take a nap. Thus, u/-iamyourgrandma- will perceive any area with lots of pillows, blankets, and somewhere to lie down as cozy. Essentially, anything can be deemed "cozy." People use their experiences, views, perceptions, and culture to shape their idea of what cozy is. As long as a particular place can invoke a relatable feeling in the viewer, it can be considered cozy.

Words like, lovely, awesome, amazing, and cozy function to create r/cozyplaces, a community that seeks to identify and create cozy areas. To many people, their cozy areas share ideals of aesthetics, green space, and comfort. Understanding all of this, I lie down once again on my honey oak bed, and I realize how lucky I am to have my own cozy place. It's a place where I can drift off into my

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

little world, and for a moment, tune out all of my worries. I feel as though I can accomplish anything and everything, even if it once seemed impossible. Life becomes brighter, and the unknown scares me a little less. We all need a safe haven from the evils of the world, especially in these uncertain times. Areas that were once deemed “safe” are no longer, leaving many of us anxious. In the last few months, our homes have become more important than ever, making cozy places essential.

### Works Cited

- felinemoooddisorder. “This may not fit here, but I feel like my driveway is a pretty cozy place. I mean, for a driveway” *reddit*, 27 Aug. 2020, [https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/ih8o4o/this\\_may\\_not\\_fit\\_here\\_but\\_i\\_feel\\_like\\_my\\_driveway/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/ih8o4o/this_may_not_fit_here_but_i_feel_like_my_driveway/). Accessed on 20 Sept. 2020.
- Honest-Improvement22. “Somebody told me my new home “office” setup looked cozy, figured I’d see if you fine folks agree.” *reddit*, 12 Sept. 2020, [https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/iqsogd/somebody\\_told\\_me\\_my\\_new\\_home\\_office\\_setup\\_looked/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/iqsogd/somebody_told_me_my_new_home_office_setup_looked/). Accessed on 23 Sept. 2020.
- iamyourgrandma-. . “This may not fit here, but I feel like my driveway is a pretty cozy place. I mean, for a driveway” *reddit*, 27 Aug. 2020, [https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/ih8o4o/this\\_may\\_not\\_fit\\_here\\_but\\_i\\_feel\\_like\\_my\\_driveway/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/ih8o4o/this_may_not_fit_here_but_i_feel_like_my_driveway/). Accessed on 20 Sept. 2020.
- Kfurt13. “My first apartment. It’s gotten cozier with time.” *reddit*, 10 Sept. 2020, [https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/iqdxfn/my\\_first\\_apartment\\_its\\_gotten\\_cozier\\_with\\_time/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/iqdxfn/my_first_apartment_its_gotten_cozier_with_time/). Accessed on 22 Sept. 2020.

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

Mazon\_Del. "Just finished my backyard bar/shed" *reddit*, 3 Sept. 2020,  
[https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/ilg3bg/just\\_finished\\_my\\_ba  
ckyard\\_bars  
hed/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/ilg3bg/just_finished_my_backyard_bars_hed/). Accessed on 20 Sept. 2020.

stecklese. "Just finished my backyard bar/shed" *reddit*, 3 Sept. 2020,  
[https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/ilg3bg/just\\_finished\\_my\\_back  
yard\\_barshed/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/ilg3bg/just_finished_my_backyard_barshed/). Accessed on 20 Sept. 2020.

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

### Rhetorical Analysis of a Cultural Artifact of r/cozyplaces

In the subreddit, r/cozyplaces, images reflect the cozy elements that are present 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 thereof, 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

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

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.

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

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 and one on the right side. 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



## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

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 seriously. 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/cozypplaces, 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

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

functions to address r/cozyplaces needs.

In total, the creation of cozy balconies can be accomplished with both expensive and inexpensive items. Both cultural artifacts expressed this ideal, and allow for self-contribution. Items that emphasize comfort, relaxation, green space, and aesthetics are found in Eye-Catching Balcony and City Rooftop Balcony. In Eye-Catching Balcony the couch, pillows, rug, and cat reflect these goals and nurture a relationship between the owner and their pet. On the contrary, City Rooftop Balcony expresses a romantic relationship and nurtures it through the use of a mattress, pillows on both sides of the mattress, and champagne with two glasses. Anyone can create a cozy place with the basic goals of coziness, while still maintaining their self-imposed, individual goals. Therefore, every cozy place is a combination of the subreddit's values and the individual's desire to utilize the cozy elements.

*Image 1: Eye-Catching Balcony*



## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

*Image 2: City Rooftop Balcony*



## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

### Works Cited

u/cgan14344. "My cozy rooftop." *reddit*, 30 Sept. 2020,

[https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j1sl5u/my\\_cozy\\_rooftop/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j1sl5u/my_cozy_rooftop/)

Accessed on 12 Oct. 2020.

u/[deleted]. "Cozy and filled with herbs, fruit, and veg!" *reddit*, 30 Sept. 2020,

[https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j1m9qa/cozy\\_and\\_filled\\_with\\_herbs\\_fruit\\_and\\_veg/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j1m9qa/cozy_and_filled_with_herbs_fruit_and_veg/) Accessed on 5 Oct. 2020.

# FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

## Virtual Ethnography of r/cozyplaces

### Introduction:

The subreddit, r/cozyplaces, 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/cozyplaces, 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 of 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

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

each on October 8th, fifteen minutes each on October 15th, and fifteen 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 chose 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 water's edge 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 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 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

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

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.

The commenters 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. 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 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 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.

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

### Analysis:

In the thread with the sparkling lake, u/ChongoLikRock's comment regarding the location of the cozy place suggests that the user is attempting to uncover the photo's location to determine whether it is possible if they can live there. This idea is reinforced by the beginning of u/ChongoLikRock's comment when he says that he is jealous of the critters that live in the area. U/kassypassy asked where the cherry wood frame chair with beige cushions was purchased, indicating a desire to possess the item. Both comments exhibit the commenter's socioeconomic status, as they express a possible capability to obtain a similar level of coziness.

Additionally, the view in the photo is similar to those in movies or stories. It creates a sense of coziness by invoking feelings of calm, serenity, privacy, safety, and security among viewers. Thus, the place in question alludes to wealth as it creates a secluded and safe area that one may only see in a movie or imagine in a novel. It appears unrealistic, and its associated values difficult to obtain.

U/dimoff commented about their personal experience in New England, particularly how the scenery allowed them to fully appreciate the season of autumn. Notably, the commenter addresses the content creator as they are attempting to relate to u/devilsbronco's experience with the perceived cozy place. Similarly, u/devilsbronco decides to answer a question regarding the animals that live near the porch and provides members a detailed list. Here, both the commenter and content creator form connections with their peers, specifically ones that share positive sentiment towards the post.

The effects of socioeconomic status are also expressed in the thread consisting of a "small city back patio". For example, u/skip6235 and u/dontcallmewoody claimed that they can relate to the original poster, as their outdoor spaces are tiny. Although we cannot physically observe their claims, they both attempt to relate to the content creator. They use their limited house space and exaggeration to form a meaningful connection about their socioeconomic status instead of insinuating a deep desire for a larger space. However, u/timk85 takes a different approach, as they question whether the patio is located within an alley and how the homeowner is able to prevent rain from affecting the furniture pictured. These blatant questions suggest that u/timk85 has a higher status of perceived wealth compared to the original poster. In particular, u/timk85's alley



## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

insult unfavorably reflects upon the content creator. A commenter who previously experienced a similar living situation would not point out an apparent class division that may make others look down upon them. U/timk85 raises an interesting question about the functionality of the cozy place with his weather-related question. This inquiry builds upon other ideas shared within the thread, signaling the use of one of the many values of r/cozyplaces.

Despite a socioeconomic class difference, the commenter still seeks to connect with the original poster through inquiry (possibly the only way they know how). The last thread observed explores the community's self-perception, instead of the typical cozy place post. Community members reflect on themselves, especially on how they function together in the community. Members like u/primarilygreen were able to form connections with several community members by voicing their downfalls (her lack of ability to keep bamboo alive). Interestingly, several members shared her concerns, especially since plants are considered one of the basic components of a typical cozy place. These components were established through the upvoting process with the desire to create overall accessibility to coziness. Most people can afford to purchase a plant, fluffy blanket, pillows, etc., making them a great starting point for someone who feels lost or overwhelmed by the subreddit's various cozy places. In addition, u/TheClockReads2113 shared complaints about other commenters who are never happy with the subreddit, who claim that beautiful views are only for rich people and that coziness is more than just a couple of blankets, plants, pillows, and fairy lights. This highlights the different coziness levels experienced by individuals who view them differently based on their experiences and socioeconomic status.

The effects of wealth cannot be pigeonholed into a specific class level, such as upper/middle/lower class. Socioeconomic class levels cannot be easily defined, as different regions in the United States have significant cost disparities. According to Jo Craven McGinty, in her article, "Middle Class, Undefined: How Purchasing Power Affects Perceptions of Wealth", the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis determined that the differences in prices for goods among all 50 states and the District of Columbia was almost 32 percentage points and that rent prices varied by 97 percentage points. There are no "one-size-fits-all numbers" (Craven McGinty). Ultimately, a dollar can take a person farther in rural areas compared to cities. A New York resident, Thomas A. Hirschl, claimed that his mortgage payments are less than his son's rent, even though Mr. Hirschl lives in a four bedroom home in Ithaca

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

compared to his son's studio apartment in Brooklyn (Craven McGinty). These differences in prices affect the goals people can fulfill, such as buying a house or going on family vacations. Thus, a person's socioeconomic status is defined by their relative location, which functions in conjunction with price level. What people can afford affects their perceptions of what is cozy, what they would recommend others to buy to make a place cozier, their physical experiences with cozy places, and awareness of the accessibility of the cozy place. These perceptions ultimately contribute to the ideals of the subreddit, r/cozyplaces.

The obsession with wealth creeps into other forms of social media, such as Instagram. The article, Flex Culture for Rent, informs readers about the flex culture on social media, primarily Instagram, and how many influencers over-represent their wealth by renting sports cars and taking photos at open-houses for mansions and penthouses (Marie-Danielle Smith). Furthermore, the article explores the cottage industry dedicated to faking wealth and creating a character or persona on the internet. A developmental psychologist at the University of British Columbia, Jennifer Shapka, raised concerns about young teens' "influencer" status and how their inauthentic online identities may prevent them from forming real relationships (Marie-Danielle Smith). These young influencers create a false sense of cozy that they project as achievable for themselves. Additionally, influencer's followers will admire the influencer and their projected socioeconomic status, as well as strive to create a similar aura of wealth for themselves. People look up to their role models and want to emulate them. In r/cozyplaces, the role model is not a person but rather the shared cozy place, discussed by community members and adopted by users who believe that they can achieve a similar coziness level. On the other hand, flex culture operates differently as community members develop a lasting desire to become their ideal influencer, despite whether or not that lifestyle is healthy and affordable for the admirer.

### **Discussion:**

Our lives are filled with defining factors- gender, ethnicity, physical appearances, and socioeconomic status. These factors vary by importance based on the community in which they live, whether virtual or in person. On Reddit, wealth and socioeconomic status seem to be the most important factor. The interactions observed on the subreddit affirm the belief that social status and

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

wealth appear interrelated and directly correspond with each other. As my research progressed, I discovered the greater influence of wealth on all social media platforms, such as Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, and even Tik Tok. Influencers, such as the Kardashian-Jenner clan, post curated images of themselves that continuously express their wealth. People who aspire to look like Kylie Jenner, for example, need a spending income that allows them to donate significant sums of money to their infatuation. A person's socioeconomic status also affects what items a person views based on their purchasing power capabilities, what tweets they find funny, who they're following, and which political issues/candidates they support. Besides promoting extreme wealth, flex culture pushes members towards cheap knock-offs of popular expensive products (like Shein, Misguided, and Amazon dupes of Lululemon). Ultimately, the desire to appear affluent has become a major aspect of our modern society.

### Works Cited

u/ChongoLikRock. "Very jealous of your critter friends. I'm guessing your parents live somewhere in Canada or North-Eastern U.S.?" *reddit*, 20 Oct. 2020, [https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j9qfsv/intdiy\\_my\\_parents\\_porch\\_in\\_autumn/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j9qfsv/intdiy_my_parents_porch_in_autumn/). Accessed on 2 Nov. 2020.

Craven McGinty, Jo Craven. "Middle Class, Undefined: How Purchasing Power Affects Perceptions of Wealth." *The Wall Street Journal*, 20 Feb. 2015, [www.wsj.com/articles/middle-class-undefined-how-purchasing-power-affects-perceptions-of-wealth-1424449343](http://www.wsj.com/articles/middle-class-undefined-how-purchasing-power-affects-perceptions-of-wealth-1424449343). Accessed on 12 Nov. 2020.

u/devilsbronco. "We've seen bald eagles, great blue heron, muskrats, beavers, turtles, ducks, geese. It's amazing how many creatures the water attracts". *reddit*, 20 Oct. 2020, [https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j9qfsv/intdiy\\_my\\_parents\\_porch\\_in\\_autumn/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j9qfsv/intdiy_my_parents_porch_in_autumn/). Accessed on 2 Nov. 2020.

u/dimoff. "I never liked fall until I spent one in Connecticut." *reddit*, 20 Oct. 2020,

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

[https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j9qfsv/intdiy\\_my\\_parents\\_porch\\_in\\_autumn/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j9qfsv/intdiy_my_parents_porch_in_autumn/). Accessed on 2 Nov. 2020.

u/dontcallmewoody. "What is 'outdoor space' haha. We don't even have a fire escape because we're first floor." *reddit*, 20 Oct. 2020,  
[https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/jc9czt/ext\\_diy\\_oc\\_our\\_small\\_city\\_back\\_patio/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/jc9czt/ext_diy_oc_our_small_city_back_patio/). Accessed on 2 Nov. 2020.

u/kassypassy. "Ok I am IN LOVE with that beige chair with the wood frame! Any chance you know where they got it?" *reddit*, 20 Oct. 2020,  
[https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j9qfsv/intdiy\\_my\\_parents\\_porch\\_in\\_autumn/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j9qfsv/intdiy_my_parents_porch_in_autumn/). Accessed on 2 Nov. 2020.

U/primarilygreen. "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 pressure." *reddit*, 20 Oct. 2020,  
[https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j6101m/meme\\_you\\_can\\_pray\\_my\\_6\\_throw\\_blankets\\_from\\_my\\_co](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j6101m/meme_you_can_pray_my_6_throw_blankets_from_my_co). Accessed on 2 Nov. 2020

U/skip6235. "I feel you there. My 'outdoor space' consists of balcony that's about 3 ft by 6 inches." *reddit*, 20 Oct. 2020,  
[https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/jc9czt/ext\\_diy\\_oc\\_our\\_small\\_city\\_back\\_patio/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/jc9czt/ext_diy_oc_our_small_city_back_patio/). Accessed on 2 Nov. 2020.

Smith, Marie-Danielle. "Flex Culture for Rent." *Maclean's*, vol. 133, no. 3, Apr. 2020, pp.94–96.  
*EBSCOhost*,  
[search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=142059002&site=ehost-live &scope=site](https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=142059002&site=ehost-live&scope=site). Accessed on 12 Nov. 2020.

U/TheClockReads2113. "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

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

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!..."

*reddit*, 20 Oct. 2020,

[https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j6101m/meme\\_you\\_can\\_pry\\_my\\_6\\_throw\\_blankets\\_from\\_my\\_co](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/j6101m/meme_you_can_pry_my_6_throw_blankets_from_my_co). Accessed on 2 Nov. 2020.

U/timk85. "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?" *reddit*, 20 Oct. 2020,

[https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/jc9czt/ext\\_diy\\_oc\\_our\\_small\\_city\\_back\\_patio/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CozyPlaces/comments/jc9czt/ext_diy_oc_our_small_city_back_patio/). Accessed on 2 Nov. 2020.

## FINAL PORTFOLIO

Student 3 • Prof. Mani • Fall 2020

### Final Portfolio Letter of Reflection

This semester, by all accounts, has not been easy. The pandemic has made many of us anxious and online learning has been a difficult adjustment. Despite the unfavorable circumstances, I, like many others, was able to improve upon my writing. Initially, when I began this semester I thought that my writing did not need any improvement. However, I quickly realized that this was not the case. I remember struggling with the transition from high school writing to college level analysis. I was not specific enough with my controlling idea, which weakened my claim. I struggled with adding too much information, or including obvious information that was not necessary. I even remember struggling with conclusion paragraphs- something I never thought I would worry about! I was not used to expanding on my claim in the conclusion paragraph, which was definitely new territory for me. These essay assignments have been an eye-opening experience, especially since I learned to pay more attention to the people and communities (both online and physical) around me. Thinking critically is an important part of writing and knowledge, which was promoted through the essays on lexis, cultural artifacts, and our ethnography.

In regards to the final versions of my essays, I ended up moving around and adding a lot of sentences, especially in the first essay. For example, I made my controlling idea more specific and made the analysis more concise in my first essay phase three draft. In the second essay phase three draft, I constructed a conclusion paragraph and reflected on the commonalities among cozy balconies (comfort, relaxation, etc), and how they can be achieved with both inexpensive and expensive items. In the last essay, I had some sentences that were analysis based in my results section and removed them. I also worked on making my discussion section more concise to explain my main takeaway from the essay better, without going into specific examples. In all of my final drafts for my essays, I made sure to review grammar and my works cited pages. Of course, my writing improvements would have not occurred without your guidance, my peer workshops, and the help of the writing center tutors (who are truly awesome!). Thank you for an engaging first semester, I wish you the best and hope you have a wonderful holiday season!