ABSTRACT

There are mainly two differently charged definitions and thoughts on voyeurism. The psychoanalysts' versions and concepts of voyeurism are different from those employed in architectural discourses. Briefly, the former sees voyeurism as a form of sexual perversion and gratification whereas the latter defines it, first by expurgating any stigmatization and criminality historically linked to it, and thence through translation of values derived from this theme, celebrating new concepts of spatial relationship.

This dissertation shall initially attempt to reveal, through an analysis of signs conventionally attained by the word 'voyeurism' and the binary of signifier and signified, how and why this difference comes about.

Next, the dissertation aims to explicate and explore the connection between voyeurism and architecture and, through structuralist approach, evince a new understanding of voyeurism that can assist in advances of understanding of architectural aesthetics. From the investigation and evaluation of the theme and taking into consideration the weaknesses of the definition of the theme from
both architectural and philosophical schools of thought, four domains of voyeurism are formulated:

1. the gazer
2. the object
3. the device incorporating element ‘X’
   
   Briefly, this study labels element ‘X’ as an entity that attaches itself to the 
   desire, differentiating voyeurism from exhibitionism, from just looking. It 
   can take on many form, physical or immaterial. It could even be the desire 
   itself.

4. the spectator

These domains form the methodology for the dissertation’s literary analysis and criticism on voyeurism. The operations of these domains are then deployed into architecture to reveal the extent of its voyeuristic theme. This study shall also rigorously evince that modernists attempt to forge new and overlapping relationships between private and public spaces in architecture stems from articulating voyeuristic themes within the four domains.

It is proposed that through the analysis of these domains, voyeurism can shed new meaning to concepts of space (especially between private and public spaces), and architecture as a whole.

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