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**ARCHITECTUE AND PEOPLE: AN EXAMINATION OF THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PERCEPTION OF ARCHITECTURE
AS A REFLECTOR OF PEOPLE
AND AS A RESPONSE TO PEOPLE.**

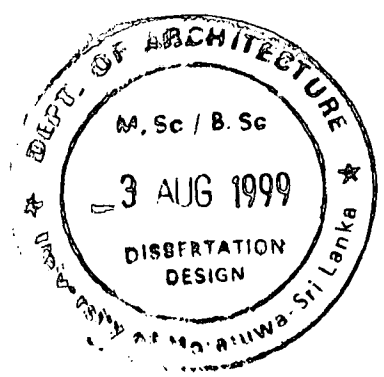
**A dissertation submitted to the University of Moratuwa
As a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science in Architecture.**

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ABSTRACT

“Perception is dependent on our own conceptions. We perceive the sum of our own experiences. “Feelings” come to dominate perception. No perception is in reality completely free from an emotional content “

Christian Norberg Schultz.

Architecture is the process and the product of human habitation. It is the only art that caters to his physical needs – shelter and bodily comfort. It is the only art that encompasses all his psychological needs, privacy, security, identity, aspirations and self expressions.

Architecture expresses. Through expression, it communicates. Depending on the beholder's readiness and temperament, he grasps the inherent meanings enshrined in these expressions, and steps on to a higher realm of contemplation.

The meaning is therefore in the ultimate supremacy. The expressions that are absence of deeper meanings does not change the beholder. These meaningless, superficial expressions therefore termed as “reflections”.

The expressions that consist of deeper meanings, modify the beholder. The end result is being essentially a change in man. These meanings therefore “respond” to the beholder.

These two kinds of perception in architecture are applied in certain situations, but misapplications could be disastrous in the situations, that the most important aspect – the psychological needs of the beholder are, more important.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The arts such as music, drama, cinema convey a message to people. Some of these arts analyze man and society in-depth and cater to people's spirit, to respond to their different psychological situations.

Another kind of art, just touches the surface of the society and people but not the reality, and reflect the situation and problems as they are.

Architecture is also a kind of art, and caters to people and to society. Therefore it also has the same kind of approaches, that is, architecture as a reflector and architecture as a response to people.

Reflective architecture touches the situations externally reacting to it only superficially. this re-action is just a reflection of the situation and rarely a deeply analyzed solution.

But responsive architecture touches the human soul and seeks out the nucleus of the problem to give a true and a permanent solution. This architecture tries to cater not only to the physical comfort of people but also to the spiritual comfort of the people.

Reflective architecture has succeeded in situations that does not concern people primarily but are concerned about functional aspects. But buildings and places which directly involve human activity and behaviour need to be responded to.

While both approaches are perhaps valid, misapplications could be disastrous. In contemporary times there is a tendency to misapply.

This seems to be due primarily to lack of appreciation of the two approaches and the kind of vital architecture that can be created when appropriately applied.

The study is directed to clearly define the two perceptions of architecture and to examine the differences between two approaches, that is architecture as a reflector and architecture as a response to people. Both these applications are observable in the practice of architecture and therefore the validity of each approach to the different situation will be highlighted through a critical analysis.

This dissertation will thus attempt to give an exposition of the appropriate application of these two approaches.



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To achieve the above position, this study will initially concentrate on identifying the different attitudes of arts, to get a basic idea about relevant approaches. Then it will easier the analysis of approaches in the field of architecture. Then the two approaches would be critically analyzed by referring the selected architectural masterpieces. And the merits, demerits and the impact on the design process of each approach would be discussed.