

Voyeur Nation (Critical Studies in Communication and in Cultural Industries) by Clay Calvert



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From 24-hour-a-day "girl cam" sites on the World Wide Web to trash-talk television shows like "Jerry Springer" and reality television programs like "Cops," we've become a world of voyeurs. We like to watch others as their intimate moments, private facts, secrets, and dirty laundry are revealed. *Voyeur Nation* traces the evolution and forces driving what the author calls the 'voyeurism value.' Calvert argues that although spectatorship and sensationalism are far from new phenomena, today a confluence of factors-legal, social, political, and technological-pushes voyeurism to the forefront of our image-based world. The First Amendment increasingly is called on to safeguard our right, via new technologies and recording devices, to peer into the innermost details of others' lives without fear of legal repercussion. But Calvert argues that the voyeurism value contradicts the value of discourse in democracy and First Amendment theory, since voyeurism by its very nature involves merely watching without interacting or participating. It privileges watching and viewing media images over participating and interacting in democracy.



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