

„Aldo—not the wrong one!”

Autopsy of a Failed Debate

Abstract

In architectural typology, representation is a fundamental theoretical problem, because any aesthetic organization of the external world does not directly reflect the facts, but rather is to be understood as an artificial construct that represents those facts. In analogy to linguistics, building types as a representation system can therefore be seen independently of these facts. This is the so-called „Saussurean section“, that epistemological rupture, based on the researches of Ferdinand de Saussure, who postulates not only a difference between the signified and the signifier, but also between the language itself as a closed system and the speakers of the external world.

Linguistics is therefore the theoretical background for the analysis of the recent large-scale attempt in architecture to establish a coherent typology theory, which was named „the third typology“ by Anthony Vidler and considered Aldo Rossi and the neo-rationalists as their main protagonists. The essay seeks to show why this debate from the sixties and seventies of the twentieth century has failed: by failing to develop critical criteria of difference between traditional customs, collective memory, and the way in which these are handed down and transmitted as signs. The charge of schematism was the result.

Keywords

Thrid Typology, Linguistics, Structuralism, Aldo van Eyck, Aldo Rossi