

Francis Violich

The Bridge to Dalmatia

A Search for the Meaning of Place

Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, 351 p.

Francis Violich is a respectable American urban architect of Dalmatian origin. He is a founding member of the Department of City and Regional Planning and Emeritus Professor of City Planning and Landscape Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley. In his previous books he deals with urban planning, especially of the cities and regions of Latin America, where he has been living and working for years. In his recent work, *The Bridge to Dalmatia: a search for the meaning of place*, he explains to the readers his theory of urban reading, leading them through the past and present of a number of villages and towns of Dalmatia, homeland of his (grand)parents, which he himself had visited several times. His stroll along the Dalmatian coast starts with three towns on the coast, namely Zadar, Split and Dubrovnik, continues in three villages on the island Brač (Supetar, Pučišća nad Bol), then two towns on the islands are depicted (Hvar and Korčula), ending with four villages on the peninsula of Pelješac (Orebić, Potomje, Kuna and Podobuče).

His intention is focused on demonstrating how natural and built environmental features develop a sense of identity with the place in a person who lives there, even if for a short period of time. Explaining his own feeling of identity with the place, he uses also his family records in order to make us understand the meaning of *the bridge* that unites people in time and space, built of photographs, stories, letters, phone-calls etc., which members of the family on distant sides of the bridge send to each other from the old and the new country.

Violich has taken numerous photographs of Dalmatian places that appear on the pages of his book in black-and-white version. Some of the drawings are also done by him, while others were drawn by Nicholas Ancel. The book is divided into seven chapters with an introductory part preceding them. After the notes there follows a glossary of Croatian words and place-names, bibliography of writings by foreign travellers through Dalmatia and the index.

Violich writes in a clear and logical manner, sometimes with a sense of mild satire and with beautiful sparks of poetry. In every page his love and concern for Dalmatia is evident, specially when he speaks about the horror of the 1991-1995 Homeland war, when many Dalmatian towns were shelled and devastated.

We can learn from the book a lot about life of the Croatian population that emigrated to the New World at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Through his personal records and memories of the members of his family, Violich describes the reasons for the decision to take such a big step as is departure towards a new continent. We can also be grateful to the author for benevolent suggestions how to cherish and wisely treat the rich cultural inheritance of the Croatian past when planning and building new urban sites.

In the first part of the book, entitled *Introduction: crossing the bridge to California*, Violich explains the need for urban planning, listing authors like L. Adamic, L. Mumford, P. Geddes and K. Lynch, who influenced his work. He also points out that memories of the places in Dalmatia, with which the emigrants kept strong sense of cultural identity, helped them find their place in the New World and feel secure in new environment. We learn here that a sense of cultural identity with one's place of origin can enable a person to keep his or her own identity, explaining how the values of his own cultural heritage helped him to »resist the popular melting-pot concept of the 1920s« (p. 5).

In the first chapter entitled *Identity: key to the meaning of place*, Violich speaks about the union of urban elements like land, buildings and people in a city as a highly effective sociological phenomenon. Recalling the San Francisco of his youth, the author notes that »diversity served to build tolerance of cultural differences, a central goal of democracy that seems threatened in America today« (p. 51). The second chapter (*The making of Dalmatia as a regional place*) deals with a short history of Dalmatia's settlements up to the present time, using archival material kept in historical institutes of several Dalmatian towns. In the next chapters (*Cities of the mainland, Three seaside villages of the islands, Two towns that dominate their islands and Mountain villages linked to the sea*), the author develops his method of urban reading where »the eye is made to think, as when reading a book«, describing the history and urban qualities of the cities and villages of Dalmatia. Violich points out the elements of quality that a person can identify with, warning the urbanists against environmentally misfit buildings of the mass-tourism type (in Hvar, Dubrovnik and Korčula) or those made for a great number of dwellers (Split III). His keen eye appreciates the merging of styles over centuries that has occurred in many places (old parts of Zadar, Diocletian palace in Split), showing us examples of a perfect balance between the natural and built environment (old urban cores of Korčula, Dubrovnik, Hvar). In the last chapter (*The environment: common ground for community identity*), the author walks us back through the Dalmatian towns after the 1991-1995 war, explaining through the examples of Zadar and Dubrovnik, how badly urban sites can be stricken when chosen as targets for shelling by enemies who wish to destroy the

same qualities of cultural heritage that the Croatian people identify with. At the end Violich considers the possibilities of rebuilding destroyed places in Dalmatia, warning young urbanists to avoid the mistakes from the past caused by over-development of tourism and lack of concern for the natural environment. He pleads for respect for the needs of citizen and hopes that maintaining a self-sustainable biological balance will be considered in full. He also suggests that California and Dalmatia, due to their many similarities, can benefit from mutual help on various levels of environmental protection and planning.

Mirjana Randić

Ethnographic museum, Zagreb, Croatia

Ivan Lajić, Sonja Podgorelec i Dragutin Babić

Otoci – ostati ili otići?: studija o dnevnoj cirkulaciji sa šibenskih otoka

Institut za migracije i narodnosti, Zagreb, 2001, 206 str.

Studija »Otoci – ostati ili otići« rijetko je osvježenje u razmjerno vrlo bogatoj hrvatskoj demografskoj literaturi o otocima i zato zaslužuje posebnu pozornost. Ivan Lajić, Sonja Podgorelec i Dragutin Babić izložili su, naime, u njoj rezultate iskustvenog demo-sociologijskog istraživanja, a iskustvenih je demografskih istraživanja u nas vrlo malo. Ne umanjujući ni u primisli znanstvenu korektnost, pa i izvrsnost obrade demografskih kretanja na hrvatskim otocima (a demografskih je radova, kao i ekonomskih, iz sociologiji bliskih područja ponajviše), valja reći da oni gotovo isključivo počivaju na podacima popisa stanovništva i demografske statistike. Iznimna su iskustvena demografska istraživanja. I ne samo što su Lajić, Podgorelec i Babić načinili taj pothvat, nego bitnu odliku njihovoga rada čini i predmet: predmigracijsko mnijenje osnovno- i srednješkolaca, te dnevne migracije otočana. Autori su toga svjesni: ovo je (danas tako, na nesreću, izgleda) bila zadnja prigoda za takvo istraživanje, jer mladih na šibenskom otočju za koju godinu i neće biti, a deindustrijalizacija države poprimila je takve dimenzije da niti posla biti neće.

Sve u svemu, jedna vrlo deprimirajuća situacija. Godine 1991. od 718 otoka i otočića (ne računajući 389 hridi i 78 grebena) – čija ukupna površina iznosi 3.384 km² ili 5,8 posto kopnenog površja Hrvatske – bilo je nastanjeno 67 (površine 3.062 km²) i na njima je živjelo 2,6 posto stanovništva Hrvatske, koje je 1990. stvorilo oko 2 posto društvenog proizvoda društvenog sektora privrede. Djece do 15 godina života bilo je u otočnoj populaciji svega 17,4 posto dok je staro stanov-