that at a certain stage in the approach route the building suddenly comes to seem utterly drained of importance. For, as one leaves behind the courtyard of the old chateau, which is the socket of the enclosure in which one had believed oneself to be, one is obliged to exchange a reliable wraith for an unpeopled arena. The whole deserted sweep of the upper valley of the Turbide has progressively come into view; the field of experience is transformed, and the nature of the stimulus to which one is subjected becomes systematically more concentrated and ruthless.

Thus, the eye which was previously directed towards the left of the church façade, towards the point of entrance, is now violently dragged away towards the right. The movement of the site has changed. The visual magnet is no longer a wall. Now it has become an horizon. And the wall which previously had acted as the backdrop to one field of vision, as a perspective traversal, now operates as a side screen to another, as a major orthogonal, which directs attention into the rapine of the far distance but which, in its nature, is the stimulus to which one is subjected. The three catwalks also serve to instigate an inseparable tension between the local and the remote. In other words, as the church is approached, the site which initially seemed so innocent in its behaviour becomes a space rifted and plunged into almost unbridgeable chasms.

This is conceivably to provide too hard an analysis, but, though it may exaggerate the intensity, it does not too seriously distort the quality of an experience which is unexpected as it is painful. It would be possible, and maybe even justified, to interpret this preliminary promenade architecturae as the deliberate implication of a presumable tragic insufficiency in the visitor's status. The wall is exclusive. The visitor may enter, but not on his own terms. The wall is the summarizes of an institutional programme. But the visitor is so placed that he is without the means of making coherent his own experience.

He is made the object of diaphanous excitements; his consciousness is divided, and, being both deprived of and also offered an architectural support, is in order to resolve his predicament he is anxious, indeed obliged—and without choice—to enter the building.

It is possible, but it is not probable, that all this is constrained. However, if one happens to be sceptical of the degree of m auto-construction and of one's responsibility, disposed to consider the game of hunt-the-symbol as an over-indulgence in literature, then it will be desirable to continue an inspection of the building's exterior. It is an easy decision to make. For the vertical surface of the church wall silences both the higher and lower approach roads like a knife and, when this psychological obstacle is penetrated, though something of the interior of the convent is at last presented, a further discovery is made. The visitor now finds that the anticipated visual devices never occur, to fact, materialize. He becomes aware that the only surface of the building which actively encourages a frontal inspection is indeed exactly that north wall of the church which it had been

continued on page 467