

lecturer, but here they are not very far back and these rows are much longer than the front rows. Since it is usually the end seats that fill first (more of that in the next chapter), this causes much inconvenience as the latecomers arrive. The latecomers feel self-conscious about asking people to stand and let them into empty seats in the back rows when all can see that there are plenty of empty seats further forward to which they could get without inconveniencing others. Even after all this the students at the back feel uncomfortably under the stare of the lecturer, perhaps a little like animals caged in the zoo. Unlike the lecturer who comes to deliver a one-hour talk and then leaves, the students spend several hours at a stretch in this theatre. Even in the gaps between lectures there is no window to look out of, and they feel incarcerated. Now one argument might have it that the students are there to learn so they should not complain, but I doubt this really holds good. Most lecturers, this one included, overestimate the attention span of their students. Perhaps a moment or too spent looking out of the window might refresh the mind, which otherwise grows stale and then wanders off altogether in the darkened isolated space of this machine-like lecture theatre.

It is hard for the architect to get all this right. The well-known architect James Stirling, probably remembering his own student days, designed a large raked lecture theatre at Leicester University that had a rear entrance to allow the latecomers in at the back. The theatre was cantilevered out into outdoor space so this entrance was served by a stairway in a vertical glass tube. I am told by some who have used this theatre that on windy days, the tube acted rather like an organ pipe, and as the door opened a deep booming sound could be heard. Hardly the way to creep in late!

We have learned from this about another crucial characteristic of distance in human relationships. We have discovered that not all relationships are reciprocal and we have identified the need to see distance from both points of view. Curiously, human distances, unlike physical ones, are not equal when viewed from opposite ends! Again, a fuller discussion of that must wait for the next chapter.

### **Personality and context variation**

Perhaps the most obvious example of the use of public distance is when a politician or public figure speaks at a political rally. You will notice that not only is the voice raised, with a greater range of dynamics, but also there is very clear emphasis and the use of repetition to create redundancy to ensure the simple message gets across even if there is a noisy background. The gestures are likely to have moved from hands and upper arms to using the complete arm. Film of Arthur Scargill, the leader of the miner's trade union in the United Kingdom, illustrates this behaviour perfectly. He had a habit of reinforcing his impor-