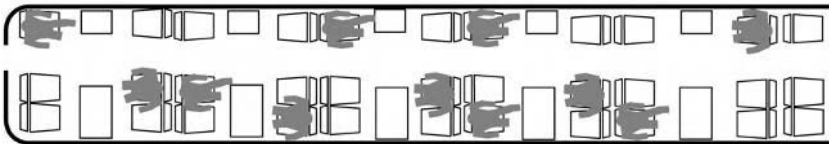
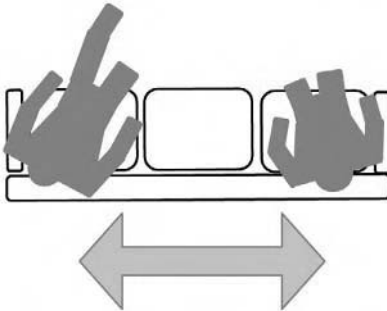


6.3 The 'conversational' role. Two opposing sofas allow for looking into each other's faces and thus reading all the non-verbal expression. However, when the two sofas get too far apart to see this clearly, people chose instead to sit on the same sofa and turn to face each other. In such a case a three-seater sofa allows for personal rather than intimate distance! (After Robert Sommer)



6.4 The 'co-existing' role. A typical railway train layout. Note how people generally adopt the 'co-acting' role if they are alone. This allows them to ignore each other without rudeness, and here even the empty seats actually perform an important spatial role

If not, they turn around to move back towards the rear of the train and begin looking for a bay with only one other person. When this is found they often ask the occupant the most ridiculous question – 'is anyone sitting here?' they say, pointing to the patently empty seat diagonally opposite. Although ludicrous if taken at face value, this British politeness has enabled them to invade what up to then was clearly regarded by the incumbent as their temporary territory. The enforced reply of 'no, I don't think so' acknowledges and accepts the invasion. Thus a