

recessed reveals which naturally serve also to locate a table, and beyond them the columns that support the balconies above further help to create places. Where study tables are out in the centre of the space, Mackintosh gives them low screens to blank off the stare from those facing each other. A tiny obscured glass panel informs the occupant of a neighbour's presence without revealing more or causing distraction. None of Mackintosh's tables or reading positions are just anywhere; they are all places carefully located in space. You can go there and 'belong' for a little while in your own special and entirely appropriate place.

These three main roles of 'confronting', 'consorting', and 'co-existing', with the major variants of 'consorting' in the forms of 'conversing' and 'collaborating', help to map out many of the common spatial situations in which people have to relate to each other in close proximity. A study quoted by Sommer shows just how strongly these role settings influence spatial behaviour, and one of my students has found almost identical results (Fig. 6.5). Here we must imagine a six-seater rectangular table with two seats on each long side and one at each end, and one person already seated at one of the side seats. Sommer's statistics show the frequency with which people chose each of the available seats when coming into this situation. We can see that the role definitions used by Sommer are very similar to the ones used here. This is one of the features of the language of space that is extremely well understood and to which very strong conventions are attached.

Sociofugal and sociopetal space

We shall now move our enquiry on to consider situations where more than two people are involved. I am indebted to Herman Hertzberger's analysis of Gaudi's Parc Guell in Barcelona (Hertzberger 1991). The romantic curved parapets also provide sitting places (Fig. 6.6). Gaudi cleverly designed the balustrade itself to be the back support for continuous seating. However this whole assembly snakes backwards and forwards in a series of reversed 'U' bends. Gaudi's use of these alternating convex and concave curves naturally creates places for people to congregate and consort where the curve is concave, or to remain more private and co-exist where the curve is convex. As one moves along this arrangement one can see groups gathered in the concave parts talking animatedly and more solitary figures on the convex parts simply watching the world go by. Whether Gaudi consciously engineered this brilliant behavioural setting, implicitly understood it, or achieved the effect accidentally we shall probably never know.

In effect, what Gaudi has created here are alternating areas of what Osmond first called 'sociopetal' and 'sociofugal' space (Osmond 1959). These words are ingeniously woven together based upon the Latin *centripetus*, which literally means seeking the centre. So sociopetal space