



2.11 The traditional Punch and Judy show with its firmly established and restricted range of characters plays out battle between the forces of good and evil. It is at times amusing and at times frightening. However, it manages to combine stimulation and security into one package for the child, who can be momentarily terrified by the crocodile and yet know all will come right in the end

this can be tolerated in the certain knowledge that it will all work out fine. As a parent, I found that an excellent barometer of a child's state of mind was the choice of bedtime story. A request for a new exciting and different tale suggested that stimulation was top of the agenda. By contrast, yet another reading of an old familiar favourite tale suggested that security was the great need of the moment. If I had to read 'The Little Red Hen' once, I must have had to read it a thousand times! This experience also taught me to admire the freshness that only great actors can somehow bring into such an often repeated performance.

Spaces, as we shall see, can always contribute to all these three requirements of stimulation, security and identity. However, some by their very nature should provide more of one than of the others. The familiar fish tank in the dentist's waiting room is a simple device for providing an element of diversion with a great deal of soothing security. The patient is already anxious enough, so go easy on the excitement here! The waiting spaces at transport interchanges need not only to counter our boredom at the enforced wait, but also to consider our anxiety not to miss the train or boat or plane. A new railway station had a totally internal and relatively comfortable central waiting space. However, whenever I used it I noticed that most people waited on the platform in the cold (Fig. 2.12); they simply did not trust the announcements on the notice board and wanted to make sure they saw when the train came in and on which platform it arrived. Their need for security overcame their wish for comfort.