

with the aid of three code letters [3]. For instance an arrangement in which all three people are standing at an acute angle to each other and facing a joint interactional space between them can be referred to as "VVV" arrangement. Similarly the "CVV" arrangement represents an encounter in which two individuals are standing at an open angle to each other, while the third participant is standing in a "V" arrangement in respect to both of his neighbors (all of course are facing the center of the gathering). People standing side-by-side as in a line of spectators can be adequately coded as being in "III" arrangement. Finally a ritual positioning of three sorcerers, described by Castaneda can be identified as an "L-minus-VV" array:

It was late in the afternoon. Don Juan was sitting on a flat rock facing the western mountains; Don Genaro was sitting by him on a straw mat with his face towards the north. Don Juan had told me, the first day we were there, that those were their 'positions' and that I had to sit on the ground at any place opposite to both of them. He added that while we sat in those positions I had to keep my face towards the south-east and look at them only in brief glances (1973:100).

Having demonstrated the virtues of our alphabetic notation system, let us now direct our attention to these arrangements which are typical of people in an informal, small scale, stationary focused gathering. What we will do here is examine spatial arrangements which can often be seen in the cluster of a free-standing conversing people or among people who have gathered to play cards or eat together. In such configurations, known as F-formations (Kendon 1976, 1977, Scheflen and Ashcraft 1976, Deutsch 1978), the bodies of the participants form and delineate a small interactional space (o-space) to which all of them have easy, direct and equal access. This means that among the many possible two-person arrangements there are only six spatial-orientational patterns, namely "N", "H", "V", "L", "C" and "I", which meet this criterion at each of them. Let us look at them briefly.

In "N" arrangements, (sometimes referred to as diagonal arrays), individuals face each other and have their body planes parallel. They stand or sit slightly displaced, by approximately half a body width. However, it should be noted that if the lateral displacement is larger so that the body silhouettes do not overlap, such an arrangement will be classified as

[3] Unfortunately formations composed of more than three participants do not yield themselves easily to identification through the code-system proposed here. They turn out to be too complex and sometimes they resemble each other too closely to be discerned with the set of code-letters. It appears that a new terminology, based on comparisons with geometrical shapes (e.g. circle, ellipse, horse-shoe, rhomboid etc.) may be an advantage here (see for example Batchelor and Goethals 1972).

belonging to the "Z" type. People in the next arrangement, the vis-a-vis, face each other directly, and when seen from above they appear to form with their body contours (and noses) an arrangement resembling a large letter "H" [4]. The third arrangement is less direct, the participants' body planes intersecting outside [5] the formation at an angle of approximately 45 degrees.

While the previous three arrangements were relatively "closed" (sociopetal), that is arrangements in which a person could not step forward and leave the encounter without colliding with the other participant, the next three arrangements belong to the category of "open (sociofugal) arrangements". In these arrangements people have greater freedom of movement and they are given fuller access to the formation's immediate environment. In "L" arrangements participants are standing at right angles to each other, with their body planes intersecting outside of the gathering [6]. The fifth type of spatial arrangement resembles a miniature crescent or semi-circle and is for this reason ascribed with a code letter "C". In this configuration the participants are standing at an obtuse (open) angle of approximately 135 degrees. The final and sixth arrangement used by people in F-formations is the side-by-side one in which two individuals face in the same direction but are standing close enough to still have a full access to each other's basic "use-space" or so-called "transactional segment" (Kendon 1976, Deutsch 1978). The code letter for this arrangement was chosen as "I" [7].

As far as three-person arrangements are concerned there appear to be only ten spatial-orientational patterns in which participants are able to overlap their individual transactional segments in a form of a jointly

[4] Scheflen postulates that: "When people show a postural orientation vis-a-vis each other, particular types of social interaction usually occur between them...involving an exchange of information of feeling: teaching, informing, nurturing, treating, courting, conversing, quarrelling and so on" (1964:327).

[5] The point of intersecting of the body planes is of great importance as it enables one to draw a distinction between arrangements of the "V" type on the one hand and "Y" and "K" arrangements on the other.

[6] Arrangements in which people are standing at right angles with their body planes intersecting within the body contour of one of the participants belong to the "T" class.

[7] It has been observed that the side-by-side orientation 'characteristically involves activities in which... (the participants) engage mutually toward some third party or object... they may share in reading, writing, building, enjoying a painting, watching television or telling a story... activities carried out in a parallel orientation are those which do not require more than one person. They are activities which can be and often are conducted by a single person' (Scheflen 1964:327).