

present. To this day, information talking has remained the most important forth of vocal communication for our species. But, having evolved, it did not stop there. It acquired additional functions. One of these took the form of mood talking. Strictly speaking, this was unnecessary, because the non-verbal mood signals were not lost. We still can and do convey our emotional states by giving vent to ancient primate screams and grunts, but we augment these messages with verbal confirmation of our feelings. A yelp of pain is closely followed by a verbal signal that 'I am hurt'. A roar of anger is accompanied by the message 'I am furious'. Sometimes the non-verbal signal is not performed in its pure state but instead finds expression as a tone of voice. The words 'I am hurt' are whined or screamed. The words 'I am furious' are roared or bellowed. The tone of voice in such cases is so unmodified by learning and so close to the ancient non-verbal mammalian signalling system that even a dog can understand the message, let alone a foreigner from another race of our own species. The actual words used in such instances are almost superfluous. (Try snarling 'good dog', or cooing 'bad dog' at your pet, and you will see what I mean.) At its crudest and most intense level, mood talking is little more than a 'spilling over' of verbalised sound signalling into an area of communication that is already taken care of. Its value lies in the 'increased possibilities it provides for more subtle and sensitive mood signalling.

A third form of verbalisation is exploratory talking. This is talking for talking's sake, aesthetic talking, or, if you like, play talking. Just as that other form of information-transmission, picture-making, became used as a medium for aesthetic exploration, so did talking. The poet paralleled the painter. But it is the fourth type of verbalisation that we are concerned with in this chapter, the kind that has aptly been described recently as grooming talking. This is the meaningless, polite chatter of social occasions, the 'nice weather we are having' or 'have you read any good books lately' form of talking. It is not concerned with the exchange of important ideas or information, nor does it reveal the true mood of the speaker, nor