a few hours previously. We have found that sometimes within minutes of forming such groups intensive tribal feelings are aroused, and these can be provoked or moderated according to the tasks they are given.

If this can happen in the classroom, so to speak, amongst people who have only just met full of goodwill for one another, how does this situation apply to society itself? Between management and labour, between statutory and voluntary committees, community organisations, ethnic groups, races, nations, countries?

Peter Barry

THE SOUND OF THE MEANING

'Language can be used to convey what it cannot say' R.D. Laing in 'Politics of Experience' (Quoted by Eric Mottram in an article on Bob Cobbing in 'Second Aeon).

Poetry information night on Tuesday May 8th at the Poetry Society, Earls Court, was devoted to *Sound Poetry*, that is poetry which uses aspects of words other than meaning. The techniques of sound poetry may be of interest for 'loosening up' group events of any kind - from parties to therapy sessions. As Bob Cobbing demonstrated, it consists in breaking up words into syllables, and exploiting the sound contrasts inherent in the word. His 'Judith' poem is the single word 'Judith', and it sets up a counterpoint, between two voices chanting the syllables in rising and falling patterns:

the short 'ith' and 'di' syllables are 'fired' in rapid bursts.

A fairly complex sound pattern could be set up in a group performance if each section of the performers adopted a different rhythm, perhaps a steady JU JU JU, like a heavy drum beat, over light, flowing 'di' sounds, and high frequency 'ith's.

Another poem which was performed ('read' is certainly an inappropriate word in Sound Poetry) used three groups of people in the audience. In this poem, not this time by Cobbing, each group chanted a different word. The words used were 'pulse', 'impulse' and 'pulsate', and each group chanted at a different rate. 'Pulse' became a low, steady throb, separated into two heavy syllables: PUL ssss, PUL ssss, Pul ssss; 'Impulse' was rapid and insistent, a much more urgent sound with a very heavy first syllable and a lighter second: IMpulse IMpulse IMpulse; while 'Pulsate' was loud and aggressive: pul SATE, pul SATE, pul SATE, pul SATE. At the crescendo all groups chanted 'ululate', drawing out the syllables as much as possible to suggest a released tension, and then subsided, and went back to their original words. The length of the performance is decided by the mood of the performers, who should be able to achieve a balance between confidence in their own chant and response to the other sounds around them.

If you're inhibited, do it in the dark, but a quite small and shy audience at the Poetry Society warmed up remarkably fast.

Anyone can make Sound Poems of their own, and there is great scope for experiment: articulate and semi-articulate sounds can be combined, between sounds can be varied, so that silences become part of the performance and increase the impact of sound. Generally, it is better to have only two or three words - at most a phrase - in a sound poem, since the purpose is not to express meaning, but to 'touch' or modify words in such a way that they become dynamic and penetrate the consciousness directly, without passing through the mental filters which deaden their impact under normal circumstances. We are so familiar with words that we must peel them, like an orange, to get their flavour. This is what Sound Poetry tries to do.

ESCHATON

The god stood.

We were secure in the belief That we would Be held. Substantiated By his power. The priest prayed.

We were inspired beyond the world Where we stayed Enclosed. Drawn by his vision.

The clown wept.

And then GOD

We were released from the curse That we were left Unknown. Suffered By his love. Silenced the priest. Dried the clown's eye. Crumbled the god.

Stephen Bartlett