

RELATIONS

An enterprise has purpose towards the achievement of a goal or goals. In a modern firm all the members, shareholders, managers and men alike, have one *goal*, survival, through the use of money obtained by cooperation in the *purpose* of the firm (say, making bicycles). To achieve that purpose there are *functions, jobs* that have to be done, and when a man does a job in a firm, fulfills his function, this is his *contribution towards the achievement of the purpose*. These functions must be coordinated, related, and the system of relations of functions constitutes an organisational *structure*. A function can, therefore, be said to have a *position* in this organisational structure. A person fulfilling the function is then said to have a *role*, the part he plays in the achievement of the purpose, defined in terms of his function and of his relations to others

fulfilling their functions. (Role is thus defined as in the drama). *Role behaviour* is the expected (but not obliged) behaviour of a person in a given role. (An actor does not 'create a role'—the author does that—he interprets the role behaviour as he uniquely apprehends it). In organisational literature, as well as in ordinary speech, we say *managing* is a function and *manager* is the appropriate role.

A *relation* can be defined, in universal terms, as that abstraction of the nature of a bond set up when two entities have any form of contact, electrical, mechanical, chemical, visual, verbal or otherwise. In human, social organisms, such as a firm, the kinds of human relation depend upon the differences between persons filling roles since the contact is human communication and this communication is governed by the differences of the persons in their roles. All men are different, in that each man is unique, and it is this difference which governs the kind of communication that passes between them. There are four main categories of difference:

- 1 Difference in *position*, i.e. in the vertical and horizontal framework of an organisational structure of the functions that men fulfil, which means the difference in the kinds of function and the decision-making involved. For example, a manager is said to be 'superior' to an operative, a 'vertical' relation, one being subordinate to the other who has the right to give commands.
- 2 Difference in *knowledge*, i.e. each man is unique in having different upbringing, capacities and experience, hence his relative knowledge or expertness governs his communications with others.
- 3 Difference in *personality*. Each man has a unique personality and this affects the way in which communications are made and received.
- 4 Difference in *mores*. Because of the way a man behaves in society, conforms to the mores of society and its rules of going about doing things, conforming to 'what is done', so people will react when he communicates with them.

Since we are here concerned with jobs and not the people in the jobs, the way in which personality and mores affect communications need not be considered, although all four differences are intricately intertwined. The differences of position and knowledge are intimately concerned with the decision-system—position is involved with ordering and coordinating, and knowledge with the way in which information is handled and conclusions drawn—and these can now be considered separately.