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ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT
IN A PERFORMING ARTS ORGANIZATION

by

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ABSTRACT

A qualitative research study was carried out to explore problems of organizational conflict. The conditions and processes of organizational conflict, issues of substantive organizational conflict, and organizational learning or failure to learn were investigated.

A variation of intensive interviewing, semi-structured, was used to obtain primary information on organizational events at the Boston Ballet, a nonprofit performing arts organization made up of a ballet school and a ballet company. Six organizational members occupying different positions from the art, teaching, and administrative staffs were interviewed. Five of the six had been interviewed ten months earlier in 1984. There were four telephone interviews, two were follow-up and two were conducted with former organization members. On average, interviews lasted two hours. A tape recorder was used during face-to-face interviews. Thirty-one questions were formulated to focus on substantive issues of organizational conflict. Letters of inquiry were also used to obtain information.

Conflict-in-development, in-change, and -in-growth were discovered at the Boston Ballet. Features of conflict-in-development include the persistence of conflict around issues of organizational roles, values, and methods; the stages of conflict where issues and interactions of conflict occur only at certain times; the contradictions of conflict where an organization grows and develops despite conflict; and the learning from experience in some cases but not in others. Argyris and Schon's theory-based approach to organizational learning and problem solving, Model O-I: Limited Learning Systems was used to further explore and to explain conflict-in-development.

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To Boyd Paul Strain
whose spirit is somewhere down on the Brazos

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

My initial contact with the Boston Ballet, a nonprofit performing arts organization was as a first-year graduate student involved in an institutional analysis workshop, that is, a practicum in the study of organizations where inquiry into substantive issues of policy, program, and the structure of arts and cultural institutions was combined with inquiry into the methodology of institutional analysis. Thus a course requirement was to select and study firsthand an arts or cultural organization. The research was divided into six stages: 1) negotiating access to the organization, 2) forming a research strategy, 3) interviewing, 4) making sense of the data, 5) feeding back research results, and 6) participating in a closing-working session where research findings and experiences were presented and exchanged with students and faculty from the Science, Systems and Society program of the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania who had also studied arts and cultural organizations that semester. The organization selected was the Boston Ballet School, Incorporated, official school of the Boston Ballet, a professional dance company formed in 1963. My research

topic at that time was to learn what congruence there is between individual and organizational goals in a performing arts organization. My findings, though inclusive, were written up in a combination preliminary report and term paper that was delivered to the proper individuals in both settings. Thus, Phase Five of the study remained undone as I was not invited to return to the organization to report on my findings. Nonetheless, these findings were fruitful in that they led to exploring the concept of the suppression (and denial) of conflict. More specifically I was interested in finding out when conflict exists, when conflict exists but is not acknowledged, and when conflict is acknowledged but is suppressed and denied. This, in turn, led to looking at some of the substantive issues that provoke conflict; change, growth, and development in the organizational environment; the conditions and processes of organizational conflict; the effects of conflict on the organization, that is, how an organization really works, how it learns (or fails to learn) during times of conflict; and finally, how an organization manages and resolves conflict.

So, when it became necessary to choose a thesis research topic, the idea of investigating organizational conflict and some of its related issues by studying the Boston Ballet School seemed appropriate. I could conduct new research in an organization where I had gained earlier entry and where I

was not a stranger to members of the organization. Even so, I would need permission to gain reentry, for a year had elapsed. Fortunately, as it turned out, my request was acknowledged and subsequently I was granted permission to resume my research. However, as my research progressed, it became logistically sound to study the whole organization rather than focusing solely on one entity, the Boston Ballet School. Therefore, both the Boston Ballet School and the Boston Ballet Company were studied.

As a student in the planning field with a specialization in the area of public policy and management while focusing on problems related to the implementation of public policy; conflict, dispute resolution, and negotiation; and organizational analysis, my approach to studying organizational conflict in a performing arts organization was from a perspective that evolved as a result of my studies in these areas. I hasten to add, however, that the root of this perspective is in the related field of political science. Therefore, in terms of studying organizations, I would tend to see organizations as places where contending individuals and groups of individuals vie for power in order to control various resources, people, and territories (read space in terms of the Boston Ballet) and where the conditions and processes of conflict result in a number of different outcomes.

In choosing a ballet company and school to investigate

problems of organizational conflict, the major focus was not exploring those characteristics of performing arts organizations that affect their activities and operations. In other words, it was not my intent to determine while studying organizational conflict within the context of a performing arts organization whether or not this particular type of organization was unique because of its artistic content and activities. In this respect, I endeavored to treat the art of ballet in a way similar to how Becker treated the larger art world. He noted, "I have treated art as the work some people do, and have been more concerned with patterns of cooperation among the people who make the works than with the works themselves or those conventionally defined as their creators."¹ However, rather than focusing on "patterns of cooperation", I have focused on patterns of noncooperation, i.e., patterns of organizational conflict, along with some of the conditions and processes of organizational conflict. Nonetheless, in viewing the ballet as the work that people do, it would be naive to ignore the fact that performing arts organizations have their own unique features. This is not the same as declaring they have nothing in common with other types of organizations. I would assume that all categories of organizations have their own unique features. Harrison talks about how organizations have different "ideological orientations". In discussing these ideological orientations, he contends that the

failure to recognize ideological issues that underlie conflict is common among managers and administrators, and "Much of the conflict that surrounds organization change is really ideological struggle."²

Returning to the question of the unique features of performing arts organizations, it should be noted that within the context of this paper, performing arts include the art forms of music, opera theater, and dance. Performing arts organizations are unique in that their product, that is, "what the actor does in speaking his lines and moving and gesturing as directed, what the musician does in playing a certain sonata on his piano or violin, and what the dancer³ does in moving his body as required by choreography", are very difficult products to both evaluate and measure. The performing arts are also unique because of the debate over the kinds of people drawn to the world of the performing arts, who may indeed differ from persons drawn to the corporate world. Whether the skills required in performing arts organizations are in the artistic, managerial, mechanical, or manual areas, they may indeed call for people who think and see the world in a particular way. In discussing the subject of dance in relation to creativity, Kraus and Chapman suggest that, "although there is no single accepted definition of creativity, one influential view today is that it is heavily based on 'divergent' thinking and exploration. As contrasted with 'convergent' (which means

moving toward a single correct solution or answer), 'divergent' involves searching around, changing directions, not necessarily flying in the face of convention, but often coming out with unconventional solutions and answers. It is felt that creative people are more likely to excel in divergent thinking and creativity." All this is to say that people who think in certain ways may gravitate towards areas where artistic and creative skills are required or to those organizational environments where persons create art products, help to create, or participate, in one way or another, in presenting these products.

Again, exploring the question of the kinds of people who participate in performing arts organizations and the question of whether or not they are unique or whether performing arts organizations have unique characteristics are indeed future research questions. However, performing arts organizations do have certain unique characteristics. Some of these characteristics are explored in this paper. For example, many were founded by performers or art lovers. Most rely heavily on both public and private sources of funding. They receive federal and state financial assistance through their nonprofit tax-exempt status. Many have experienced problems of growth, change, and development. And most have had at some time throughout their history periods of financial instability. In terms of the economics of performing arts organizations, Lowry notes that,

"Like colleges and hospitals, a performing arts enterprise is labor both intensive and limited in one way or another in the mass distribution of its products. Salaries and fees average over 70 percent of all expenditures; in any one field they are over 50 percent. And earned income ranges between 50 and 75 percent among the four performing arts fields, with an average of about 52 percent if they are all taken together."⁵

In attempting to find answers to problems of organizational conflict by studying the Boston Ballet, I used Argyris and Schon's Model O-I: Limited Learning Systems, a conceptual model based on a theory of action approach to organizational learning, in classifying, analyzing, and explaining my findings. The strategy was to apply features of Model O-I against interview data collected at the Boston Ballet to discover individual and organizational behavior that revealed the problems of organizational conflict and organizational learning. This strategy also involved attempting to discover inconsistencies and contradictions in the organization's espoused theories and its theories-in-use. Thus, initial research questions were:

- Determining through analysis of organizational events learning systems that fostered conflict, along with those that fostered the suppression and denial of conflict.
- Determining congruence between espoused theories and theories-in-use while observing where features of Model O-I principles of organizational learning were present.

The purpose in using this model was not to test or verify

the theory but rather to use it to explain what was going on in the organization under study.

A variation of intensive, semistructured interviewing, was the principal method used for primary data gathering. Willamson et al. note that "semistructured interviews include questions that are asked of all respondents (either in structured or nonschedule form) as well as other, unstructured questions . . . it provides some data that are comparable for all respondents . . . and other data derived from questions tailored to the unique experiences and perspectives of each individual."⁶

Six organization members occupying different positions from the art, teaching, and administrative staffs of both the school and the company were interviewed. Five of the six had been interviewed ten months earlier in 1984. There were four brief telephone interviews. Two were conducted with organization members who had been interviewed earlier and where it became necessary to obtain additional information to fill in data gaps. The other two were conducted with former employees. On the average, the intensive interviews were two hours in length. For those conducted face-to-face, a tape recorder was used. Thirty-one interview questions were prepared and formulated in such a way as to focus primarily on the areas related to events of substantive organizational conflict and change, growth, and development. Secondary sources included examining selected publications

on organizational theory, such as, conflict, behavior, change, development, and substantive issues of organizational conflict. Also, literature on the art form of ballet, performing arts organizations, and nonprofit organizations was reviewed. Public documents, newspapers, magazine, and journal articles were also reviewed.

In an effort to explore, explain, and understand the nature of organizational conflict, responses to interview questions were analyzed based on conceptual themes of organizational conflict inherent in the interview questions. Once theme responses were identified and categorized, they were written up in a quasi-case study form with attributed statements of organization members presented to focus on certain problems. While statements are attributed to various organization members, they, of course, remain unidentified. In most instances events are presented within a chronological time frame. At times, however, sequences of time are broken in order to highlight significant events or problems.

The quasi-case form description and discussion of events are not only a presentation of significant events told to me by persons interviewed, but also a reflection of where I thought and felt my research inquiries would find answers. Focusing on the five reflections of events resulted from sorting the interview data and separating it based on the dominant themes that emerged during this process, and looking

again and again through the emerged themes for substantive issues of organizational conflict. Interviews were conducted while conflict was either in the stages of being suppressed, fought over, mediated, or solved.

Finally, Model O-I: Limited Learning Systems was used to explain the Boston Ballet as a limited learning system by "guiding the mapping and diagnosis" of significant events that evolved and persisted around specific cycles of conflict. The model also aided in explaining some of the conditions and processes of conflict, how conflict is viewed and handled, and how an organization learns at different stages in its life.

The structure of this paper reflects the stages of my research. Chapter two first reviews the literature related to the problem of organizational conflict in a nonprofit performing arts organization. Second, this chapter considers elements of Argyris and Schon's Model O-I: Limited Learning System. This conceptual model is used as a theoretical framework for explaining organizational conflict at the Boston Ballet. Chapter three sketches the history of the Boston Ballet. This historical sketch looks at the growth, development, and change of a ballet school and company over the past fifty years with particular reference made to biographical events that evolved around the organization's founder. Chapter four is a chronological summary of major events that occurred throughout the history of the Boston

Ballet. The next section, chapter five, presents the interview data in a quasi-case form that describes events, incidents, and episodes. These events are based on the perceptions and comments of organization members, and are separated into five categories: A "Meddling" Board of Directors, the Artistic/Management Dichotomy, Financial Instability, Teaching Styles in the School, and the Lack of Studio Space. This chapter is followed by an overview that looks at some of the features of conflict-in-development that were discovered in the process of reviewing the data. The last section, chapter six, is an explanation of my research findings. Here an attempt is made to present my overall findings in a way that will contribute to solving problems of organizational conflict in a number of organizational environments.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This first section, the literature on organizations, nonprofit organizations, change, growth and development in organizations, performing arts organizations, the organizational environment, conflict, responses to conflict, and theory-based principles of problem-solving is used to explore and explain the phenomena of organizational conflict. The review of these topics proceeds in the same sequence as presented here. The second section reviews features of Argyris and Schon's theory-based technique of problem-solving, Model O-I: Limited Learning Systems. This model is used as my theoretical framework for exploring and explaining the problem of organizational conflict at the Boston Ballet.

Before looking at the components and concepts of organizational conflict, first, let us take a look at what an "organization" is. Borrowing from the work of Etzioni, "organizations are social units (or human groupings) deliberately constructed and reconstructed to seek specific goals. Corporations, armies, schools, hospitals, and prisons are included; tribes, classes, ethnic groups, friendship groups, and families are included. They are

characterized by: 1) divisions of labor, power, and communication responsibilities, divisions which are not random or traditionally patterned, but deliberately planned to enhance the realization of specific goals; 2) the presence of one or more power centers which control the concerted efforts of the organization and direct them toward its goals; these power centers also review continuously the organizations performance and repattern its structure, where necessary, to increase its efficiency; 3) substitution of personnel, i.e., unsatisfactory persons can be removed and others assigned their tasks. The organization can also recombine its personnel through transfer and promotion.¹ Etzioni further suggests that, "organizations are much more in control of their nature and destiny than any other grouping."²

Shepard observes that, "organizations, like persons, can be viewed as organisms, whose parts are living and in communication. Organizations can be understood as learning and adapting, as being and becoming. If one takes this view, then change is to understood in terms of development and regression, of health and illness, adaptive and maladaptive processes. And the social science practitioner needs concepts, methods, and criteria of development and adaptation that are not culture-bound or power-bound."³

With reference to this study, to particular types of organizations, and to how they are viewed and understood,

Wolf, in discussing nonprofit organizations, outlines four characteristics common to nonprofit organizations. He suggests that:

1. They must be incorporated and they must have a public purpose.
2. Their governance structure must preclude self-interest and private financial gain.
3. They must be exempt from paying federal tax.
4. They must possess the special legal status that⁴ stipulates gifts made to them are tax deductible."

Wolf adds that, "there can be no owners in a nonprofit organization because such an entity is intended to serve a broad public purpose and the law is clear in specifying that ownership (with concomitant private gain) is incompatible with public purpose ... but the money that is taken in must be directed toward the public purpose for which the organization was set up or, if this is impossible, held in reserve or turned over to another organization with a public purpose."⁵

In describing the four characteristics of nonprofit organizations and the consequent challenges facing those that govern and manage them, Wolf notes that a great dilemma for the nonprofit organization is determining: "Which is more important? To assure the continuity and the survival of the organization? Or to stay true to the organization's mission even if this involves certain financial and institutional risks?"⁶ Questions of organizational

survival versus public service are often sources of conflict in nonprofit organizations. Not surprisingly Starbuck notes that, "the importance of survival to an organization can not be overstated--at least as a logical necessity. An organization may not impart prestige, power, and security to its members. It may not do many things. But one thing which it must do, if it is to be an organization at all, is survive."⁷ Starbuck's observation is of particular interest here since a number of different kinds of nonprofit organizations have histories of financial instability, including the Boston Ballet.

Weeks suggests that, "the first internal goal which organizations seek ... is the reduction of conflict between organizational goals."⁸ Returning to Wolf's discussion of choices between risks and compromises, he notes that, "the tug between these two competing tendencies is constant in the nonprofit environment, and it becomes extreme when organizations are under pressure, when funds are scarce, and when there is lack of agreement about basic purpose."⁹

In discussing change, innovation, growth, and development. Zaltman et al. state that, "it is important to distinguish between innovation and organizational change. Innovation is any idea, practice, or material artifact perceived to be new by the relevant unit of adoption. Change, on the other hand, is the alteration in the structure and functioning of a social system. All innovations imply

change. Not all change involves innovation since not everything an organization adopts is perceived as new.¹⁰ On organizational growth and development, Starbuck, for example, states that, "growth is defined as change in an organization's size when size is measured by the organization's membership or employment; development is defined as change in an organization's age."¹¹ Essentially, the story of the Boston Ballet is a story of growth and development in a nonprofit performing arts organization-- often amidst conflict that evolved either because of or as a result of organizational change growth, and development.

Of interest, Starbuck reviews ten organizational goals that "with varying degrees of validity are related to growth."¹² Of equal importance, he discusses the bases for organizational growth: "Three of these goals are rooted in the self-interest of individual organizational members: the urge for adventure and risk, the desire for higher for prestige, power, and job security, and the desire for higher executive salaries. Three are rooted in the problems and aesthetics of managing an organization: the desires for a stable environment,, for 'organizational self-realization' and for organizational survival. And four are rooted in organizational purpose and effectiveness: the desires for high profit and revenue, and low cost, and for monopolistic power."¹³

In describing some common characteristics of open

systems, Katz and Kahn note that, "the most common type of growth is a multiplication of the same type of cycles or subsystems-- a change in quantity rather than in quality ... a social system adds more units of the same essential type as it already has ... Qualitative change does occur, however, in two ways. In the first place, quantitative growth calls for supportive subsystems of a specialized character not necessary when the systems are smaller. In the second place, there is a point where quantitative change produces a qualitative difference in the functioning of a system. A small college which triples its size is no longer the same institution in terms of the relation between its administration and faculty, relations among the various academic departments, or the nature of its instruction."¹⁴

In outlining the history of the phenomenal growth of the performing arts between 1957 and 1975 and some of the problems that accompanied that growth, Lowry says that expansion of the symphony, opera, theater, and dance between 1957 and 1975 had no precedent in any similar period in any country. He points out that, "how this expansion was brought about is ... better understood than why it began when it did."¹⁵ Inquiry into four case histories that focus on symphony, opera, theater, and ballet for the purpose of investigating the growth and development that occurred in performing arts organizations between 1957-1975 reveals that during that time Ford Foundation with its huge

assets was largely responsible for that growth and development. In 1957 the Ford Foundation began its program in the performing arts and "since then has devoted an average of about 4 percent of its grant to this area."¹⁶ Also, "in 1963 the Ford Foundation began a national program in ballet that eventuated in the investment of \$29.8 million, ... Since that date every professional ballet company of minimum size, and performing season has been involved in the Ford Foundation's program, most for as long as twelve to fourteen years."¹⁷ Lowry also notes that the source or "chosen instrument for expansion in the ... performing arts area has been 'unearned income'"¹⁸

Arian in selecting the Philadelphia Orchestra as a subject of a case study that focuses on problems of bureaucratization in a nonprofit performing arts organization notes that, "a phenomenon associated with bureaucracy is the allocation of status, prestige, or financial reward in a manner calculated to control personnel and reduce conflict with the organization over the conditions of their environment."¹⁹ Bureaucracy here is thus viewed as a mechanism for structuring both efficiency and control. Arian remarks that, "the problems revealed by this study are not peculiar to the Philadelphia Orchestra, but are widespread throughout the American cultural scene."²⁰ He argues that "a commonality of problems" can be recognized by those studying leading

performing arts organizations in cities across the country. For instance, problems arose when the Philadelphia Orchestra changed from one controlled by a charismatic musical director to one where a more cooperative, Board-controlled, "organization man" became the musical director. Problems also arose when it lost the support of its principal financial supporters during the Great Depression and upon implementation of the progressive income tax. Arian further points out that bureaucratic practices, such as "emulating astute business practices of economy and efficiency ... have exacted a high toll." ²¹ He notes,

the artistic quality of the Orchestra's programming and the education of its audiences have suffered; it has neglected a responsibility to American culture by largely ignoring modern music and catering instead to the conservative musical tastes of its upper class audience; the spectrum of concert artists presented has been restricted; its musicians have been exploited in various ways with a resultant lowering of morale and worsening of labor relations; and finally, it has neglected the musical education of the young and served the cultural needs of only a small and narrow segment of the community.²²

Thus, two major costs of bureaucratization include the domination of organization leadership by board members and worker alienation. Arian contends that these costs "now pose a real threat to the future existence of the organization."²³ Notwithstanding these problems that are sources of internal conflict, Arian, in concluding his case study, offers measures to aid in solving problems of the Philadelphia Orchestra.²⁴

Gelles' case history is a description of the development of the Pennsylvania Ballet, its director, Barbara Weisberger, how it came into existence in 1962-1963 with the aid of Ford Foundation monies, and how problems persist despite its "enviable record of growth, being well-managed administratively, and artistically well-defined."²⁵

Gelles notes that the Boston Ballet directed by E. Virginia Williams and the Pennsylvania Ballet directed by Barbara Weisberger "were in effect brought to life by the Ford Foundation grants."²⁶ Kendall emphasizes that "the Boston Ballet and Philadelphia Pennsylvania Ballet were two of the more successful ventures of the 1963 grant action. The initial troubles of these two companies came from the old money in those cities-- . . . When the ballet came on the scene in Boston and Philadelphia, it had to beg: Bostonians and Philadelphians supported symphonies, operas, and museums--familiar cultural institutions--but ballet was new to them."²⁷

Thus the environment in which an organization functions and the way it functions within that environment is an important element in determining the relationship an organization has with its environment and vice versa and in identifying those physical and social factors that weigh heavily in discovering conflict phenomena in the organization.

Zaltman et al. in their work on innovations in

organizations concisely define the organization environment as "the totality of physical and social factors that are taken directly into consideration in the decision-making behavior of the individuals in the organization."²⁸ In differentiating between the external and internal environment they note that "the internal environment consists of those relevant physical and social factors within the boundaries of the organization or specific decision unit that are taken directly into consideration in the decision-making behavior of individuals in the system The external environment consists of those relevant physical and social factors outside the boundaries of the organization or specific decision unit that are taken directly into consideration in the decision-making behavior of individuals in that system."²⁹

Using Coser's classical definition of "social conflict" as a preliminary operational definition in identifying organizational conflict, "social conflict" is viewed as "a struggle over the values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals."³⁰ Of equal interest, Thompson cogently states that, "conflict may be simply a result of inability to put oneself in another's place."³¹ Several of the Simmel-based propositions discussed by Coser³² believed to be of relevance when exploring some of the major events of the

Boston Ballet will be considered in the investigation. A sketch of several of these propositions that describe some of the functions of conflict include:

- Conflict serves to establish and maintain the identity and boundary lines of societies and groups. (p 38)
- Conflict is not always dysfunctional for the relationship within which it occurs; often conflict is necessary to maintain such a relationship. without ways to vent hostility toward each other, and to express dissent, groups might feel completely crushed and might react by withdrawl. (p 47)
- Social systems provide for specific institutions which serve to drain off hostile and aggressive sentiments. These safety-valve institutions help to maintain the system by preventing otherwise probable conflict or reducing its disruptive effects. (p 48)
- Aggressive or hostile 'impulses' do not suffice to account for social conflict. Hatred, just as love, needs some object. Conflict can occur only in the interaction between subject and object; it always presupposes a relationship. (p 59)
- Realistic conflict need not be accompanied by hostility and aggressiveness. 'Tensions' in the psychological sense are not always associated with conflict behavior. Yet it might be useful to hate the opponent. The propagandist expects that such hatred will reinforce the emotional investment in the conflict and hence strengthen the readiness to carry it out to the end. (pp 59-60) °Coser suggests that "realistic conflicts" which arise from frustration of specific demands within the relationship and from estimates of gains of the participants, and which are directed at the presumed frustrating object, ... Non-realistic conflicts on the other hand, although still involving the interaction between two or more persons, are not occasioned by the rival ends of the antagonists, but by the need for tension release of at least one of them. (p 49)
- Close social relationships, characterized as they are by frequent interactions and involving the total personality of the participants, may be said to

include in their motivational structure an essential ambivalence in that they contain both positive and negative cathexes inextricably intertwined. (pp 64-65)

- Conflict with another group leads to mobilization of the energies of group members and hence to increased cohesion of the group. (p 95)
- The absence of conflict cannot be taken as an index of the strength and stability of the relationship. Stable relationships may be characterized by conflicting behavior. Closeness gives rise to frequent occasions for conflict, but if the participants feel that their relationships are tenuous, they will avoid conflict, fearing it might endanger the continuance of the relationship. (p 85)

Katz suggests that, "without conflict, however, there would be few problems, little stimulation, and little incentive for constructive effort. Organizations without internal conflict are on their way to dissolution." ³³

Mack and Snyder argue that, "in general, it might be expected that the more central conflict is to the operations of a group of organization, the more highly developed will be the techniques of conflict waging. For groups and organizations whose missions are not primarily conflict-directed, conflict avoidance or quicker resolution might be expected." ³⁴

Some possible responses to conflict range from suppression and total war to limited war and bargaining to problem-solving. Shepard's continuum table shows how methods of conflict management can range from "primitive" methods to "civilized" methods. ³⁵ Primitive methods are classified as destructive and range from limited war to bargaining, and civilized methods, according to Shepard and

others, are "not yet attained" and involve problem-solving as a productive way of managing conflict.

In determining whether or not organizational conflict should be "managed" or "resolved", Boulding observes that the phenomenon of organizational conflict is susceptible to analysis and therefore advocates supporting "better management of conflict" rather than "conflict resolution". He states that, "'resolution' has an air of finality which we do not mean to convey. We are not 'against' conflict. It is indeed an essential and, for the most part, useful element in social life. There is, however, a constant tendency for unmanaged conflict to get out of hand and to become bad for all the parties."³⁶ Not surprisingly then, Shepard in considering suppression of conflict views the organizational chart as a suppression chart because "in the case of conflict, the organizational pyramid tells us who can suppress whom."³⁷ Therefore, "managing conflict" through suppressive structures "may be a superficially effective form of conflict resolution, particularly when the suppressed party is much weaker than the suppressing party. It produces compliance, but there is an unseen cost in the reduction of the productivity of the suppressed person or group."³⁸ Thus Shepard in his discussion of suppression as a means of handling conflict notes that, "suppression remains society's chief instrument of handling conflict."³⁹

In terms of organizational conflict, Westrum and Samaha suggest that, "organizational conflict exists when there is some disagreement in the organization about: 1) what the organization should be doing, 2) how it should be doing it, 3) what parts of the organization are responsible for each task, and 4) what parts of the organization should have the privileges or rewards."⁴⁰ Leas and Kittlaus distinguish "three major ways in which conflict is experienced: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and substantive."⁴¹ In attempting to explain events at the Boston Ballet I will focus primarily on issues of substantive conflict even though it is more than likely that instances or manifestations of intrapersonal and/or interpersonal conflict will present themselves. However, dealing directly with those types of conflict is beyond the scope of my research endeavors at this time. Briefly then, intrapersonal conflict "is that struggle which a person has within himself ... the contest that one has with different parts of his self. ... Interpersonal conflict ... is related to differences between people but is not related primarily to issues. This is the conflict where one person is striking against another primarily over incompatibility as persons. This conflict is not generated by what a person does or what he thinks about an issue, but by how he feels about the other person."⁴²

In terms of substantive conflict, Leas and Kittlaus

point out that, "substantive conflict can be between two individuals, or between an individual and a group, or between groups. Substantive conflict has to do with conflict over facts, means, ends, or values."⁴³ In borrowing from Tannenbaum and Schmidt's discussion on the nature and management of differences that is included in their study on Leadership and Organization: A Behavioral Science Approach, Leas and Kittlaus categorize four kinds of substantive conflict (or "differences") and suggest that people may disagree on any one or more of these issues: facts, goals, methods, and values. Thus, based on Tannenbaum and Schmidt's characteristics of these four kinds of substantive conflict, they include:

1. Conflict over facts. Disagreements occur because individuals have different definitions of the problem, are aware of different pieces of relevant information, accept or reject different information as factual, or have differing impressions of their respective power and authority.
2. Conflict of goals. Disagreements over what should be accomplished--the desirable objectives of a department, division, section, or specific position within the organization.
3. Conflict over methods. Disagreements about procedures, strategies or tactics which would most likely achieve a mutually desired goal.
4. Conflict over values. Disagreements over ethics--the way power should be exercised, moral considerations, assumptions about justice, fairness, etc. These differences may affect the choice of either goals or methods.⁴⁴

Additional terms that will help in exploring and explaining events at the Boston Ballet are:

1. Values. The term 'values' may refer to interests, pleasures, likes, preferences, duties, moral obligations, desires, wants, needs, aversions, and many other modalities of selective orientations.⁴⁵
2. Norms. A norm is a rule, standard, or pattern of action ... The norms are the standards of reference by which behavior is judged and approved or disapproved. A norm in this sense is not a statistical average of actual behavior but rather a cultural (shared) definition of desirable behavior ... A norm calls for 'right action' and implies a generalizable reason for the rightness of the indicated conduct. Ultimately this propriety or rightness traces back to some standard of value that is taken without further justification as valid by the individual or group in question ... At the same time, norms actually can guide conduct only if they prescribe or proscribe identifiable courses of action; therefore norms are more specific and socially imperative than values or ideals.⁴⁶
3. Role. The term 'role' continues to be used to represent the behavior expected of the occupant of a given position or status ... In this definition two features are emphasized: (1) expectations (i.e., beliefs, cognitions) held by certain persons in regard to what behaviors are appropriate for the occupant of a given position, and (2) enactments (i.e., conduct) of a person who is assigned to, or elects to enter, a given position.⁴⁷

Turning again to organizational theories designed to either increase effectiveness, enhance cooperation, encourage communication, or manage, reconcile, or resolve conflict, Blake and Mouton point out that theory-based methods of problem-solving are "for facilitating a change from current practices to a more systematic way of doing things."⁴⁸

However, selecting a specific technique to use in a given organization should be done with care.

Lawrence and Lorsch in studying types of organizations

effective in dealing with various economic and market conditions found in their comparative study of several types of competing industries that, "managers in all the organizations studied almost unanimously saw confrontations as the most desirable mode of conflict resolution." ⁴⁹

On the other hand, they also found that confrontation "is used much less than it is recommended." ⁵⁰ This apparent contradiction is "explained by the assumption that people have the requisite knowledge, but have a personally-based aversion to confronting differences sharply." ⁵¹ Their study also "offers a reminder that people may also not confront conflict because they do not have the requisite knowledge and yet feel a need to be influential." ⁵²

When people have a personality-based aversion to confronting differences management development techniques designed to remedy this problem could be utilized. The Managerial Grid "provides a set of contrasting theories depicting different ways of dealing with others. Grid concepts enable individuals to gain insight into their own power/authority dynamics. A typical first step in this process involves the client describing his or her managerial behavior in boss-subordinate situations.

Secondly, the individual studies The Managerial Grid in order to gain insights into those issues that are systematically clarified. This is initially accomplished through reading, but recurs later in an organized seminar situation where

participants, through intensive team interactions, have an opportunity to observe one another's grid styles." ⁵³ Thus The Managerial Grid provides a framework for comparative thinking about alternative approaches to management and supervision, along with identifying thirteen approaches ⁵⁴ that are being used in organizations today.

Before continuing to discuss theory-based techniques that are used in solving problems of organizational conflict, it should be noted that Lawrence and Lorsch, while recognizing the value of techniques that facilitate organizational change, argue that while training methods can improve interpersonal competence and the ability to confront conflict to some extent, training experiences do not alter the manager's underlying personality characteristics even though they can alter expectations of themselves and others about what is legitimate behavior to the point that they are encouraged to behave more openly ⁵⁵ and to resolve conflict more effectively. Mere recognition of "legitimate behavior" is indeed quite an accomplishment and thus a step towards resolving conflict in the organization.

Kotter suggests that, "as organizations become more complex, managers need help in diagnosing what is going on ⁵⁶ both internally and externally." Kotter's method for improving organization effectiveness involves using a model designed "to lead the manager through a systematic

diagnostic process while revealing the inherent complexity of organizations and the multiple interdependencies that exist within them." ⁵⁷ In his study of twenty-six diverse organizations during 1974 and 1975 where data collection involved acquiring written information on each of the organizations and interviewing top managers, along with interviewing a number of well-informed insiders and outsiders, Kotter used a descriptive model made up of seven major elements: a central "processes" and six "structural" elements. In turn, relevant questions were asked to obtain information on the present state of 1) the organization's key processes, 2) its external environment, 3) employees and other tangible assets, 4) formal organizational arrangements, 5) the internal social system, 6) the organization's technology, and 7) the dominate coalition. These questions were posed not only to obtain comprehensive answers but to encourage "a sensitivity to the potential relevance of each element, variable, or question highlighted in the model which when combined with an understanding of how these elements and variables tend to interact, can be enormously helpful to both managers and organization specialists, especially those trained from a specialized point of view." ⁵⁸ This apparently useful model also takes into consideration time frames, i.e., the short run of hours to a few months, the moderate run of a few months to a

few years, and the long run of a few years to a few decades. each time frame focuses on a different but specific relationship between the six structural elements and the organizational processes. For example, if I were to study events of the Boston Ballet within the short-run time frame, the focus would be on "cause-and-effect relationships" among the six structural elements and the organizational processes, in focusing on the moderate run, the focus would be on the relationships among the six structural elements and the concept of alignment, and in the long run, "More diverse types of people tend to be employed. More formal arrangements usually appear. A larger more diverse task environment is developed. A more complex internal culture emerges. Additional technologies are incorporated. The size and complexity of the dominant coalition increase." ⁵⁹ Thus, the focus would be on "considering what elements if any are acting as 'driving forces', and what level of adaptability is built into the system." ⁶⁰ "Driving forces" are any one or two elements in the model that are clearly more influential ⁶¹ than the others.

A unique feature of a theory-based approach to organizational problem-solving is that this approach can "provide such a powerful basis for changing behavior (i.e., changing behavior to facilitate solving organizational problems) because mainly the theories are written out

and open to public discussion. They are objective in the sense of being subject to external validation and verification not only against research and experimental evidence but in personal terms as well. In other words, they derive strength from demonstrated utility."⁶²

Finally, all theory-based organizational improvement techniques focus on problems of conflict, (i.e., Blake and Mouton's The Managerial Grid, Likert's System 4 Theory, Argyris and Schon's Models I and II, Vroom and Yetton's Model A and Model B, Transactional Analysis, Kotter's Organizational Dynamics Model, and McGregor's Theories X and Y). Blake and Mouton point out that these theories have both similarities and differences, but "the most characteristically shared feature is their common emphasis upon the importance of conflict as a significant issue that can strengthen or weaken relationships, depending on how it is dealt with."⁶³ They say that "all theory-based approaches deal with this fundamental issue in one way or another."⁶⁴ Again, they say that the basic approaches for dealing with conflict involve the five possibilities of suppression, smoothing, withdrawal, compromise and accommodation, or confrontation.⁶⁵ Not surprisingly, they contend that The Grid "which identifies a number of different ways of dealing with conflict, is the approach which most concentrates on conflict resolution."⁶⁶

However, based on my review of the literature, I have

chosen one of Argyris and Schon's theory-based organizational models, Model O-I: Limited Learning Systems, as a theoretical frame of reference from which to examine and explain interview data gathered from the Boston Ballet. This model is discussed in the next section.

A Theory of Action Perspective:
Model O-I: Limited Learning Systems

In exploring organizational conflict in a nonprofit performing arts organization, it is assumed a priori that conflict exists in all organizational environments. A theoretical generalization is thus made that conflict exists in all social systems where people come together and interact with one another in a number of different and complex ways. It is also assumed that organization members spend an inordinate amount of time and an excessive amount of energy in dealing with (and not dealing with) problems of conflict internal and external to the organization. As noted earlier, some of the ways of dealing with problems of conflict include: suppressing, smoothing, withdrawing, compromising, accommodating, confronting, and even physical fighting. At times, conflict is also dealt with by using problem-solving techniques of organizational learning.

In thinking about conflict in a nonprofit performing arts organization against a background of change through growth and development, conflict may be defined as a

struggle between individuals, between individual and a group, or between groups, over issues that are important to them.

My intent is to look at problems that evolved and persisted around major issues of substantive conflict at the Boston Ballet; to discover the sources of conflict and the participants involved at different stages throughout the organization's history; to learn why subjects and issues of conflict occurred at particular stages in the organization's life; to determine whether or not the dominant actors in the conflicts remained the same over time, i.e., to discover the actors--who they were, what they did, and what they fought over; to learn and attempt to understand how an organization that had a history of back-to-back situations of crises continued to survive and thrive (or appeared to thrive) despite a history of a reoccurring series of conflicts. In addition, to learn how organizational success is measured. Is it measured by an organization's existence? And finally, to learn how organizations learn.

In thinking about answers to these questions shaped and based on organizational events that surfaced as persistent examples of conflict, and in looking for reasons why these events occurred again and again, it became necessary to look at these issues from a perspective that would guarantee at least some answers. The prospect of

viewing these problems from a variety of perspectives commands interest, however, such research efforts are both well beyond the scope of this paper and well beyond the reach of my present research endeavors. Therefore, I have chosen one perspective from which to explore the problem of organizational conflict.

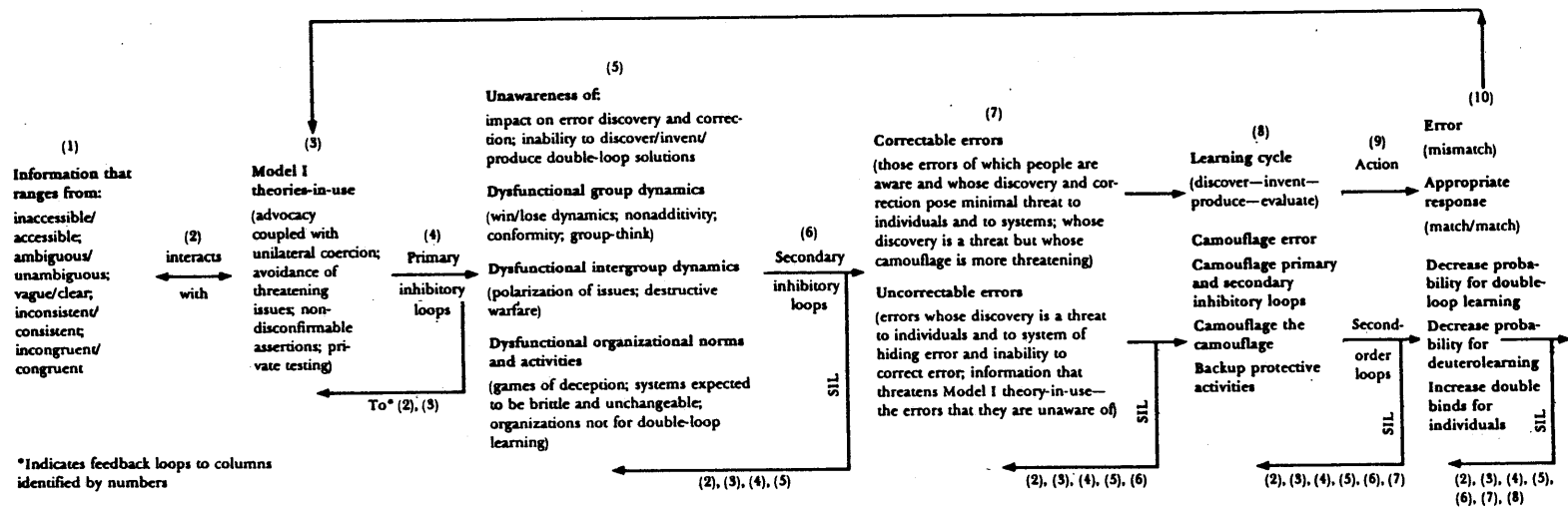
In searching for answers to questions of conflict-in-development, conflict-in-change, conflict-in-growth at the Boston Ballet features of Argyris and Schon's Model O-I: Limited Learning Systems were used to look at these historical events from a theory-based perspective of organizational problem-solving. Based on a theory of action perspective, this model will also guide understanding, predicting, and thinking about solutions to organizational problems of conflict at the Boston Ballet.

Argyris and Schon's theory of action conceptual framework consists of four models: Model I Theory-in-Use, Model O-I: Limited Learning Systems, Model II Theory-in-Use, and Model O-II: Learning Systems. Model O-I was specifically chosen to use as a frame of reference to guide exploring, examining, and explaining events at the Boston Ballet for the following reasons: 1) it is assumed the model "holds" for the Boston Ballet mainly because it is believed that the Boston Ballet is a classic example of a limited learning system, 2) the model "holds for mature organizations" and it is believed that the Boston Ballet is

a mature organization based on Kotter's three time frames, 3) it will help in determining the extent to which the O-I model is representative of the Boston Ballet, 4) it will aid in learning what really goes on in organizations, that is, to uncover underlying causes, 5) it will direct the focus on organizational theories-in-use rather than on individuals' theories-in-use as would be the case in using Model I Theory-in-use, and 6) it will aid in uncovering those factors that inhibit and those that facilitate organizational learning.

To maintain accuracy in reviewing features of the model and to explain these features in a clear and concise way, let me begin by quoting the model's authors. According to Argyris and Schon, Model O-I: Limited Learning Systems is a "model of organizations whose learning systems are conducive to limited learning--a model of organizations which are unlikely either to correct first-order error by double-loop learning or to inquire into their own learning systems." ⁶⁷ In explaining the features of the model, (see Figure 1) Argyris writes that, "Figure 1 displays a Model O-I learning system (O is for organization). Reverse arrows along the bottom indicate feedback loops that close the system. The order of columns, from left to right, and the numbered arrows in the reverse direction show the interaction effects that seem to us to be most important. Complex as it is, the model is still

Figure 1. Model O-I: Limited-Learning Systems



(from Argyris, 1982 p 90)

oversimplified in a number of ways. For example, arrows along the top might also have been numbered; secondary loops to take one instance, lead not only to correctable and uncorrectable errors (Column 7) but also to camouflage of error (Column 8). Each Column has its effect not only on the one immediately following but also on others further down the line. However, as we have tried to arrange the columns so that left-to-right order is a reasonably good presentation of direct effects." ⁶⁸ In continuing to discuss the causes and origins of limited learning systems, Argyris notes that, "The model does not describe the etiology of limited learning systems. Its meaning is not, for example, that primary inhibitory loops came first in the evolution of organizations and that they later led to dysfunctional group and intergroup dynamics, and so on. We think it more likely that a limited-learning organization, at any period of its evolution, displays, at least embryonically, the full configuration of the system." ⁶⁹

Continuing to explain features of this "systems model", Argyris says that, "What the model does reveal is the set of direct and indirect effects and feedback loops that interconnect with the principal element of a limited learning system. Given any column (such as column 8, Camouflage), one can look to the left to find its immediate and less immediate antecedent conditions

and to the right to find its immediate and less immediate consequences." ⁷⁰ In pointing out the principal function of the primary inhibitory loops, Argyris writes, "We begin with primary inhibitory loops because they seem to us the best starting point in order to explain a limited-learning system and the best starting point for intervention. They are 'primary' not in the sense of temporal order but in the sense of their importance among the processes making up the system. The model, then, has the principal function of being a guide to mapping and diagnosis of limited-learning systems." ⁷¹

In using Model O-I to "map and diagnose" the Boston Ballet and to explain my research findings, it is necessary to take an even closer look at some of the features Argyris outlines in the model: ⁷²

Column 4: Primary Inhibitory Loops: Elements of an organization's instrumental theory of action are inaccessible, unclear, or inadequate. One or more of the features of the organizational theory of action gives rise to error (Column 1). In a good dialectic, such conditions of error would be confronted and reduced through organizational inquiry. In a Model I behavioral world, however, such conditions trigger Model I interactions (Column 3), which reinforce conditions for error or create new ones. Within such loops, conditions for error become uncorrectable and trigger the very responses that make them so. (p 91)

Column 5: Unawareness; Dysfunctional Dynamics. Primary inhibitory loops reinforce unawareness of their effect on organizational learning. ... Primary inhibitory loops yield intragroup and intergroup dynamics (secondary loops) that mirror and amplify the properties of primary loops. These secondary loops feedback, in turn, to sustain primary loops. Sustained primary loops lead to the expectation that

organizations are brittle and unchangeable. When members despair of double-loop learning, the stage is set for deception. (p 92)

Column 7: Correctable and Uncorrectable Errors.

The processes described so far do not prevent members of an organization from detecting and correcting errors in the first-order performance so long as that detection and correction does not confront Model I governing variables. Given the primary and secondary loops characteristic of these living systems, however, such errors become uncorrectable. Given the frame of conditions for error and Model I theories-in-use, efforts at error correction tend, in fact, to amplify error. ... errors tend to be uncorrectable whenever their correction entails double-loop learning--that is, when norms central to organizational theory-in-use would have to be questioned and changed ... also ... errors tend to be uncorrectable when their correction would threaten Model I governing variables--that is, when it would require double-loop learning at the level of the behavioral world. (p 72)

Column 8: Camouflage: In a Model I behavioral world, discovery of uncorrectable error is a source of personal and organizational vulnerability. The response to vulnerability is unilateral self-protection, which can take several forms. Uncorrectable errors and the processes that lead to them can be hidden, disguised, or denied (all of which we call camouflage), and individuals and groups can protect themselves further by sealing themselves off from blame should camouflage fail. ... Camouflage may resort to espoused theory ('We are open, trusting, and cooperative with one another') in which everyone makes an open secret of the incongruity ... Members of the organization may make a public show of attacking the problem while covertly sharing an understanding of the ritual nature of that attack. ... Moreover, when camouflage and protection are broadly practiced, they set the conditions for a second layer of camouflage. (pp 92-93)

Column 9: Second-Order Loops that Inhibit Learning.

These are second-order loops that arise when inquiring into an organization's first-order activities. They are generated by the same kind of factors--conditions for error, the Model I behavioral world--that create primary and secondary loops. And they feedback to reinforce both primary and secondary inhibitory loops. (p 93)

Column 10: Decreasing Probability for Double-loop Learning; Increasing Double Binds for the Individual.

Double-loop learning depends on awareness of error, which primary and deuterolearning loops prevent. When errors are uncorrectable, they can not trigger double-loop learning ... Members of limited-learning systems might inquire into the features of their system that make errors uncorrectable, except that deuterolearning loops prevent inquiry. Hence, in limited-learning systems, double-loop and deuterolearning are unlikely. (p 93)

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In conclusion, key terms from Argyris and Schon's book, *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective*, that will facilitate understanding features of Model O-I: Limited Learning are listed:

- organizational learning system: an organization's theory of action embedded in a behavioral world which shapes and constrains organizational learning about theory-in-use. (p 41)
- theory of action: a theory of deliberate human behavior which is for the agent a theory of control but which, when attributed to the agent, also serves to explain or predict his behavior. (p 11)
- theory-in-use: the theory that actually governs a person's actions is their theory-in-use, which may or may not be compatible with their espoused theory. The individual may or may not be aware of the incompatibility of the two theories. (p 11)
- espoused theory of action: the theory of action to which a person gives allegiance, and which, upon requests the person communicates to others. (p 11)
- organizational dilemma: the inability to resolve conflict through inquiry. Sensitive issues are not discussed in public. Inquiry into sensitive topics is considered inappropriate. It involves the risk of vulnerability to blame, and of interpersonal confrontation. (p 38)
- deutero-learning: Learning about previous contexts for learning. Reflecting on previous episodes of organizational learning, or failure to learn. What actions facilitated or inhibited learning.

Inventing new strategies for learning, and evaluating and generalizing about these strategies. The results become encoded in individual images and maps are reflected in organizational learning practice. (p 27)

- "good dialectic": the processes of organizational inquiry which take the form of single- and double-loop learning, as appropriate, and where ... both single- and double-loop learning meet standards of high quality inquiry. (p 42)
- single-loop learning: when error detected and corrected permits the organization to carry on its present policies or achieve its present objectives. (pp 2-3)
- double-loop-learning: when error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organization's underlying norms, policies and objectives. (p 3)

From this review of the literature on organizational conflict and a look at Model O-I: Limited Learning Systems and some of its features, we can now consider the growth of a ballet company.

CHAPTER 3
THE GROWTH OF A BALLET

The Boston Ballet Company, formed only twenty-one years ago, is an established professional company with thirty-five professional dancers paid at union scale who work about thirty weeks a year. They are in residence in November, February, and April and when home perform in an, oftentimes, too huge, restored, 4,200-seat old movie house. The company has balanced repertoire of forty-three classical and contemporary ballets, including thirteen ballets given to them by the great George Balanchine, who was artistic advisor to the company when it was formed in 1963. Older by about thirty years, its affiliate, the Boston Ballet School, is not as well-established or as well regarded as the company. The School does not "turn out a uniformly trained corps" and is thus not considered a great ballet school. A future goal of the organization is to improve the school, form it as a separate organization with its own board, and "separate the preprofessional program from the other classes."¹ It is also reported that the school supported the company and the company's founder when the company was a young dance troupe.

Even though the company has a balanced repertoire, it leans towards staging the big nineteenth century story ballets, such as Swan Lake, Romeo and Juliet, Giselle, The Sleeping Beauty, The Nutcracker, and Gaite Parisienne, for instance, rather than the smaller repertoire works. The Company was the first American Ballet company to dance in the People's Republic of China since the Cultural Revolution. It is reported that the City of Boston is proud of its ballet company.

The Boston Ballet Company was formed September 1958 as a not-for-profit organization and was then known as the New England Civic Ballet of Boston. Its mission and stated purposes outlined in its articles of organization are that it "shall be a civic theatre dance company consisting of advanced students, teachers, and professional dancers and members of the allied arts who are joined together for the benefit of this and neighboring communities. Its purposes shall be forwarded by the giving of as many performances as possible each year, both by itself and in conjunction with other organizations such as civic orchestras or operatic groups and the like, by commissioning the composition of musical and choreographic scores and by the granting of free memberships in the organization."²

But the history of the Boston Ballet Company dates back to an earlier time when E. Virginia Smith, founder of both the original school and the company, opened her first

dance school in Melrose and in three other suburban communities, including Stoneham and Malden (her adopted hometown) during the Great Depression--a time when one person in four was unemployed. It is unknown if Williams was employed by the Federal Dance Theater during this time but for those students whose parents couldn't afford to pay, Williams offered free classes. Commenting on Williams' free classes, Kendall writes that, "When she opened her first school in the mid-thirties, she bribed students wanting 'tap and acrobatic' to take ballet lessons, by offering the latter free. These classes, soon full, were taught soundly and imaginatively, since Williams had made it her business to find out from every possible source what constitutes good ballet teaching."³

Despite the hardships of the 1930s, there were indications that the country would soon produce its own ballet pioneers, for it was during that time that Lincoln Kirstein, arts patron and "ballet-struck scion of a wealthy Boston merchant family" invited George Balanchine, a Russian expatriate, to help establish a ballet company, ballet school, ballet repertoire, and ballet audience in the United States. That effort eventually resulted in the New York City Ballet and the School of American Ballet--one of the outstanding companies and one of the outstanding schools in the ballet world.

Also, between 1935-1938, the federal government put

forth for the first time a "large scale effort" to support performing arts in the United States, even though the primary goal was to promote employment. The Federal Theater Project and the Federal Dance Theater were established to promote a nation-wide program of dance, mainly modern, although some ballet and ethnic dance were included. Balanchine fared considerably better than the government-supported performing arts project, for in 1938, the Dies Committee on Un-American Activities launched an attack and charged employees of the two projects as either being members of or sympathetic to the Communist Party. In 1939 the Dies Committee destroyed both projects.

E. Virginia Williams survived the economic tragedies and hardships of the depression and in 1940 opened a dance school in Boston--the town where earlier she had continued her professional training and had danced professionally with concert groups and in opera ballet. It is reported that during the 1940s Williams' students began performing in the Northeast as an informal concert group, and in 1950, she rented the old Boston Opera House for student concert performances. Recalling that venture, she is reported to have said, "'It took me five years after the conference to finish paying for it. I was very naive; we had a ten-hour orchestra rehearsal, something unheard of. I didn't know about overtime.'"

Of interest, especially to people in the performing arts world, was study undertaken by the Ford Foundation in 1957 to investigate the state of the country's performing arts organizations and training institutions. W. McNeil Lowry, former vice president, Division of Humanities and the Arts, the Ford Foundation, travelled throughout the United States visiting regional dance festivals to find out who the best young dancers were and to determine whether or not their instructors were the types of individuals willing to keep their dance organizations running despite a number of problems and obstacles. Often, he was accompanied by Balanchine. It is reported that Lowry was looking for, "People with 'that compulsive, hair-shirt business of giving force to a collective' . . . He emphasizes that his (and his foundation's) brand of philanthropy was not to create something that wasn't there, but to 'find people who have compulsion and drive, and shorten history for them'"⁵

If I were to describe Williams based on a mental image of what a "compulsive, driven, hair-shirt type" looks like, I most certainly would be accused of stereotypic thinking and consequently run the risk of creating an image based on such thinking-- an image in fact quite different than Tobias' vivid description of Williams. Writing in 1976 when she was sixty-two years old, he wrote: "Her body is unprepossessing--rather short

and rather squat--but moves with lightness and precision, a description, come to think of it, of the way she conducts her working relationships. She's got the most elegant calves, ankles, and feet, as she deftly demonstrates in class, you see where her company's unerring sense of line comes from. Her face, especially the gaze of the clear, sea-color eyes . . . is as truthful as daylight. Her New England voice . . . , with its broad A's and penetrating tone, makes fancy pretension look like a waste of time. Being plain-spoken is her charm." ⁶ Even so, the characteristics and traits Lowry and others were looking for, apparently, Williams possessed, for the same writer continued: She has a leader's vision, drive, and enduring stamina. There'd be no Boston Ballet without that." ⁷ She has also been described as "a concerned mother" and "a spiritual mother to dancers." The general consensus was that E. Virginia Williams was a "no-nonsense New Englander."

Between 1958-1963 several events that would, according to Lowry, "shorten history" while hastening the growth of the company (and school) forced Williams to stop choreographing, for in the process of "shortening history", administrative duties and responsibilities increased and consumed more and more of her time--necessary time away from the work she most enjoyed, choreographing. As a Choreographer, Williams in describing her work said, "'Music.

Music was always the impulse. Then I liked to see a dance that really moves, that covers space . . . I have a sentimental feeling for lyrical dance.'"⁸

Balanchine, artistic director and choreographer of New York City Ballet--the first ballet company in the United States to be accorded the status of a public institution--and ballet master of the School of American Ballet where 90 percent of New York City Ballet dancers are trained saw the New England Civic Ballet of Boston perform at the second and third Northeast Regional Ballet Festivals in Erie, Pennsylvania and Dayton, Ohio respectively. Several of Williams' students were taken into the New York City Ballet. Williams has produced a number of well-trained dancers. Reflecting on this during an interview, she said, "'It sounds like boasting to say this, but the dancers I trained usually passed their first auditions; some of them went into companies even without an audition, directly from my school. . . . at one point I taught in and around Boston, and I was working fourteen hours a day--and I started getting some very good dancers. But after five or six years they left me, because I couldn't make any professional performing opportunities available to them.'"⁹

It is important to also note at this point that, "Williams' first quiet fame came from her teaching, which is calm and logically paced, with the emphasis on elegant

placement at the barre and on the dynamics really dancey motion traveling in space. It is laced with humor . . . She is matter-of-factly uncompromising when it comes to technique and style--dancing's concerns; instinctively warm and adaptable when it comes to dealing with each dancer . . . in a way that fits that dancer's personality--human concerns."¹⁰

Good news came in December 1963 when the Ford Foundation, the single largest contributor to the arts in recent years, announced it would begin a national program in ballet in 1964 by giving grants totaling \$7,765,750 to nine leading ballet companies with the lion's share, not surprisingly, going to Balanchine's New York City Ballet and its affiliate, the School of American Ballet. Table 1 provides supporting data. A leading dance magazine reported that: "Believing in the necessity of a single artistic force, the Ford Foundation made this choice deliberately. It demonstrates their conviction that Balanchine is the most significant leader in the American Ballet." Others were less generous and "there were instantaneous objections from the non-Balanchine ballet world and from the modern the modern dance spokesmen."¹¹

The Boston Ballet Company (the name was changed from the New England Civic Ballet of Boston in June 1963) was "granted \$144,000 over a 3-year period for the purpose

TABLE 1
*
1963 FORD FOUNDATION GRANT

Organization	Amount and Proviso(s)
New York City Ballet and its affiliate, the	\$2,000,000 over a 10-year period
School of American Ballet	<p>\$50,000 for extending the rehearsal periods;</p> <p>\$50,000 to enable company members to perform as guests with regional ballets, to do lecture-demonstrations, etc.;</p> <p>\$50,000 to support a costume workshop for Karinska at City Center (with the NYCB having first call on her output);</p> <p>\$50,000 for scenery and other ballet production costs.</p>
San Francisco Ballet	<p>\$644,000 over 10 years with a proviso that the sum be matched by \$250,000 in new funds and that the San Francisco Ballet Guild maintain the existing level of its contribution to the company.</p> <p>Most of the Ford assistance goes to establishing a more intensive training program at the San Francisco Ballet School and to lengthening of contracts for a nucleus of company dancers.</p>
The National Ballet of Washington, DC (now defunct)	<p>\$400,000 over a 5-year period. The grant requires matching contributions of \$500,00.</p> <p>Half of the Foundation's funds will be used to increase the number of performances per season from the present 17 to 70 by 1967-68, and to raising company strength from 25 dancers to 35. The balance goes toward development of training at the National Ballet School.</p>

TABLE 1 (continued)
1963 FORD FOUNDATION GRANT

Organization	Amount and Proviso(s)
The Pennsylvania Ballet	\$295,000 \$45,000 is allocated to training and performance activities for current season. \$250,000 (to be matched by \$500,000 from other contributions) will assist in the development of the school and the company during the next decade.
The Utah Ballet (now Ballet West)	\$175,000 to be matched over a 5-year period by \$100,00. Funds will assist performances and provide scholarships, thereby maintaining a nucleus of professional dancers in Salt Lake City.
The Houston Ballet	\$173,750 for a 5-year period, largely for training activities. The amount is to be matched equally by local contributors.
The Boston Ballet	\$144,000 over a 3-year period for the purpose of assisting its transition from a semi-professional to a professional organization.
School of American Ballet	\$1,500,000 (an additional fund) administered by a staff of 3 to be used to give nation-wide support to instruction at the local level.

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From Dance Magazine, January 1964, p. 3.

of assisting its transition from a semi-professional organization."¹² Other ballet companies that received grants were the San Francisco Ballet, the National Ballet of Washington, DC (now defunct), the Pennsylvania Ballet, the Utah Ballet (now Ballet West) and the Houston Ballet.

The "American ballet boom" had begun. With two exceptions--President Eisenhower's signing of the law creating a National Center for the Performing Arts in Washington in 1958--and the great depression programs of the 1930s, the federal government indeed had never supported the arts in the United States in any significant way. In 1963, President Kennedy tried unsuccessfully to establish a National Arts Foundation. However, in 1964, President Johnson, signed a bill establishing within the Executive Office of the President the National Council on the Arts, an organization without the funds or the authority to offer grants-in-aid but with a chairman and twenty-four private citizens appointed by the President.¹³ Also, that year, at the Boston Arts Festival, fourteen dancers performed for the first time as members of the recently incorporated Boston Ballet Company.

In 1965 the Boston Ballet gave its first professional performance; and the Congress with the passage of the Arts and Humanities Act that year established a National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities as an independent agency in the executive branch "to encourage and support

American arts' artists . . . by awarding grants and through
its leadership advocacy activities." ¹⁴ "Its Dance Program
provides support for professional choreographers, dance
companies, and organizations that present and serve dance." ¹⁵
Its Dance Company Grants are "to help dance companies of the
highest artistic level and of national and regional
significance improve artistically, and increase their
visibility and community support." ¹⁶ These "grants cover
such projects as commissioning new works; paying dancers
during rehearsal periods; touring; hiring administrative and
artistic personnel; launching promotional campaigns; and
documenting work through film, video, or notation." ¹⁷
Also, in 1965, the Rockefeller Panel Report in its
assessment of the future of theater, dance, and music in
America said about the dance: "From the standpoint of
finance, administration, and organization, the dance world
is close to chaos . . . At the moment not more than five or
six companies can claim both a national reputation and a
relatively stable institutional setup capable of surviving
a crisis. . . . In projecting the future pattern of dance
in America, there is urgent need for encouragement of
permanent companies that do exist and show potential for
growth--encouragement toward stability within their own
communities and encouragement to tour more widely than they
are now able to do." ¹⁸ In 1966, a \$300,000 Ford Foundation
grant established the Boston Ballet for good. ¹⁹

It has been noted that the company managed its transition from a regional group to a professional company "with grace". The company's continued growth saw Samuel Kurkjian joining the company initially as a dancer and part-time choreographer and then becoming the resident choreographer, ballet master, and second in command in 1967.

From 1970-1980 "when most companies were having their growing pains"²⁰ the company continued to grow with grace, but it was becoming more apparent that the growing pains were becoming more acute thus adversely affecting grace. In 1970 the company received \$350,000 from the Ford Foundation. That year the company and the school moved into newly renovated digs in the South End of Boston, an area in the process of being regentrified. In 1971, on the national level, NEA expanded its level of federal funding while on the local level, the company made its first national tour. Yet in 1971 the company's financial situation was grim. There were problems with deficit spending. The company was brought to a standstill. As a result, the board created a management staff to handle fund-raising, determine the budget, and the bookings. A company manager and fund raiser were hired. A Ford Foundation matching grant in the amount of \$470,460 to stabilize the Ballet was also received in 1971.

In 1972 "the new management hired an outside consulting firm to research ways in which the Boston Ballet could

broaden its appeal." ²¹ Fanger suggests that this was the first time a dance company . . . tried to put market research to work to sell dance as a product and service." ²² Becker would argue that market research personnel are new members of a collective who would now join others already in the art world of ballet in producing a product through cooperative activity, that is, staging ballets and what is necessary to bring these works of art into existence." ²³

Briefly, 1970-1975 may be viewed as a period of growth and change. The company celebrated its Tenth Anniversary Season 1973-1974. In 1975 Ford Foundation grants came to an end. The company thus became conservative shifting emphasis from an adventurous repertoire of both ballet and modern choreographers to classics that the company hoped would be big box office draws. In 1975 the board became a "prestigious" board with the addition of a Cabot. It is reported that, the very first board was composed primarily of the dancers' mothers, women who pitched in with all their time and energy. ²⁴ Another recalled, "'We didn't have much money to give, but Virginia gave us all jobs.'" ²⁵

Since 1978, the company has received about \$100,000 each year from NEA. In 1979 a new resident choreographer, Bruce Wells, was hired replacing Lorenzo Monreal who had succeeded Kurkjian in 1973. Also, in 1979 the official school and primary educational vehicle of the Boston Ballet was acquired by the company. In other words, in 1979, the

Boston Ballet School was formed as a nonprofit organization and an affiliate of the company. And between 1979-1982 the company toured the People's Republic of China, Israel, Europe, throughout the United States, and in the Far East.

From 1980-1984 a number of events and structural changes occurred that were instrumental in revealing what Harrison calls the "character" of an organization. In 1980, Violette Verdy, former New York City Ballet principal and former director of the Paris Opera Ballet was appointed co-artistic director. Williams, however, appeared to have continued functioning as the artistic director and her "suggestions" were usually followed where the choreography of Verdy and Wells was concerned. Lewis reported that Williams "very much involved" one day during a rehearsal of Swan Lake leaped out of her chair and commenced rearranging "swans". Lewis said: "What are the swans to do when Virginia Williams pelts into the corps, grabbing them by the wrists and moving them to where she wants them, then decides they would look better in a double line? The answer is obvious."²⁶

In 1981 the company began negotiations to send eighteen dancers to perform in South Africa in the Township of Soweto that June. Conditions set by the Boston Ballet included "a fully integrated company playing to integrated audiences, the whole company to be housed in the same hotels, and the principal dancer Augustus Van

Heerden, a Black born in South Africa be accorded all rights and dignities under international law." ²⁷ Only after public criticism was the proposed tour canceled. The board suggested that "touring there didn't any more signify support of apartheid than touring in China signified support of communism." ²⁸

In October 1982, Joel Garrick, former director of the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, was appointed president of the Boston Ballet. Soon after, in March 1983, Williams relinquished her post as co-artistic director of the company and Verdy became the artistic director. Williams now had the title of founder and artistic advisor. Lewis observed while watching the rehearsal of Swan Lake that, "though she hired Wells, Verdy, and one assumes Julia Trevelyan Oman (set and costume designer), she is not about to hand over the company to anyone." ²⁹ In an interview at the time of her stepping aside, Williams is reported to have said, "'I'm not retiring to Florida, mind you: I'm only in my 60s and its too early for that. I'll still be here, teaching in the school, coaching and rehearsing.'" ³⁰ Williams coached, rehearsed, and taught in the school for little more than a year until she became ill and was hospitalized on April 30, 1984 for a circulatory ailment. She died in a hospital in her adopted hometown of Malden, Massachusetts on May 8, 1984 as a result of complications following surgery.

Tobias said in writing about the Boston Ballet that:

Despite intelligent reorganization, the financial life, and thus the life, of the company is continually a matter of adept brinkmanship. What with the troupe's healthy, and, indeed, essential expansion and the rampantly increasing cost of production, the Boston Ballet, like so many comparable art enterprises, lives from crisis to crisis.³¹

An ongoing "crisis to crisis" situation persisted following the death of E. Virginia Williams. This situation had been labeled a "dust storm", an "epic war", and a "wartorn battlefield". After the company's first full-length production of Romeo and Juliet, the music director, David Commanday, left. On June 12, 1984, the president, Joel Garrick, was "forced" to resign. On June 24, Violette Verdy resigned and the board accepted her resignation that day. She had resigned immediately following Williams' death but the board had refused her resignation. In September, two "prestigious" board members resigned. Following this exodus, Bruce Wells, resident choreographer, was appointed interim artistic director. On December 24, the Boston Globe essentially suggested that the company eat crow when it reported not only that the "American ballet boom had thudded to a stop" but also that the Boston Ballet "was up for grabs".

Not quite. Without a chief executive, the board assumed undaunted, a straight-out managerial role. On January 6, 1985, the board appointed Bruce Marks, choreographer, and former leading dancer with American

Ballet Theater and Royal Danish Ballet, and recent artistic director of Ballet West in Salt Lake City, artistic director. Until Marks' appointment became official in June, Wells continued functioning as interim artistic director and then in June was appointed associate artistic director.

Marks, who will manage a budget of \$4.9 million, has a reputation as a "successful administrator". His stated goals include turning the company into a great national company with an eclectic repertoire while building on its stature as a classical company. He believes the company's first obligation is to the Boston and Massachusetts audience. A major change planned during his appointment is to disaffiliate the Boston Ballet School from the Boston Ballet Company by establishing it as separate organization with its own board--a move believed long overdue. Other changes are in the wind. Marks said, "'It is not going to be the old buddy club anymore. Boston deserves a real, professional company.'"

CHAPTER 4

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF MAJOR EVENTS

- ?1930. E. Virginia Williams opens her first dance school in Melrose, Massachusetts during the depression and eventually opens schools in the Boston suburban communities of Stoneham and Malden, the latter community, her adoptive hometown. She offers free classes to students whose parents cannot afford to pay.
1933. George Balanchine arrives in the United States at the invitation of Lincoln Kirstein, patron, to help establish a ballet academy, a ballet school, a ballet repertoire, and a ballet audience.
- ?1935-
1936. E. Virginia Williams studies with George Balanchine.
- 1935-
1936. First "large-scale effort" by the federal government to support the performing arts in the United States--but primarily established to promote employment during the depression. Music project set up to assist symphony orchestras, musicians, opera, and composers.
1936. Federal Theater Project and Federal Dance Theater

sponsors performances, tours, and helps to promote a nation-wide program of dance, mainly modern, although some ballet and ethnic dance is included. Choreography concerned either with American folklore or with socially liberal and minority-group themes.

1938. Dies Committee on Un-American Activities attacks the Federal Theater Project charging its employees as either being members of or sympathetic to the Communist Party.
1939. The Federal Dance Theater and Federal Theater Project destroyed by the House Dies Committee on Un-American Activities.
1940. E. Virginia Williams opens a dance school in Boston, the E. Virginia Williams School of Dance.
1953. Williams forms a performing unit made up of advanced students. She rents the Boston Opera House for a student concert performance. She also begins full-scale choreographing.
1957. The Ford Foundation undertakes a five-year study to investigate the state of the country's performing arts organizations and training institutions. W. McNeil Lowry, vice-president of the arts at the Ford Foundation travels around the country to learn where the best young dancers are trained, who their teachers are, and to visit

regional dance festivals in search of the people running dance companies to see if they are the types--"hair shirt types"--who will keep them going despite seemingly insurmountable odds. Williams' informal concert group begins touring the Northeast.

1957-
1964.

The Ford Foundation is the largest single contributor to the arts.

1958.

E. Virginia Williams' informal concert group officially incorporated and becomes the New England Civic Ballet of Boston. Williams uses "New England" in the name because she is interested in opening her company to students from other local dance schools and also to students from dance schools throughout the New England region. However, many teachers are skeptical and suspicious fearing that she will steal their best students. Thus, her plan to have a real regionally-based company is never realized.

1959.

The New England Civic Ballet of Boston performs at the First Northeast Regional Dance Festival in Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

1960.

Gifted students throughout the country receive Ford Foundation scholarships for advanced training in New York and San Francisco. Several of Williams' students are taken into the New York

City Ballet. Williams stops choreographing due to administrative duties. The School has four faculty members and one person performing secretarial and managerial duties.

1960-
1961.

George Balanchine, director and choreographer of the New York City Ballet and ballet master of the School of American Ballet, and Lowry see the New England Civic Ballet of Boston perform at the Second and Third Northeast Regional Ballet Festivals in Erie, Pennsylvania and in Dayton, Ohio respectively.

1960.

Balanchine invites Williams to New York for private coaching after seeing her group perform. She travels to New York once a month for one year for private coaching on technique, music, choreography, and is also invited to sit in on company classes and rehearsals. Sometime in here Balanchine becomes Williams' mentor. Lowry recommends Williams' work to the Ford Foundation. Balanchine and Lowry visit the New England Civic Ballet of Boston.

1963.

Williams alternately calls her company the New England Civic Ballet of Boston and the Boston Civic Ballet until Lowry advises her to name the company the Boston Ballet. The new name becomes official on June 18. Balanchine is designated

artistic advisor to Williams. The Ford Foundation announces (on December 19) it will begin a ten-year national program in ballet designed to "strengthen professional ballet in the USA". Approximately \$8 million is given to eight ballet organizations:

The New City Ballet and its affiliated School of American Ballet, The San Francisco Ballet, The Pennsylvania Ballet of Philadelphia, The Utah Ballet (now Ballet West), The Houston Ballet, The National Ballet of Washington, D.C. (now defunct), and The Boston Ballet. The Boston Ballet is granted \$144,000 over a three year period.

"Reactions are fierce." "Resentment and anger" spring from nonrecipients--the established but struggling ballet companies, the anti-Balanchine, the modern dance world, the civic ballet companies, and the dance world in the South and the Midwest.

1964. The National Council for the Arts is established within the Executive Office of the President. During the summer fourteen dancers give their first performance as members of the Boston Ballet at the Boston Arts Festival. In December the company presents The Nutcracker for the first time for one performance.

1965. In January the first official performance of the Boston Ballet is given in John Hancock Hall.

Congress creates a National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities as an independent agency of the executive branch of the federal government. The foundation consists of the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities. The major goals of NEA are to foster artistic excellence by helping to develop the nation's finest creative talent, to preserve its diverse cultural heritage, to make the arts available to a wider, more informed audience, and to promote the overall financial stability of arts organizations.

1966. A Ford Foundation grant of \$300,000 "establishes the Boston Ballet for good". That is, the money gives the company working capital, a cash flow vehicle, that allows the organization to have enough up-front cash to commit to producing better-quality ballets which will, it is believed, replenish the company financially through the sale of tickets.
1967. Samuel Kurkjian joins the company as a dancer and part-time choreographer. He becomes resident choreographer, ballet master, and second in command sometime in here.
1970. Company receives \$350,000 from the Ford Foundation.

The Boston Ballet moves into a new facility in the South End section of Boston.

1971. Somewhere between six and nine staff people and twenty-five dancers are members of the organization. The company goes on its first national tour. In September "deficit spending" and a "brinkmanship" method of dealing with fund shortages brings the company to a standstill. The board president "demands" that a professional management team responsible to the board be hired "to control the company's operations". A new treasurer, company manager, accountant, and fund raiser are hired. Williams is relieved of administrative duties but continues on as artistic director.

1971-1979. The Ford Foundation gives approximately \$8 million to help ballet companies to stabilize their financial positions.

1972. The Boston Ballet receives a \$470,460 Ford Foundation matching grant over a four-year period. An outside consulting firm is hired to research ways the company can broaden its appeal. There is a 65 percent increase in donations from forty-five different business organizations and foundations, excluding the Ford Foundation, plus individual gifts.

- 1972-
1973. The company participates in NEA coordinated Touring Residency Program.
- 1973-
1974. The company's tenth anniversary season.
1973. Lorenzo Monreal succeeds Kurkjian as the resident choreographer and ballet master. The company performs The Nutcracker in fourteen holiday presentations.
1975. The Ford Foundation grant ends. The company becomes more conservative. There is an emphasis shift from an "adventurous" repertoire of ballet and modern choreographers to the classics in order to increase ticket sales. The board becomes a "prestigious" board with the addition of Maryellen Cabot.
1976. Williams is awarded the Dance Magazine Award for outstanding contributions to American Dance.
1978. The company has thirty-two professional dancers paid union scale wages, an apprentice program, a repertoire of thirty ballets, and an orchestra.
1979. The First Boston Ballet Choreographers' Showcase is established by Williams to invite choreographers to set dances on the Boston Ballet for a cash prize. Bruce Wells, now resident choreographer and interim artistic director, is one of the six finalists from the more than 250 entries.

1980. The Boston Ballet Company, Inc. buys the Boston Ballet School from Williams and it is incorporated into the organization as a nonprofit affiliate of the company. The First Summer Dance Program, an eight-week course from June to September for preprofessional and professional ballet students between fourteen and twenty years old is held. The Second Boston Ballet Choreographers' Showcase is held. The company tours the United States and makes its first appearance in New York City. The company goes on its first (12-week) international tour of the People's Republic of China (the first American dance company to perform there since 1949) and performs in Peking, Canton, and Shanghai. The company also tours Israel, Italy, and France. Touring turns into a financial loss. Violette Verdy, former director of the Paris Opera Ballet and a former principal dancer of the New York City Ballet, is appointed co-artistic director (in September) with Williams as the other co-artistic director. Williams is named Distinguished Bostonian as part of the City's Jubilee 350.
1981. The company plans a South African Tour. Cancels trip after public criticism.
1982. Joel Garrick is appointed president of the

organization (in November). He is the former head of the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College. The roof of the company's performance headquarters almost caves in and the company has to move its biggest money maker, (The Nutcracker) at a considerable financial loss, to another facility.

1983. Williams relinquishes post as co-artistic director of the organization (in March). Verdy becomes the artistic director (in March). Williams is now known as the founder and artistic advisor. Balanchine, New York City Ballet co-founder and "ballet master of America", dies. Ballet superstar, Nureyev, injures leg and cannot perform with the company as its main attraction thus causing it to cancel its two-week run of Don Quixote at a considerable financial loss.

1984. Williams dies May 8. David Commanday, music director, resigns in May. Joel Garrick is asked to resign, effective June 12. Verdy resigns on June 24. Bruce Wells, resident choreographer and principal dancer is appointed interim artistic director on June 27. The company signs (in July) a three-year lease with the Wang Center for the Performing Arts that confirms a permanent performance home. Two "influential" board

members resign in September, Sunny Dupree and Maryellen Cabot. John Humphrey, board chairman, announces (in December) a new five-year strategic plan for the organization that outlines its mission, cost structures, and the roles of its top management people--the board, the artistic director, and the staff.

1985. Bruce Marks, former leading dancer with the American Ballet Theater and the Royal Danish Ballet and presently director of Ballet West in Salt Lake City, is appointed (in January) by the selection committee of the board as the Boston Ballet's new artistic director. Chosen from among fifty candidates his appointment becomes official in June. He has a reputation as a gifted organizer, administrator, fund-raiser, and image-maker. He is also considered to be in the "modern-ballet camp".

1985. The board announces (in February) its plan to make the school a separate organization with its own board of trustees. The move is designed to give the school "an independent focus". The Company's artistic director, Bruce Marks, announced (in April) that Sydelle Gomberg, dean for the arts at the Walnut Hill School of Natick, signed a contract to become the director of the Boston School of

Ballet, the affiliate of the Boston Ballet
Company.

CHAPTER 5

REFLECTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL EVENTS:

THE BOSTON BALLET

This section will look at problems of substantive conflict-in-development, conflict-in-growth, and conflict-in-change. These segments, or if you will, sequences of events, are reflections by organization members on the incidents, and episodes that happened at specified and unspecified times under different conditions and involving different individuals. In a relative sense, they all began at the same time, that is, when the organization first came into existence; however, in a historical sense, certain elements of events were more pronounced than others within the same time frame of the organization's history.

The Boston Ballet, a nonprofit performing arts organization, was characterized by its ability to survive, despite a history of "living from crisis to crisis". Throughout its more than fifty years of change, growth, and development, certain problems of a substantive nature persisted. They arose again and again, in recurring cycles, during periods of significant organizational change. The type of change, whether external or internal, the individuals involved, and the organizational climate at

the time, all combined to determine the extent, duration, and intensity of the problems.

An awareness of the nature of these three elements, the type of change, the individuals involved, and the organizational climate will enhance discovery of why certain problems associated with change evolve into recurring cycles of crises situations. In other words, attempts at reading these elements of organizational life may facilitate forming mental images that aid in determining conditions where problems of conflict may surface and thus become part of a cycle of crises situations. These cycles of crises situations occur when problems of a substantive nature accumulate and become part of an organization's repertoire of organizational problems. Consequently, they are always present, yet, dormant. Whether or not they surface is often dependent upon the kind of change proposed, the individuals involved, the organizational climate at the time of change.

It is mainly events of a conflictual nature that emerged and reemerged at different times and under different circumstances in the life of the organization and that are reflected on by organization members. These events, that began in 1971, simmered for more than a decade, and surfaced in 1984, are the latest in a series of events that occurred in what I would describe as "moment of truth" years. Thus, an attempt is made to pinpoint events in terms of dates,

and although reflections are organized separately around different "stories" of events based on substantive issues of conflict, they too, similar to time and history, often overlap and converge. The sense here is of time and history woven together, converging and overlapping.

The following events are selected from the views, experiences, and opinions of organization members who were involved in and/or aware of incidents and events in their organizational environment and who shared pictures of these events. These will aid in uncovering linkages between conflict phenomena, which may, in turn, help us understand how organizations learn or fail to learn. These events or reflections include:

1. Conflict because of a "meddling" and "overly-powerful" board of trustees reportedly controlled by an "inner circle".
2. Conflict between the artistic director and the president and/or others in the organization, e.g., over the kinds of ballets in the repertoire to be performed.
3. Conflict over a board of trustees unable to manage the organization's deficit or to ensure a stable financial future for the organization.
4. Conflict over the absence of uniformity in the style of dance characteristic of the company and the school.
5. Conflict between company dancers and students in the school over insufficient and uncomfortable studio space.

(Note: Quotation marks are also used throughout this chapter when referring to words and phrases spoken or written by others.)

A Meddling Board of Trustees

Board members should be as carefully screened as performers, and procedures for rotating membership should be considered. The potential for serious and prolonged damage to the organization is as high in the board room as on the stage.¹

The organization's very first board, about which little is known, was assembled in 1958 when the New England Civic Ballet of Boston, Incorporated was formed by nine incorporators. These, I suspect, were the first board members. The first board was made up mainly of parents, friends, balletomanes, and friends of friends. Five years later, in 1963, the New England Civic Ballet of Boston adopted the name, the Boston Ballet Incorporated, and was thus officially incorporated under law. The names of its incorporators are unknown. It is unknown how many board members there were at that time or if any of the first board members automatically became members of the Boston Ballet's board of trustees. However, upon reflection, a former board member counted off thirteen names. "The treasurer was a parent, Stanley Perry. The chairman was Harry Wilcott. We had somebody else before him who was a balletomane, Dr. William Stone. And there was a Mr. and Mrs. Burlingame. They were wealthy people. A few balletomanes who were brought in by friends of friends. Virginia Dunton. Virginia Stuart was the name she used in the New York City. Her mother, Liz Dunton was on the board for years, and Marjorie Duff, who really ran Virginia's School

in Malden as she got busier here in Boston. She had been with Virginia all along. Mr. Hobbs, Miss Williams' husband, and a couple of women who were sisters actually of Marjorie Duff--who was a ballet mother, but her child had already moved on to New York, Mrs. Harrington, who was Miss Williams' secretary and assistant for the whole period practically." In 1985, there were forty-four board members.

According to the corporate bylaws of 1963, the officers of the corporation included a director (chairman) who performed the functions and duties of a president, a treasurer, a secretary, and a clerk. This governing board was elected from the board of trustees. Section 3 of the bylaws stated that, "the Board of Governors shall have the control and management of the activities, policies, and property of the corporation and shall have and exercise all the powers conferred upon them or set forth in the charter of the corporation . . ."² In addition, to these general powers, other powers include:

To acquire by purchase, lease, or otherwise rights in any property, either real or personal, that they may deem necessary to the purposes of the corporation.

To borrow or raise money and execute notes of mortgages for the same in the name of the corporation.

To provide for the management of the affairs of the Corporation in such manner as they may think fit and in particular to delegate such power and authority as the laws of Massachusetts will permit to any committee, officer or agent.

At their discretion to appoint and remove committees, agents and employees, determine their duties and fix their compensation or may invest any officer or committees of the corporation with any or all of the powers in this sub-section.

To determine when, where and to what extent the books, accounts and records of the corporation shall be open to inspection by the members, except as otherwise provided by the General Laws of Massachusetts.³

Thus, it is the Board of Governors with its "unlimited" powers that is frequently referred to as the "inner circle" by individuals both internal and external to the organization.

I am now going to trace the historical development of the Board and its relation to the company and school.

In the early days, powers written into the bylaws had little impact on the organization as long as the founder had the dominant voice. In his discussion on governance and administration in performing arts organizations, Lowry suggests that, "if an artistic director were really the founder, even though without his or her own financial resources, the trustees gave up on major control except over the outside limits of budgetary planning".⁴ But as the Boston Ballet grew and the founder's strength imperceptibly became more diffuse, or eventually diminished, the board raised its flag more and more; eventually, organization members were saluting.

In 1971, when the board chairman "demanded" that Williams relinquish her administrative duties, Williams'

influence started to wane--at second glance--perhaps not so imperceptibly. In exercising their right to demand that change, the board for the first time since assembling in 1958 was demanding innovative change in organizational structure and roles. This act was not lost on a number of organization members who saw a rapidly growing organization no longer capable of achieving its goals as a "one-woman operation". Or perhaps Williams was no longer perceived as a symbol of change and development.

In 1975, when a "Boston Brahman" joined the board, many in the Boston area believed that the company's board had become "prestigious". Writing about Boston arts boards in general. Christine Temin, Boston Globe dance critic, commenting on Cabot and the Boston Ballet board said, "In 1983 she gave more than \$50,000 to the Ballet, which was not considered a 'prestige' board until she joined it in 1975." It is unknown if other "Boston Brahman" followed her in at that time; nonetheless, the complexion of the board seemed to change with its slowly increasing budget. With a wider range of board members, there followed a wider range of personal agendas.

However, between 1980 and 1982 when the organization was without a president, board members performed in that capacity. Some organization members suspected that the board's reputation for being "meddling" and "powerful" became entrenched and part of the organization's

standard operating procedure at that time. In fact, in 1983 when the founder/co-artistic director "stepped aside" thus allowing Verdy to become artistic director, it was assumed by many both inside and outside the organization that this move was brought about through the machinations of the board.

The major focus of the following comments is how organization members perceived the role of the board and the board's role and behavior during the Garrick-Verdy conflict.

A former board member said, "Now the idea is not necessarily to have people who are particularly interested in the dance or understand dance but who want to lend their name or either their money or who have friends who have money. The principal function of the board is to raise money but the original board did everything, whatever needed to be done." At present, the board members do not do everything. Others contend that they do not do anything. The general consensus of those members of the organization who were interviewed was that the board had a tendency toward "meddling" into the affairs of artists, managers, administrators, and even dancers, often expecting them to perform without pay at house parties and special events. There is clearly a conflict within the organization about the appropriate role of the board.

The consensus of the staff and management of the organization is that the major responsibility and function of the board should be to raise money. Some organizational members suggested that this was all they should do. An employee recalled, "I think that there is too much deadwood on the board. There are people who don't come to meetings, who do not either donate or fund raise the amount of money they're committed to, who have been on the board for too long. I think the new chairman of the board or the current chairman of the board has to bring on more people who are active and interested in the future of the company, not just because it is a social situation to be in. Most of the ones who are involved just for social reasons don't give that much money in the first place." One member of the organization observed that, "They all have artistic opinions and because they give money they feel that they have a right", and "if they were qualified, fine, but they're not. They're qualified in an entirely different area", and "I wonder sometimes how qualified they are. They come from many different backgrounds and in such things as corporate business, business is business, and there's a right way to sell or market your product no matter what the product is, but when it comes to artistic things, that's a whole different ball game. It's like me being the chief administrator of a hospital and walking

into the operating room and saying to a neurosurgeon, 'You shouldn't make a cut there.' Totally foreign to most people."

In 1983, the board walked into Williams' sphere--the sphere of the founder/artistic director--a sphere most likely "totally foreign" to many of the board members and said to her that it was time for her to "step aside". An organization member recalled that time, "Well, they wanted to make it look like her decision for continuity and they had her convinced it was the right thing for the company but she was not convinced. She was only doing it because she saw the writing on the wall. And she thought that if Violette took it over, it would bring new focus to the company, new energy, and that's all she really cared about and after Violette came on, she let it be known to many people in the organization that she'd made a mistake."

Williams over the years had acquired a reputation of being a persuasive person, and able to influence people both within and outside the organization. It is not clear why she did not attempt to convince or manipulate the board into allowing Verdy to bring new focus to the company as a guest instructor-in-residence. An organization member recalled her ability to influence others: "She had an effect over a number of people and we never knew how she did it to us. I saw it happen so many times. It's ironic because she kind of looked like a bag lady. So it wasn't

that she had a refinement that made you react, it was just something about her. She could manipulate people. Whether it was conscious or unconscious, I don't know, but it was not a confrontation. You had to chuckle as she walked away and say, 'She's done it again to me'. So I think that was a very valuable gift and that's what probably made her create all this. She was selfless enough that she didn't care if somebody ended up hating her because she had to ask nine hundred times for whatever. I don't think it mattered as long as she got what the organization needed. It didn't matter that people would say, 'Oh, here she is again, give her the money and shut her up.' And I think she would say, 'That's good now, I got the money. That's what I came for.'" Another employee recalled her technique, "There was something about her. You would sell your soul to the devil for her but not for anyone else. She had a genius for picking out the right person for the right job. She got all the credit. You knew that when you took it on, perfectly willing. That was her strongest point. She somehow could manipulate people and get them to kill themselves for the good of the company."

Violette Verdy, a former diva, pressured the board to make her the sole artistic director. The board complied in 1983, and Williams was assigned the titles of founder and artistic advisor. The board and the management team had by

that time, because of the financial losses in 1980 and 1981, developed a conservative fiscal policy. However, this policy was in conflict with Verdy's artistic goals. An employee described it this way, "She had big ideas for the company. So when she persuaded the board to persuade the founder to step aside and let her have the title, she wanted much bigger things than the board felt they could afford and she couldn't make them understand what she had in mind. You know, men will not listen to women. They just won't. Her principal concern was to be on a much higher level technically but the board wants to make the artistic decisions because they control the money and wanted to control not only the money but also the artistic decisions because what you do artistically depends on how much money you can spend and Virginia was able to wiggle around. Violette had no patience for that. She got no place with them during that period which was only a few months."

In 1984 the board had become "operational". An organization member pointed out how this happened. "In the past two years it has become more operational than it perhaps should be and I think they would agree with that and that is because we've had so much turmoil--both internal and external. It's very attractive for a board member to be operational, but I think they would agree that that is not their primary function here. It's great fun to come in once a month to a meeting and be a problem

solver and get right in there and muck around", and "We had a space of time between them (presidents) where there was a board member who was like an acting president. Maybe that . . . I don't know. I've heard people say that they don't raise as much as they should and do meddle more than they should."

Both the president, Garrick, and the artistic director, Verdy, were trying to influence and control the board. During this struggle the organization lost its founder. Williams died on May 8, 1984. Two "influential" board members, Sunny Dupree and Maryellen Cabot, followed Verdy and resigned from the board in September 1984. An organization member recalled these resignations, "The two board members who left, Dupree and Cabot, was a function of . . . they really had no choice in their minds. They were staunch supporters of Violette. When Violette said, 'You've got to fire Garrick', and they said, 'Yes, we have to do this because Violette is the future of the company.' Then when Violette bolted and left everybody holding the bag, they had to save face," and "Verdy and Cabot and Dupree were all one swoop. Verdy was best friends with Maryellen Cabot and Dupree was trying to, through Maryellen Cabot, manipulate the board, Cabot having been former chairman of the board, and Sunny Dupree was just Cabot's friend . . . and when Verdy resigned and quit then Dupree and Cabot had to because they said that if they didn't fire Joel

Garrick and keep Verdy that they would leave the board and when Verdy resigned, they had to."

In December 1984, the board's response to this organizational turmoil was to design a "new strategic plan" that would address some organizational problems. One of the goals of the strategic plan was to "improve the quality of on-stage performances and the community's perception of the company's artistic quality". This meant placing emphasis on supporting a community-driven ballet company, an organization member recalled, "There are four kinds of ballet companies a board might be willing to support--community-driven, choreographer-driven, tradition-driven, and dancer-driven. A community-driven ballet company is interested in providing the art of dancing and the product that the company produces, ballets and performances, to a geographically-centered area that is Boston. That is sensitive to the needs and wants of the Boston-area community both in the kind of repertoire we want to provide them with and with other services both educational and community enrichment that will contribute to the community in a way that the community would feel good about it. And we've recently expanded the concept of community-driven to New England. So its not just Boston. The idea is to regain our base of support--to regain the support of the people who really make us here."

Ironically, the past had become the future. Almost

thirty years earlier when the informal concert group was incorporated into a civic ballet company, Williams wanted to establish a regional dance company. An organization member recalled, "In the beginning, we tried to open it to all the schools, first to all the local schools and then all the New England schools but the teachers were afraid that she was trying to steal their best pupils away so they were all very suspicious and resentful and that was why she was going to call it the New England Ballet Company--some phrase with "New England" in it--hoping to make it a regional company, an entire New England regional group, but that was most unsuccessful." Thus, one of the board's "Strategic Plan Goals for the Fiscal year '86 would be a return to Williams' original idea. Finally, in January 1985, the board appointed Bruce Marks as the organization's third artistic director. Marks assumed his position in June 1985.

Thus, the role of the board and how it carried out its duties and responsibilities in its effort to fulfill its obligations evoked a number of comments from organization members. Often, the motives of various members were questioned. Even though the board exercised power acquired through its 1963 corporate bylaws, organization members expressed concern about the board having too much power. In terms of managing the organization, there were questions about whether or not the board was qualified to manage a performing arts organization. The consensus was that the

primary function of the board was not to manage the Ballet but to raise funds and endeavor to ensure the organization's financial stability.

The board's reason for being assembled in the early days was to help establish, build, and expand a ballet company and school. At that time, the goals of the founder and the goals of the board were, in most instances, compatible. This early situation created an organizational environment where conflict over differences were either nil, did not arise, or if they did, were few, and manageable. However, as the organization grew and developed, new people arrived whose primary concern was not the growth of a ballet company but working in a job that happened to be in a performing arts organization. Consequently, conditions for conflict also grew and developed.

Another issue of concern to organization members was the manner in which the board, as governing body, carried out its role in situations of organizational conflict. That is, how well had the board managed or resolved problems of conflict between and among those members of the organization they managed? Were they effective at managing or resolving conflict, or rather, were they, on occasion, parties to or even sources of organizational conflict? For example, were they parties to the Garrick-Verdy conflict? Had their "meddling" in management and artistic matters provoked that conflict?

These questions remain unanswered; however, they will be considered again in Chapter 6, Explanations.

The Artistic/Management Dichotomy

Certainly in staff, the programmatic side of a nonprofit organization, direct training, experience, and skill in the field of activity is the primary criterion by which people should initially be judged . . . However, on the management side, the issue is not clear.⁶

In chapter 8 of The Performing Arts: Problems and Prospects, it is noted that a "good manager" in a performing arts organization is many things--"an impresario, a labor negotiator, a diplomat, an educator, a publicity and public relations expert, a politician, a skilled businessman, a social sophisticate, a servant of the community, a tireless leader--becomingly humble before authority--a teacher, a tyrant, and a continuing student of the arts".⁷ Of course, if these are the criteria by which to measure a "good manager", then indeed a "good manager" must be really hard to find. A person functioning in a number of multifarious roles must surely end up stepping on his own toes and frequently on the toes of many others in his organization. In fact, it was reported that, "one ballet world source says that recently no fewer than 11 US troupes were looking for managers, with one Sun Belt company desperate enough to offer a six figure salary".⁸

Since 1971 the company has had two presidents, two general managers, four business managers, and three

artistic directors. In terms of top management, the first president, Michael Judson, worked in that capacity for about eight years, and as one employee recalled, "He was very young when he got the position and sort of grew with the company". The second president, Joel Garrick, was hired after a three-year hiatus and worked in that capacity for one year and a half. The founder, E. Virginia Williams, was the artistic director of the company for more than twenty years and of the school for more than forty years. The artistic director, Verdy, worked in that capacity for about fifteen months and as co-artistic director for three years. The third artistic director, Bruce Marks, began in June 1985.

Before Williams opened her school in Boston in 1940 she had "taught in six different schools in and around Boston".⁹ However, in her own school she not only taught but worked as artistic director, i.e., ballet mistress and choreographer and as chief administrator. Throughout the years she continued and increased working in a number of different capacities. Her best students grew into an informal dance troupe, then into a regional ballet company, and then into a professional ballet company. But in 1960, two years after her informal dance troupe was incorporated as the New England Civic Ballet of Boston, she began relinquishing her duties. First she gave up full-time choreographing that year because of pressing administrative

duties and responsibilities. Then in 1971, Williams was asked to "surrender" her administrative duties when the board hired a new management team to "control the company's operations". In 1980, she shared her artistic directorship until she relinquished that post in 1983. In 1983, and again, as in the beginning, she was teaching in a school. The difference was that the school was no longer her school, for in 1980 she had sold the Boston School of Ballet, her privately-owned school to the organization, the Boston Ballet, and the school thus became known as the Boston Ballet School, Incorporated. Even so, she continued functioning not as artistic director but as artistic advisor both to the company and the school that she had earlier founded.

When other people began to occupy the role(s) previously occupied by Williams, a change in the organizational climate and structure followed. A number of administrative duties previously performed by Williams were now distributed among four members of the new management team who were assigned the duties and responsibilities of persons functioning in the positions of treasurer, accountant, company manager, and fund-raiser. However, the differences that ensued, especially between artistic and management staffs and their directors, accelerated in 1980 with the arrival of the company's second artistic director, Verdy, gained momentum in 1982 with the arrival of the

company's second president, Garrick, and escalated into open warfare in 1984 with the death of the organization's founder, E. Virginia Williams.

The following are comments by organization members that focus on events related to and about the conflict between the artistic director and the president.

There had been growing for years and years and years a sense of division between the artistic and management, a sense that it was the artistic against management . . . management against artistic, depending on what side of the alley you happened to be on. (A member of the management team of the Ballet)

The foundation for this conflict was established in 1971 when the board hired a management team that was responsible to the board and removed the administrative duties and responsibilities of E. Virginia Williams. However, since the first president was "very young" and "sort of grew with the company", the implication is that despite the arrival of the new management team, Williams, perhaps due to her position and personality, was able to influence the organization's "young president". Also, it was assumed he would voluntarily consent to her wishes or demands. Following her death, an organization member recalled, "She was the mainstay. She was the mother figure, the father figure--the one we all looked to. Everybody thought she would be here forever but that wasn't to be. We all looked to her. She was very strong". Thus, the success and reputation of the Boston Ballet continued to grow even though the foundation for the

artistic/management conflict had been set. The board of trustees pressured Williams to bring in an associate director. Their overriding concern was to find someone who was not too old and someone with a big name. They were interested in a big name because they thought the public was also interested in a big name. Thus, they thought the publicity that would follow a big name would indirectly attract more people and money to the ballet. One member of the organization commented, "I don't know if a big name is vital. They cast about for a long time and She (Williams) didn't want to do it. She was never the kind that could work with anyone. She wanted to make all the decisions, all the rules."

Violette Verdy was hired as co-artistic director in 1980. She had earned an international reputation as a prima ballerina with the New York City Ballet and had worked as the director of the government-supported Paris Opera Ballet. Verdy was also nineteen years younger than Williams. She also wanted to add more of the "lavish" nineteenth century story ballets to the repertoire and to emphasize touring accompanied by well-known guest artists. Verdy was able to persuade the board to make her sole artistic director in 1983.

Joel Garrick was appointed president of the Boston Ballet in 1982. He was the chief administrator of both the school and the company and was thus responsible for

carrying out the goals set forth by the board of trustees in the official documents of the organization. It was also expected that Garrick would increase the organization's revenues and increase its artistic reputation by devising and implementing a plan that would allow the organization to serve not only its primary Boston audience but also its secondary regional audience.

When Verdy was able to persuade the board to make her artistic director, she and Garrick naturally came into conflict, first of all, because the artistic/management battle lines had been drawn before either parties had arrived on the scene, and second, because Garrick appointed president at the same time Verdy was artistic director aggravated the conditions for conflict. As one organization member recalled, "They both had volatile personalities. Personally, they didn't get along very well." They both expected that his or her job was to shape the future direction of the organization. One member of the organization noted that Verdy's contract, "gave her unlimited powers within the organization and approval over many areas of administration that made it difficult to get the work done. It required so many approval steps that got in the way of what was clearly a president's responsibility --making sure that projects happen. The contract suggested that she wanted control over things that should have been the purview of the president yet she wasn't capable of that.

She didn't have the experience nor did she have the ability to handle everything. And on the other side of it, the president did muck around in things that were clearly none of his business, none of his responsibility, under any sort of a description of what a president should be doing."

The only thing that prevented this natural conflict from growing into a declared and open war was the mediation of Williams. She acted as a "buffer" between the president and the artistic director. An organization member recalled, "Joel was having lots of problems with Violette. He really couldn't get anything done and couldn't tell what she wanted and they weren't talking to each other. It was just a mess, and on the other hand Violette was essentially incapable of communicating clearly or in a way that people could understand. I would say most people in the organization stopped trying to figure out what it was and and just sort of went with whatever way it went that day," and "She (Williams) was a buffer that provided a mediator kind of viewpoint". Williams' primary concern was getting the parties to reach a truce before a situation developed that would jeopardize the organization's image. Again, her major concern was "the good of the company".

A member of the company recalled this activity: "She was so effective that she kept her mouth shut, she wouldn't mention it. She would see a problem happening and would let it get to the point where it was just about to bust and then

she would go in there and make everything all right. It took the bite out of the punch, but it kept people working together where they would have fumed, split, and we would have faced the ultimate break that we did ultimately face."

When E. Virginia Williams died on May 8, 1984, the conflict between Verdy and Garrick broke into "open war". In talking about the organizational climate before Williams' death, an organization member recalled, "I think it was pretty wartorn before her death. She was the person with the white flag going from trench to trench. When the person with the white flag went away there was no one to say, 'Stop shooting'". And "There were power struggles even before her death that really came to a head when she died. The president wanted to make artistic decisions and was not qualified to do so . . . The artistic director wasn't a decision-making type of person, didn't like dealing with boards, didn't deal well on that level, didn't realize that just didn't work." Nonetheless, when Verdy presented the board with a "him" or "me" choice, the board perceiving Verdy as the "greater talent" asked Garrick to resign. Commenting succinctly on why Garrick rather than Verdy was forced to resign, an organization member recalled, "They felt that Violette was the greater talent," and "Actually, the reality of it was Violette forced his resignation by essentially saying its him or me and at that point there was no one on the board

willing to throw Violette out in order to keep Garrick. Then three weeks later she said that not only was Garrick the problem but also the board chairman. She said, 'I want him to resign'. It was at that point that several members of the board started standing up and saying, 'Now just a minute'. That was when she resigned." Another organization member recalled, "So Joel was fired and Violette actually wanted four other people fired in the organization at that time. She said she could not have control of the company until we were all gone." The four other people were the board chairman, the general manager, a resident choreographer, and the marketing director. Thus when the board refused her requests, Verdy resigned effective June 24, 1984. Another organization member recalled that, "Violette wanted everyone who ever said 'No' to her on a monetary matter out of the organization. She said they didn't understand her artistically and that she couldn't function."

This section has attempted a consideration of the division and differences that developed between persons engaged in management and in artistic activities at the Ballet--differences that surfaced and erupted into open conflict following the death of Williams between the president, Garrick, and the artistic director, Verdy. The management/artistic struggle appeared inevitable in that it grew out of a situation where one person as founder

and leader, Williams, had functioned in several positions, including artistic director and manager, for a number of years without an apparent need to define her tasks or write them up in job description form, for as long as she was around, she could tell organization members what to do and how to do it. However, as the organization grew and developed, persons hired to perform in the areas where Williams and others had previously performed (and where Williams frequently continued to function) found themselves in situations where it was never quite clear to them exactly where and what they should be doing and for whom.

Ironically, specialists hired to improve the organization's efficiency often found themselves in situations where they were not allowed to do so without interference.

The Verdy-Garrick conflict under those circumstances was inevitable. These two individuals, both new to the organization and both hired to improve the organization's image and efficiency, clashed because there were no clearcut guidelines suggesting to them where they were to perform their tasks, the bounds within which they were to perform, what tasks they were to perform, and where in the organization their differences could be discussed, managed, or resolved rather than buffered or suppressed as their conflict was in its early stages. Neither Garrick nor Verdy had organizational guidelines to support their activities. At that juncture, it would have been innovative

of the board to have established some sort of guidelines, perhaps even in the form of job descriptions. This strategy may have been viewed by organization members as a step towards alleviating the Verdy-Garrick conflict and some of the conditions for that conflict, rather than being viewed as a measure to institutionalize a performing arts organization or as a strategy of control. However, following the resignations of Garrick and Verdy, a step taken by the board in alleviating future conflict between organization members engaged in artistic and management activities involved eliminating the position of president.

Financial Instability

The Boston Ballet received \$144,000 for three years in 1963 from the Ford Foundation. In 1966 the Ford Foundation provided the Boston Ballet with a grant of \$300,000. This money gave the ballet the working capital to produce ballets that would generate revenue. In 1970 the Boston Ballet received \$350,000 from the Ford Foundation. These funds were the result of E. Virginia Williams' contact with the Ford Foundation through George Balanchine and W. McNeil Lowry. Although a financial crisis in 1971 caused Williams to be stripped of administrative duties in the Boston Ballet, she was able to obtain a four-year \$470,460 matching grant from the Ford Foundation; the purpose of the grant was to stabilize the organization financially. A member of the

organization recalled, ". . . 1973-74 were real rough times. There were rumors of not being able to meet the payroll and people had to go out and ask trustees to make their donations so that they could make the payroll. I was never asked to go without a paycheck but I'm sure it was close to that." In 1975 the Ford grant ended and the Boston Ballet, in order to increase ticket sales, became more conservative in its repertoire. In 1979, the ballet initiated a series of national and international tours, expensive, and not always financially successful. In 1980, the Boston Ballet Company bought the Boston School of Ballet from Williams, incorporated the school as a nonprofit affiliate of the company, the Boston Ballet School, and in 1982 and 1983 used resources from the school to meet company expenses.

In 1984 the company nearly went bankrupt again. A staff member commented, "In 1984 we were at the edge of our credit. We essentially just squeaked by. We were at the point where we were seriously considering whether we were going to meet the payroll and then we came out of it," and "We're on much more stable footing now, but there had to be a lot of belt tightening." Capacity attendance at the 1984 traditional holiday performance of The Nutcracker and a major second settlement on the insurance claim from damages suffered as a result of injury to a guest artist helped stabilize the organization financially. One person said, "The combination of those two put us in a better position

but certainly not out of the woods and not to a place where we should abandon recapitalizing."

The financial situation of 1984 was a result of two events and deviation from an organizational plan. As one organization member recalled, "In October 1984 the company was near bankrupt. We lost a reasonable amount . . . primarily caused by two events that we had no control over and a deviation from a plan that wasn't really thought through and deviation from the plan was the decision to essentially change our season in Boston and go on tour with a guest artist and take the glamorous route as opposed to the route that was consistent with the plan. And almost at the same time the first force majeure situation. The Wang Center had to close for an unsafe roof. We had to move our Nutcracker to Hynes Auditorium. We were unable to perform eight or nine of the performances we had scheduled, so we had not the opportunity to make the income we had budgeted and that resulted in a half-million dollar shortfall relative to budget. It was the opportunistic approach and long-term trade-off. We would do a tour in Europe that would lose money, at the end of which we would do a production in Boston whereby we would make it all back, and some, to put the company in a better net position. We did all the part of the tour that lost money and we got here to Boston and due to an injury the guest artist had to cancel after the first night. He cancelled eleven of the twelve performances and

that was another \$500,000 net loss. We were insured for it, but that was just in October of last year we received the second portion of the settlement on that claim," and "You set a plan in motion and if you don't get the revenue at the end of it, you've already paid out most of it. So we continued to get ourselves in a worse net position and that meant going to the banks, setting up a line of credit and going into debt with the banks. That's why I was saying 1984." The problem of financial instability persisted throughout the organization's history, as was the case in many nonprofit performing arts organizations that were frequently unable to manage their deficits or to ensure their organization's fiscal health.

The fact of financial instability was not explicitly expressed in my interviews as a subject of conflict. Nevertheless, methods for alleviating the problem were often viewed in terms of duties and responsibilities of board members who were sometimes seen as failing to fulfill their fund-raising obligations. Organization members agreed that the primary function of the board should be to raise funds, "to provide adequate direct financial contributions and commitment to fund-raising"¹⁰. The view that the board should be ensuring the organization's financial stability seemed based on interview comments, less a subject for discussion of organizational conflict than discussion of the fact that the board was not fulfilling its primary task of

raising funds. Perhaps these phenomena were perceived as being intertwined. In that case, it is assumed that respondents did not see where it was necessary to discuss the board's fund-raising role in relation to the board's role of bringing financial stability to the organization.

In discussing the duties and responsibilities of board members in nonprofit organizations, especially their fund-raising duties, Wolf suggests that, "trustees must support the organization in spirit, encouraging others to be as enthusiastic about its programs and activities as they are; and they must support the organization more tangibly with money, demonstrating that those closest to the organization, its trustees, are 100 percent committed to it."¹¹ With emphasis, Wolf continued, "put quite simply, everyone who serves on a board of trustees must contribute some cash every year to their organization," and "how much they contribute is another matter, but there should be no ambiguity about the requirement of some sort of annual cash gift."¹² Trustees were expected to contribute \$5000 a year, but an employee recalled that exceptions were made. Based on comments from organization members, the Boston Ballet did not have any exceptionally generous patrons.

Thus, in the case of the Boston Ballet, as with most nonprofit performing arts organizations, the board had to contribute and raise funds. But in order to successfully raise funds, an organization's "financial house" had to be

in order. Again Wolf pointed out that for an organization to raise "significant funds," it must take the following steps to "dress itself up properly":

1. It must put its fiscal affairs in order.
2. It must develop a convincing case for support that relates to the contributor's own funding agenda.
3. It must demonstrate a strong commitment and involvement of its board of directors in all phases of the fund-raising effort.¹³

In terms of the board and the organization's history of financial instability, again, a major concern of some organization members was whether or not the board was, in fact, dedicated enough to ensuring, or at least attempting to ensure, "fiscal health" for the organization. Concerns of some of organization members thus evolved around the following subjects that both affected the organization's future and the means chosen by the board members to provide a financially stable organizational environment:

Extensive National and International Touring. In 1983 the company toured for six weeks in Europe visiting Belgium, Italy, and England. They danced in Swan Lake and Don Quixote, two full-length story ballets. Nureyev was the famous guest artist accompanying them. According to a Boston Globe report, "the advantage of the company's summertime tours according to company president, Joel Garrick, is extra weeks of employment for the dancers, which benefits them both financially and in honing their skills

before audiences. As for the company finances, the tour was essentially a break even function."¹⁴ This same article also reported that, "Garrick noted it was still, in terms of attracting producers and audiences, essential¹⁵ for the Boston Ballet to tour with a guest artist."

In 1980 the Boston Ballet toured the People's Republic of China. A DanceMagazine article reported that, "Although the burden of expenses has not been determined yet, the company expects to pay a substantial portion of the costs. It will attempt to raise \$250,000 from corporate¹⁶ sponsors."

In the August 1984 issue of DanceMagazine, it was reported that the Boston Ballet failed to maintain its identity at home while touring from 1979-82 to the People's Republic of China, the Far East, Europe, and throughout the United States. This same article noted that, "some major patrons are eager for the Boston Ballet to return to China for a second tour, and in general, to travel more often. Many others hope that the company will sink its roots deeper into its home territory and grow¹⁷ healthier before it continues its globe trotting."

The Ballet's new and third artistic director, Bruce Marks, according to DanceMagazine, "says he already has plans for change. Under Verdy's leadership, the ensemble toured extensively in the unglorious capacity of back-up company, mostly with Rudolph Nureyev--a direction to which

Marks is adamantly opposed."

Famous Guest Artists. In The Performing Arts and American Society, Gelles, in chapter 8, "The Ballet", an account of the Pennsylvania Ballet and its director, Babara Weisberger, quoted Weisberger on guest artists: "Don't think you are going to snare the public and then do all the things you really wanted to do. It doesn't happen that way. Your audience feels cheated mentally after that or they get mentally set to expect guests all the time. And what have done? You've defeated your most important purpose, which is to perpetuate, to continue. You've also hurt the morale of the dancers, who, except in very specific instances, don't want to work all year and then have the goodies given away . . . anyway, it is a myth that you sell a million tickets because you have a guest artist. First of all, it is stupid to bring in somebody whose talent is way up there while the rest of your company is way down here. Get your dancers built up to the level where they are so good that they are going to be asked to be guest
19
artist."

The Audience. A public opinion survey conducted in January 1973 revealed that, "The American public . . . has had more limited exposure to ballet and modern dance than to
20
any other art with the exception of opera." In response to the question, "If you were going to a dance performance,
21
which type of dancing would you most like to see?",

fourteen percent chose classical ballet, twenty-four percent chose folk and ethnic dance, twenty-two percent chose modern dance, eleven percent chose ballroom dancing, and four percent chose tap dancing.²²

The National Endowment for the Arts in its 1984 annual report noted that, "Dance . . . in 1965 had an audience of approximately one million (80 percent based in New York City), now claims attendance of 16 million in most parts of the country."²³ In contrast, NEA also reported that, "61 percent of the adult population in 1982 did not attend a single jazz, classical music, opera, musical/operetta, theatrical, or ballet performance, or visit an art museum or gallery."²⁴ Data on attendance at just ballet performances are in the process of being compiled at NEA.

In terms of audience preferences, it is unknown if an audience survey was ever conducted in the Boston and New England region to determine audience preference for the kinds of ballets it would like to see performed and also to determine audience constituencies. In discussing the small ballet audience in Boston, one organization member recalled, "there is a limited audience for ballet and we tried to experiment with some modern pieces some years back and they were soundly rejected. They only wanted Swan Lake and The Sleeping Beauty. So a great deal of progress has been made in that area. People are much more receptive to new work.

The younger portion of our audience like to see experimental things. They receive them better. Their minds are more open, not having a preconceived idea of what classical ballet is, you know, tutus and pointe shoes. It can be a lot more than that."

Ballet company repertoires usually include the classical 19th and 20th century ballets, ballets created by contemporary choreographers, ballets created especially for a particular company, and the large-scale full-length story ballets. The Boston Ballet has in its repertoire works in all four groups, along with works in the modern dance idiom. Its contemporary classics are mostly works by Balanchine and it leans towards the traditional ballets. Somewhere around 1979 how and why a board decision was made to stage the expensive full-length story ballets despite the organization's shaky financial situation remained unknown; however, it is safe to assume the big ballets came with Verdy. Commenting on the costs of producing repertoire works, an organization member said, "The cost of producing, it's funny. It's like the balloon, the air expands to fill the available space. You can spend as much as you want on a particular production--depending on what you're counting--dancers' salaries, administrative salaries, overhead for the company . . . I think we would all be shocked and amazed at how much a ballet really costs us." Lewis, in discussing the full-length story ballet,

Swan Lake, said in 1981, "It costs about a quarter of a million dollars to produce a ballet of that size and elaborateness."²⁵

Subscription Lists, Contributions, and Ticket Sales are all affected by the end of the ballet boom. This change will adversely affect the organization's survival unless innovative measures are designed and implemented to counteract financial problems brought about by this change. Despite an increase in subscriptions at the Boston Ballet from 5800 in 1982 to 10,000 in 1984, an 80 percent increase; in contributed income from \$600,000 to \$1.2 million during the same period, a 100 percent increase, and the fact that ticket sales were essentially 90 percent of all earned income, funds needed to be raised.

Corporate Support. The corporate world of Boston does not ordinarily support the art world of ballet. Corporate support is low. Still, the company recently received a \$125,000 grant from the Merrill Lynch Pierce Fenner and Smith stock brokerage firm. Even so, corporate support in Boston accounts for 1.8 percent of the combined operating budgets of arts groups as compared to 4 percent in San Francisco, 10 percent in Houston, and 14.6 percent in Minneapolis.

Public Support. The Boston Ballet has a \$4.9 million annual budget and although it receives support from the

National Endowment for the Arts to promote artistic development, financial stability, and performance activities; the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities to provide basic support, and expects to receive support from the Greater Boston Arts Fund to expand and strengthen its financial resources, these funds will not be enough, even if combined, for the organization to carry out all of its activities.

The National Arts Stabilization Fund is a fund created and supported by the Ford, Rockefeller, and Mellon Foundations to expand and strengthen the financial resources of performing and other arts organizations. Boston was selected as its "pilot city" and will be provided with \$3 million over several years to be matched by \$3 million from the Greater Boston Arts Fund, a public/private effort that is a branch of the National Arts Stabilization Fund. The Greater Boston Arts Fund is made up of thirty corporations, the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, and the Permanent Charities Fund. Middle-sized performing arts organizations like the Boston Ballet were in the first batch of organizations to receive funds. The huge groups--the symphony, the museum, and the opera were in a later batch.

Finally, in view of the organization's limited resources, how board members and those in top management

responded to the high costs of a program of extensive national and international touring, the contracting of famous guest artists, the small ballet audience, the lack of corporate support, and the changeable nature of public and non-corporate private support would, because of their importance, ultimately have an impact on the organization's financial situation. The status of the organization's financial health was, in large part, determined by the organization's policy and budgetary decisions. If these decisions proved impractical for whatever reasons then, the board and others in top management positions would again have created conditions for the existence of organizational conflict.

Teaching Styles in the School

E. Virginia Williams began teaching in the 1930s when she was sixteen years old. For more than half-a-century she taught ballet and during that time developed her own teaching and dance "style." She produced a number of professional dancers recognized for their technique and style--"dancing's concerns." By 1960 many of her former pupils were working in the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Robert Joffrey's American Ballet Center Company, the San Francisco Ballet, the New York City Ballet, the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, Radio City Music Hall with the Rockettes, and in companies in Europe and Canada.

In 1976 Tobias wrote,

The company has a marked cohesiveness of style. The dancers move with delicacy and care--a physical sensitivity and a fine sense of placement and awareness of line. Their performances are honest, understated--in fact they might do with a bit more boldness in space, and panache--happily, with no theatrical or stylistic excesses. They reflect their founder's manner.²⁶

Williams' style resulted from her unique teaching style, a method of instruction that combined the classic steps, movements, and positions and the techniques of the romantic ballet. Commenting again, Tobias said that the hallmark of her teaching and of her company was her sense of structure, taste and style.²⁷

However, by 1983, neither company dancers nor school pupils were being described as having any particular style or possessing a cohesive and unique style of dancing. A 1982-83 internal task force report recommended the need for students in the school "to grow in the 'style' of the Boston Ballet so that they will be ready to join the company." Nonetheless, a description of that style was not outlined in the report nor defined in terms that would clarify what the organization aspired to in terms of its own dancing style. In 1983, in discussing the status of the company, a reporter said, ". . . it could become something dazzling. I mean, if it finally realized that what it needs more than anything is an identity. One built on a repertoire that was unmistakably

its own. A mixture of new choreography and classic works that signaled a personality and a mind behind the whole thing." ²⁸

In sum, Williams' style became less pronounced in the school after she began devoting more of her time to building the company. Consequently, students emulated the styles of a number of different teachers and thus a variety of styles emerged rather than one style or "one single point of view." And since many of the company dancers were not trained in the school, they could also be described as having a multitude of styles, or more specifically no particular style.

So, the dance style in the school and the school itself are the major topics of the following comments.

The first priority of the Boston School of Ballet was to survive. Officially incorporated as "The Boston Ballet School" in 1980, its second priority was to turn out as many good dancers as possible. The only difference then and now was that in the beginning the school didn't have a company to feed dancers into and they were thus fed into other companies. However, now the organization would like to keep them for its own company if they are available. One member of the organization recalled, "I would say the original idea still stands--a really good solid dancing school that gives good training. So what we want to do is to be the

be all and end all of perfection technically, to train them right, and to constantly maintain our high standards." And because the school is the only professional ballet school associated with a professional company in the region, this feature allowed students in preprofessional and open classes to observe professional dancers and use these dancers as their models to aid them in determining how far they had to improve in order to reach a level of professionalism necessary to become a member of the company.

Williams earned her reputation not only as the founder of a ballet school and company but also as teacher of preprofessional, professional, and nonprofessional dancers. The number of professional dancers she trained has been well-documented. Nonetheless as the company grew and demanded more of her time in administrative matters, she spent less time teaching in the school and did not have the trained personnel nor the time to maintain the quality of teaching at the level she had brought the school. At the time of her death, the amount of time she had spent in the school was very limited. Members of the organization recalled, "Before her death Williams had a limited schedule of teaching because she was pulled in many directions. She was terribly preoccupied for some

years. So her schedule was unpredictable because she was filling in for an instructor in one of her suburban schools who was very ill--even when she was ailing herself," and "In the past year she couldn't make it in and it was very difficult getting her to make instantaneous decisions. But at the same time, an authority figure was missing in the school." As a result, the situation was frustrating both for Williams and others because not only were decisions not being made but also the styles and techniques of different instructors were not being monitored. Thus the goal of producing and moving dancers into the company was on hold.

Some teachers in the school failed to continue training students in the Williams' style and manner that earlier had produced dancers who were recruited into the major ballet companies in the United States, Canada, and Europe. Many of these dancers also found employment in the theater, in television, in films, and in teaching. Something had occurred to change the training and teaching techniques used by Williams, for without her constant presence and guidance and strength to ensure that her "uncompromising" high standards were being maintained, adhered to, and in turn imparted to her students, her style apparently became less cohesive, less distinct, and gradually a number of lesser styles were reflected in the students' styles and levels of

ability. That is, the same "language" was no longer being taught. The result of this at first seemingly imperceptible process over the years became a major source of conflict as her presence and guidance were felt less and less in the organization. That is, the conflict over teaching styles. Commenting on the quality of teaching, an organization member recalled, "It is an important quality in the dance world that you retain your history . . . to keep the similar focus so that we're talking the same language. We're not always teaching the same language."

Commenting on this conflict, an organization member said, "I think we have some very good teachers in the school and I think we also have some terrible teachers. Unfortunately, the division seems to come in the levels of the school. In the beginning levels, I think our teaching staff leaves a lot to be desired. I think there is much that needs to be changed, altered, or replaced. It's an important area. The good teachers want to teach the advanced students and be able to do wonderful combinations, partnering, and variations. Unfortunately, what I keep seeing is that when you get people that really have something to give, they want to work with the company," and "Right now, the growth and the development of the school is not the same as the company as it should be. Most people in the Boston Ballet have not been trained at the Boston Ballet. That is not right. Forty years and

we're not making it."

On the other hand, a member of the school noted that, "In five years, you're going to see development--a more cohesive style. A group of exercises designating how much a student should learn within a year. I would say in five years you're going to see a stronger syllabus. Also, a stronger advanced performing group is being molded and becoming more of a second company. That group is going to be stronger. Hence, the people coming out of that group are going to be prepared for the Boston Ballet Company--to be professional union members paid a salary. And they're going to be ready."

When the school becomes "one voice" the school will then automatically be "stylistically oriented". To facilitate the development of a cohesive style and technique, teachers of course will be required to work closely together and under the guidance of the artistic director or one of his or her assistants. Teachers and students alike must be evaluated to determine if the style advocated by the school through the artistic staff is being conveyed to the students.

Thus, in order to transmit a "cohesiveness of style", faculty members would first have to agree to the proposed style, teach that style, and perchance a faculty member did not agree with the proposed style then that person could either accommodate, or conform, or if the style was

totally unacceptable to both the present and prospective faculty members then clearly they would, respectively, leave or not be hired in the first place. In other words, prospective faculty members would not be hired if they were unwilling to agree to teach the school's adopted style, could not, or were unwilling to learn how to teach that style. Some of the teachers would find it extremely difficult, and others, even impossible to adapt, change their style and the style they taught, or accommodate. As one individual in the organization pointed out, "It is the faculty. We need to shake up the faculty. We have some people who have been here too long and won't change and won't accept direction from anyone. Others are not just the caliber of teachers that should be here at the school, and some just really don't have the know-how to improve. So we're understaffed in many ways. We need stronger, more cohesive faculty working towards the same goals."

Regarding the task of ensuring a "cohesiveness of style" in the school, another member of the organization recalled, "Most of the time we do agree on doing things the same. We try to have a teachers' meeting with the director, artistic advisor, and our director to discuss how we are teaching, the way we teach a step or an exercise and most of the time we do agree on doing things the same. We follow the . . . basically, we all follow the same patterns. If we're told to change something, we go ahead and do it, but I show the

dancers the way I was taught and the way we do it. If it works, it's fine. If it works for the dancers, then I leave it alone. If it doesn't, then I'll say, try it this way, and I'll say to the dancer, "Now remember, I told you two ways-- if one works for you, keep it."

Williams successfully imparted a style and technique to a number of her students; however, she was not successful in imparting to some of her instructors her ballet style, teaching skills, teaching methods, or her attitudes towards her students that taken together were important constituent parts that went into producing a number of successful dancers. At the Boston School of Ballet, Williams was the dominant voice. An organization member recalled, "It was her opinion only. But unfortunately what happened is that she never created an environment in which she shared. She educated those teachers to her opinion. The problem was they were in the dark. They were left in the dark to try and somehow read her mind and second guess what she was doing." So, Williams' style and techniques of dancing and methods and style of teaching were difficult for her to pass along to others or for others to easily grasp.

It should be noted here that Williams patterned her style of dance after the style of the New York City Ballet. As an organization member recalled, "Yes, she patterned a great deal of the work after the New York City Ballet, the technical aspect of it, but only to a degree. For instance,

we never felt their arms were right. Their footwork and some of the training of the body and the feet and legs and certainly the long skinny legs and short-waisted body that they featured she liked. But the arms and some of the ballets we did were more of the European style. So it was a conglomerate of the old-fashioned European style . . . and the Balanchine (American style) style which is stark, high, straight, long skinny legs . . . long thin arms and a high arched back and a rather strong sparse line as opposed to a little more fluid embellished interpretation."

Even before Verdy arrived, the school's goal was to produce the best dancers it could. As one organization member recalled, "The school's priority has always been to turn out as many good dancers as we possibly could. The only difference was that in the beginning we didn't have a company to feed them into and we fed them into other people's companies and now we do and we would like to keep them for our own company if they're suitable, but I would say the original idea still stands--a really good solid dancing school that gives good training." However, when Verdy arrived on the scene as the organization's second artistic director, she brought some of her ideas with her. One was to "dramatically upgrade" the school. She also expressed a profound interest in modeling the school after the "great ballet academies" of Europe. Oddly enough, in a city infamous for its stinginess in supporting the arts,

especially the ballet, which was viewed by many in the area as either too erotic or too esoteric, it was an ambitious idea. Nonetheless, she envisioned a school where ballet and academic courses were combined and where related subjects such as music, theory of music, the history of dance, other dance forms, and crafts such as scenery, properties, and lighting were taught. One individual recalled, "When she came the focus in the school changed. She made people think more about the need to have a school that viably produced dancers for the company. A couple of years ago, there were teachers in the school and there were ballet masters and people in the company. Now both teach in the school very regularly, not only in the summer but also throughout the year when they have a chance. Company guest teachers also teach in the school. That gives the students the opportunity to study with many more people." Commenting on Verdy and the school, an organization member recalled, "Verdy never spent enough time in the school to know the teachers. She never worked in the school." Nonetheless, both the renewed emphasis on producing more dancers in the school that in turn could be fed into the company and the sharing of company and guest teachers were viewed by many in the organization as steps towards fostering an environment where a positive exchange could occur between the company and school people whereby a cohesive Boston Ballet style could perhaps develop and grow.

Thus, an organizational environment where one dance style could develop and grow was a major concern of many in the organization. Also, many outside the organization often expressed, albeit not always in the kindest way, their views on the company's lack of style, often claiming that the dancers lacked an identity and their unique style of dancing.

Since Williams stopped teaching full-time at the Ballet, a number of diverse dance styles surfaced and were taught in the school, and dancers recruited into the company often arrived with their own distinct styles of dancing. Under these circumstances, it was difficult for the school and company dancers to present a uniform and distinct style of dance. The problem of how to develop and teach a unique style was often a sensitive issue and an even more difficult policy to implement mainly because it was unclear whether the organization had yet discovered the style it really wanted to project and present to the public. Also, once a particular style became an established part of the organization's look, then those instructors unable to advance that style in the school and the company would most likely be asked to leave.

Although most of the instructors were aware of the need to have "one voice" many still would go off in their own direction, teaching their own brand of ballet in apparent disregard of the desirability of presenting one dance style to the public which would enhance the image of both the

school and the company. Failure to coordinate efforts in this endeavor was, again, a major source of frustration for many in the organization who wanted to see the Ballet with its own unique style. This question of style hovered in limbo. Perhaps the new artistic director, Marks, will prove instrumental in taking the problem out of limbo and in giving the Boston Ballet "one voice".

The Lack of Studio Space

The lack of studio space has been an ongoing problem since E. Virginia Williams first rented a hall somewhere in the vicinity of Huntington Avenue and Opera Place in the Back Bay Section of Boston for one day a week and taught the remainder of the time in her other suburban studios. When Maria Paporello, former prima ballerina and ballet mistress at the Boston Opera Company retired from teaching and moved from her dance studios at the corner of Huntington Avenue and Opera Place across from the New England Conservatory of Music in the Gainsborough Building, Williams moved into her studios on the top floor and taught classes there for about three years. The building was torn down in 1958 so that Northeastern University could build dormitories on the land. Williams then moved to second-floor studios on Massachusetts Avenue across the street from what is now called the Christian Science Center and conducted classes there for ten years until that building was razed for the

Church Park Apartments. The exact dates Williams moved in and out of these buildings are unknown at this time; however, the point here is that studio facilities were constantly being sought. From Massachusetts Avenue the school and company moved to the corner of Washington Street near Avery Street in the downtown section of Boston near the fringe of what is now called an "adult entertainment area" but in fact is Boston's own Combat Zone. The organization stayed there for about three-four years until once again the building had to come down for a parking lot. As they were leaving that building the stairways were being sealed. The studios they were leaving were fourth-floor studios. In 1970 Williams moved into offices and studios on the second and fourth floors of the Boston Center for the Arts on Tremont Street in the South End Section of Boston and used studios in that facility for about two years. Later the organization acquired more office and studio space in an adjacent building around the corner on Clarendon Street with studios for both classes and rehearsals on the first and second floors. All in all, there are four studios, three on the first and one on the second floors. There are no studios set aside solely for rehearsal space. On occasion, the second and fourth floors of the Tremont Street building are still used for younger students enrolled in the Children's Summer Workshop. Administrative offices for

the company are located in the Tremont Street building and the school administrative offices are in the Clarendon Street Building.

Beginning in 1940 when Williams first opened studios in Boston, the organization had been on the move. At one period, they moved into a different facility at least once per decade, but never into a brand-new facility. "Its headquarters in the South End is drafty, grimy, too small, with its offices and studios unconnected,"²⁹ reported the Boston Globe in April 1984. For some time now there had been plans to begin a capital campaign to either renovate the present facilities or to think in terms of building a new facility. In 1984 one of the organization's strategic goals for fiscal year 1986 was to "develop a fund-raising campaign for a new facility for the Boston Ballet."

Beginning in the early days when Williams turned the first floor of her Malden home into dance studios, the search for adequate studio space plagued her and of course plagued others in the organization both before and after her death. The search began in 1940 for the Boston organization when Williams moved to her first studio. Since that time the organization has moved six times. The sixth and latest move was to a building where for the first time in the history of the organization first-floor studios and offices were available. Four of the six facilities were razed as a result of urban renewal.

Another, now the proverbial urban parking lot, was located on the fringe of a so-called combat zone (read red-light district). However, in contrast, the last two facilities, both used, were allowed to remain since they were located in areas still seized in one of the nebulous stages of transitional regentrification. Nonetheless, despite the urban renewal business of razing, renovating, and rebuilding that hovered about and shadowed the Boston Ballet, it remained a mystery why, until recently, top management never gave top priority to organizing a mechanism whereby fund-raising efforts were directed towards building a new facility to house the organization.

Thus, one of the major problems facing the Boston Ballet was a shortage of space for both company and school activities. The professional company after 3:00 P.M. had to relinquish "enormous amounts of studio space" so that the students in both open and professional student classes could take classes. As a result professional dancers had to return in the evening between 7:00-10:00 P.M. after open classes to continue their work. Additional space would allow the school to add more classes, to invite more guest teachers, and to create conditions favorable for more turnover in the school. Thus, if studio space were not taken up by the company dancers during the day more school classes could then be scheduled. A member of the organization briefly commented on the space shortage

situation, "It's not an uncommon problem in ballet today." Another employee observed how the lack of space had hindered the growth of the organization, "The school and company need a new building in the next few years so everyone can have their space needs satisfied. The school could grow physically the way it has the potential to grow. Right now we are pretty much up to capacity simply because we only have a very limited number of studios to work in a very limited time period and the company gets stuck in the same crunch in that they have limited times for rehearsals."

The problem of managing and at times manipulating the use of space turned scheduling classes and rehearsals into a time-consuming and tedious endeavor for the ballet master who was responsible for conjuring up space that oftentimes was just not there. A glance at a typical day's schedule revealed how a potentially tense work environment could easily escalate into a potentially explosive work situation, for connected to the problem of scheduling classes and rehearsals was the problem of company priorities versus school priorities. These issues tended to frame the overall problem of the shortage of space into a "them" and "us" situation that spilled over into other areas of organizational conflict. Members of the organization unanimously noted that as a major source of conflict, for example, "We have a major

conflict in terms of building usage and time because the company needs all the time it can to rehearse, the school needs time and space for classes, and it's a scheduling nightmare and I think we all know that. It's being addressed and they're (the board and others in top management) looking at a capital campaign to build a new or renovate this building at some point within the next five years. We try to work with each other." So, determining priorities in terms of studio space was a major source of conflict between the school and the company. As one organization member observed, "There's an unresolved conflict because it was never stated what takes priority. It all comes back to the same thing-- school and company."

Again, there were "scheduling nightmares" because there were only four studios available for classes and rehearsals even though on occasion the second and fourth floors in the adjacent building were available. However, they were available only for the students enrolled in the Children's Summer Workshop. The fourth floor studio in the adjacent building had a patchy linoleum floor that had wide seams and gaps and two big floor-to-ceiling poles in the center of the floor. Of the four studios on the Clarendon Street side, again, three were on the first floor and one on the second. There were six levels of classes in the school, Basic through Six, separate classes

for professional school students, and for persons over twenty-one enrolled in the adult evening classes. A mild day of activities involved scheduling at least four levels of classes during the day in different courses, i.e., in Men's Partnering, Pointe, Variations, or Repertoire and Workshop. In addition, company classes had to be scheduled. They began at 10:00 A.M. Open classes, Level One through Five, were usually half-an-hour and company classes were scheduled for an hour and one half. Time had to be set aside for rehearsals for different acts with each act in a separate studio. In addition, many performances, especially the full-scale story ballets, called for three different casts. When rehearsals for upcoming performances were scheduled there was an ongoing jockeying for and shifting of studio space. Open classes were then combined so that the company dancers could rehearse. Often instructors who taught also performed and were thus unable to conduct their regularly scheduled classes. Space also had to be provided for the couples who rehearsed duets. Once scheduling was completed (or tentatively completed) the information was then transmitted to the school and company administrative offices and in turn passed on to the instructors, students, and professional dancers. The professional dancers, since they were union members of the American Guild of Musical Artists, worked six hours a day

in a span of ten hours. So, if they worked three hours without a break they were allotted an hour off and if they worked two and a half hours they were allotted half-an-hour off. Thus, the activity of scheduling people, time, and space was viewed as a "conflict scheduling nightmare."

In addition to a lack of studio and office space for classes, rehearsals, and administrative activities, there was not enough space for storage, in the costume workroom, or for parking.

The lack of studio space made it necessary to locate company administrative offices in one building, school administrative offices in another building, and the offices of artistic personnel scattered somewhere in between--near the studios in the school. These scattered about office sites were fortunately in adjacent buildings separated only by an alley. This arrangement often meant that people were trotting back and forth between buildings in all kinds of weather. Of course during balmy weather, the trot could have a soothing effect. On the other hand, it could have a disturbing effect during inclement weather. This situation also intensified the existent "them"/"us" dichotomy. Recently, however, a person in management who had previously occupied an office in company administrative offices moved into one of the school's administrative offices during the summer of 1984 to help alleviate

the division that had grown and developed over the years between artistic and management people and between company and school people.

Similarly, the physical separateness also created problems of organizational unawareness on the part of those directly involved in administrative and artistic matters. The unawareness level appeared higher for those in the company administrative offices mainly because the school administrative offices were located in the same building as were the studios. An employee recalled, "We consciously make an effort not to be 'us' and 'them' but it's hard when your physically separate and every time you get a new staff member in administration who until they come over here and spend some time do not know and understand what we do. If a person new in development is trying to raise funds and knows nothing about ballet and doesn't come over here and watch then that person doesn't know why or what they're trying to raise funds for!"

The space shortage prevented a breakdown of students in the studios, that is, fewer students in the classrooms. An organization member recalled, "Right now, what we need is more studios than students. In that way we can have the breakdown of the levels of the classes with not so many people in the classes." At times there were between thirty and thirty-five students in a classroom. An

instructor commented that, "There should be no more than fifteen." During the Summer Dance Program, an eight-week comprehensive course of study for professional and preprofessional students, that had been in existence for five years, 250 students were enrolled each year. An organization member vividly recalled, "During that eight-week course the school dominates the entire studio facility, and when I say the school, I mean the population of the school. The student body dominates all the studio space." In terms of Summer Dance Program attendance, there were, at times, forty to forty-five students in one studio with one instructor. One organization member noted, "I have no air conditioning and 250 kids. That's for a very tense time."

Consequently, some organization members in the confines of their offices and studios recalled the fortunes of the San Francisco Ballet. They had recently moved into a new \$13.8 million facility, a four-story building that had a dance school, offices, and a rehearsal hall the size of its regular performance stage that was located directly across the street in a place called the War Memorial Opera House. Moreover, the facility was paid for by the time it opened. Another member of the organization mused, "if we had a building like the San Francisco Ballet . . . It is the heaven of dance companies across the country . . . and we were

shown the whole new building and of course turned pea green with envy and cried later in the hotel."

In sum, this section has attempted a consideration of the lack of studio space at the Boston Ballet. It should be noted that, in addition to a lack of studio space, there was also a lack of rehearsal, office, storage, and parking space at the Ballet.

Throughout the history of the Boston Ballet, poor physical conditions had plagued the organization while at the same time contributing to situations where problems of conflict frequently became enmeshed with other organizational problems. Questions of whether or not company or school people would use available studio space often placed organizational members and groups in conflict with one another not only over questions of who or which group would use available studio space but also over the importance to the organization of work activities. In other words, it came down to problems of whose work took precedence over the work of others. This situation was often characterized by organization members appearing to carry out their work activities at the expense of others. This problem also reinforced other organizational differences that existed between and among individuals in the company and those in the school and between those in management and those in artistic positions. Thus, the lack of studio space led to conflict

that had become entrenched within the system and remained there.

Recently, however, the space problem was being addressed. Taking into consideration the organization's limited resources, its history of financial instability, and its limited sources of private and public support, many in the organization gave every indication that they were ready for a major change, for it appeared that the board viewed the Ballet as having grown enough in the past forty-plus years and was therefore considering a new facility. In fact, a strategic plan for fiscal year 1986 was to "develop a fund-raising campaign for a new facility for the Boston Ballet."

Overview Conflict-in-Development

As an organization changes through development (and growth, often there are struggles between individuals and among groups in the organization over facts, means, ends, and values. In the case of the Boston Ballet, there were struggles over the lack of studio space, the style of dance, the role of the board, the artistic director, and the president, and over the goals and objectives of the organization. These struggles, I have defined as conflict-in-development. Features of conflict-in-development, outlined below, present the central issues of conflict-in-development discovered at the Boston Ballet.

In the next chapter, I will attempt to explore and examine features of conflict-in-development within a Model O-I: Limited Learning Systems framework.

The features of conflict-in-development include:

1. The persistence of conflict around issues of organizational roles, values, and methods.
2. The stages of conflict where issues and interactions of conflict occur only at certain times.
3. The contradictions of conflict where an organization grows and develops despite conflict.
4. The learning from experience in some cases but not in others.

The conflict between the artistic force at the ballet and the management force began in earnest in 1971 when the board brought in a new management team and limited the authority of the founder. The conflict that began then continues to this day. The board of trustees was established to raise money and to develop policy. The board has raised relatively little money over the years and has been involved directly in the management and artistic decisions of the company since the early 1970s. The conflict of the style of the ballet has persisted ever since Williams had to cut down on her teaching. Williams had the initial and major contacts with Balanchine, Lowry and the Ford Foundation, and was thus instrumental in bringing in grant funding, but the organization never really followed a plan of sound fiscal

management and periodically drifted to the verge of bankruptcy. With the Boston Ballet Company and the Boston Ballet School in the same small facility, there was never adequate space and the problems that this lack of space generated never seemed a priority of management and of the board of trustees. Throughout these conflicts, Williams was always the informal mediating force that held the organization together.

Certain events seemed to happen in the organization only after some sort of change in the founder's role. When Williams died and could no longer informally mediate, the conflict between the artistic director and the president worsened and consequently the president and the artistic director resigned within twelve days of each other. When the board began to limit the founder's authority in the organization, they started a pattern of interference with management and artistic decisions. When Williams could not personally spend the time teaching the style of the school began to drift in a number of different directions.

Despite the limited funds of the organization, the conflicts between management and artistic units, the conflict regarding style, the board interventions into management and artistic decisions, the Boston Ballet had not only survived, but developed and had earned an international reputation. Since the early 1970s, there

had been a steady effort to limit the authority and influence of the founder of the school and company. However, it was Williams' energy, determination, and charisma that kept the ballet alive and growing regardless of her formal role in the organization. She was indeed the "catalyst."

There are a number of instances where the organization seemed to have learned from its experiences: the board removed the position of president from the organizational structure that it redesigned late in 1984 thus eliminating the structural conflict between the position of the president and the position of the artistic director; the board established the Boston Ballet Company and the Boston Ballet School as two separate nonprofit organizations with separate boards and separate executive and program officers thereby eliminating the possibility of the commingling of funds and diffused responsibilities; and the Boston Ballet returned to its community-based mission when it became apparent in 1984 that the strategy of national and international touring with a famous guest artist was very risky financially and eroded the organization's natural home constituency.

There are also a number of instances where the organization has not learned from experience: the board's effort to improve the ballet lacked an awareness of the critical role(s) that E. Virginia Williams played

in the organization; the organization did not realize the importance of maintaining the unique and cohesive style of dance which had established the reputation of the Boston Ballet; and the new artistic director, who was selected in January 1985, had all the functions that Williams had in 1970: artistic director, chief administrator, and fund-raiser. If these functions were too much for one person in 1970, how can one person handle them in the more complex and growing environment of the future?

CHAPTER 6

EXPLANATIONS: CONFLICT-IN-DEVELOPMENT

A First Look

In thinking about events reflected on by organization members at the Boston Ballet, four central issues of organizational conflict were identified and referred to as conflict-in-development. In this final chapter, I will attempt to address these issues against some of the core features of Model O-I: Limited Learning Systems that are outlined in Chapter two. In this endeavor, the model will serve as a guide in explaining conflict in development, along with mapping and diagnosing the Boston Ballet, i.e., "describing how the organization got to its present state".

The recurring conflicts and problems of the Boston Ballet, the conflict over the appropriate role of the board, the conflict between the artistic director and the president, the reoccurring financial problems, the conflict between the artistic and management groups, and the lack of adequate space can be explained in terms of the primary inhibitory loops that grew out of the Model I Theories-in-Use of the members of the organization and the inappropriate behavior that the loops produced. Members of the board did not want to deal with the threatening issue of their

appropriate role of fund-raising and financial responsibility. Members of the board unilaterally coerced E. Virginia Williams into relinquishing various roles within the organization. They assumed that a relatively young and famous former prima ballerina/artistic director was essential to the financial success of the organization and they assumed that a national and international touring program with the company performing full-length story ballets would benefit the organization in financially successful ways. They assumed the image of someone who looked physically like a "bag lady" was inappropriate for an internationally acclaimed ballet company. If these assumptions had been publicly tested, some serious errors may have been avoided. The Boston Ballet developed dysfunctional organizational norms and activities. The board members felt that it was appropriate to deal with operational activities and to ask members of the company to perform for them free at social gatherings. Staff members used the board to try and force one another out of various positions and the board complied. The board created organizational structures which created natural conflicts between two positions, that is, the president and the artistic director. Dysfunctional intergroup relations developed between the artistic and management sections of the organization. They contended with one another from different sides of the "alley". There were dysfunctional

group dynamics within the company. The "open war" between Verdy, Garrick, various members of the management team, and the board was the classic win/lose dynamic. The organization had to have a serious problem of group-think to be unaware of the importance of Williams' teaching style and founding contacts to the continued success of the organization. On the other hand, Williams' attempt to do everything herself rather than building a team to succeed her was destined to turn success into, not failure, but conditions for conflict. The organization seemed unaware of the errors that were consistently produced by its financial management style, its lack of space, its drift away from a unique and cohesive dance style, and its drift away from the original mission of serving the Boston and New England areas.

The fact that certain things only happened with some change in the formal or informal role of the founder, E. Virginia Williams, can be explained in terms of apparently incongruent information, the theories-in-use of members of the organization, and dysfunctional group dynamics. Williams' lack of glamour and fame seemed incongruent with the importance of her teaching style, financial contacts, and her charismatic leadership of the Boston Ballet. The board members avoided publicly testing a variety of assumptions concerning Williams and every time she was asked to "step aside," problems resulted. When she died and her

informal mediating role was lost, the organization blew up. By the same token, Williams did not try to institutionalize her fund-raising contacts, her teaching, and leadership into the structure of the organization. Based on her actions, she probably had a number of assumptions about the Ballet and its members that she did not test publicly. The group dynamics surrounding Williams' transition from founder and driving force of the organization to artistic advisor and informal mediator were filled with win/lose situations, little building on what had been developed before, and an unwillingness to raise questions that did not go along with the majority view of the "inner circle" of the board.

The contradictions of the organization and the learning from experience in some cases and not in others both seem to flow from whether they were based in correctable errors or uncorrectable errors. Despite the primary and secondary inhibitory loops, the organization with Williams' leadership was able to correct some errors and produce actions that were appropriate to some of the problems of the Boston Ballet. The funding by major foundations continued and the reputation of the company and the school grew. On the other hand, the board's effort to unilaterally force Williams from leadership positions was based on errors that were uncorrectable because they were threatening to the individuals and the system hiding the error. Uncorrectable errors can only lead to camouflage, second-order loops, and

more double-binds for the individuals in the organization.

Eliminating the structural conflict between the president and the artistic director, separating the company from the school, and returning to the original community-based mission of the company were all examples of appropriate responses that came from a learning cycle which dealt with correctable errors. Forcing Williams from positions of leadership unilaterally, losing the distinctive and cohesive dance style of the Boston Ballet, appointing a new artistic director in 1985 with all the functions that were too much for one person in 1970 were all examples of uncorrectable errors whose discovery might threaten the individuals, the system, and the Model I Theories-in-Use.

A Second Look

Why did conflict-in-development evolve around a "meddling" board, a management/artistic dichotomy, financial instability, an undefined teaching and company dance style, and the lack of studio and rehearsal space?

In terms of the "meddling" board, the members seemed unaware of their responsibility in correcting their own errors so that the board could, in turn, correct organizational errors. But the board was hindered in seeing its own errors or understanding its own theory-in-use or the individual theories-in-use of the board members. Based on Model O-I, the board, trapped in Column 3 (see

Figure 1): Model I theories-in-use, avoided the threatening issue of looking at its own behavior (or its theory of action) that might help explain its behavior. If the board were to discover, for example, its error in "meddling" in artistic and management matters, this discovery would require correcting organizational errors that were threatening to them and to other organization members. Discovery of the errors would result in a need to review those provisions of the bylaws that granted unlimited powers to the board. Questioning the powers spelled out in the bylaws, provisions that were drawn up more than twenty years ago when the board was assembled and controlled by a strong founder and made up of friends of the founder, balletomanes, mothers of dancers, and friends of friends could jeopardize the positions of many in the organization. Presently, the governing board controls a number of artistic and management activities. Thus, reviewing and, if necessary, revising the bylaw provisions, those rules affecting board members' duties and responsibilities, would require that organizational inquiry take place. To my knowledge, organizational double-loop learning had never occurred, that is, inquiry where board members had given away some their powers through the process of changing bylaw provisions. If the board were to look at some of the norms that govern its functioning, this action might eventually lead to the discovery of

uncorrectable errors where questioning the validity of the 1963 bylaws, in terms of the model, would lead to Column 8: Camouflage--a reaction to uncorrectable errors whose discovery would threaten the organization. This route lessens the likelihood that board members will double-loop learn. Thus, the board would deny that the bylaws needed revising or that the rules they advocated were no longer relevant in 1985 because of organizational growth and change in the past thirty years. If this form of self-protection failed, however, board members could then seal themselves off from blame by declaring that they were functioning well within the guidelines in making incursions into artistic and administrative duties. This self-protection would lessen the possibility of their being vulnerable through the loss of status and power that might accompany revision of the bylaws.

Column 1 of Model 0-I provides a look at how the board's behavioral strategies ranged, at times, from ambiguous/unambiguous, vague/clear, inconsistent/consistent, and incongruent/congruent. These behavioral strategies interacted with Model I theories-in-use reinforced and created new conditions for error. For example, the board's reason for hiring Verdy and the board's actions from 1980-1984 appeared ambiguous, vague, changeable, incompatible, and incongruent. They were ambiguous and vague because it was never explicitly made clear to Verdy,

Garrick, other organization members, and the public why the board had hired Verdy other than to improve the company's image and give it a new focus. How? In what ways would Verdy contribute to a new focus and improve the organization's image? As it turned out, in terms of image, Verdy may have proved to be more of a liability than an asset in a number of ways. If the board's purpose in hiring a former prima ballerina as artistic director was clearly stated and its strategies for improving the Ballet's image were, in turn, explicitly made clear to Verdy, especially in relation to her interactions with Garrick, Williams, the board, and other organization members, then the conditions for conflict created as a result of unclear role assignments, may have been prevented early on. In hiring Verdy, allowing her free rein in artistic matters, and then apparently reversing a commitment to changing the focus and image of the organization by reining her in when her spending got out of hand was clearly inconsistent behavior on the part of the board. The board's behavior must have seemed especially vague and inconsistent to Verdy who without clear-cut guidelines did not know the rules that had to be followed and adhered to while changing the focus of the Ballet or in improving its image. National and international touring, hiring and travelling with famous guest artists, and staging full-length story ballets seemed inappropriate strategies given the original mission and the financial

constraints of the Boston Ballet.

Also, the board's behavior appeared inconsistent if its goal was to improve the organization's image in the Boston Area or to build its Boston audience. What were the advantages in hiring an international star, a former prima ballerina? What did it mean to the Ballet's Boston audience and prospective audience? Cultivating and impressing the present and prospective Ballet audience may have also occurred at less financial loss if the board had hired a former pupil of Williams who had gained a national or international reputation if the board's primary objective was indeed improving the organization's image and focus. In appointing Verdy, the board's motives and behavioral strategies could be perceived as vague, inconsistent, and incongruent; incongruent because touring and producing big ballets at home and abroad continued for some time despite financial losses. There is the probability that the Boston audience may have grown, the Ballet's image enhanced, its focus appropriately directed, and public and private support increased if the organization had conveyed a message that it wanted to improve its image not only artistically, but also financially. In thinking of the Boston performing arts audiences and supporters, performing arts organizations may indeed improve their artistic image if at first they improve their financial images. In Wolf's terms, the organization should

"dress up" for fund-raising purposes by first putting its fiscal affairs in order.

Again, looking at Model O-I, we can see the appearance of behaviors that lead to a pattern or system where more error; decreased probability for double-loop learning, i.e., detecting and correcting error in ways that involve examining and modifying the Ballet's underlying norms, policies, and objectives; and more double binds for individuals occur. Error correction strategies that call for individuals in top management positions to examine the organization's theory-in-use also involve the examination of their individual theories-in-use at some point in the learning process. Again, the behavior expected of Verdy and Garrick was never spelled out by the board, communicated to them, or to others in the organization that they worked with in producing ballets. Organizational chains of authority and lines of responsibility and reporting appeared vague. That there were apparent prescribed or proscribed ways of behaving in those roles contributed to the artistic/management conflict that, until 1984, was mediated by Williams. Put another way, there were few, if any, criteria or established procedures to guide the behavior of the artistic director who worked alternately within and outside of the shadow of Williams--an awkward situation (equally awkward if Williams walked in Verdy's shadow), and the behavior of a second president whose

predecessor functioned primarily as a figurehead rather than as a chief executive. In fact a board member had acted as president before Garrick arrived. It is unclear if Garrick, without a job description or guidelines to direct his behavior as president, proceeded to go about doing his work in a way that seemed opposed to his new organizational environment and organizational expectations. Had the governing body of the board explicitly stated his duties and responsibilities? If not, what governing variables were guiding his behavior?

In terms of the Verdy-Garrick conflict, we see that primary inhibitory loops can lead to "self-reinforcing cycles" where conditions for organizational error persist and reoccur. In other words, the behaviors of Verdy and Garrick, whether a product of unspecified organizational norms or previous organizational norms or role behaviors that accompanied them to the Boston Ballet led to first suppressed, then mediated, and eventually open conflict. Boston Ballet "behavioral maps" to guide their behavior appeared obscure. Organization norms, i.e., the company/school and the artistic/management dichotomies reinforced the win/lose dynamics of the Verdy-Garrick conflict. Williams, guided by her private map, responded to conflict unilaterally by buffering the conflict of threatening issues. This behavior drew the contestants deeper into games of deception, of blaming others, and of

avoiding blame. At top management levels, where governing board members, Garrick, and Verdy interacted, dysfunctional group (artistic/management) dynamics and dysfunctional intergroup (governing board members, the artistic director, and the president) dynamics were generated. Finally, added to these dysfunctional organizational norms and activities were the unknown motives of the parties to the conflict which eventually reached a stage very close to destructive warfare. I would assume, however, at that stage, that the governing body of the board discovered that the organization was approaching a brittle and perhaps unchangeable stage and that the conflict would become entrenched and therefore even more difficult to correct or respond to appropriately. Hence, so the Ballet could continue to fulfill its mission, the board had to ask for the resignation of Garrick and accept Verdy's resignation. Eventually, the position of president was eliminated. This decision appeared to be a result of single-loop learning in that board members indicated that they were aware of error and corrected it by changing the organizational structure but did not really examine the values or norms underlying their theory-in-use. The elimination of the position of president "camouflaged", i.e., denied and disguised, the board's role in the conflict. It is unlikely that a "good dialectic" actually occurred at the Ballet, i.e. where both single- and double-loop organizational inquiry and learning occurred.

In terms of an organizational environment where one cohesive dance style could develop and grow and where adequate studio rehearsal space for both company and dance was available, let us again look at some of the features of Model O-I to help explain why solutions to these two problems of organizational conflict were not sought earlier. There were individuals in the organization who believed that building an adequate facility and arriving at a cohesive dance style were problems that warranted immediate attention and action. Camouflage helps explain why these problems were not dealt with until fairly recently. Solutions to these problems were directly related to the duties and responsibilities of the board, the artistic director, executive director. Confronting organization members about their duties and responsibilities could easily turn into threatening situations, especially, if questions of job performance were raised. Searching for solutions to these problems would entail questioning organizational norms and values. For example, what were the views of various organization members on space and comfortable work environment? Were there organizational norms and values held by board members on space and the physical organizational environment that prevented their addressing the problem early on? Was it the problem of financial insecurity that is a common feature of most performing arts organizations? In order to correct organizational

error, it is necessary to identify the source of errors. Addressing the problem of both space and style head-on would involve modification of organizational objectives and activities which, in turn, would involve inquiry into individual and organizational theories-in-use. If these inquiries were made they would most likely lead to individuals questioning their norms (why instructors did not work cooperatively towards developing and maintaining a distinct and cohesive dance style) and the norms governing the board's behavior (why did the board fail to raise the funds to provide an adequate facility). But rather than making inquiry into these problems, the members of the organization ignored, denied, and suppressed them for years.

Finally, a second look at conflict-in-development while exploring and explaining organizational learning and failure to learn through a theory of action perspective based on Model O-I: Limited Learning Systems facilitated identifying those circumstances where cause and effect relationships might have determined the nature of conditions for conflict and the processes of conflict.

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