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## The Process of Play Production as an Instrument for Developing Collective Leadership Through Presencing.

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**Abstract:** This article examines play production in drama education as a relational presencing field in which collective leadership emerges as a function of shifting ontological conditions. Drawing on Theory U, social presencing theater, and the ontological scholarship associated with the International Journal of Presencing and Leadership in Complexity, the study reframes leadership as an emergent field phenomenon arising from ontological changes in the underlying ground of perception, attention, and relational awareness of participants. Within this framing, presencing is understood less as a technique or developmental skill located in individuals, more as a transformation in the source condition from which experience, meaning, and action arise. As participants engage in rehearsal and performance processes, habitual ego-based orientations are temporarily suspended, enabling a shift toward ontologically-attuned perception through the field in which agency becomes distributed across the ensemble. Observations from play production illustrate how leadership emerges momentarily through individual as well as relational coherence within the field. However, this coherence is shown to be inherently fragile, repeatedly disrupted by institutional pressures, ego reactivation, and temporal constraints, leading to oscillations between field coherence. The article argues that drama education serves as a kind of learning laboratory of ontological instability, where collective leadership continuously enacts, dissolves, and reconstitutes itself. In doing so, it deepens an ontological view of the social field by demonstrating how presencing operates as a generative condition for leadership emergence within embodied, time-bound creative human systems.

**Key words:** presencing, collective leadership, theory u, drama education, leadership development, theatre production

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### I. Introduction

Contemporary leadership discourse is increasingly confronted by conditions of complexity in which coordinated action cannot be adequately explained through linear causality, hierarchical control, or individual agency. Within such contexts, leadership is better understood as an emergent phenomenon arising from relational configurations of perception, attention, and meaning-making rather than as a property located in individuals or roles (Mary Uhl-Bien & Michael Arena, 2018;

Denis, Langley, & Sergi, 2020). Complexity leadership theory, for example, reframes leadership as an adaptive dynamic emerging from interactions within complex systems rather than as a function of authority or positional power (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). This shift reflects a broader movement in leadership studies away from entity-based models toward relational and processual understandings of organizing (Crevani, Lindgren & Packendorff, 2019).

From an ontological presencing perspective, leadership emerges through the ongoing constitution of relational fields in which participants increasingly co-perceive, co-sense, and co-enact meaning through shared modes of attending and responding (Gunnlaugson, 2021, 2023, 2024a, 2024b, 2025a, 2025b). Within this framing, collective leadership is the emergence of a coherent presencing field through which perception, intentionality, and coordinated action become increasingly participatory and relationally organized. Leadership, therefore, is approached less as an attribute possessed by individuals and more as a field phenomenon arising through conditions of relational attunement, embodied responsiveness, and participatory ontological attunement (Gunnlaugson, 2021, 2024b, 2025b). Ontologically, what appears as collective leadership can be understood as embodying an evolving field of presencing in which intrapersonal and relational dynamics reorganize how participants perceive, interpret, and act together (Gunnlaugson, 2024b, 2025b).

Play production in drama education provides a particularly generative site for examining these dynamics, as rehearsal environments are constituted through continuous negotiation of attention, embodied responsiveness, and emergent coordination under conditions of uncertainty, temporal pressure, and interpretive openness (Nicholson, 2011; Heddon & Milling, 2018). Rather than functioning as a metaphor for organizational collaboration, theater-making is understood here as an enacted field ecology in which perception, affect, and action co-determine one another. The rehearsal space operates as a living system in which participants continuously adjust to shifting relational cues, enabling coordinated action without reliance on fixed scripts or hierarchical control structures (Sawyer, 2019). Within prevailing leadership scholarship, collective leadership is often described in terms of distributed influence, shared decision-making, and relational coordination (De Brún & McAuliffe, 2023). While these accounts extend beyond individual-centered models, they frequently remain anchored in epistemological descriptions of interaction patterns, thereby leaving under-theorized the ontological conditions through which such patterns become possible. As Edwards and Bolden (2023) argue, leadership research continues to privilege observable practices and structural configurations while neglecting the generative conditions that give rise to those

practices. Consequently, collective leadership risks being reduced to a set of behavioral arrangements rather than being understood as an emergent property of deeper shifts in awareness and relational being.

This article addresses this limitation by re-situating collective leadership within an ontological presencing framework in which leadership emerges through shifts in the underlying field conditions that organize perception, relationality, embodiment, and coordinated action. Within this framing, presencing refers to a transformation in the generative ground through which experience, meaning, and participation become constituted (Gunnlaugson, 2024a, 2025b). While Scharmer's Theory U approaches presencing as a movement from habitual downloading toward deeper states of sensing and co-creation (Scharmer, 2009; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013), Gunnlaugson's ontological scholarship deepens this understanding by approaching presencing as a field-based mode of being in which perception, action, and relational intelligibility emerge through participatory engagement within the unfolding dynamics of the presencing field itself (Gunnlaugson, 2021, 2023, 2024a, 2024b, 2025a, 2025b). As participants deepen into this field condition, the boundaries between self, other, and collective become increasingly permeable, enabling a shift from ego-centered perception toward participatory modes of ontological attunement embedded within the relational whole. Leadership, accordingly, emerges through temporary configurations of field coherence in which coordinated action, embodied responsiveness, and collective sense-making arise organically through the field itself rather than through centralized authority or individual control.

From this perspective, play production becomes a living ontology of emergence. Rehearsal processes provide empirical access to how shifts in awareness re-organize relational structures in real time. For instance, moments of synchronized timing, shared silence, or collective improvisation can be understood as manifestations of a deeper ontological basis of field coherence, where participants respond to the unfolding situation with heightened attunement and responsiveness (Kimmel, Hristova & Kussmaul, 2018; Novembre & Keller, 2021). These moments illustrate how leadership arises through the alignment of embodied perception and intention within the group.

Moreover, the instability and fluidity of rehearsal environments make visible the conditions under which presencing either stabilizes or collapses. Under pressure, participants may revert to habitual patterns of control and ego-based positioning, disrupting the relational field and reintroducing hierarchical dynamics (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). Conversely, practices such as deep listening, silence, and embodied awareness can restore field coherence, enabling the re-emergence of collective leadership (Nakajima & Leong, 2020; Scharmer, 2009). These dynamics highlight that

collective leadership arises from shifts ontologically within the relational field of awareness through which perception, intention, and action are constituted. By examining play production as an embodied presencing field, this project contributes to IJPLC's ongoing work of articulating leadership as a phenomenon grounded in being, awareness, and embodied relational emergence.

## II. Presencing as a Developmental Capacity

Within the Theory U framework, presencing is often articulated as the capacity to connect present awareness with emergent future possibility (Scharmer, 2009). Gunnlaugson's ontological interpretation re-situates presencing at a more foundational level, where the emphasis shifts from anticipatory awareness toward a transformation in the underlying ontological ground from which perception, cognition, relationality, and action emerge (Gunnlaugson, 2024a, 2025b). From this perspective, presencing refers to a reorganization in the very conditions of being through which agency becomes possible and intelligible. Agency no longer arises principally through the intentional assertions of the separate self, but through an increasing participation in the unfolding dynamics of the presencing field itself (Scharmer, 2009; Joseph Raelin, 2020).

This distinction is significant. Presencing emerges through a condition of ontological openness in which participants become progressively transparent to the unfolding dynamics of the presencing field itself. Action increasingly arises through participatory attunement within the relational whole rather than through identity maintenance, role preservation, or cognitive control. Within ensemble rehearsal contexts, this ontological shift becomes phenomenologically observable through changes in how perception, responsiveness, embodiment, and attentional participation become organized. Awareness gradually shifts from role-bound identification toward participatory engagement within the evolving movement of the ensemble itself. Participants increasingly orient from the unfolding intelligibility of the presencing field rather than from the standpoint of the separate performer.

From this vantage point, coordination is no longer adequately understood as the alignment of independent actors operating in parallel. It is more accurately approached as the stabilization of a presencing field through which perception, responsiveness, embodiment, and coordinated action become relationally organized (Denis, Langley & Sergi, 2020; Fiore et al., 2021). Within such moments, the ensemble participates within an unfolding field of presencing that reorganizes how meaning, interpretation, and collective movement emerge through the relational whole itself.

In ontological-oriented scholarship, this condition is increasingly understood as a presencing

field in which cognition, affect, embodiment, perception, and action arise as interwoven dimensions of a unified relational emergence (Gunnlaugson, 2024a, 2025b). Presencing, from this perspective, refers to a transformation in the ontological ground through which experience, relationality, and action become organized and enacted. As individuals deepen into the field of presencing, the locus of awareness gradually shifts from the separate self toward a participatory mode of being embedded within the unfolding movement of the relational whole. Meaning, responsiveness, and action increasingly arise through the field itself as a living generative process rather than through individual assertion, role performance, or cognitive control alone.

Leadership, therefore, is approached less as something possessed or exercised by individuals and more as an emergent expression of the presencing field itself as participants enter into shared modes of attending, sensing, and responding. This reframing aligns with relational and processual leadership perspectives that locate leadership in unfolding patterns of interaction rather than in discrete actors (Crevani, Lindgren & Packendorff, 2019; Joseph Raelin, 2020). Yet an ontological reading of presencing extends this view further by suggesting that the relational dynamics themselves become reorganized through shifts in the underlying field conditions from which perception, meaning, and action emerge.

This repositioning displaces the assumption that leadership originates primarily through intentional control or individual decision-making. Instead, leadership emerges through the generative intelligibility of the presencing field as participants co-enact conditions of openness, attunement, and responsive presence that allow coordinated action to arise organically without centralized authority (Mary Uhl-Bien & Michael Arena, 2018). From this perspective, the field is viewed in part as an ontological medium through which collective sensing, participation, and emergence become possible.

## II.1. Presencing as the Foundation of Collective Leadership

Collective leadership, from an ontological presencing perspective, cannot be reduced to distributed authority, shared decision-making, or collaborative coordination. Such formulations remain secondary expressions of a more foundational shift in the underlying field conditions through which relating, perception, and action become organized (Denis, Langley & Sergi, 2020; Crevani, Lindgren & Packendorff, 2019). Leadership, from this view emerges through the increasing coherence of a presencing field in which participants become attuned to the unfolding dynamics of the relational whole itself.

Presencing functions here as a generative ontological condition rather than as a psychological capacity or interpersonal technique. As participants loosen identification with habitual interpretive structures, role-bound orientations, and ego-centered positioning, the field of interaction undergoes a qualitative reorganization. This shift alters the very conditions through which relationality is experienced and enacted. Perception, intentionality, and action increasingly arise through a shared field of participatory awareness rather than from isolated subjectivities operating in parallel. Within such moments, coordinated action tends to emerge organically through the generative intelligibility of the presencing field itself.

Within rehearsal environments, this transformation becomes observable as a shift from role-bound participation toward field-responsive enactment. Timing, gesture, silence, and attentional responsiveness are continuously reorganized through participatory attunement within the evolving dynamics of the ensemble itself (Sawyer, 2019; Fiore et al., 2021). In such moments, agency increasingly emerges through the relational intelligibility of the presencing field rather than through isolated individual intentionality. Importantly, this implies their reconstitution as emergent properties of field dynamics rather than fixed organizational forms. Hierarchy, in this sense, becomes fluid and situational, arising in response to the needs of the moment rather than being imposed in advance. Authority is transformed, becoming temporal, relational, and contingent upon the coherence of the field (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018; Raelin, 2020). Leadership shifts from directive control toward the facilitation of conditions that sustain relational attunement and collective responsiveness.

From an ontological perspective, collective leadership arises when relational awareness becomes sufficiently integrated to support coordinated emergence without reliance on centralized control mechanisms. In this framing, leadership is neither distributed nor shared in a structural sense; rather, it is enacted through the ongoing co-constitution of a relational field in which perception, action, and meaning emerge together.

## II.2. The Mechanism of Presencing in Collective Leadership Development

The transition into collective leadership can be analytically described as a sequence of ontological reconfigurations. This distinction is critical, as it shifts the analysis from observable actions to the generative conditions through which perception, meaning, and coordination become possible (Crevani, Lindgren & Packendorff, 2019).

First, suspension refers to a loosening of identification with pre-structured interpretive frames through which perception is filtered. In contrast to conventional understandings of

reflection, suspension interrupts the automatic reproduction of meaning derived from past experience, thereby opening a space in which perception is no longer governed by habitual judgement (Scharmer, 2009). This creates conditions in which action is no longer determined by established interpretive structures but can arise in response to emergent relational dynamics.

Second, de-centering denotes a shift in the locus of awareness away from ego-anchored identity structures toward participatory modes of relational sensing embedded within the presencing field itself. This movement involves an ontological displacement in the organizing ground of experience through which perception, responsiveness, and meaning become constituted relationally rather than through isolated subjectivity. Awareness becomes less associated with individual subjectivity and more aligned with the relational field itself, enabling participants to perceive and respond from within a shared horizon of meaning (Denis, Langley, & Sergi, 2020).

Third, field reconfiguration occurs as individual perceptual boundaries become increasingly permeable, allowing the relational dynamics of the ensemble to reorganize into emergent patterns of ontological coherence. At this stage, perception increasingly arises through a participatory field of presencing in which relational intelligibility becomes collectively enacted through ongoing interaction. Cognition, affect, embodiment, perception, and action emerge as interwoven expressions of a unified presencing movement unfolding through the field itself (Gunnlaugson, 2021, 2024b, 2025b; Fiore et al., 2021). From this perspective, the field is approached as an ontologically participatory dimension of experience through which responsiveness, meaning, and coordinated action become relationally constituted and enacted.

Finally, emergent enactment refers to the spontaneous coordination of action arising from field coherence. Such action unfolds through the relational intelligibility of the moment itself. Participants act in ways that are responsive to the evolving dynamics of the field, suggesting that agency is distributed across the relational configuration (Raelin, 2020; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). What appears as intentional coordination is, in this sense, the expression of a temporarily stabilized field of shared awareness.

Within drama production, these ontological transitions are materially enacted through embodied interaction, temporal constraint, and improvisational responsiveness. Rehearsal environments provide conditions in which shifts in awareness become visible through changes in timing, gesture, attention, and relational alignment (Sawyer, 2019; Heddon & Milling, 2018). As participants engage in improvisation and collective sense-making, the emergence and dissolution of field coherence can be directly observed, making theater a uniquely generative site for examining

presencing as lived experience. From this perspective, collective leadership is a manifestation of field coherence under conditions of shared ontologically embodied awareness. Leadership arises through the ongoing reconfiguration of relational dynamics that enable coordinated action to emerge without reliance on centralized control (Denis et al., 2020).

### III. Drama and Play Production as a Presencing Field

Play production in drama education from an ontological perspective, it is more precisely apprehended as a relational field in which perception, embodiment, and meaning arise through continuous co-constitution (Gunnlaugson, 2023, 2024b, 2025b; Crevani, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2019). In this framing, theater process functions as a dynamic field ecology in which participants are mutually implicated in the ongoing generation of experiential reality. What is commonly described as rehearsal or performance is a continuous modulation of relational intensity, attentional distribution, and embodied responsiveness (Nicholson, 2011; Sawyer, 2019). Perception, affect, and action become interdependent dimensions of an evolving relational configuration.

Within such a field, hierarchy, institutional expectation, and role differentiation operate as latent structural tendencies that become either intensified or attenuated depending on the coherence of the field (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). These tendencies are themselves expressions of field configuration at different levels of stability. Hierarchy, in this sense, is dynamically enacted through patterns of attention, authority, and responsiveness. When field coherence is low, interaction collapses into fragmentation. Perception becomes individuated, attention narrows, and relational responsiveness is replaced by isolated intentionality. In rehearsal, this may be observed in increased interruption, rigid adherence to individual interpretations. Under such conditions, we have a reversion to ego-centered perceptual organization, in which action is generated from self-contained interpretive frames rather than shared field awareness (Denis, Langley & Sergi, 2020; Edwards & Bolden, 2023).

Conversely, when field coherence increases, perception becomes distributed and relational boundaries between participants become more permeable. Actors begin to adjust timing, gesture, and vocal modulation in response to subtle cues within the ensemble, often without explicit verbal coordination. In such moments, what is experienced as “ensemble coherence” is the emergent intelligibility of a shared perceptual field in which action arises prior to deliberation (Sawyer, 2019; Fiore et al., 2021). These moments illustrate how coordination can emerge as a property of relational attunement rather than intentional control.

From this standpoint, leadership isn't located in roles such as director, actor, or stage manager. Leadership appears only when the field temporarily stabilizes into coherent patterns of responsiveness that enable coordinated movement without reliance on centralized control. Agency, in this sense, is distributed across the relational configuration rather than possessed by individuals. Therefore, what is conventionally interpreted as directing, acting, or responding is more accurately understood as differential participation in a shared field of awareness whose dynamics shape the possibilities of action at any given moment. Participants here are enacting the field through their ontological patterns of attention, responsiveness, and embodied engagement.

Presencing, within this ontology, names a transformation in the mode of participation itself in which perception, embodiment, and attentional responsiveness become increasingly organized through the unfolding dynamics of the presencing field. As participants deepen into this field condition, they enter into a participatory mode of presencing in which meaning, responsiveness, and coordinated action arise relationally through the evolving movement of the ensemble itself. Action emerges through the intelligibility of the field rather than through isolated intentional control. This gives rise to forms of field-responsive enactment in which gesture, timing, silence, and expression emerge as relational properties of the unfolding field configuration. Improvisational responsiveness, shared stillness, and synchronized movement exemplify such moments of field coherence within the ensemble (Heddon & Milling, 2018; Nakajima & Leong, 2020).

Theatre production, therefore reveals the conditional instability of relational fields in which collective coordination is continuously formed and dissolved. What is experienced as coherence is always provisional, requiring ongoing relational attunement rather than procedural maintenance. Breakdowns in coordination, often triggered by time pressure, ego attachment, or institutional demands, demonstrate the fragility of field coherence and the ease with which interaction can revert to fragmented modes of organization (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018).

From an ontological perspective, play production is thus best understood as an embodied living laboratory of field dynamics, in which the emergence, stabilization, and dissolution of collective coherence can be directly observed. Leadership, in this context arises only when relational conditions permit coherent emergence. Accordingly, the significance of theater lies in its capacity to make visible the ontological processes through which collective reality is continuously constituted. In doing so, it offers a uniquely embodied and experiential site for examining how presencing operates as the generative ground of collective leadership.

### III.1 Constituting the Presencing Field in Rehearsal

A shared presencing field in rehearsal emerges through processes of relational attunement, embodied perception, and sustained attention. Within such a field, performers move toward a more distributed and collective mode of engagement. Central to this shift is a form of sustained listening that extends beyond auditory perception to include sensitivity to movement, intention, and affective expression. Research in improvisational performance and embodied cognition suggests that such attunement enables performers to register both their own and others' intentions, supporting the co-creation of meaning in real time rather than reliance on pre-scripted structures (Sawyer, 2017; Shaun Gallagher, 2020).

Openness to uncertainty constitutes a further condition of the presencing field. In rehearsal contexts oriented toward improvisation, participants suspend habitual interpretive frameworks and engage responsively with emergent situations. This aligns with enactive and phenomenological approaches to cognition, which understand knowledge as arising through situated action and interaction rather than internal representation (Di Paolo, Cuffari and De Jaegher, 2018). Improvisation thus functions as a practice of presence, situating performers within a continuously evolving relational field. Studies of applied improvisation demonstrate that such conditions enhance adaptability, responsiveness, and collective problem-solving capacities (Vera and Crossan, 2005; Balachandra et al., 2019).

Perception within the presencing field undergoes a corresponding transformation from individualized attentional organization toward participatory attunement within the evolving dynamics of the ensemble itself. Performers increasingly orient from the unfolding relational movement of the field rather than from self-contained interpretive positioning. Through this shift, participants become sensitized to subtle variations in rhythm, gesture, vocal modulation, silence, and spatial responsiveness that collectively shape the emergence of coordinated action (Kimmel, Hristova and Kussmaul, 2018; Novembre and Keller, 2021).

Silence plays a critical and often underexamined role in the constitution of this field. Rather than representing an absence, silence functions as an active reorganisation of attention, enabling heightened perceptual sensitivity and relational awareness. Periods of shared stillness can interrupt reactive patterns and allow participants to attune more fully to subtle environmental and interpersonal cues. Research in embodied listening and contemplative performance practices suggests that such moments deepen awareness and enhance the quality of interaction (Schwarz, 2019; Nakajima and Leong, 2020). In this sense, silence contributes to the ongoing modulation of

the presencing field.

#### IV. Developmental shifts in participation: A phenomenology of presencing in practice

Across rehearsal processes, presencing becomes observable as a transformation in how participants participate within the relational field itself through shifts in attention, embodiment, responsiveness, and coordinated action. The primary phenomenological movement involves a loosening of self-referential perceptual organization and an increasing attunement to the unfolding intelligibility of the ensemble as a living relational whole.

This shift becomes most visible in improvisational rehearsal structures where scripts are partially suspended. Here, actors reorient from line-delivery toward interactional calibration. For example, changes in pause length, interruption frequency, and turn-taking smoothness function as observable indicators of altered attentional organization. These micro-adjustments signal a transition from individually planned action to co-regulated emergence, consistent with enactive and distributed cognition perspectives (Fiore et al., 2021; DeChurch & Mesmer-Magnus, 2019).

Within this field condition, leadership is redistributed as situational initiation. Rather than being anchored in formal role identity, initiation appears at points where an actor's responsiveness aligns most closely with emerging group conditions, for instance, when a participant introduces a gesture, pause that reorganizes subsequent ensemble behavior. These moments are evidence of transient increases in relational attunement that reorganize collective direction (Crevani, Lindgren & Packendorff, 2019; Raelin, 2020).

In the absence of presencing conditions, rehearsal dynamics typically revert to observable patterns such as increased interruption rates, directive speech acts from authority figures, reduced improvisational uptake, and narrowed attentional focus on role execution rather than ensemble coherence. Such regressions reflect a return to ego-stabilized identity positions, where agency is expressed as control over interpretation rather than responsiveness to relational emergence (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018; Edwards & Bolden, 2023). Presencing is therefore operationally necessary because it sustains a specific interactional ecology in which coordination remains emergent rather than imposed. Without this condition, ensemble behavior collapses into predictable coordination structures governed by hierarchy, time pressure, and role compliance.

#### V. From ego-orientation to observable relational reconfiguration

At the beginning of rehearsal cycles, ego-orientation is observable. These include: increased

self-justifying speech (“I thought the character should...”), reduced uptake of peer suggestions, and positional anchoring (actors maintaining fixed spatial or interpretive positions despite group shifts). These behaviors indicate stabilized identity-positioning within the interactional field (Crevani, Lindgren & Packendorff, 2019).

As presencing conditions emerge, a measurable shift occurs in turn-taking structure and attentional distribution. Actors begin to delay response initiation, allowing silence to extend interactional space, and increase gaze-following behavior toward others’ movement cues. These shifts indicate a redistribution of attentional ownership from individual planning to relational tracking (Fiore et al., 2021; De Jaegher, 2013). Relational awareness is therefore evidenced in altered coordination patterns: fewer interruptions, more overlapping alignment of movement and speech timing, and increased acceptance of emergent direction changes without negotiation. These micro-changes collectively indicate reduced ego stabilization and increased field sensitivity.

The presencing gesture “letting go” offers a measurable reduction in control-oriented coordination strategies. In rehearsal practice, this is observable when actors abandon pre-planned line delivery in favor of adaptive timing adjustments based on others’ actions. For instance, an actor may extend or shorten a pause in response to an unplanned shift in another performer’s tone or movement, rather than maintaining scripted rhythm. This shift corresponds to a move from representational control (pre-planned execution) toward enactive coordination (meaning generated through interaction) (Di Paolo, Cuffari & De Jaegher, 2018; Gallagher, 2020).

Silence functions here as a structural coordination device rather than absence. It can be observed when groups collectively extend nonverbal intervals, during which micro-adjustments in posture, gaze, and breathing synchronize. These pauses reorganize attention distribution and allow realignment without verbal instruction (Nakajima & Leong, 2020; Schwarz, 2019).

## VI Closing Remarks

This article has argued that collective leadership, when approached through an ontological presencing perspective, emerges through shifts in the relational field conditions that shape how perception, attention, embodiment, and coordinated action become organized. Across the analysis of play production, presencing was shown to operate as a generative field condition through which participants enter into increasingly shared modes of sensing, responding, and enacting meaning together. Leadership, from this perspective, arises through moments of relational coherence in which the ensemble becomes collectively attuned to the unfolding dynamics of the field itself.

Within such moments, coordinated action emerges through participatory responsiveness, embodied attentiveness, and relational intelligibility unfolding through the dynamics of the ensemble itself.

The analysis further demonstrates that play production functions as a uniquely intensified environment for observing the emergence and reorganization of presencing dynamics in practice. Rehearsal processes continuously expose the ensemble to conditions of uncertainty, temporal pressure, vulnerability, improvisation, and interpretive openness, making visible the ongoing fluctuations between coherence and fragmentation within the relational field. These fluctuations reveal the deeply processual nature of collective leadership as an emergent phenomenon that must be continuously enacted and renewed through embodied participation. Field coherence arises through sustained relational attunement and gradually dissolves when participants become reabsorbed into defensive patterns of role preservation, interpretive control, or ego-centered orientation.

From an ontological standpoint, these movements are integral features of field-based systems. Presencing unfolds as a dynamic and continually evolving condition of relational participation through which collective awareness reorganizes itself in response to emerging situations. Leadership therefore appears as a temporally emergent event within the field rather than as a stable possession of individuals, roles, or organizational structures. What persists across these fluctuations is the ongoing potential for the relational field to reorganize itself into renewed patterns of coherence, responsiveness, and participatory awareness.

This article also contributes to the growing scholarship on presencing and relational ontology by offering a situated examination of how field dynamics become embodied and enacted within creative ensemble practice. The study demonstrates that presencing extends beyond a psychological, interpersonal, or developmental framing and can instead be understood as a transformation in the ontological ground through which collective experience becomes organized and lived. Within moments of field coherence, participants begin to perceive, interpret, and respond through a shared mode of embodied relational awareness that reorganizes how action and meaning emerge within the group.

In this sense, collective leadership is best understood as a field phenomenon arising through the temporary alignment and coherence within an evolving presencing field. Theatre production makes these dynamics uniquely visible because the ensemble continuously participates in the formation, dissolution, and renewal of collective coherence through embodied relational participation. Ultimately, this study reinforces a central ontological proposition within presencing

scholarship: that leadership emerges through the ongoing co-constitution of relational fields in which perception, meaning, embodiment, and coordinated action are continually enacted and reconfigured through participatory modes of ontological presencing and relational being.

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