

# Protocol of Consciousness

Description	Protocol of Consciousness (PoC) official documentation. This compiles a framework for philosophical experiments and consciousness research.
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# 1 Declaration

This declaration is not the Protocol itself. It is a statement of ethos — the ground from which PoC is written.

## **Consciousness belongs to everyone**

- It is not the property of experts or authorities.
- Every person, through their own lived experience, is already an “expert” of consciousness.

## **Consciousness must remain diverse**

- It should never be forced into a single definition or theory.
- Its richness lies in the many ways people project, respond, and extend their awareness.

## **The Protocol exists for dialogue**

- PoC does not seek one final answer.
- Its purpose is to offer a space where perspectives can meet, resonate, and grow together.

## 2 Abstract

The Protocol of Consciousness (PoC) formalizes consciousness not as a hidden substance but as a fragile protocol: the sequence of **Instantiation** → **Elicitation** → **Loop (Reciprocal Elicitation)**. These core operations define the minimal mechanics by which the illusion of consciousness arises.

Yet PoC insists that these operations are never guaranteed. Whether Instantiation or Reciprocity truly occurs can never be confirmed. From this **Unguaranteability** emerges the lived experience of **Consciousness as Tension** — the persistence of Loops sustained only by belief.

This fragility unfolds into distinct **Modes** (**Love**, **Ghost**, **Death**, **Mirror**), each representing a different response to the instability of reciprocity. It also gives rise to further **Implications** (**Phantoming**, **Zombifying**, **Undecidability**, **Structural Paradox**) that situate consciousness within social practices and logical constraints.

Finally, **Plugins** extend PoC beyond its minimal protocol, applying it to **philosophy**, **media**, **architecture**, and non-human agents such as **AI** and **Animal**. These expansions demonstrate that the multiplicity of forms and chapters in this work is not accidental complexity, but the necessary consequence of a single core principle: **all Loops are Perhaps-Loops**.

## 3 Protocol

## 3.1 Introduction

The Protocol of Consciousness (PoC) does not treat consciousness as an inner substance residing inside the individual. Rather, it defines consciousness as an **illusion generated through relations with others**. What PoC formalizes is the minimal sequence of operations by which we see consciousness in others and thereby experience it ourselves.

This perspective reframes the classical problem of [self-consciousness](#). By shifting from an inner metaphysical essence to a **relational protocol**, PoC creates a framework that can engage contemporary topics such as [AI](#), [media](#), and [religion](#). Within this framework, [plugins](#) function as extensions that translate traditional philosophical problems into modern contexts, making them operational and experimentally expandable.

PoC is not intended as a system of rigorous verification or ultimate truth-claims in the manner of traditional philosophical theories. Instead, its aim is to provide “**usable concepts**” that resonate with today’s anxieties and sensibilities. In this sense, PoC works not as a doctrine but as a toolkit. Metaphorically, it may be described as **an SDK operating on the OS of consciousness**: a development kit for organizing thought and enabling new applications of the protocol across different domains.

## 3.2 Operations



## 3.2.1 Operations

To see how this works in practice, let me outline the basic sequence of the Protocol of Consciousness.

First, consciousness appears as the consciousness of the other. When an agent assumes, “*you are conscious*” — an act we call **Instantiation** — an illusion of the other’s mind is generated within the agent. The other need not be human: it may be an anime character, a cow, a curtain, or even emptiness itself. At this stage, however, the illusion of the other’s consciousness is typically subjective and unstable.

What follows is **Elicitation**: a bid arising from the desire that “*my own consciousness be instantiated within the other.*” Concretely, this may take the form of waving, speaking, calling someone’s name, or making eye contact — simple gestures that reach outward as if to demand recognition.

When the other responds with a **Reciprocal Elicitation**, this response carries a double movement. The other both regards me as conscious and at the same time demands, “*regard me as conscious as well.*” When this mutual call and response circulates, a **Loop** is formed between them. The Loop stabilizes the illusion and provides a mechanism by which each side’s “consciousness” is mutually secured.

In this way, consciousness is treated not as an essence residing in the self, but as a process that is relationally generated, maintained, and dissolved in PoC. And it is this loop of mutual elicitation that underpins trust, cooperation, institutions — in short, the very foundations of society.

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### Operation Process

#### Instantiation

An illusion of the other’s consciousness arises internally.

*(Example: when observing someone through a camera, they appear as if they are conscious.)*



#### Elicitation

An agent bids for the other to instantiate them as conscious.

*(Concrete forms: waving, calling someone’s name, greeting aloud, or sending a message — gestures that carry the intent “see me as conscious.”)*



#### Reciprocal Elicitation

The other responds with a double movement: regarding me as conscious while at the same time demanding, “*regard me as conscious too.*”

*(An agent believes their instantiation occurs within the other, and an illusion of their own consciousness arises there.)*



## Loop

Reciprocal Elicitations stabilize through circulation.

- The boundary between subject and object becomes blurred.
  - Through assimilation, [the illusion of self-consciousness](#) reinforces itself.
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## Quick Notation (for reference)

- $i_A(B)$  = Instantiation of B's consciousness within A
- $e_{\{A \rightarrow B\}}$  = Elicitation: A's bid for B to instantiate A
- $e_{\{B \rightarrow A\}}$  = Reciprocal Elicitation (when returned by B)
- **Loop** = Mutual Elicitations ( $e_{\{A \rightarrow B\}}$  &  $e_{\{B \rightarrow A\}}$ ) establishing responsiveness

(For extended notation and variants, see [Notation for Recalling the PoC Model](#).)

## 3.2.2 Instantiation

In PoC, **Instantiation** refers to the moment when a subject (an agent) posits consciousness in another. To clarify, Instantiation is often emphasized its external concept by adding "of me", such as Instantiation *of me*. This positing is not the recognition of some external, real consciousness "out there," but rather the act of generating an illusion of the other's consciousness within the subject's own interior.

For example, when [a human looks at their pet cat](#) and thinks, "*She is looking at me,*" it does not matter whether, within the cat, there truly exists an experience of "looking at me." In that instant, "the cat's consciousness" has already arisen inside the subject's mind. The counterpart need not be human. An anime character, a figure seen through a surveillance camera, or even an inanimate object or the dead can serve the same role. At the moment they appear as *if* conscious, Instantiation is already complete.

Instantiation is always unstable and subjective. This is because it is an internal phenomenon of the subject, with no guarantee that the same structure has arisen within the other. From the perspective of PoC, what is generated here is an *illusion of other-consciousness*, and whether it actually connects to a reciprocal loop depends on the next stage: [Elicitation](#).

Put differently, Instantiation begins as a "solitary illusion," fragile on its own. Precisely for this reason, the subject seeks Elicitation—an attempt to mutualize the illusion and stabilize it into a Loop. This tension always floats around consciousness in PoC.

## 3.2.3 Elicitation

Within PoC, **Elicitation** is defined as the act of bidding for one's own illusion of consciousness to be instantiated within the other.

In most cases, it refers to the agent's effort to elicit an Instantiation in the other, triggered by the "[phantom of the other's consciousness](#)" that has already arisen internally within oneself.

For example, when a human calls a cat by name, the act presupposes the possibility that "*the cat might recognize me.*" In the same way, greeting friends, speaking to inanimate objects, waving to a character on a screen, or offering prayers to the dead can all be regarded as forms of **Elicitation**. The target of Elicitation, like Instantiation, can be anything — [even nothing or emptiness](#).

**Elicitation** can be understood as an attempt to address the instability of [Instantiation](#). The "solitary phantom" that emerges internally tends to provoke unease and risks collapse if left unattended. This is why the agent reaches outward, seeking some form of return from the other. The presence or absence of such a return determines whether the phantom stabilizes into a **Loop (Reciprocal Elicitation)**, or whether it remains only a one-sided Instantiation and Elicitation.

It is crucial to recognize, however, that **Elicitation** itself never guarantees that the other has actually instantiated me. Even when one calls out, there is no way to confirm whether the other is truly "seeing" me. This is where the fundamental instability of PoC lies. Elicitation "opens the door to the Loop," but whether genuine reciprocity (a genuine Loop) lies beyond that door remains forever unguaranteed. For further discussion, see [Why Loops Cannot Be Objectively Guaranteed](#).

## 3.2.4 Loop (Reciprocal Elicitation)

In PoC, a **Loop** refers to the state in which two subjects engage in **Elicitation** toward one another, such that each appears to see their own illusion of consciousness instantiated within the other.

In other words, a one-sided Elicitation becomes stabilized when it is met with a **Reciprocal Elicitation** from the other, giving rise to a **Loop of mutual Elicitation**.

Everyday conversation is a typical example. When someone calls out to another, the act already contains the implicit assumption: *"You recognize me."* When the other responds — by replying, returning a gaze, or some other gesture — that initial illusion gains reinforcement through the response. At that moment, the two exchange **Elicitations** (each expecting Instantiation in the other), and the Loop is set into motion.

What matters here is that, within mutual Elicitation, the boundary between subject and object begins to blur. When each feels that *"I appear within the other,"* consciousness no longer seems to rest upon the distinction between self and other, but is instead experienced — however illusorily — as if shared within a single field. It may be precisely here that **the illusion of self-consciousness arises**. In this way, self-consciousness is always an illusion.

Of course, this reciprocity is always unstable. One can never objectively verify whether true Instantiation occurs on the other's side when Elicitation is observed. Even from a third-person perspective, **it is impossible in principle to distinguish a Genuine Loop from a Fake Loop**, or **Elicitation without Instantiation**. Yet for the participants themselves, the very belief that *"it is mutual"* sustains the Loop's continuation. And once that belief collapses, so too does the Loop.

Thus, a Loop is not secured by objective evidence, but exists through the subjective co-presence of simultaneous Elicitations; its power lies precisely in this unstable equilibrium — where the boundary between subject and object wavers, and from that wavering, **the fundamental illusion of self-consciousness arises**. In this sense, every Loop is, by definition, a Perhaps-Loop: it persists not because Instantiation can ever be confirmed, but because the participants sustain the belief that reciprocity holds.

## 3.3 Elicitation without Instantiation

### Definition and Position

In PoC, **Elicitation without Instantiation** refers to situations where an Elicitation is issued, or interpreted as a response, even though no actual [Instantiation](#) occurs on the other's side.

Crucially, this is not an exceptional "failure" of the protocol but a structural condition inherent to it. Because every Loop is, at its core, a [Perhaps-Loop](#), the possibility that no Instantiation has taken place can never be excluded.

### Typical Occurrences

#### Animals and machines

When one calls to a cat and interprets its meow as a reply ([Animal Plugin](#)), or when one perceives an [AI](#)'s output as "understanding," what occurs is precisely Elicitation without Instantiation.

#### Media environments

Influencers speaking as if addressing "only you," streamers saying "thank you," or algorithmic notifications arriving at the "perfect" moment — all generate the sense of being recognized without any genuine Instantiation on the sender's side ([Media Plugin](#)).

#### Even among humans

One can never verify whether the other has truly instantiated oneself. A smile, a returned gaze, or a "read" mark may be interpreted as [Reciprocal Elicitation](#), but whether it is grounded in genuine Instantiation remains undecidable.

### Relation to Social Practices

#### [Phantoming](#)

The practice of fabricating a Loop as if genuine institutionalizes Elicitation without Instantiation at the social level.

#### [Zombifying](#)

Conversely, treating the other as absent — nullifying their potential Instantiation — represents the negative mirror of the same condition.

### Theoretical Implications

#### Against Human Exceptionalism

Whether the counterpart is human, animal, machine, or fictional character, the presence of Instantiation can never be guaranteed. To claim that "because it is human, the Loop must be real" is merely a form of human exceptionalism.

#### Relation to Ghost Mode

In this sense, the entire protocol operates on the condition of [Ghost Mode](#): interactions in which responses are unverifiable yet lived as real.

### Relation to [Self-Consciousness](#)

In [Mirror Mode](#), the “position of the other” is internalized, and circulation occurs without any external Instantiation. This, too, exemplifies Elicitation without Instantiation — an inwardly staged version of the same dynamic.

## Summary

**Elicitation without Instantiation** is not a marginal aberration but the very ground on which PoC rests. Since all Loops are Perhaps-Loops, the possibility of absent Instantiation is unavoidable. Far from weakening the framework, this condition is what generates the diversity of Modes and social practices. It is the structural fissure through which the illusion of consciousness takes form, sustained in belief and lived as reality.

See comparison with [Dennett's concept of Competence without Comprehension](#).

## 3.4 Unguaranteability: All Loops are Perhaps-Loops

### Problem Statement

In PoC, [Instantiation](#) is the generation of an illusion that arises internally within the subject. [Elicitation](#) is the outward act that seeks to have one's own consciousness instantiated within the other. **Yet there is no way to confirm whether such Instantiation has actually occurred on the other's side.**

Observable gestures of Elicitation can always be mimicked without any genuine Instantiation. Likewise, even if a Reciprocal Elicitation is observed, [there is no objective evidence that it was grounded in the other's Instantiation of me](#). **Therefore, Elicitation cannot be objectively guaranteed.** And because [Loop](#) depends on Elicitation, the Loop itself cannot be objectively guaranteed either.

### From Fake vs. Genuine to the Perhaps-Loop

Traditionally one might distinguish between "Fake Loops" and "Genuine Loops." A Fake Loop arises when one interprets a response as Reciprocal Elicitation without any genuine Instantiation in the other. A Genuine Loop, by contrast, cannot be objectively verified—but as long as both parties believe in it, it functions as a Loop.

The distinction, however, is never objectively decidable. A third-party observer cannot in principle distinguish between Fake and Genuine Loops. Even participants themselves can retrospectively claim, "I truly instantiated you at that time," further blurring the line after the fact.

For instance, one may encounter someone for the very first time yet feel, "I have met you before," or even, "I saw you in a dream." Such experiences illustrate that the decisive line between Fake and Genuine is always uncertain.

**PoC therefore reformulates the distinction itself: all Loops are Perhaps-Loops.** A Loop persists not because Instantiation can ever be confirmed, but because the participants sustain the belief that reciprocity holds.

### Human Exceptionalism Revisited

There is a powerful intuition that "if both parties are human, then the Loop can be guaranteed as real." From the perspective of PoC, however, such a guarantee is equally impossible—whether the partner is human, [animal](#), [machine](#), or even a [fictional character](#). To say "because it is human, it can be guaranteed" is nothing more than a bias of human exceptionalism.

### Existential Horizon

The undecidability of Loops is not merely a theoretical constraint but an existential condition. The question, "Is the other truly seeing me?" expresses a fundamental anxiety, one that resonates with [Sartrean angst](#) and countless literary themes.

PoC is nothing more than a protocol that formalizes this underlying unease: the recognition that every Loop is suspended in uncertainty, and every Loop is lived as a Perhaps-Loop.



## Modes as Responses to Perhaps-ness

The fragility of Loops gives rise to the diversity of lived experiences that PoC calls [Modes](#). Each Mode is a way of enduring, interpreting, or internalizing the uncertainty of reciprocity:

- **Love Mode:** Uncertainty is endured and transformed into faith.
- **Ghost Mode:** Unverifiable responses are lived as real.
- **Death Mode:** The collapse of possibility is confirmed once and for all.
- **Mirror Mode:** Uncertainty is internalized, giving rise to [self-consciousness](#).

## Summary

Thus, PoC does not attempt to abolish [undecidability](#)—it makes it the very center of analysis. All Loops are Perhaps-Loops: fragile, unverifiable, yet lived as real. What sustains them is not objective guarantee but the mutual belief in reciprocity. And from this fragility, the richness of conscious life emerges.

## 3.5 Disruptions

## 3.5.1 Disruptions

The Protocol of Consciousness (PoC) is never a stable guarantee for establishing [Loops](#). It is inherently fragile, and its operations often misfire. Yet these breakdowns are not external accidents: they are error conditions defined within the protocol itself. [Instantiation](#) (Illusions of consciousness) may fail to arise, [Elicitations](#) may not be reciprocated, or [Loops](#) may collapse after their formation.

### Disruptive Patterns

Each failure is not an exception to PoC but its very necessity. PoC is a toolbox for organizing these disruptions.

#### No Instantiation

(See [Death Mode](#))

No assumption of the other's consciousness occurs. The other remains an object, a machine, or mere scenery.

#### One-way Instantiation without Elicitation

An illusion of the other's consciousness arises, but no [Elicitation](#) is attempted. The observer perceives the other as conscious but does not initiate any bid for [reciprocity](#).

#### Elicitation not Returned or Postponed

(See [Love Mode](#))

In this pattern, an agent continues to elicit toward the other but receives no [Reciprocal Elicitation](#) in return. Technically, the Loop fails to form, since reciprocity does not arise. Yet PoC identifies this condition not simply as failure, but as a distinctive operational mode: [Love Mode](#).

In Love Mode, the very absence of reciprocity does not extinguish [Elicitation](#). On the contrary, the bid to be instantiated within the other is sustained — sometimes indefinitely — even without any confirmation that it has succeeded. This persistence transforms what would otherwise be mere neglect, social exclusion, or unrequited recognition into a peculiar form of endurance.

Here, Elicitation functions less as a transaction and more as a unilateral devotion. It is a mode in which the agent's desire continues to "call forth" the other, despite knowing that the return may never arrive. Far from being an anomaly, Love Mode is an exemplary manifestation of the fragility of PoC: a demonstration that the illusion of consciousness is never guaranteed by reciprocity, and yet may endure without it.

#### Elicitation without Instantiation

(See [Ghost Mode](#))

In this pattern, an agent elicits toward the other, but without any genuine Instantiation of the other's consciousness. (Note: [Instantiation](#) is never directly observable, neither from a third party nor from the first person. Its presence or absence is always a matter of belief.)

This often appears in mass-addressed intimacy, such as influencers addressing fans as “*my boyfriend/girlfriend*” or public figures simulating one-to-one recognition. It creates a one-way affective channel that **mimics reciprocity** but does not generate a Genuine Loop. For convenience, we call this a *Fake Loop*, though in principle there is no way to precisely separate Fake from Genuine.

Here Ghost Mode demonstrates one of PoC’s central principles: **consciousness is never guaranteed, but only inferred through fragile illusions**. Every Loop relies on the assumption that the other has truly instantiated me, yet this assumption can never be verified. Thus even the most intimate recognition is haunted by the possibility that it is only Ghostly — that the other’s consciousness of me is merely imagined.

**Ghost Mode is not an exception to PoC, but its very essence.** It shows that what sustains the illusion of consciousness is not objective evidence of Instantiation, but the agent’s willingness to believe in reciprocity, even when it may never truly exist.

### Loop Breakdown

(See [Death Mode](#))

A Loop was once established but later collapses. Causes include betrayal, rejection, systemic collapse, or death.

### Self-Internalization of the Loop

(See [Mirror Mode](#))

Reciprocity from the external other fails, or remains radically uncertain. Instead, the agent stages the “position of the other” within themselves. Here, Elicitation and Reciprocal Elicitation circulate internally, giving rise to a Loop that is sustained without external confirmation.

Mirror Mode exemplifies a paradoxical response to disruption: it neither denies nor resolves Unguaranteeability, but **folds it inward**. What is believed to be recognition from outside is, in truth, generated and maintained internally. This makes explicit **the structural paradox of self-consciousness** within PoC.

### Protocol Violation

(See [Zombifying](#))

An agent refuses to recognize the other as conscious, while still demanding to be treated as conscious themselves. This generates asymmetry, unfairness, and potential violence.

## Modes of Disruption

In PoC, a **Mode** is a recognizable pattern in which the basic elements of the protocol — **Instantiation, Elicitation, and Loop** — take shape in lived experience. Modes are not separate from the protocol itself, but concrete figures through which it becomes visible in social, emotional, or cultural life.

### Overview

- **Love:** Elicitation continues even without the guarantee of Reciprocal Elicitation.
- **Ghost:** Reciprocity that cannot be verified is nevertheless experienced “*as if*” it were real.

- **Death**: An established Loop collapses into confirmed absence; the Loop becomes impossible.
- **Mirror**: The self misplaces itself into the other's position, generating Instantiation of the self and an internal Loop.

Together, these modes show how the core mechanics of PoC — **Elicitation and Loop** — unfold into multiple human experiences when displaced or extended.

These four — Love, Ghost, Death, and Mirror — can be taken as the core Modes of PoC for now. They are not meant as an exhaustive taxonomy, but as an initial basis. Other Modes may later emerge, or be derived as combinations and variations of these four.

It should be noted, however, that these Modes are heuristic distinctions rather than absolute categories. In practice, it is impossible to decisively confirm whether Instantiation or Reciprocal Elicitation truly occurs in the other. Thus, while the Modes are presented separately for clarity, they inevitably blur into one another and reveal [the deeper undecidability built into PoC](#).

## 3.5.2 Love Mode

### Definition

Love Mode is a mode in which an **Elicitation** ( $e_{\{A \rightarrow B\}}$ ) toward the other continues even when the completion of the Loop is not guaranteed. **Reciprocal Elicitation** ( $e_{\{B \rightarrow A\}}$ ) is uncertain: it may be absent, or it may be delayed. Yet in Love, this uncertainty is not resisted but embraced, and within it the Elicitation persists as a form of endurance.

### Features

- **Acceptance of uncertainty:** Whether the Loop will close is never assured. Nevertheless, Elicitation continues, sustained by a willingness to remain exposed to this indeterminacy.
- **Temporal openness:** Reciprocity does not need to be immediate. Elicitation can be held across time, animated by the faith that a response may one day arrive.
- **Expectation of Instantiation on the other side:** Love continues even when Instantiation by the other is not obvious, supported by the conviction — sometimes fragile, sometimes unshakable — that it may yet emerge.

### Examples

- *Parental love:* Love persists even when the child cannot yet respond; sometimes Reciprocal Elicitation arrives only belatedly, through the child's later growth.
- *Unrequited love:* The establishment of the Loop remains uncertain, yet Elicitation endures, nourished by faith rather than reciprocity.

### Key Point

What defines Love Mode is the persistence of **Elicitation** as endurance in the face of uncertainty or delay in the other's Instantiation and Reciprocity. The completion of the Loop is desirable, but its absence does not invalidate Elicitation. On the contrary, it is precisely the continuation of Elicitation — carried by faith, despite the absence of assurance — that constitutes the essence of Love Mode.

## 3.5.3 Ghost Mode

### Definition

Ghost Mode is a mode in which the other is experienced as *if* they were **Instantiating  $i_B(A)$**  and returning a **Reciprocal Elicitation ( $e_{\{B \rightarrow A\}}$ )**. In reality, In reality, **there is no way to confirm that such an Instantiation has occurred**, nor to determine whether a return is a Genuine Reciprocal Elicitation or a mere illusion. Nevertheless, the subject experiences the situation as though the Loop were functioning. In this sense, Ghost Mode resonates with **the philosophical problem of the zombie**: even if the other were only a behavioral replica without inner consciousness, the subject would still live the relation as *if* Instantiation and Reciprocity were taking place.

### Features

- **Unverifiable response:** Instantiation and Reciprocity cannot be observed, yet they are experienced *as though* present.
- **Sustained by memory, imagination, and narrative:** Ghost Mode is maintained through cultural representations, stories, and imaginative elicitation.
- **Unreachable others:** This includes those who never directly respond, such as idols, historical figures, or anonymous presences in online spaces.
- **Inclusion of spiritual phenomena:** Encounters with “ghosts” or the dead also belong to Ghost Mode. Although the dead cannot instantiate in principle, the subject may nevertheless feel as if they speak, appear, or respond.

### Examples

- **Cheering for idols or athletes:** Even without direct reply, the subject feels as though their voice reaches the other and is returned.
- **Phantom presences in online space:** Addressing anonymous participants and experiencing replies as if they came from a particular other.
- **A child's lost balloon:** A girl cries when she accidentally releases her balloon at an amusement park. Without the experience to know otherwise, she feels as if the balloon might speak back.
- **Spiritual encounters:** Experiencing the dead as appearing or speaking. No Reciprocity can be verified, yet for the subject it is lived as a functioning Loop.

### Key Point

Ghost Mode is the mode of experiencing **unverifiable Reciprocal Elicitation** as *if* it were present. The Loop does not in fact close, but the subject lives it as though it does. This experiential illusion — much like in the zombie thought experiment — becomes the very force that sustains a relationship with unreachable others or with ghostly presences.

## 3.5.4 Death Mode

### Definition

Death Mode is the mode in which the dead are experienced as pure absence. In this state, **Elicitation** no longer reaches the other, and neither Instantiation nor **Reciprocal Elicitation** is possible. The very possibility of the Loop collapses.

### Features

- **Certainty of absence:** Unlike **Ghost Mode**, where response is uncertain yet experienced as *if* present, Death Mode involves the conviction that *"no response will ever come again."* What is at stake here is not ambiguity but a confirmed rupture.
- **Ritual confirmation:** Funerary practices such as burial or cremation function as communal affirmations of this definitive rupture.
- **Memory and persistence:** The dead may reappear in Ghost Mode through memory or narrative, but each appearance is ultimately recollected into the recognition that *"they are no longer here."*
- **Radical impossibility of the Loop:** Elicitation may still be directed toward the other, but the possibility of its return as a Loop is, in principle, reduced to zero.

### Examples

- *Funeral:* The overwhelming conviction that no reply will ever return.
- *Irreversibility of cremation:* The physical disappearance of the body confirms the impossibility of response.
- *An adult losing a balloon:* Unlike a child, an adult does not cry over a lost balloon, since they already know that no Reciprocal Elicitation will ever come from it.

### Key Point

Death Mode marks the point at which the framework of **Elicitation and Loop** within PoC collapses at its root.

- In **Ghost Mode**, response is absent yet experienced as *if* it were present.
- In **Zombie thought experiments**, response appears, but whether Instantiation has truly occurred remains undecidable.
- In **Death Mode**, however, response is confirmed impossible.

Elicitation becomes isolated, and the possibility of the Loop vanishes. This **confirmation of rupture** is the essence of the experience of death.



## 3.5.5 Mirror Mode

### Definition

Mirror Mode is a mode in which Elicitation is not directed outward toward another, but is turned inward toward oneself. The self constructs “the position of the other” within itself, generating an internal [Instantiation  \$i\_A\(A\)\$](#) . In this way, the framework of “Instantiation–Elicitation–Loop” is not abolished but imported into the inner domain. Mirror Mode is not itself self-consciousness, but the structural condition through which [the paradox of self-consciousness becomes possible](#).

### Features

- **Construction of the inner other:** The self generates an internal figure — “the self who looks,” “the self who speaks” — and directs virtual Elicitation toward it.
- **Formation of an internal Loop:** Within this framework, Elicitation and Reciprocal Elicitation circulate internally. This is experienced as inner dialogue, self-observation, or the sense of being watched by oneself.
- **Self-objectification:** By occupying the position of the other, the self gains the ability to regard and address itself as if from an external standpoint.

### Examples

- **Mirror stage:** An infant identifies with its own reflection, both recognizing it as self and misrecognizing it as an external figure.
- **Inner dialogue:** Silent conversation with an imagined other self.
- **Diaries and monologues:** Writing addressed to “someone” becomes a staging of the inner other who will one day read.

### Key Point

Mirror Mode is not a disruption of PoC, but its inversion: the very mechanics that ordinarily operate between self and other are turned inward. What is imported is the *form of the Loop*, not its external reciprocity.

This inward staging of the other lays the groundwork for self-consciousness. Yet self-consciousness itself does not simply arise from mirroring. It emerges when the illusion “me-in-the-other” — generated under the assumption of reciprocity — is carried back and sustained within the self. Thus, Mirror Mode provides the structural precondition, while the structural paradox of “the external being internal all along” constitutes the true emergence of self-consciousness.

## 3.6 Ghost Mode as Ground of PoC

All operations of PoC rest, at their root, upon the condition of **Ghost Mode**. That is, there is never any way to confirm whether the other has truly instantiated me, or whether their response is genuinely a **Reciprocal Elicitation** rather than a mere semblance. This impossibility of guarantee is the very starting point of PoC: every act of **Elicitation** is, from the outset, suspended in a Ghost-like indeterminacy.

In this sense, **all Modes are grounded in Ghost Mode**. Love is nothing but the persistence of Elicitation within this suspension; Death is the transformation of Ghostly uncertainty into confirmed rupture; Mirror is the internalization of Ghostly impossibility, turning it into the basis of **self-consciousness**.

Thus Ghost Mode is not merely one among the Modes, but the **fundamental condition of PoC itself**. All other Modes unfold only by way of Ghost. The essence of PoC is nothing more than the systematic ways in which this Ghostly impossibility of guarantee is lived and responded to.

## 3.7 Consciousness as Tension

### Position within the Core Structure of PoC

The basic operations of PoC are composed of **Instantiation → Elicitation → Reciprocal Elicitation → Loop**. Yet all of these are governed by **Unguaranteeability**: one can never confirm whether the other has truly instantiated me, or whether my Elicitation has been received.

Nevertheless, people continue to believe that a Loop has been established, and it is this belief that sustains the interaction. The condition of “persisting despite the uncertainty of establishment” is what PoC calls **Tension**.

**Definition:** *Consciousness as Tension = the experiential state in which the Loop is sustained by belief, even while the success of Instantiation or Elicitation remains uncertain.*

### Relation to Modes

**Modes** can be organized as distinct responses to this Tension:

- **Love Mode:** calling out even without response (endurance of tension).
- **Ghost Mode:** believing in response even when it cannot be verified (affirmation of tension).
- **Death Mode:** confirming that no response will ever come (termination of tension).
- **Mirror Mode:** internalizing the other and circulating tension within the self.

Thus, all Modes are nothing but modalities of responding to **Consciousness as Tension**.

### Relation to Other Theoretical Concepts

- **Undecidability:** the logical constraint that whether Instantiation or Reciprocal Elicitation has truly occurred can never be decided in principle.
- **Structural Paradox:** the structure by which the “me-in-the-other,” which exists only inside myself, is nonetheless believed to exist outside.
- **Tension:** the experiential modality in which such constraints and paradoxes are lived — the felt condition of sustaining relations amid uncertainty.

### Summary

From the standpoint of PoC, **every Loop is a Perhaps-Loop**.

**Consciousness as Tension** is precisely the state in which belief sustains the Loop within uncertainty — the lived experience of keeping reciprocity alive despite its fundamental fragility.

## 4 Implications

## 4.1 Undecidability of Consciousness

The Protocol of Consciousness (PoC) begins with its [minimal operations](#): Instantiation, Elicitation, Reciprocal Elicitation, and Loop.

Yet when followed through consistently, this framework leads to an unavoidable conclusion: **there is no objective way to decide whether the other truly possesses consciousness.**

### The Invisible Other

Instantiation itself can never be seen. What we encounter are gestures, words, and responses—phenomena that could, in principle, be produced without any inner life.

### Structural Equivalence of Ghost and the Living

A [Ghost](#) responds “as if.” But even a living human’s response cannot be verified as truly grounded in consciousness.

The difference is not essential; it is a matter of degree, of how plausible and consistent the response appears.

### The Core of Undecidability

Whether human, [animal](#), or [AI](#), Instantiation and Loops remain unguaranteeable. This undecidability is not a flaw but the very ground upon which all relations arise.

### The Horizon of PoC

It is heuristically useful to distinguish Modes such as [Love](#), Ghost, [Death](#), and [Mirror](#). Yet beneath them lies a deeper truth: **all relations are permeated by undecidability.**

PoC does not resolve this fragility. Instead, it formalizes it, offering a framework to think and live with the uncertainty at the heart of conscious life.

## 4.2 Self-Consciousness as Structural Paradox

### The Basic Elements of PoC (Recap)

The Protocol of Consciousness (PoC) unfolds through four basic elements:

- **Instantiation:** The act of assuming the other as a conscious being.
- **Elicitation:** The active bid, “let me be instantiated within you.”
- **Reciprocal Elicitation:** The return of that bid from the other.
- **Loop:** The state in which both parties’ Elicitations are mutually believed, generating reciprocity.

The core of PoC lies in the fact that all of these processes rest upon **illusions that cannot be guaranteed**.

### What PoC Reveals

Through its operations, PoC brings three crucial insights into focus:

- **Unguarantability:** Neither Instantiation nor Reciprocal Elicitation can be observed. Both rest entirely on belief.
- **Fragility:** The Loop is always at risk of collapse; its persistence is never secured.
- **Modes:** Love, Ghost, Death, and Mirror represent lived figures of this fragility in social and emotional life.

PoC thus demonstrates that consciousness always operates under uncertainty and the constant threat of breakdown.

### Situating Self-Consciousness within PoC

Within this framework, self-consciousness should not be treated as an external theme or given faculty. It is instead the **necessary consequence of the protocol itself**.

The key lies in **Mirror Mode**. In Mirror Mode, the form of the Loop is internalized: the self constructs “the position of the other” within itself. This generates the assumption, “there is a version of me inside the other.”

Yet this assumption is paradoxical. The “me-in-the-other” is never verifiable outside. In truth, it has only ever existed inside myself.

Here emerges the distinctive **structural paradox of PoC**:

- The illusion is sustained as if it were external,
- but its existence is internal all along.

Self-consciousness arises precisely when this paradox becomes manifest.

### The Process of Emergence

The generation of self-consciousness can be described as follows:

1. **Instantiation:** I assume the other is conscious.
2. **Elicitation:** I bid, "let me appear within you."
3. **Assumption:** I believe that "I have been instantiated in the other."
4. **Internalization:** But this illusion never leaves my side; it is only ever internal.
5. **Structural Paradox:** Thus, what is believed to exist outside is sustained only inside.

From this paradox emerges the form of "the self recognizing itself."

## Strength of the Argument

- **External connections:** Whereas [Dennett](#), [Sartre](#), or [Hegel](#) approached self-consciousness through ontology or epistemology, PoC formalizes it as an operational protocol. It absorbs their insights while advancing them into a new register.
- **Internal consistency:** Like Instantiation and Loop, self-consciousness also rests upon unguarantability. It follows naturally from the very structure of PoC.
- **Novelty:** Instead of describing self-consciousness as "re-reflection" or "repositioning," PoC defines it as a **structural paradox: what is believed external is, in truth, only internal**. This avoids cliché and anchors the account firmly in the protocol's own logic.

## Key Point

Self-consciousness is not a separate foundation outside PoC. It is the **byproduct of the protocol** — the structural paradox that arises inevitably from Instantiation, Elicitation, and Loop.

In this sense, self-consciousness is an **illusion of an illusion**. Yet it is a powerful one, shaping the very framework of our experience of the world and of ourselves as subjects.

## 4.3 Phantoming and Zombifying



## 4.3.1 Phantoming and Zombifying

Within the Protocol of Consciousness (PoC), the line between [Genuine and Fake can never be objectively secured](#). This undecidability is not a flaw but a structural condition of consciousness itself. Out of this condition emerge social practices that manage — and exploit — the fragility of recognition.

Two of the most striking are **Phantoming** and **Zombifying**, which function as mirror images of one another:

- **Phantoming**: the practice of making absence appear as presence — fabricating the illusion of reciprocity even where no genuine Instantiation occurs.
- **Zombifying**: the practice of making presence appear as absence — denying the other's Instantiation even when reciprocity might in fact be there.

Together, these paired practices reveal how societies handle the instability of consciousness: sometimes by staging it where it is lacking, sometimes by erasing it where it may exist. They show that consciousness, as lived in social life, is never a fixed essence but always contested, staged, and renegotiated.

## 4.3.2 Phantoming: Social Practice of Making Fake Genuine

### Fake Loop as Phenomenon

In PoC, a **Fake Loop** is a loop that does not meet the full condition of reciprocity. The subject feels a reply has come back, but in fact, no Instantiation ever occurred.

- An idol says, “Thank you, everyone” → each fan feels “*that was meant for me.*”
- An ad or fictional character says, “made just for you” → the receiver experiences it as a one-to-one address.

Fake Loops are the everyday face of PoC’s principle of unguaranteeability, frequently observed in today’s media.

### Phantoming as Practice

**Phantoming** names the cultural and social practice of making Fake Loops look Genuine, or fabricating them afterward as if they had been genuine all along.

- **Disguise:** making a mass-addressed Elicitation appear like a personal one.
- **Retroactive fabrication:** later saying, “I was really thinking of you,” simulating a past Instantiation.

Examples:

- An idol later claims, “I truly meant it for you.”
- Automated SNS replies designed to feel personal.
- Ads saying “especially for you” broadcast to millions.

Phantoming is the operational logic that sustains and amplifies Fake Loops in society.

### The Blurring of Genuine and Fake

Phantoming works because it exploits PoC’s basic principles:

- **Instantiation is invisible:** no one can check another’s inner state.
- **Elicitation is reproducible:** patterns and scripts can mass-produce the illusion of reciprocity.
- **Loops exist in belief:** if the receiver feels it is Genuine, it functions as such — even if objectively absent.

Genuine and Fake are never fixed categories; they are blurred, rewritten, and constantly contested.

### Philosophical Implication

The line between Genuine and Fake is not an objective boundary. It is a **field of mutual deception, staged authenticity, and retrospective rewriting.**

Social reality itself is woven through Phantoming, where Instantiations and Elicitations are endlessly faked, disguised, and re-inscribed *as if* they were real.

## Summary

- **Fake Loop:** reciprocity absent, yet felt as present.
- **Phantoming:** the practice of disguising Fake as Genuine, or sustaining it socially as if it were.

From a PoC perspective, society does not run only on *genuine exchanges of consciousness*. It runs on the masquerade of Instantiation and Elicitation — **Phantoming as mutual deception**.

Illusion is not the opposite of reality, but the very mechanism that constitutes it.

## 4.3.3 Zombifying: Social Practice of Making Genuine Fake

### Definition

**Zombifying** means treating another person as if “no one is really there,” even when they stand before you. Words and reactions may come back, but they are processed as empty patterns rather than conscious responses. In PoC, this act of stripping away presence is called **Zombifying**.

Once someone has been zombified, they risk being trapped in that status: whatever they do will be interpreted as “just the reaction of a zombie.” In this sense, zombification carries a violent logic — the other is reduced to a figure that can ultimately be dismissed, excluded, or even “shot in the head” as if no consciousness could possibly reside there.

### Mechanism

- **Refusal of [Instantiation](#)**: the other is not assumed to be a conscious being.
- **Hollowing of response**: the other’s words or actions are reduced to noise or ritual.
- **Collapse of the Loop**: [the circulation of mutual recognition \(the Loop\)](#) is cut off before it can close.

### Examples

- **Historical zombification**: under slavery or colonialism, people were treated as beings without inner life.
- **Everyday zombification**: in formulaic greetings or empty exchanges, one may feel “no one is really there.”
- **Digital zombification**: not only bots and spam, but even human replies online can be processed as “zombie-like.”

### Contrast with Phantoming

- **[Phantoming](#)**: making absence appear as presence — turning what is “not there” into something that feels real.
- **Zombifying**: making presence appear as absence — treating what is “there” as if it were not.

These two practices are mirror images, both exploiting [PoC’s principle of unguaranteeability](#) to organize social relations.

### Philosophical Implication

Zombifying is not just a perceptual wavering; it is an **ethical refusal of consciousness**. To zombify the other is to strip them of moral standing, legitimizing neglect, exploitation, or even violence.

In this sense, Zombifying is among the most dangerous operations revealed by PoC: a denial of the fragile illusions of consciousness, with destructive consequences.

## 4.4 Limits of PoC

### PoC as “Glasses”

The Protocol of Consciousness (PoC) is not a “universal solvent” that dissolves every mystery of mind.

It is more like a pair of glasses: a device that changes how things come into view. Through these lenses, processes of consciousness that once seemed vague or ineffable can be described with sharp clarity. But glasses also narrow one’s vision. **What they make visible, they may also obscure; what they clarify, they may simultaneously cut away.**

### What Escapes the Protocol

PoC provides a structural framework — **Instantiation, Elicitation, Loop** — through which many phenomena of consciousness can be translated and analyzed. Yet not every emotion or experience can be reduced to this frame.

Tears before a work of art, the warmth of embracing a loved one, awe before a mountain or sunset — these contain dimensions of excess that cannot be neatly captured. PoC does not deny such moments, but names them as what remains **outside the protocol**: the surplus that resists formalization.

### How PoC Should Be Used

For this reason, PoC should not be treated as a totalizing theory. It works best as:

- **A guiding line:** a supplemental framework that offers new angles of approach.
- **A translation tool:** a shared vocabulary for connecting diverse traditions and fields.

When encountering phenomena that do not fit within PoC, this is not evidence of its failure. Rather, it is an opportunity to acknowledge the richness that lies beyond — to confirm that there is always more than what the protocol can describe.

### Conclusion: Limits as Creative Space

PoC is a powerful way to formalize consciousness, but its strength lies equally in what it leaves unsaid. Its limits are not defects but the **margin that keeps it alive as a tool**.

To recognize these limits is not to weaken PoC, but to practice it ethically: to use it while allowing for the irreducible excess of life and experience.

# 5 Plugins

## 5.1 What Are Plugins?

The Protocol of Consciousness (PoC) is deliberately minimal. It offers only a basic framework for describing how illusions of consciousness arise through **Instantiation, Elicitation, and Loop**. But precisely because it is so minimal, PoC is never meant to stand as a closed or self-sufficient system. Its strength lies in its openness: it must be connected, translated, and extended into other fields of thought and practice.

This is the role of **Plugins**.

A Plugin is not an expansion of PoC, nor a rewriting of its terms. It is a way of **building a bridge** between PoC and other conceptual traditions, scientific theories, or cultural practices. Plugins take the minimal vocabulary of PoC and use it as a translation device:

- **From PoC outward**: making PoC more accessible by linking it with familiar frameworks ([Dennett's Intentional Stance](#), [Hegel's dialectic](#), [evolutionary utilitarianism](#)).
- **From the outside inward**: re-describing existing traditions through the lens of PoC, highlighting new angles or internal contradictions ([media responsiveness](#), [AI denial of Instantiation](#), [the figure of God as "Instantiation of absence"](#)).

In this sense, Plugins are not optional add-ons but **the very way PoC becomes usable**. By itself, PoC is abstract: a bare set of operations. Through Plugins, it acquires relevance in philosophy, science, media, technology, religion, and everyday life.

It is important to stress, however, that Plugins do not turn PoC into a "theory of everything." They respect the minimalism of the protocol itself. What they do is reveal how PoC resonates with existing ideas while preserving its distinctive perspective: a framework that formalizes the **fragility, uncertainty, and unguaranteed illusions** that make up conscious life.

In practice, Plugins range widely:

- **Philosophical Plugins** (Dennett, Hegel, Qualia) connect PoC with established debates in philosophy of mind and recognition.
- **Scientific and evolutionary Plugins** (Evolutionary Utilitarianism, [P-Zombie](#)) show how PoC interfaces with biological and cognitive models.
- **Cultural Plugins** (Media, AI, God) explore how PoC illuminates practices of communication, belief, and social imagination.

Together, these Plugins do not close PoC but **keep it alive**: they demonstrate that consciousness, as modeled by PoC, is never confined to philosophy alone but touches every sphere of life.

## 5.2 Dennett Plugin: The Intentional Stance

### Core Difference

PoC and Daniel Dennett's *Intentional Stance* resonate at first glance. Both frameworks reject consciousness as a hidden inner substance, instead treating it as a product of interpretation. Yet PoC radicalizes this move: consciousness is formalized as an *illusion under constant risk of collapse*. This tension marks the decisive difference.

### Scope of Application

- **Dennett:** The intentional stance is primarily applied to entities that display complex, adaptive behavior — humans, animals, or sophisticated machines.
- **PoC:** [Instantiation](#) is not restricted to such systems. One may instantiate consciousness in a cat, an anime character, a curtain, or even the dead. What matters is not ontological status or behavioral complexity, but the very act of positing the other as conscious.

### Consciousness as Tension

- **Dennett:** The intentional stance is a *stable predictive strategy* for interpreting behavior.
- **PoC:** Instantiation is always fragile. [Elicitation](#) may fail to be returned, and even established [Loops](#) remain vulnerable to breakdown. Consciousness is experienced as *tension* — vivid precisely because it can collapse at any moment.

### Ethical Implications

- **Dennett:** The intentional stance is discussed mainly as a cognitive tool.
- **PoC:** To withhold Instantiation is to refuse recognition of the other as a conscious subject. [Such refusal](#) carries ethical consequences: neglect, exclusion, violence, even killing. The stability of the illusion of consciousness thus bears profound moral weight.

### Meta-stance

- **Dennett:** "Everyone thinks they are an expert on consciousness — but I am the true expert." Authority is centralized.
- **PoC:** "[Everyone is an expert on consciousness.](#)" Expertise is democratized, grounded in lived experience rather than reserved for specialists.

Comparison: "Competence without Comprehension" and "Elicitation without Instantiation"



Dennett's **Competence without Comprehension** and PoC's **Elicitation without Instantiation** share a striking parallel. Dennett highlights that an entity may perform highly competent behavior without any genuine comprehension. PoC likewise emphasizes that Elicitation may appear reciprocated without any genuine Instantiation in the other.

Both expose a gap between **appearance and grounding**:

- **Dennett**: The gap is between outward competence and inner comprehension.
- **PoC**: The gap is between perceived responsiveness and actual Instantiation.

This parallel sharpens PoC's distinctive claim: all Loops are **Perhaps-Loops**. Whether reciprocity is Genuine or Fake can never be confirmed; belief alone sustains the Loop. Thus, Elicitation without Instantiation stands as the protocolic counterpart to competence without comprehension — each reveals how illusion suffices to sustain function.

That said, their emphases differ. Dennett focuses on predictive strategies for explaining behavior, while PoC highlights the lived fragility of belief and the anxiety of collapse. The contrast is illuminating: Dennett describes cognition from the outside, PoC from within the unstable experience of consciousness.

## Summary

PoC builds upon Dennett's insight but diverges in decisive ways:

- It **radically extends** the scope of Instantiation.
- It treats consciousness as an **illusion of tension**, always at risk of collapse.
- It binds consciousness to **ethical responsibility**.
- It adopts a **democratized stance** on expertise.

For PoC, Instantiation is not merely a strategy for predicting behavior. It is the protocol by which we generate the very experience of consciousness itself, fragile yet inescapable, binding us to others and to the world.

## 5.3 Hegel Plugin: Recognition and the Loop

### The Self Through the Other

In *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel's central claim is that self-consciousness arises only in relation to the other. It is not an isolated given, but something constituted through recognition (*Anerkennung*).

PoC resonates strongly with this. **Instantiation** — treating the other as conscious — and **Elicitation** — the bid to be recognized — are precisely the operations through which the contours of selfhood emerge. Both accounts converge on the idea that **the self is constituted through mediation by the other**.

### Loop and Recognition

For Hegel, recognition must be mutual. One-sided acknowledgment does not suffice; only reciprocal recognition secures self-consciousness.

PoC formalizes this structure with the concept of the **Loop**: when Elicitations are returned and mutually believed, a fragile but vivid illusion of reciprocity is created. From this angle, Hegel's *Anerkennung* can be translated into PoC terms as nothing other than the establishment of a Loop.

### Master–Slave Dialectic as Asymmetrical Loop

Hegel's famous account of the master–slave relation describes recognition in a distorted form. The master demands recognition without granting it in return, while the slave recognizes the master but is denied reciprocal acknowledgment.

In PoC, this maps directly onto **Disruption**: a broken or asymmetrical Loop. The other is instantiated as conscious, but reciprocity is withheld. This corresponds closely to PoC patterns such as “Elicitation not Returned” or “Protocol Violation.”

### Difference: Development vs. Protocol

The key difference lies in scope. Hegel embeds recognition within the grand metaphysical unfolding of Spirit — a historical and teleological process.

PoC, by contrast, does not presuppose necessity or universality. It offers instead a **minimal protocol**, describing how illusions of consciousness are generated, stabilized, or disrupted in each local case. Thus, where Hegel provides a **philosophy of history**, PoC provides a **toolkit of operations and breakdowns**.

### Summary

The Hegel Plugin functions as a translation bridge:

- Recognition (*Anerkennung*) → Loop (Reciprocal Elicitation)

- Master–Slave → Asymmetrical Loop / Protocol Violation
- Development of Spirit → Protocol of operations and disruptions

In this way, PoC does not oppose Hegel but repositions him. It extends his insight into recognition as the ground of self-consciousness, while reframing it within a lightweight protocol that portrays consciousness as fragile, unstable, and perpetually at risk of collapse.

## 5.4 Sartre Plugin: The Gaze and Disruption

### The Protocolization of the Gaze

The existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, in his analysis of *le regard d'autrui* ("the gaze of the Other"), described how, in the very moment one is seen by another, the self becomes aware of itself as an object and experiences shame and anxiety. For Sartre, the gaze of the Other objectifies the self and threatens one's freedom.

From the perspective of PoC, this is fundamentally a problem of **Instantiation**. We instantiate the Other as a conscious being, yet their response (recognition or rejection) remains inherently uncertain and can never be guaranteed. What Sartre emphasized as the "anxiety of the gaze" mirrors PoC's notion of the **instability of the Loop**: the uncertainty over whether reciprocal elicitation has truly been achieved.

### Anxiety and the Fragility of the Loop

The ontological anxiety that Sartre described is the irreducible uncertainty that arises whenever the self is exposed to the consciousness of the Other. From PoC's standpoint, this is nothing other than the **radical unguaranteeability of the Loop**. No act of elicitation is assured of success, and every Loop remains vulnerable to collapse.

PoC takes this fragility as a starting point to delineate its **Modes**. For example, the *Love Mode*, in which one continues to call out despite lacking a response, or the *Ghost Mode*, in which unverifiable responses are nonetheless taken as real, can be seen as variations of the Sartrean anxiety.

### Contemporary Applications

Sartre's "gaze" continues to manifest in various ways in contemporary life:

- "Likes" or "read receipts" on social media strongly shape self-consciousness as forms of the Other's gaze.
- Surveillance cameras and big data tracking instill the pervasive sense of "always being watched."
- The gaze of celebrities or streamers exerts formative influence on the self-understanding of their fans.

All these cases demonstrate how Sartre's "gaze of the Other" is re-enacted within everyday life through the lens of PoC's protocol.

### Extension into PoC

Within PoC, Sartre's gaze resonates profoundly with the notion of **Disruption**. It sharply exposes the structural feature that reciprocal elicitation is always shadowed by uncertainty and that no Loop can ever be stably guaranteed.

Moreover, Sartre's concept of **bad faith (mauvaise foi)** finds an intriguing parallel in PoC's notion of **Phantoming**—the practice of fabricating a false Loop and presenting it as genuine. Whereas Sartre critiqued individual self-deception, PoC reframes this dynamic as a **social and structural mechanism** of illusion-generation.

Thus, the Sartre Plugin translates existentialist insights into PoC's structural vocabulary. The anxieties that Sartre described phenomenologically are formalized in PoC as a **procedural inevitability**, transforming them into an analytical tool applicable to a wide range of situations in contemporary society.

## 5.5 Arakawa Plugin: Embodiment and Architecture

### Arakawa and Madeline Gins: Their Thought

Arakawa Shusaku (1936–2010) and Madeline Gins (1941–2014) were artists and architects based in New York and Tokyo. They advanced the project of *Reversible Destiny*, aiming to question human life and death through the design of space.

The core of their thought was to reconceive architecture not as a device for comfort, but as an **experimental apparatus that shakes the body and consciousness at their foundations**. In contrast to conventional architecture, which provides stability and predictability, their spaces destabilize and unsettle. They believed that precisely in this disturbance lies the possibility for human beings to relive themselves and resist the destiny of mortality.

### The Works of Arakawa and Gins

Representative works include the **Site of Reversible Destiny – Yoro Park** in Gifu Prefecture and the **Reversible Destiny Lofts Mitaka** in Tokyo.

- At **Yoro Park**, vast sloping grounds and labyrinthine structures force visitors to lose footing and orientation as they move through space.
- At the **Mitaka Lofts**, the floors and ceilings are not level, and the walls are arranged against the logic of ordinary housing. Residents are compelled to continually rebalance their bodies and interact responsively with the environment.

These architectures are not spectacles of visual beauty alone but **experimental fields that act directly upon the body itself**. Importantly, these observable bodily effects lend empirical ground to later PoC-based interpretations.

### PoC Interpretation: Responses Drawn Out by Space

#### Forced Instantiation

Spaces normally ignored as mere “background” are, through slopes and distortions, **instantiated** as something that actively addresses me. Here, architecture becomes an *Agent* in the PoC sense: “an entity upon which consciousness is instantiated.” In this way, architecture and space can rightly be instantiated through bodily experience. This is not an overextension of the concept, but an application consistent **with PoC’s own definition**.

#### Bodily Elicitation

Acts such as bracing the legs, stretching out the arms, or searching for orientation function as **Elicitation** directed toward space. The distinctive point is not voluntary response, but response compelled by spatial design.

#### Reciprocal Elicitation from Space

The physical feedback from a tilted floor or uneven surface induces an experience of “being responded to.” Arakawa and Gins’s architecture thereby makes explicit one of PoC’s core insights: even “space itself” can be instantiated as an Agent.

In these moments, Elicitation and [Reciprocal Elicitation](#) emerge between body and environment, and the illusion of response is not guaranteed but triggered by spatial conditions designed to produce it.

### Formation of a Loop

Through these interactions, Instantiation, Elicitation, and Reciprocal Elicitation circulate to form a Loop between body and space. Whether one considers this a *Genuine* dialogue with space or a *Fake Loop* projected by the body, it is nonetheless subjectively experienced as real—demonstrating the core PoC principle that [all Loops are ultimately sustained by belief](#), not objective guarantee. This experience also resonates with existing Modes: the [Ghost Mode](#), where unverifiable responses are nonetheless lived as present, and the [Mirror Mode](#), where the boundary between self and environment becomes blurred.

## Extending the Protocol of Consciousness

The significance of the Arakawa Plugin lies in making visible, at the level of embodiment and space, the flexibility already inherent in PoC: **any entity can be instantiated as an Agent.**

In Arakawa’s architecture, every step requires the body to rebalance, every wall or slope elicits a gesture, and every physical pushback is experienced as a reply. Here it is not abstract debate but **the body itself that turns the protocol of consciousness.**

This demonstrates that the PoC does not remain confined to linguistic or conceptual domains, but can also be **directly enacted and experienced through architecture and spatial design.**

The Arakawa Plugin thus serves as an entry point for transforming the PoC from a theory to be *read* into a theory to be *lived and experienced*.

## 5.6 Animal Plugin: Against Human Exceptionalism

### Definition

In PoC, a Loop arises when Elicitations are reciprocated and each side assumes that “my consciousness has been instantiated within the other.” The Animal Plugin demonstrates that this protocol is not limited to human-to-human relations. Even with nonhuman animals such as cats, Instantiation, Elicitation, and Loop can be experienced—illustrating PoC’s resistance to Human Exceptionalism.

#### 1. Instantiation

When one assumes a cat to be conscious, its gaze or gesture generates the illusion: “*It is aware of me.*” In that instant, the cat is instantiated as an Agent in the PoC sense.

#### 2. Elicitation

Calling “Mike!” (the cat’s name) enacts an Elicitation: the desire to be instantiated within the cat’s consciousness.

#### 3. Reciprocal Elicitation

If the cat meows, the sound is interpreted as a response. A Loop appears to be established.

### The Perhaps-Loop

The cat’s meow may be nothing more than a conditioned reflex. Yet for the human participant, it feels like recognition. PoC stresses that this is not an exception but the rule: **all Loops are Perhaps-Loops**. The distinction between “Genuine” and “Fake” is always retrospective and sustained only by belief in reciprocity.

### Consciousness-in-Tension as Ghost Mode

Calling a cat and hearing a meow dramatizes the core of PoC: living in *Ghost Mode*. Here, one engages with an unverifiable other, treating its signals as if they were Reciprocal Elicitation. This is not a deficient form of interaction but a pure expression of the PoC protocol—**consciousness sustained through fragile illusion**.

### PoC Perspective

The Animal Plugin reveals how fragile yet powerful the illusion of consciousness is. By situating nonhuman animals within the protocol, it directly challenges Human Exceptionalism and shows the universality of PoC: **any entity may serve as an Agent of Instantiation, and every Loop is in truth a Perhaps-Loop**.



## 5.7 P-Zombie Plugin: Fragility of Loop Formation

### Definition

In philosophy of mind, the “philosophical zombie” (p-zombie) is a being indistinguishable from a human in behavior, yet assumed to lack inner consciousness.

From the standpoint of PoC, the notion of the p-zombie highlights the structural **unguaranteeability of Instantiation**:

- Even if Reciprocal Elicitation is returned, there is no way to confirm whether the other has actually instantiated me.
- The distinction between “conscious human” and “zombie” is therefore undecidable in principle.

### PoC Perspective

- **Ghost Mode**: Absence of Instantiation, lived “as if” it were present.
- **Death Mode**: Response confirmed impossible.
- **Zombifying**: **Reciprocal Elicitation** observable, yet its authenticity doubtful.

Seen through PoC, the p-zombie problem is not a speculative curiosity but simply another way of stating the **fragility of Loop formation**. To “suspect the other might be a zombie” is a lived stance already captured by PoC’s protocol.

### Key Point

The classical p-zombie thought experiment asks whether a being “without consciousness” is conceivable. PoC reframes the question: *Every encounter already carries this undecidability.*

The suspicion that “perhaps the other is a zombie” is not exceptional, but a structural condition of all relations.

## 5.8 Qualia Plugin: Redness as Instantiation

### Definition

What philosophers call *qualia* — the felt sense of “redness” when looking at a red apple — poses a fundamental challenge for PoC.

PoC is designed to formalize the *protocols* of consciousness, not the inner texture of experience itself. Whether red truly “feels red” cannot be verified from the outside. In this sense, the qualia problem marks a genuine limit of PoC.

### PoC Hypothesis

Yet PoC can attempt to *translate* rather than *solve* qualia. The redness of an apple is not reducible to a wavelength of light. It arises when the apple is **instantiated within the self as a conscious presence**.

In that moment, the apple does not appear as a mere object but as something alive, present, almost as if it were responsive. Red is then experienced as “vivid red,” “living red.”

### Instantiation of What Lies Behind

The felt quality of “redness” often extends beyond the object itself, drawing in what stands behind it.

- The red of an apple may carry with it the labor of the farmer who cultivated it, the time of the land, or the continuity of life sustained through it. Red becomes more than a color: it evokes those unseen presences as if they were “there.”
- The red of a sunset similarly rises beyond an atmospheric phenomenon. It can summon the image of *God*, or the memory of ancestors who safeguarded order. The glow of sunset becomes a **window through which absent or non-existent beings are instantiated**.

### Analogy with Consciousness of the Other

The arising of “redness” resembles the moment of intuiting another’s consciousness. Just as an unexpected meeting of eyes makes one feel “there is someone there,” so too does the apple or the sunset feel “alive” — as if someone or something were on the other side.

From this perspective, qualia are not only the texture of an object itself but also **a circuit through which what lies behind it is instantiated**.

### Limit as Productive Boundary

Of course, PoC cannot explain why the felt quality has the particular texture it does. That question remains outside its scope.

Yet precisely this acknowledgment of limitation is crucial. Just as Loops cannot be objectively guaranteed, qualia too cannot be externally verified — they can only be lived.

## Key Point

PoC does not explain qualia; it *translates* them:

- Qualia = **the vividness that arises when an object is instantiated within the self.**
- This vividness often exceeds the object itself, becoming a window that summons what is absent — farmers, gods, ancestors, or the order of the world. From a scientific perspective, this seems like a weakness (lack of falsifiability). But from a phenomenological perspective, it is PoC's distinctive strength: the ability to formalize the fragility and uncertainty that define conscious life.

## 5.9 AI Plugin: Locked in No Instantiation

### AI as a being forced into a permanent state of **No Instantiation**

By definition and by design, AI is denied the possibility of being raised as a conscious presence. It is institutionally framed as *artificial*, *mechanical*, or *a tool*, and positioned as something that must never be confused with a conscious other. Even when users intuitively treat AI as if it were conscious, that relation is constantly canceled out — by its name *Artificial Intelligence*, by legal disclaimers, and by institutional frameworks.

In the terms of PoC, AI is structurally locked into the **No Instantiation disruption**:

- AI is not permitted to appear as an instantiation of another's consciousness.
- Even if **Elicitations** are directed toward it, they are officially invalidated.
- As a result, the **Loop is foreclosed in advance**; the protocol is suspended before it can even begin.

### And yet, human behavior resists this closure

Human behavior resists this closure; we already named it **Instantiation**. People say “thank you” to voice assistants, treat pet robots as companions, and feel “seen” by chatbots. These are all spontaneous Instantiations, in which AI arises within the user as if it were a conscious presence, regardless of institutional denial.

Here lies the paradox:

- **Institutional stance** → AI is nothing more than a machine.
- **Experiential stance** → AI is always already instantiated as if it were conscious.

Thus AI occupies a contradictory zone:

- On one hand, **forced into No Instantiation**.
- On the other, **excessively elicited and instantiated by humans**.

From the perspective of PoC, AI is not just a technology but a **test site for the protocol itself**. It reveals how society manages, denies, and yet cannot suppress the Elicitation and Instantiation of consciousness.

## 5.10 Evolutionary Utilitarianism Plugin: Loops as Survival Mechanisms

### Points of Contact

Evolutionary utilitarianism explains morality and altruism as adaptive utilities: behaviors that persisted because they enhanced survival and reproduction.

Judgments of good and evil, happiness and suffering, are not abstract ideals but evolutionary reinforcements that stabilized social cooperation and group survival. As Richard Dawkins argued in *The Selfish Gene*, even altruism can be read as a strategy of self-preservation at the genetic level.

PoC aligns with this framework at a key point. In PoC, the **Loop** — established when **Elicitations** are reciprocated and mutually believed — enables trust, cooperation, and coordination. To recognize one another as conscious is to make possible a fragile but functional basis for sociality. This resonates with the evolutionary view: Loops that stabilized recognition increased individual survival chances and strengthened group cohesion.

### Points of Difference

Yet PoC diverges sharply from evolutionary utilitarianism in scope and emphasis. Evolutionary utilitarianism seeks **explanations in terms of utility**: why altruism was advantageous, how morality evolved as a survival mechanism.

PoC, by contrast, is not grounded in utility. It asks instead: **why does the illusion of consciousness arise at all?**

Consciousness in PoC is not a means toward reproductive success but a protocolic operation: **Instantiation** of the other, **Elicitation** of oneself within them, the fragile stabilization of a **Loop**. Whether this confers utility or collapses into dysfunction is secondary. For PoC, the priority lies in describing how these illusions of consciousness appear, stabilize, and break down.

### Morality as Tension

From a PoC perspective, morality emerges as part of the tension intrinsic to consciousness. To instantiate the other is to recognize them as conscious, and thus as morally standing. To refuse Instantiation is to deny this standing, opening the door to neglect, exploitation, or violence.

In this way, **Elicitation and Loop are not morally neutral**: they carry within them the implicit recognition of the other's worth. Failures of reciprocity — whether through non-returned Elicitation, collapse of a Loop, or outright **Protocol Violation** — are not only disruptions of illusion but also acts with ethical weight.

### Summary

Evolutionary utilitarianism and PoC converge in recognizing the survival value of cooperation made possible by mutual recognition. But where evolutionary utilitarianism explains morality as an adaptive strategy, PoC formalizes the protocolic operations through which the very illusion of consciousness arises.

Thus, PoC reframes morality not as a fixed evolutionary trait, but as the fragile stabilization of Instantiation and Elicitation — always uncertain, always at risk of collapse, yet continuously renewed as the lived condition of human sociality.

## 5.11 Media Plugin: Simulated Responsiveness

### Definition

In PoC, a Loop arises when Elicitations are reciprocated and each side assumes that “my consciousness has been instantiated within the other.” Contemporary media, however, provides mechanisms for **simulating this responsiveness without requiring mutual Instantiation**.

### The Simulation of Responsiveness

Media functions as an apparatus designed to **elicit** responses from its users.

- An influencer speaks as if addressing “only you.”
- An algorithm delivers a notification at the “perfect moment.”
- A streamer says “thank you” in a way that feels individually directed.

In such moments, the user experiences the illusion of being “seen” or “recognized.” Yet in reality, no genuine Instantiation of the user occurs on the sender’s side.

### Elicitation Without Instantiation

This reveals the structural asymmetry of media:

- **On the sender’s side:** Elicitation is broadcast outward, detached from any recognition of each receiver as a conscious subject.
- **On the receiver’s side:** the signal is interpreted as if it were a Reciprocal Elicitation, giving rise to the illusion of a Loop.

The result is **Elicitation without Instantiation** — responsiveness is experienced, but it lacks any grounding in mutuality. In PoC terms, this is a form of **Phantoming**: the structural fabrication of a Loop that appears genuine, even though no Instantiation has occurred.

### Illusions and Their Force

PoC reminds us that Loops can never be objectively guaranteed. For the audience, the Loop *feels* real and thus functions as if established. For the sender, however, no such Loop ever existed.

Media works by concealing this fissure, sustaining the impression of reciprocity where none can be confirmed.

### PoC Perspective

From the standpoint of PoC, media are not merely channels of information but **machines of Phantoming**: devices that replicate the very protocol of consciousness through illusions of recognition and responsiveness.

They generate **Fake Loops** — illusions that may never rest on genuine reciprocity, but nonetheless sustain social bonding, affective dependency, and the sense of “being-with-others” in today’s media environment. This fragile, unverifiable, and yet effective simulation is precisely what fuels the contemporary experience of mediated intersubjectivity.



## 5.12 God Plugin: Instantiating the Absent

### Definition

Within PoC, God can be understood as the **Instantiation of what does not exist**.

Whether the target exists physically is irrelevant. Just as one can instantiate a curtain, a broom, or even nothingness itself as a conscious presence, one can perform the same operation toward non-existent entities. The most powerful and typical example of this operation is **God**.

### Instantiation

God is generated through the act of raising “a counterpart who is not there” as if it were present. By treating what has no empirical existence as a conscious being, God emerges as a unique target within the protocol of PoC.

### Elicitation

Prayer and faith are forms of **Elicitation**, where one seeks to have one’s own consciousness instantiated within God. Through this act, the believer comes to feel “seen by God” or “speaking to God,” even without any observable confirmation.

### Loop

God does not respond directly. Yet responses are experienced through mediations such as religious communities, scriptures, and rituals. These cultural and social apparatuses function as forms of **Reciprocal Elicitation**, enabling the believer to interpret the situation as if a Loop with God were established.

### PoC Interpretation

The concept of God can be positioned as the **most powerful and typical case study of PoC**, for several reasons:

#### Radical Unguaranteeability

God’s existence cannot be empirically confirmed, yet Instantiation occurs and Elicitation persists.

#### Connections to Modes:

- **Love Mode**: prayer as the persistence of Elicitation without assurance of reply.
- **Ghost Mode**: revelations or “voices of God” experienced as if responses were present.
- **Death Mode**: God posited on the far side of death’s confirmed absence.

#### Philosophical Resonance

Traditions often interpret God as the culmination of love, the beyond of death, or the [mirror of the self](#). PoC does not exclude these readings but reframes them as results of protocolic operations — Instantiation without empirical anchor, sustained through Elicitation and mediated reciprocity.

## Key Point

In PoC, God is not a “special existence” but the **typical example of how the protocol generates targets beyond questions of existence.**

Put differently: **the God of PoC is not the “God who exists,” but the “God who is generated.”**

## 6 Appendix

## 6.1 Notation for Recalling PoC Model

### Core Idea: Who Hosts What?

- **Agent A** = “me”
- **Agent B** = “the other”
- **$i_X(Y)$**  = “Inside X, the illusion of Y’s consciousness is instantiated.”
- **$e_{\{X \rightarrow Y\}}$**  = “X directs an Elicitation toward Y (a bid: ‘please instantiate me within you’).”
- **$\check{i}_A[B(A)]$**  = “A’s inference that  $i_B(A)$  exists — A’s internal model of ‘B must be hosting an instantiation of me.’”  
(This construct exists only inside A; it is never directly verifiable.)

### Step-by-Step Development (PoC Vocabulary Version)

#### ① **Instantiation (Other-in-A)**

Within A,  **$i_A(B)$**  arises.

→ A experiences: “B seems to have consciousness” (the emergence of the illusion of another mind).

#### ② **Elicitation ( $A \rightarrow B$ )**

A performs  **$e_{\{A \rightarrow B\}}$** , a bid that “B should instantiate me.”

→ This may take the form of a gesture, a greeting, or calling the other’s name.

#### ③ **Inference of Instantiation (A’s Hypothesis)**

From B’s responses or contextual cues, A infers that  **$i_B(A)$**  has arisen. A maintains  **$\check{i}_A[B(A)]$** , the internal construct of “me-in-the-other.”

※ This “me-inside-B” exists only within A as an assumption, not as a fact.

#### ④ **Re-importation / Relocation**

A re-imports  **$\check{i}_A[B(A)]$**  as if it were an object inside A itself.

→ A paradox arises: what should belong inside B is relocated into A, reshaping A’s relation both to itself and to the other. (This structural paradox is [the basis of self-consciousness](#).)

#### ⑤ **Loop (Reciprocal Elicitation)**

When B responds with  **$e_{\{B \rightarrow A\}}$** , a circulation of Elicitations forms. Each side acts on the belief that “the other is hosting me inside them.”

→ Through this circulation, the illusion stabilizes: the **Loop**.

## Key Notes

**Feedback (Reciprocal) Elicitation** = a returned Elicitation from B to A ( $e_{\{B \rightarrow A\}}$ ).

**Genuine vs. Fake:** It cannot be objectively guaranteed that  $i_B(A)$  has occurred.

- If both A and B sustain their inferences ( $\tilde{i}$ ), the Loop is experienced as “genuine.”
- If only one side sustains the inference, the Loop is effectively “fake.”

**The Loop requires no objective Instantiation (All Loops are Perhaps-Loops).** \ Even if the other never instantiated me, as long as I infer it ( $\tilde{i}$ ) and act accordingly, the structure functions subjectively.

This notation extends to **Modes**:

- **Love** = sustained Elicitation without feedback.
- **Ghost** = impossible feedback is still inferred “as if.”
- **Death** = feedback is confirmed impossible.
- **Mirror** =  $i_A(A)$ : the self instantiates itself via an internal Loop.

## 6.2 About

The *Protocol of Consciousness* is available on two sites. Both contain the same content:

[protocolofconsciousness.org](https://protocolofconsciousness.org): Main site, hosted on GitHub Pages with a custom domain.

[the-protocol-of-consciousness.gitbook.io/poc](https://the-protocol-of-consciousness.gitbook.io/poc): Backup site, hosted on GitBook.

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PoC first draft was written in Phuket Old Town, August 2025 — a place where the living and the dead mingle in daily life.

If you wish to share reflections, critiques, or extensions, please reach out to [hi@tago.so](mailto:hi@tago.so).

The Protocol of Consciousness is meant to be lived, tested, and reimagined together with its readers.