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> What I apprehend immediately when I hear the branches crackling behind me is not that *there is someone there*; it is that I am vulnerable, that I have a body which can be hurt, that I occupy a place and that I can not in any case escape . . . in short, that I *am seen*.
>
> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*

1. Introduction

As online learning becomes more prevalent, colleges and universities in the United States have increasingly turned to remote proctoring services (e.g., ProctorU, ProctorTrack, Honorlock, Respondus, Proctorio) that claim to detect and deter student cheating during online exams. In response, a number of editorials and news articles have emerged detailing the discomfort and anxiety remote proctors often cause students; however, the existing empirical and philosophical literature has yet to offer a substantive analysis of these negative psychological and physiological effects. This chapter aims to illuminate the existential and phenomenological nuances present in student testimony regarding remote proctoring. Specifically, I argue that the anxiety students describe is a response to *feeling seen*.[1] In most cases, remote proctoring involves the surveillance of student behavior by either a stranger or artificial intelligence, and the empirical literature suggests that students are often falsely penalized for innocuous or unintentional "disruptions" during their exams (Sietses, 2016, p. 15). Thus, rather than be "caught up" in the exam process

[1] Throughout this chapter, I use italic type to denote technical concepts and distinguish them from colloquial, nontechnical usage. Italic type is also sparingly used for emphasis throughout the chapter.

(and invisible to oneself), students are forced to attend to their bodily comportment and engage in a self-reflective awareness of their behavior as a body *for-others*. Moreover, student testimony suggests that in the most extreme case, remote proctoring is more than a distraction for students; it can also be alienating such that students no longer feel free to appraise the character of their own actions but must instead see themselves through the eyes of the proctor.

2. The Rise of Remote Proctoring

In April 2021, Ohio State University student Claire Krafka (2021) published a report in *The Lantern*—the school's independent student newspaper—about the university's newfound reliance on remote proctoring services. Krafka wrote, "Despite its intended goal of keeping students honest while outside of physical classrooms, online test proctoring programs, such as Proctorio, have given some Ohio State students test anxiety" (para. 1). Proctorio, founded in 2013, is one of several remote proctoring services created over the last decade in response to the growing demands of online academic programs. As the low cost and flexibility of distance learning at for-profit schools proved to be an attractive option for nontraditional students, leading research institutions in the United States began leveraging their prestige by offering online alternatives of their own (Casey, 2008), often marketed as "identical" to in-person courses (Johnson, 2017, para. 16). But with reputations on the line, research universities quickly shifted their focus to concerns about cheating as a possible foil to this new online model, and remote proctoring services were a natural response (Barnes, 2010; Hollister & Berenson, 2009; Nash, 2015).

By 2020, Proctorio reported that it had administered more than 20 million exams across 1,200 institutions (Olsen, 2020)—a statistic now reflective of the industry-at-large (Kimmons & Veletsianos, 2021)—and students began voicing their concerns. In the year that followed, student newspapers at Brandeis, Cornell, DePaul, Duke, Emory, Ole Miss, Penn State, Purdue, Syracuse,

William and Mary, and many more covered student dissatisfaction with the services. Multiple petitions were launched by student groups in protest of remote proctoring, and several universities agreed to stop using the software altogether (Kelley, 2020a). Students have cited a number of concerns, including privacy violations and discriminatory practices, while also pointing out that the long-term effectiveness of proctoring services remains ambiguous as students begin to test and share techniques for circumventing remote surveillance mechanisms (Geiger, 2021; Heilweil, 2020). Moreover, empirical literature examining the severity of academic dishonesty taking place during online versus in-person exams has produced inconsistent results (Peterson, 2019; Woldeab et al., 2017).

3. The "Invisible" Body

Though many of these issues have been treated at length elsewhere, student reports of increased anxiety while under the watchful gaze of remote proctors have yet to be thoroughly explored. In this chapter, I attempt to move beyond an empirical analysis and address the *lived experience* of testing under the supervision of remote proctors. By taking embodied experience as the point of departure for this investigation, I aim to uncover the existential implications of newly implemented proctoring technologies. For this reason, I employ phenomenological perspectives throughout this inquiry—regularly turning to and interpreting student testimony found in the editorials and news articles mentioned above. As a theoretical framework, phenomenology is concerned with revealing the tacit structures and conditions that shape a person's conscious experience as a being-in-the-world (i.e., a body inextricably linked to—and in constant dialogue with—the world as such). From this theoretical perspective, an individual is not considered a disembodied and unaffected "ego" of the Cartesian—now posthumanist (Vaccari, 2012)—tradition; rather, the experiences that an individual has are directly shaped by the *facticity* of their

being: the specific particularities of their body (e.g., age, race, height, disposition), as well as the many cultural norms and ideological influences embedded within it. For example, when I miss a step while walking down the stairs, the flutter in my stomach reminds me that I am not merely a free-floating mind but a corporeal, perspectival being, limited by the particular physical benefits and constraints that my body affords me.

Influenced by the work of Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl, French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) wrote that the body is our "point of view upon the world" (p. 73). Indeed, the body is our "general means of having a world" at all (p. 147). It is through my hand that I engage with the pen on my desk, through my eyes that I admire the bird outside my window, and through my nose that I become distracted by the smell of freshly baked bread wafting through my office. Moreover, as Drew Leder (1990) has noted, "My expressive face can form a medium of communication only because it is available to the Other's gaze" (p. 11). Simultaneously seeing and seen, touching and touched, the body is not a refuge or "envelope" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 172) that protects me from an outside world but the means by which "I am immersed in it" (p. 178). "Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is . . . caught in the fabric of the world" (p. 163). And yet, often, it seems that I am unaware of my bodily comportment. The body's tendency to recede into the background of one's attentional field is a point that has been repeatedly discussed in phenomenological literature. For example, in *The Absent Body*, Leder noted that "While in one sense the body is the most abiding and inescapable presence in our lives, it is also essentially characterized by absence" (p. 1). He continues:

> That is, one's own body is rarely the thematic object of experience. When reading a book or lost in thought, my own bodily state may be the farthest thing from my awareness. I experientially dwell in a world of ideas, paying little heed to my physical sensations or posture. (p. 1)

Merleau-Ponty suggested in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945/2012) that this bodily absence may be explained by the simple idea that we do not *have* so much as *inhabit* our bodies. Indeed, I do not often perceive my arm as an external object or tool; instead, as I start to pick up the mug on my desk, my movement is informed by a wealth of "preconscious knowledge" that has already determined the range of possibilities available to me without the need for "a clear and articulated perception of [my] body" (p. 83). Nor is there a need to consciously calculate the mug's distance, shape, or weight—I am already aware of such things. Though the items in my periphery are distinct physical objects in their own right, my orientation toward them is almost always as an object available *for me* such that, as Luna Dolezal (2015) has noted, "I situate my lived-body in space around them and in relation to them" (p. 22). She continues:

> I cannot see a glass bottle, for example, and observe, in an abstracted way, its material and form without immediately and pre-reflectively associating it with my body's history of experiencing such an object and hence projecting a possible future that includes the human act or acts which it can serve. (p. 22)

As a result, my body is "already mobilized by the perception" of the objects around me (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012, p. 108). Moreover, my intent to reach for an object on my desk may only become clear to me once the object is already within my grasp. The prevalence of habitual motor processes in everyday activities (e.g., eating, walking, driving, speaking) highlights how rarely we consciously attend to and exercise conscious control over our bodies. The ability to move in and respond to one's surroundings with ease and confidence is possible, in some sense, only because of the prevalence of this pre-reflective, habitual knowledge. As Dolezal (2015) has noted, "We do not and (many argue) cannot move and act successfully if we thematically regard the body as an object, supposedly using rational and quantifiable judgments to control and manipulate it" (p. 22).

Thus, phenomenologists have often described the "normal" body as experientially *absent* or *invisible* insofar as we are rarely explicitly aware of our bodily comportment during everyday

life. Experiences of bodily absence, termed "flow" by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1975, p. 86) and Hubert Dreyfus (1999, p. 105), are perhaps most noticeable during moments of high-level cognition: Athletes, musicians, and public speakers report being "in the zone" during their most impressive performances, and almost everyone has undoubtedly experienced the realization, after driving home from work, that they have no memory of monitoring and adjusting the speed of their vehicle, signaling lane changes, or maneuvering through traffic. In *Being and Nothingness* (1943/1992), Jean-Paul Sartre analyzed the familiar example of writing. When putting pen to paper, he argued, "my hand has vanished" (p. 426):

> I do not apprehend *my* hand in the act of writing but only the pen . . . I use my pen in order to form letters but not *my hand* in order to hold the pen. I am not in relation to my hand in the same utilizing attitude as I am in relation to the pen; I *am* my hand. (p. 426)

Moments of flow like the one Sartre describes are dependent upon the body's ability to move through and act upon its surroundings without "getting in the way" (Dolezal, 2015, p. 27). When I walk through a crowd, my body constantly shifts and maneuvers around obstacles to avoid drawing itself into my attentional field. Thus, my own physical structure is "*passed by in silence*"—a latent presence in the background of my everyday life (Sartre, 1943/1992, p. 434).

4. The "Visible" Body

There are, however, many situations that can disrupt this flow. For example, if I suffer a muscular strain in my arm while exercising, my attention is immediately directed toward the point of injury. In the days that follow, even the simplest tasks in my routine—putting away dishes, walking the dog, or reaching for the mug on my desk—are plagued by a newfound awareness of muscles I didn't even know I had. Similarly, Luís Madeira and colleagues (2019) have described the experience of falling ill, when the "pre-reflexive, intimate, and familiar" features of the body become "other" and the "painful, heavy, nauseated, feverish body, now alien and out of control, is no longer *home*" (p. 278). Leder (2016) wrote that when we are ill, we are brought to a "heightened

awareness of the body," now perceived as an "external threat" that encumbers our once free-flowing movement and thought (p. 16). Having entered the attentional field, the ill or injured body is regarded as an obstacle, an *object* of sorts. Indeed, the disruption of bodily invisibility often occurs during everyday performative failures, much like the way a familiar keyboard—taken for granted in everyday use—comes sharply into focus when a broken key fails to produce the intended letter.

5. The Body *for-Itself*

Though I have focused on localized and individual disputations of bodily invisibility up to this point (e.g., illness, injury, disability, pregnancy), such examples fail to get at the inherently social and discursive dynamics at play between students and their proctors. In order to evaluate the critical intersubjective dimensions of bodily self-consciousness at work during student-proctor encounters, I turn now to Sartre's account of *the gaze*—or "the look"—in *Being and Nothingness* (1943/1992) and its existential significance as an objectifying and alienating force.[2] Though at times his ontology is too heavily tied to Cartesian subject-object dichotomies, it remains particularly useful for analyzing the technologically mediated forms of communication under investigation here, in which limitations to the conveyance of gesture, tone, and eye contact only further emphasize the superficiality these forms of communication often promote.[3]

The "invisible" body already discussed above reflects the first of three ontological dimensions of embodiment introduced by Sartre: the body *for-itself*, the body *for-others*, and the body *for-itself-for-others*—the last of these three dimensions having been re-termed the "seen

[2] Sartre has often been criticized for his almost exclusively negative portrayal of the gaze as a medium for antagonism (Cloutier, 2018; Daly et al., 2020; Dolezal, 2015). However, insofar as the student-proctor relationship is one of generally opposed interests, Sartre's analysis proves useful for my purposes here.

[3] See Ngo (2017) chapter four, part two for an insightful analysis of the limitations present in Sartre's ontology due to its grounding in Cartesian dualism.

body" by later scholars (Dolezal, 2012; Sheets-Johnstone, 1994). The first of these, the body *for-itself*, is experientially characterized by its inconspicuous absence and familiarity. "*Lived* and not *known*" (Sartre, 1943/1992, p. 324), the body for-itself is "surpassed" as it remains in the background of my attentional field (p. 236). But, of course, my body is *not* invisible to others.

6. The Body *for-Others*

Diverging from his description of the invisible body, Sartre (1943/1992) recalls his experience volunteering to participate in various psychology and physiology experiments. Sitting in a laboratory, and "in the Other's presence," an experimenter asked that he assess whether the light on a screen in front of him was more or less illuminated, whether the pressure exerted on his hand was more or less intense, and so on (p. 311). He wrote that, though he apprehended the objects presented to him as a self-reflective subject, he was apprehended by the experimenter as a mere object among other objects: "The illumination of the screen belonged to *my* world; my eyes as objective organs belonged to the world of the experimenter" (p. 311). Here, thematized by the experimenter's gaze, his body-as-object was "utilized and known by the Other," and he was faced with the ontic features of his physical form (p. 351). This illustration typifies the second of Sartre's ontological terms: the body *for-others*. Under the (omnipresent but often ontically absent) gaze of the Other, I acquire a conceptual self-awareness of my bodily features and instrumentality as a mediating "tool-among-tools" (p. 352). Jacob Saliba has further illuminated Sartre's familiar scene in an examination room, writing, "The doctor presses the stethoscope against my chest listening intently to my breathing patterns and objectifying me in my anatomical form; I, in turn, sit there patiently as the ground for the doctor's actions" (Saliba, 2021, para. 16). As the doctor asks me to breathe in and out, my breathing becomes stilted, and I find myself keenly aware of every movement required to accomplish this task—a task which, just before the doctor turned his gaze

upon it, I completed without forethought and without effort. “There is no doubt”—as Sartre (1943/1992) surmised—my experience is one of objectification, of bodily visibility (p. 252). I *am seen* by the Other, and now *I see myself* as well.

In the next section, I connect the disruptive force of *the gaze* as outlined above to the particular functions and methods employed by proctoring services. I then turn to the last of Sartre’s three ontological dimensions (i.e., the “seen body”) and its often-alienating role in the constitution of reflective self-consciousness.

7. The Proctor’s Gaze

The proctor’s gaze clearly presents issues for students, many of whom report, in quite plain terms, “It feels like someone is staring at me as I take my exam” (Krafka, 2021, para. 6). In an interview about his petition to stop the use of remote proctors at Brooklyn College, a sophomore named Aharon asked that readers imagine what it would feel like if they knew a proctor was watching their every movement: “You [would] think about it the whole entire time,” he said. “You can’t not think about it” (Young, 2020, para. 11). Further elucidating this experience, Takashi, a student at St. Charles Community College, explicitly compared remote proctoring to common in-person test-taking: Noting the “intrusive” nature of remote proctoring, he reported that the online experience feels “like having someone standing over your shoulder” (Chin, 2020a, para. 25). Similarly, another student asked, “You know how in high school, when you’d be doing a test and a teacher would walk around and peer over your shoulder? That anxiety you feel for those 10 seconds? That’s how basically all of us feel” (Harwell, 2020a, para. 18). The experience described here is undoubtedly familiar to many readers. Looking back at my time as an undergraduate, I clearly recall the uneasy feeling that eclipsed any attempt to concentrate on the exam in front of me as an instructor or proctor, tasked with monitoring the room, passed by my desk. When the

heat of their gaze grazed my back, hands, desk, paper, and backpack, I too became aware of the presence of these objects. Like a spotlight surveilling the room, the proctor's gaze drifted onto my desk and, lingering for a moment, illuminated its contents. As the teacher stood behind me, tension grew in my chest, my posture tightened inward, and I became increasingly aware of my bodily comportment: I was paralyzed in this state of being-for-others, unable to move freely or direct my attention back toward the task at hand.

However, unlike the momentary disruptions that occur during in-person testing, students have pointed out that remote proctoring ensures they each remain under direct surveillance "the whole time" (Chin, 2020a, para. 25). Indeed, many services include features that explicitly remind students that they were under observation, repeatedly drawing students' attention back to their bodily comportment. Drew Harwell (2020a) of *The Washington Post* found that when students using ProctorU were "flagged" for suspicious behavior, their proctors alerted a "more aggressive specialist," known as an "interventionist," who could interrupt the exam to "demand that the student aim his or her webcam at a suspicious area or face academic penalty" (para. 24). Meanwhile, Betsy—a Rutgers University student navigating ProctorTrack—found that once her exam began, "a red warning band appeared on the computer screen indicating that [the proctor] was monitoring her computer and recording video of her" (Singer, 2015, para. 3). Moreover, "To constantly remind her that she was being watched, the program also showed a live image of her in miniature on her screen" (Singer, 2015, para. 3). As a result, students have reported being unable to give their "undivided attention . . . to the content of the test" (Krafka, 2021, para. 8). One student noted that they found the services "distracting" (Zhang, 2020), while another said that she "wasn't as focused" (Scavo, 2020). Tracy, a recent graduate, reported that she often felt as though she could only use "half of [her] brain . . . to actually work on the exam" because the other half was

"so concentrated on not messing up or doing anything wrong or making the wrong move" (Harwell, 2020b, para. 59). Similarly, University of Minnesota student Katrina said, "My experience with Proctorio has been nerve-wracking, to say the least. Every time I take a test I worry about accidentally acting suspicious while the camera's watching" (Chin, 2020b, para. 14). And for good reason: In an oft-cited example, more than one-third of the nearly 9,000 participants who sat for the State Bar of California's remote exam last October had their test flagged by ExamSoft for review (Kelley 2020b).

Indeed, numerous reports have emerged that proctors incorrectly flag unintentional and innocuous behaviors as cheating (Hubler, 2020). Like its competitors, Proctorio is a remote service meant to replicate the security of an in-person exam. Once the test begins, the service employs several surveillance techniques to guard against cheating: Student behavior is monitored and recorded via the computer's webcam and microphone; artificial intelligence software tracks physical movements, facial expressions, background noise, and screen activity; and several computer features (e.g., printing, web browsing, copy-pasting, etc.) are made inaccessible. However, while the methods and functionality of these services are not monolithic, the many forms of observation they introduce extend far beyond what is found in most classrooms. Live proctors at Examity (who each monitor one student at a time) say they are instructed to continuously scan their student's surroundings and "closely watch the face of the student . . . [for] suspicious eye movements" (Chin, 2020a, para. 26). Meanwhile, Harwell (2020b) found that services reliant on automated software use gaze-detection and computer-monitoring to "flag students for 'abnormal' head movement, mouse movement, eye wandering, computer window resizing, tab opening, scrolling, clicking, typing, and copies and pastes" (para. 7). He continues:

> A student can be flagged for finishing the test too quickly, or too slowly, clicking too much, or not enough. If the camera sees someone else in the background, a student can be flagged

> for having "multiple faces detected." If someone else takes the test on the same network — say, in a dorm building — it's potential "exam collusion." Room too noisy, Internet too spotty, camera on the fritz? Flag, flag, flag. (Harwell, 2020b, para. 7)

As one student put it, "Stuff that people wouldn't think twice about in a real classroom was being used against us" (Harwell, 2020b, para. 3). Indeed, Thera, a student at the University of California, Los Angeles who suffers from allergies, reported that she was "intimidated" by the testing software after it repeatedly flagged her exam each time she sneezed into a tissue on the grounds that she was looking away from the screen to view a piece of paper (Hubler, 2020, para. 22). Similarly, test-taker Cole reported that interruptions from the proctor disrupted his "train of thought" (Guthrie, 2020, para. 7). Cole noted, "When you are taking the exam at the testing center where it is normally held, nobody pops up out of nowhere, barking at you not to touch your face" (Guthrie, 2020, para. 7). As a result, students report heavily self-monitoring their own behavior—a task encouraged by the inclusion of features (e.g., self-facing cameras, red banners, proctor interruptions) that intentionally draw the student's bodily comportment back into their attentional field. It is here, however—when students begin to report (not only "distraction" but) "anxiety" about the way their proctors see them—that Sartre's third ontological dimension of embodiment becomes most relevant.

8. The "Seen Body"

As we have seen, the gaze of others has the ability to alert the individual to (i.e., make visible) their body as an object (utilized by themselves and others) much in the same way an injury might bring one's arm into focus. Sartre (1943/1992) argued, however, that the gaze also reflects the value-laden judgments of the gazer. Thus, the *seen body* is characterized by the intersubjective, socialized manner in which "I exist for myself as a body known by the Other" (p. 351). That is to say, the third ontological dimension is distinct from the conspicuous body *for-others*, in which my superficial features, movement, and comportment are apprehended as the object of my attentional

field; rather the *seen body* is characterized by first-person experiences of *shame*, *embarrassment*, or *alienation* as I develop a self-conscious awareness of *how I appear to the Other* (p. 358).[4] Sartre wrote, for example:

> I have just made an awkward or vulgar gesture. This gesture clings to me; I neither judge it nor blame it. I simply live it. I realize it in the mode of for-itself. But now suddenly I raise my head. Somebody was there and has seen me. Suddenly I realize the vulgarity of my gesture, and I am ashamed. (p. 221).

Finding myself within the Other's attentional field, I am thrown into a position of self-appraisal: I am suddenly faced with concern about my outwardly appearance. Sartre further illustrated this point in an oft-cited vignette of a voyeur jealously peeking through a keyhole to spy on his lover. "Let us imagine that moved by jealousy, curiosity, or vice I have just glued my ear to the door and looked through a keyhole," he writes (p. 259). At first, he is pre-reflectively engaged in this act of voyeurism: "there is no self to inhabit my consciousness, nothing therefore to which I can refer my acts in order to qualify them. They are in no way *known*; I *am my acts*" (p. 259). Immersed in this act of spying, his body recedes from his awareness. But then, hearing someone approach, his bodily invisibility is disrupted:

> All of a sudden I hear footsteps in the hall. Someone is looking at me! What does this mean? It means that I am suddenly affected in my being and that essential modifications appear in my structure . . . First of all, I now exist as myself for my unreflective consciousness . . . I see *myself* because *somebody* sees me. (p. 260)

Sartre reports that, with the appearance of the Other, his face turns red, an "immediate shudder" runs down his back, and his *seen body* enters his attentional field. He writes, "I am ashamed of myself as *I appear* to the Other" (p. 222). Hence, Dolezal (2012) has noted that our self-knowledge is largely *dependent* on the objectifying responses of other people; In the third ontological dimension of embodiment, "I experience and am aware of how (I think) the other sees me" (p. 13).

[4] See Dolezal (2015), especially chapter two, for a comprehensive review and application of Sartre's work on bodily shame.

And yet, I am never truly aware of how I appear to others. Sartre (1943/1992) wrote that to apprehend the Other's gaze is not to apprehend it as-object in the world; rather, "it is to be conscious of *being looked at*" (p. 258). Nevertheless, I have no direct access to the contents of this look. As such, Helen Ngo (2017) has noted that the "unknowable" nature of the Other's objectifying gaze necessarily involves an asymmetrical power relation such that "there is a distinct sense in which the gaze leaves the Other-as-object both revealed and exposed" (p. 140). She continues, "to find oneself suddenly looked-at . . . is to find oneself naked" and in a "moment of vulnerability" experienced as "disempowerment" (p. 142). *Disempowerment* is particularly apparent for proctored students who, to paraphrase Saliba (2021, para. 16), must sit there patiently as the ground for the proctor's actions. Thus, this loss of control is a constitutive element of what Sartre (1943/1992) termed "alienation," an objectified state in which the *seen body* comes to the fore of my attentional field (p. 263).

9. The Alienated Student

Though alienation is not a necessary consequence of objectification, Sartre (1943/1992) has argued that it often arises when the subject is "vividly and constantly conscious of his body not as it is for him but as it is *for the Other*" (p. 353). An experience of alienation occurs when the *seen body*—that is, the body as it has been characterized by the Other (e.g., as shameful, vulgar, lazy, deceitful)—comes to the forefront of my attentional field but does not reflect my true intentions or desires. In a state of alienation, I feel *estranged* from myself—"in the shock which seizes me when I apprehend the Other's look . . . suddenly I experience a subtle alienation of all my possibilities" (pp. 264-265). In other words, a state of alienation is one in which I no longer feel free to appraise the character of my own actions but must instead see myself through the eyes

of the Other. In Sartre's words, "my freedom escapes me in order to become a *given* object" (p. 261).

As we have already seen, students take great care to note how little control they have over their proctor's perception of them. In a remote testing environment, unconscious gestures and even events fully out of students' control may lead to disqualification: Guidelines before the exam inform students that "Changes in lighting can flag your test for a violation," and "Even stretching, looking away, or leaning down to pick up your pencil could flag your test" (Singer, 2015, para. 17). As a result, students consistently report experiencing anxiety about how their actions will be interpreted: Rachel, a sophomore using Honorlock for one of her courses, told her school paper that the experience was "so stressful . . . knowing that I might be accused of cheating" because "I never know if what I'm doing is going to trigger a flag" (Hill, 2020, para. 6). Similarly, Cole wrote that after a proctor interrupted his exam with the injunction "don't touch your face," he worried what other behaviors might trigger a disqualification: "I was terrified. If I got an itch on my nose, was he going to fail me? What if I moved around too much in my chair? What if I looked at the ceiling?" (Guthrie, 2020, para. 9).

As Jane C. Hu (2020) has noted, "The mere threat of being flagged can be anxiety-provoking for students" (para. 7). And yet, it is students' physiological symptoms of anxiety (e.g., fidgeting, face-touching, pencil tapping) that are most often flagged as disqualifying behaviors. Femi, a junior at the University of Texas at Austin, reported, "I feel like I can't take a test in my natural state anymore, because they're watching for all these movements, and what I think is natural they're going to flag" (Caplan-Bricker, 2021, para. 4). His dread of the software increased further after his roommate dropped a pot in the kitchen, making a loud clang that the automated proctoring software he was using deemed suspicious. "I had to try to calm down," he said, adding

that he worried if he showed any physical signs of anxiety, Proctorio would "say that suspicious activity is going on" (Caplan-Bricker, 2021, para. 4). Inaara, a second-year criminology student, summarized the situation quite succinctly: "Online proctoring really just feels like you're trying to avoid getting caught for something that you didn't even do" (Jeffrey, 2021, para. 14).

Hence, we find in student testimony a range of experiences. It must be acknowledged that for many students, the geographical flexibility of remote proctoring offers more benefits than drawbacks: For some, a moment of bodily visibility at the start of the exam may be quickly overcome as they resume their work and the proctor's presence is forgotten. For others, though, this visibility may create difficult testing conditions as frequent reminders of the proctor's presence extend over the course of the exam, disrupting their flow. And as we have seen, in the most extreme circumstances, students may even find the proctor's objectifying gaze harmful; Sartre has suggested that "By the mere appearance of the Other, I am put in the position of passing judgment on myself as on an object, for it is as an object that I appear to the Other" (p. 222). And so, we see that the proctor's gaze has the potential to awaken a self-reflective anxiety that goes far beyond mere distraction, instead creating in students an ongoing *self-conscious* awareness of how they are being perceived, their apparent lack of control over that perception, and the feelings of alienation that soon follow.

10. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to begin the process of elucidating some of the under-theorized phenomenological and existential nuances present in student testimony about remote proctoring. In reconsidering the effects of the proctor's gaze as an objectifying and alienating force, it is possible to reevaluate several other lines of inquiry already emerging from the tacit *technological solutionism* that grounds the remote proctoring project-at-large (Swauger, 2020).

Perhaps the line of inquiry most immediately available involves the application of Michel Foucault's (1975/2012) incisive work on *panopticism*, in which a unidirectional system of surveillance leads prison inmates to self-enforce predetermined norms of behavior. Students take care to note their lack of recourse when sitting in a remote testing environment. As one student noted, "They can see you, but you can't see them" (Hu, 2020, para. 1); another wrote, "It's kind of like a one-sided FaceTime" (Toth, 2020, para. 3). While a proctor can clearly see the student throughout the exam, "the student cannot see the proctor's face" (Harwell, 2020a, para. 24), and as a result, has "no idea if or when" a proctor is watching (Ryan, 2020, para. 14). Thus, we find the Foucauldian "eye that must see without being seen" already present in the mechanics of remote proctoring services (p. 171).

A number of additional topics emerge from a Foucauldian analysis of the gaze as a method of norm creation. For example, the series of injunctions students face as they start a remotely proctored exam—"Don't make any sudden movements." "Look directly ahead." "Don't speak" (Cahn & Deng, 2020, para. 1)—have already proven themselves uniquely burdensome for students with disabilities (Brown, 2021; Patil & Bromwich, 2020). And numerous reports have emerged that the facial recognition and detection features built into some proctoring services are not adequately constructed to "see" students of color (Clark, 2021; Feathers, 2021). Thus, there is also a need for further exploration of the unique ontological significance these experiences of alienation pose for racialized bodies, as well as a critical engagement with the clear sense in which the proctor's gaze takes shape as yet another form of the "white gaze."[5]

In this chapter, I hope to have provided a philosophical foundation on which these many new lines of inquiry can grow. As we have seen, the more extreme forms of alienation many

[5] See Yancy (2017) for a thorough account of the hegemonic status of the "white gaze" and its effects.

students experience reflect a lack of control over how their in-test actions will be interpreted by universities that—through the very adoption of remote proctoring services—have demonstrated an implicit assumption that these students are *already* suspicious, *already* guilty. Indeed, the proctoring services currently in use, with features (e.g., self-facing cameras, red banners, real-time interruptions) designed to remind students of their surveilled state and encourage self-policing, only emphasize the student's inability to avoid the shameful implications of each accusatory signal. It is clear, however, that even face-to-face, in-person proctoring has the potential to throw students into a state of being-*for-others*, distracted by a wandering gaze when concentration is needed most. Thus, as teachers and administrators consider how best to maintain academic integrity inside and outside of their classrooms, one need also consider how such measurers affect the student experience, what those measures signal to the student, and whether more forgiving, less intrusive options are available.

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