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Embodying Guilt in Neoliberalism

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Write-Up for *Inspiring Minds 2023*: Embodying Guilt in Neoliberalism

I research anti-work originating from Italian Autonomism. Today's entrepreneurial neoliberalism is increasingly built on white-collar innovation replacing industrial factory production. Although the factory is no longer central to work, individual experience has seen a rise in productive efficiency exemplified by smart technology and the control of biological rhythms such as eating, sleep, and sex. The body must voluntarily receive sacrificial corrections to perfect the inner entrepreneurial self which would develop in tandem with capitalist growth. Thus, work becomes a way of holding the body guilty.

The guilty body is found both in rationalist philosophy and its religious precursors. Original Sin informs the credit economy – individuals incur student and housing debt, work towards future redemption, crippling the embodied present. Disembodiment pervades online dating, designed by algorithmic rationality, and extends to climate collapse through ordered gentrification. I explore degrowth possibilities in anarchist care economies to rescue the body from its own financialisation. (150 words)