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# Thirty laughs in search of a joke: towards a theory of auto-affective labour

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## Résumé

Theories of affective labour, which originally emerged from Italian autonomist feminism, are based on analyses of various forms of immaterial labour, often with a view to their gendered aspects. These aspects are most readily discernible in service work that involves interpersonal interaction and exchange, in precarious jobs with little worker protection and job security. Besides this, there are other kinds of insecure work, such as the selling of digital services through online platforms, which usually involve self-employment and where one often works alone, separate from others. Working in this way necessitates another kind of affective labour, one which has to do with the effort of disciplining and motivating oneself, with staying focused on the task and achieving maximum productivity. Aspects of the affective labour involved in this can be seen in a growing body of business self-help literature, which dispenses advice and motivational platitudes in precisely this area. This work on the self could be called *auto-affective labour*, a term which evokes Jacques Derrida's critique of the auto-affectation of the unified subject of western philosophy, where in the present case the Derridean rupture at the core of the self is mirrored in the internalised split between boss and worker. This presentation will outline a theoretical framework for a discussion of auto-affective labour, with reference to superconductr's project *Workers laughing alone for money*: <http://www.superconductr.org/workers-laughing-alone-for-money/>.

**Mots-Clés:** affective labour, art & labour, digital labour, freelancing, self employment, subjectivity

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