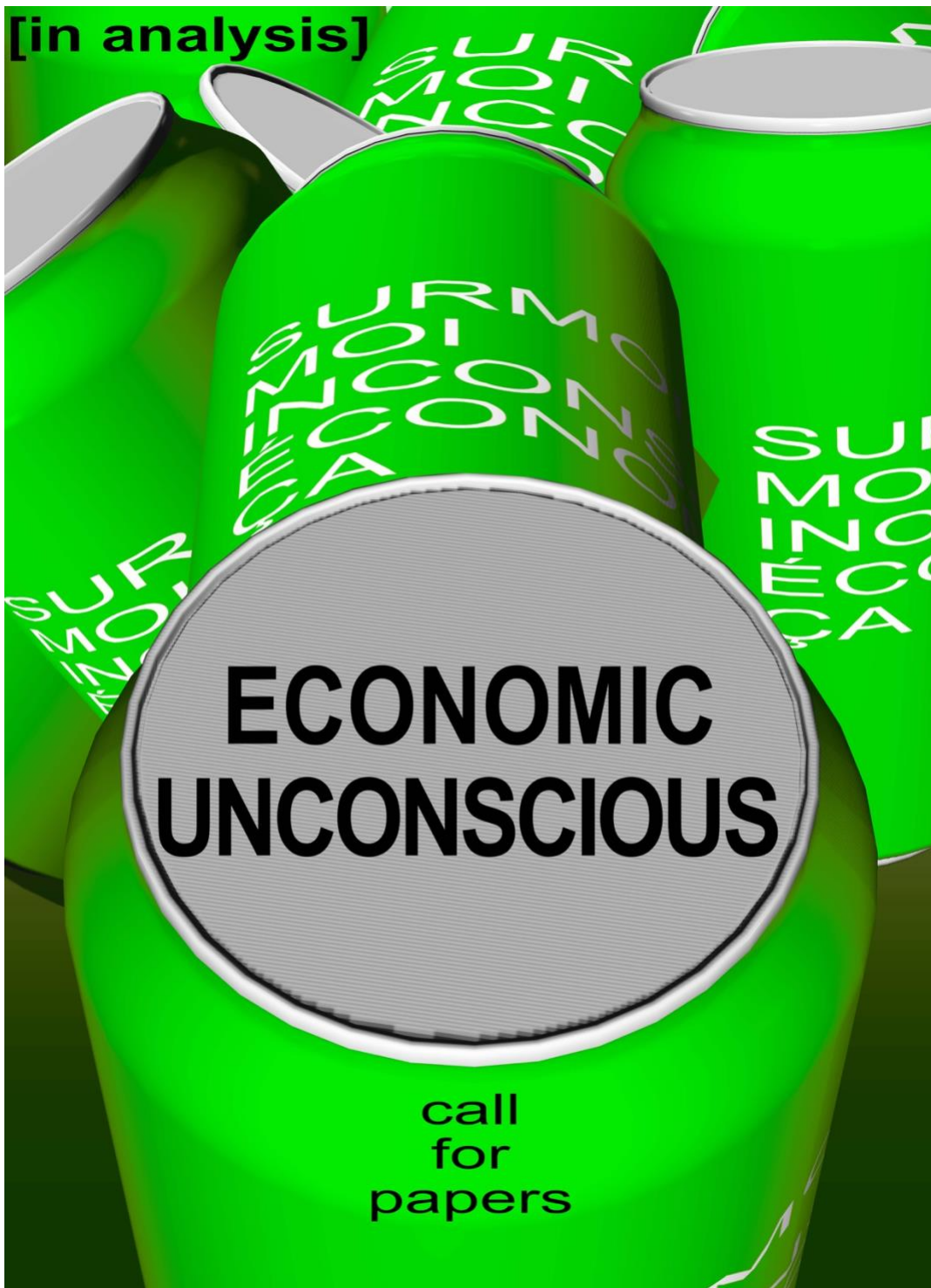


[in analysis]



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ARGUMENT

Despite a certain number of works applying psychoanalytic theories to the liberal economic context, the economic unconscious (individual and collective) has remained in the blind spot of scientific disciplines. It is important to note that the concept does not refer to a specific theory and is not recognized in the field of economics, and even less so in psychology; at most, it could refer to a way of describing hidden influences that can shape economic choices.

Freud became aware of Marxist works related to profound changes in consciousness and human nature under the influence of capital and means of production. According to Marx (1867), these conditions determine social relations and dominant thoughts of an era. The founder of psychoanalysis excluded the powerful territorialization of the psyche by economic reasoning to subject the individual primarily to the captivity of the nuclear family [perceived by Foucault (1976) as a new disciplinary territory of biopower and by Alliez and Lazzarato (2016) as one of the battlegrounds of total war]. Thus, psychoanalysis focuses solely on the undeniable psycho-affective and sexual effects of family configurations. It is noteworthy that Freud omits from his theory the powerful economic injections that shape primary relationships, of which parents are the primary vectors.

The contemporary world, prey to algorithmic economic logics increasingly escaping human intelligence and consciousness, now provides evidence of the coevolution of the subjective and the economic, as well as the relevance of certain Marxist concepts: alienation, accumulation, commodity fetishism, the logical precedence of the economic over the social, the production of ideas and beliefs by dominant classes, and the determination of consciousness (and the unconscious) by socio-economic conditions (Ratner, 2017). It seems reductionist to us to understand the economic as the projection of human nature and pre-existing drives without taking into consideration the instinctual distortions induced by early captivity within economic codes.

The sources of influence on our unconscious continue to multiply since our ecosystem is co-produced through artificial intelligence, which precisely targets the neuro-cognitive-behavioral and emotionally malleable points of the individual for profit. Neurosis is no longer solely affective and/or sexual in nature; it is generated by social class and the infinite, indefinite, fractal, transversal, micropolitical and macropolitical capital that naturalizes drive denaturation. All this calls for theoretical and clinical reworkings in accordance with the plurality of factors and disciplines that provide explanatory theories to approach the economic unconscious of capitalism.

In the era of cybercapitalism and social media as vectors of propaganda, of inoculation-extraction of new digital individual-collective "DNA", of emotional and viral contaminations-contagions leading to the massive degradation of self-image and even suicide (as demonstrated by young Instagram users), studies in cognitive sociology emphasize the predominance of implicit, automatic, involuntary, and unconscious phenomena in socio-cognitive processes (Bargh, 2007; Payne and Stewart, 2007; Ferguson, 2007). For example, Ferguson indicates that automatic evaluations of our environment are altered by the current context, even though these modifications take place at an unconscious level. Thus, the mobilized memory becomes prospective, meaning that it does not rely solely on past experiences to interpret the present or even the future (a thesis that underlies psychoanalysis) but continuously updates itself based on new objectives demanded by an environment that exploits the fear of obsolescence and exclusion. At the risk of exhausting the subjective foundation!

In the digital tsunami sweeping through humanity, the scopic colonialism plays a crucial role in the massive injection of "non-self" objects (Poenaru, 2023) that colonize psychosomatic territories to create new hallucinatory and hostile psychic screens. Indeed, vision is a sensory modality involving more than 30 different brain areas; it is thus the most extensive and exploited sense by cybercapitalism, which generates scopic and emotional hypervigilance aiming, paradoxically, at protection against predators that multiply due to deliberately induced addiction. Thus, screen time increases year after year, and with it, exposure to the unconscious injunction of new codes that initiate and program our brain for the creation of consumable, consumerist, and productivist subjects.

In this issue, we aim to bring together new avenues of research essential to the development of a scientific paradigm of the economic unconscious, which is inevitably confronted with theoretical diversity. It seems to us that understanding the unprecedented logics of the contemporary world, while adapting clinical theories and medical-psychological treatments, is becoming one of the major challenges of the 21st century. This perspective seeks to synthesize studies that examine the psychoanalytic unconscious, the cognitive unconscious, the mechanisms and dynamics of the neuro-cognitive-behavioral and emotional complex that process information from this shifting, invasive and productive environment, and the resulting social influences and classical and operant conditioning, the affective politics of virality and propaganda that are grafted onto cognitive phenomena, the hypnotic nature of the ecosystem (and the voluntary-involuntary opening of the unconscious, thus preparing it for the infiltration of new economic injunctions), the pathologies induced by the mental piracy of cybercapitalism, and so on.

To achieve this, we are inviting researchers from many emerging and interdisciplinary fields to join us in this joint reflection: artificial intelligence, consumer neuroscience, behavioral economics, social neuro-economics, cognitive sociology, cultural neuroscience, cultural psychology, psychoanalysis, epidemiology, ethics, philosophy, visual studies, etc.

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