The multiple meanings of the critical news images depicted in the corpus of *Le Monde Diplomatique*

Kostas Theologou & Anastasia Veneti

Abstract

The visual is a key constituent in the cultural construction of political-economic-cultural-social life in contemporary Western societies. People seek to understand the political reality and culture through various visual representations. This paper, thus, examines the complex and multilevel relation of visual material, such as art, photography, computer graphics and maps, with news critical articles. Our case study is the monthly socio-politically oriented medium *Le Monde Diplomatique.* The paper draws from the rich theoretical approaches of Visual Culture. Visual culture is concerned with visual events in which information, meaning, or pleasure is sought by the consumer in an interface with visual technology (Mirzoeff, 2008: 3). We are at a historical moment in the West when the visible and the readable are interacting in new ways. In these new varieties of media, picture may be even more important than word. Mitchell (1994) calls this a "pictorial turn", that is, the depicted image understood, in short, as an *imagetext*.

Keywords

news, art, Le Monde Diplomatique, visual culture, meaning.

Bio note

Kostas Theologou is a Lecturer at the National Technical University of Athens and at the Hellenic Open University

Anastasia Veneti is a Lecturer at the Media School at Bournemouth University

Introduction

In this paper, we examine the way photography, computer graphics, and maps are being used in order to frame news, critical articles, international affairs etc in a monthly socio-politically oriented medium such as *Le Monde Diplomatique* (LMD), which should not be confused with the French daily newspaper *Le Monde*. *Le Monde diplomatique* has more than 70 foreign editions in 25 languages. In February 2009 there were 72 editions: 46 in print, 26 online). That represents a world circulation of 2.4 million readers. We are not going to discuss anything about these publications.
Our paper comprises visual art, especially painting, as a constituent of our scope. Theoretically and methodologically wise we take advantage of approaches of visual culture.

We also attempt to redefine the conceptual content and framework of 'news' through a socio-cultural perspective. Swidler (1986) reflects on culture as a tool kit of symbols, rituals and views of the world, which people use in many occasions. In this context, media imagery and other visual representations contribute to our understanding of the world around us. As Hall (1997:2) argued
"*Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meanings –the giving and taking of meaning- between the members of a society or group…Thus culture depends on its participants interpreting meaningfully what is around them, and making sense of the world, in broadly similar ways.*"

Though the biographical story of *Le Monde Diplomatique* (LMD or *Le Diplo* for the French readers) is not of crucial value for the methodology of the paper, we ought to provide some technical data concerning the identity and its origins and lineage. According to a marketing promotion "*LMD is one of the most highly respected independent periodicals. Published monthly in French and English, it brings together a diverse range of high-calibre writers from across the world*" (Pluto-press books, 2012).[1] LMD (founded in 1954) is a monthly publication offering analysis and opinion on politics, culture, and current affairs. Its articles are long, thoughtful, scholarly and opinionated, usually from an uncompromising leftist position.[2] As of March 2008, the paper's original edition is headed by Serge Halimi, who replaced

Ignacio Ramonet. Serge Halimi joined LMD as a journalist and writer in 1992. He holds a PhD in Political Science from Berkeley, and he specialises in the USA, Media, and the history of the French Left. Among his various publications *Quand la gauche essayait* (1993/ 2000), *Les Nouveaux chiens de garde* (1997/2006), *L'opinion, ça se travaille* (co-authored with Dominique Vidal and Henri Maler (2000/ 2006) and *Le Grand bond en arrière* (2004/ 2006). The editor of LMD in English is Wendy Kristianasen, a writer and journalist on the Middle East and wider Muslim world. The newspaper has often been described as 'the left-wing French political monthly'[3] in its political views.

The publication is owned by 'Le Monde diplomatique SA', a subsidiary company of *Le Monde*, also left-leaning, founded in 1944 by Hubert Beuve-Méry (1902-1989) and Francois Honti (1990-1974), which grants its complete editorial autonomy from it. More information on the newspaper's history and political alignment can be found on the web and various titles (e.g. Szczepanski, 2003). An explanation for its left leaning orientation could be retraced back to its historical origins. *Le Monde* was built, at the behest of Charles de Gaulle, from the ruins of *Le Temps*, using its offices, printing presses, layout, typeface and those staff members who had *not* collaborated with the Germans, since *Le Temps* came out of the Nazi occupation politically compromised due to accusations of collaboration with the Nazi regime. Following this brief genealogy *Le Monde* gave birth to *LMD*, a *mensuel* (French for monthly) that 'offers a cool, reasoned, different view of the world's most pressing issues' according to *NY Review of Books*.

LMD is our research terrain in order to examine and discuss on the relation and co-existence of visual material and news articles. In order to conduct our examination we used a sample of recent LMD issues. Specifically, we examined six random issues: October 2011, December 2011, February 2012, March 2012, April, 2012 and May 2012. For the purpose of our study, we opted to focus on the following features: layout and printing size, type of texts hosted, use of art, graphs, maps, photos and, ads. We tried to produce some quantitative measurements and data which could provide of a useful parameter for a quasi-qualitative assessment that is, to facilitate our discussion concerning features and identity characteristics of the specific

newspaper. We clarify that we attempted to conduct a rather qualitative analysis of LMD.

Visual Culture's Theoretical Insemination

Studying the visual is becoming more and more popular. We are surrounded by an image dominated culture by advertisements, photographs, art etc, providing us with views of the world. As Jenks (1995) argues, we live in a 'visual culture'. Admitting the significance of the visual in contemporary culture has encouraged the constant production of various studies on the visual culture from different perspectives; some of the most recent ones include Banks (2001), Pauwels (2005), Mirzoeff (2008), Rose (2012), Burri (2012) proving the visual culture field of study to a rather contested terrain. There are a lot of disagreements and debates concerning the various visual theoretical and methodological approaches. This diversity prevents any generalisation about studies on visuality and renders them to a difficult task. For the purposes of this article, we attempted a necessary comprehensive overview of some important theories.

The Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries brought across the mass production not only of goods, but also of images, texts and other artifacts. For the first time, the masses could have access to items of *visual culture*. As Barnard (1998: 113) puts it "*the evolution of these methods of production and reproduction entailed a split between elite and mass culture*". These developments radically transfigured the appearance of newspapers. The amount of advertising was increased and the layout changed adopting the new visual and aesthetic trends. This new era of mass culture has been severely criticized by the Frankfurt School. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer coined the term *culture industry* in order to analyze and explain the relation between culture, consumption and mass production (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1997 [1947]; Adorno, 1991). They claim that the culture industry turns the products of both high and low culture into commodities, to be promoted and sold to everyone (Barnard, 1998: 186). Adorno does not entirely reject popular culture, but he merely criticizes its *standardization* which eventually renders it to a capitalist tool.

Walter Benjamin also assumes the main tenet of dialectical materialism that the means of production determine the nature of cultural production. In his famous (1936/1972) *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* [*The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction*], he explains that the technological reproducibility of works of art destroys their *authenticity*. Even the most *perfekt* reproduction of a work of art is failing to meet this specific condition: the presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be. According to Benjamin that which *withers* in the age of mechanical reproduction is the *aura* of the work of art. *Aura* implies authenticity. The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its being imbedded in the fabric of tradition. It is related to acquiring the ubiquitous presence with *hic et nunc*. The elimination of aura implies the loss of any sense of unreachable (mysterious, divine) distance. On the conquest and the concept of ubiquity there's always the precious discussion by Paul Valéry (1960/1934: 103-4). Walter Benjamin though, argues that the new technical standards of reproduction replaced earlier conditions of producing and consuming artworks. As Benjamin was really interested in the impact of the *Kunstwerk* [artwork] and the audience too, he recognized that though the artwork lost its *aura*, it became *modern*. Of-course, Benjamin collected a response by his intellectual opponent, Theodor Adorno, who challenged Benjamin's account about the relation of the concepts *aura* and *modern* (Adorono, 1968/1970: 166-176), but Benjamin's point of view is closer to our discussion.

The way of diffusing images via reproduced copies, has grandly *de-materialized* the sculpture, and *disincarnated* the painting and even the photography. Various photo-albums, catalogues and art books detach forms and colours from their supporting frame, their sites, their environment, abolishing the thickness, and their tangible values (Debray, 1992: 74).

In addition to the work of the above mentioned renowned theorists, an increasing number of other specialists -visual sociologists, sociologists, cultural anthropologists, media theorists- have acknowledged the importance of the visual and consequently explored relevant visual issues since the 1980s. Guy Débord (1983) affirmed that the world has turned into a 'society of spectacle', and Paul Virilio (1994) explained that

the new visual technologies have created the 'vision machine' in which we are all caught. Furthermore, Jay (1993) coined the term *ocular-centrism* to elucidate the importance of the visual to contemporary Western societies. Mitchell (1994) in his 'picture theory' stresses the *pictorial turn* in some aspects of Western philosophy and science. He discusses that

 "the realization that spectatorship (the look, the gaze, the glance, the practices of observation, surveillance and visual pleasure) may be as deep a problem as various forms of reading (decipherment, decoding, interpretation, etc) and that visual experience or visual literacy might not be fully explicable in the model of textuality" (Mitchell, 1994:16).

Furthermore, an important attempt is also made by Pauwel (2010) to propose the *Integrated Framework*: a more encompassing analytical framework for visual methods that moves beyond the disparities across the various visual approaches.

The developing significance of the visual to contemporary Western life is incorporated in a broader analysis of the shift from pre-modernity to modernity and from modernity to post-modernity (Jenks, 1995; Mirzoeff, 1999: 1-33). According to Mirzoeff (1998:4) the "*postmodern is a visual culture*". Mirzoeff (2008: 3-4) noted "*The disjunctured and fragmented culture that we call postmodernism is best imagined and understood visually, just as the nineteenth century was classically represented in the newspaper and the novel*". Post-modernity has heralded a new era where the distinction between the real and the unreal was blurred. The French social theorist Jean Baudrillard (1988) called this domination of simulations *simulacrum*. Though Baudrillard was not an enthusiast advocate of this situation, another modern philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1968:69) takes a different view, seeing simulacra as the environment where accepted ideals or "*privileged position*" could be "*challenged and overturned.*"

The examination of the effects of visual images is not the main focus of this study. However, some parameters of significant studies on the effects of visual images should be taken into account. Mitchell's work (1994) argues that the seeing of an image is always realized in a specific social context that mediates its impact. Moreover, Rose (2012:15) names this social context as *location* and explains that

"*these different locations all have their own economies, their own disciplines, their own rules for how their particular sort of spectator should behave, including whether and how they should look, and all these affect how a particular image is seen too*". It is also acknowledged that images do not always reflect meanings on their own, but in conjunction with accompanied texts, like in the newspapers. Mitchell (1994) used the term 'image/text' in order to emphasize the interrelation of images and written texts. In this sense, one can conceive visual material as being understood in conjunction with other things, such as written texts or other images.

Finally, for the methodology of our account, we adopt a significant sociological approach of visual culture by Regula Valerie Burri (2012) who reflects on the relations between images, social structures and cultural meanings. She forwards the concept of 'visual logic' to examine the role of images sociologically. She claims that "*social practice is intertwined with a visual logic*" (Burri, 2012: 45). In her study, she develops a model that comprises of three dimensions: the visual *value*, the visual *performance* and the visual *persuasiveness* (Burri, 2012: 49-54). What she calls a *visual logic* is comprehensively defined below:

"*The visual value refers to the non-discursive characteristics of images. In social practice, it allows a simultaneous perception of visual information. The visual performance – points to the ways visual signs are composed in an image, in other words, to what is visually represented. The third dimension of an image's visuality – the visual persuasiveness – underlines both the importance of visual information in communication and the rhetorical power of images*" (Burri, 2012: 49).

Discussing the critical news images in LMD

It's already been claimed that mass production and reproduction of images, graphs, maps, art and texts created the visual experience of modernity and post-modernity. The visual is a key constituent in the cultural construction of political-economic-cultural-social life in contemporary Western societies. As Jenks (1995: 1-2) argued "*looking, seeing and knowing have become perilously intertwined*" so that "*the modern world is very much a seen phenomenon.*"

Guy Débord in his *Society of Spectacle* argues that individuals are amazed and captivated by the spectacle into a passive existence within mass consumption culture. People are entrapped in a relentless chase of buying and consuming of more and more products. The rise of an image dominated culture is due to the fact that "*the spectacle is 'capital' to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image*" (Débord, 1977: 32). Numerous examples can be found in various famous brands such Adidas, McDonalds etc which are recognizable in any situation around the world. Jonathan L. Beller [(1994: 5) in Mirzoeff, 2008: 27] "*has termed this development 'the attention theory of value'. Media seek to attract our attention and in so doing create a profit.*"

The mass consumption culture that Débord describes is related with the entrepreneurial nature of the Mass Media incorporations and their frequent endorsement of governmental parties' policies. The Mass Media incorporations belong to private businessmen aiming to woe and attract a specific part of society -i.e. the readers- as a targeted consumerist percentage of the population, in order to address them commercial messages on behalf of the companies being entangled with the channel. The party policies serving Mass Media are devoted to the organisation they minister and which rewards them in various ways. Newspapers and imprints in general also pertain in this typology, i.e. private and public policy serving institutions.

It is easier to focus on their choices, because: a) one can retrace and refer to texts and b) newspapers, magazines and journals do not *first timely wise* transmit the news. However, this is not purely significant in an age of rapidly transmitted and diffused data, news, information, and knowledge. As a result, in the age of rapid information diffusion and in-bulk misguided or rather aimless data transmission, namely by the digital Media and networks, we seem to be deprived from the significance of news and the meaning of the 'new knowledge' encapsulated in the *event* or the *fact*, that may have various contents (an *effect* produced or achieved; anything done or that comes to pass; an act; an event; a circumstance; a *doing*, making, or preparing. The *assertion or statement of a thing done or existing*; sometimes, even when false, improperly put, by a transfer of meaning, for the thing done, or supposed to be done; a thing supposed or asserted to be done; as, history abounds with false facts).

LMD proves to be a special and particular case; there's carefully selected advertisement, images, art, photographs, maps and graphs and sketches as well, along with eclectic articles signed by carefully selected authors. This mosaic of journalistic quasi-particularities attracted our interest, and inspired us to animate the multiple meanings of this, again, particular and, again, eclectic co-habitation. LMD seems to adopt Henry David Thoreau's view about the news and thus claims a more philosophized standpoint: "To a philosopher all news, as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea". LMD avoids news that can be potential gossip, and exorcises any impression of editors and writers and readers who design and comment its issues over a cup of tea with cookies. On the contrary, this independent *mensuel* provides a cool and reasoned and differentiated aspect on the most urgent and hot topics of the globe. And although Colin Powel is right that "bad news isn't wine; it doesn't improve with age", it's almost certain that a critical recollection on the major and significant news, whether bad or good, or a phenomenon offers a constructive mode of news printed spreading.

The co-habitation of photos, reproduced art-works, graphs, maps and ads (mainly self-referent) together with the specialists' accounts, critical approaches and revelations/disclosure of notions and issues not always obvious neither clear to the citizens-readers finally upgrades the news content and enhances the *visual logic* (see above: Burri, 2012). Therefore, the inanimate corpus of a news paper acquires a particular idiosyncrasy and livens up the news through a 'personified' sum of features. Doesn't every signed text in LMD seem like an almost incontestable view claimed by a serious specialist in every particular article it publishes? Doesn't this serious specialist's view eventually ends-up contributing to the serious and incontestable image of the news paper itself?

LMD's response to the co-existence of image and text is subtle, eclectic, *different,* and has a role in depicting reality. It's gathered that this subtlety, eclecticism and *difference* is also pursued by its readers; it's very common for purchasers of specific brands to identify with the qualities of their *selected* product.

On this complex notion of *image-text* it's been argued that the specific power of the *imagetext* is to reveal the inescapable and inevitable heterogeneity of *representation*. In representation the wrinkles and differences, its specific interweaving with economics, politics, ethics, semiotics, and esthetics, its unpremeditated transitions between codes and conventions, between Media and genres, between sensory channels and imagined experiences are all equally constitutive of the *imagetext's* totality (Mitchell, 1994). Kress and Van Leewen view on the interdependence of image and word can best describe the case of LMD. They argue that the visual component of a text is "*an independently organized and structured message-connected with the verbal text, but in way dependent on it: and similarly the other way around*" (Kress and Van Leewen, 1996: 17). LMD does this extremely successfully since it combines image and text, images with words, the visual with the verbal.

Table 1: Number of Advertisements per issue

Issue	Number of Ads
October 2011	16
December 2011	6
February 2012	9
March 2012	8
April 2012	13
May 2012	13

More specifically, the text part of LMD is signed by experts in their specific field; the maps, graphs and stats usually derive from 'relative' publications of the same corporate group (Atlas etc); the art-works- not necessarily connected to the theme or the concept of the text- enhance the 'verbal' *performance*, the 'scientific' *value* (i.e. the trustworthiness) and the virtual persuasiveness of the hosted view; the ads are very carefully selected to depict in their own turn the 'serious' profile of the specialist/expert. The number of ads is restricted while most of them are self-referent (see Table 1). It is worth noting, too, that advertisements take up less space comparable with other papers. Graphs are commonly used to persuade or convince as have always been considered a highly effective way to visually communicate

information. The use of graphs, blueprints etc provided us with static images and gave us the possibility of conceptualizing many things differently (Pacey, 2001: 55).

A typical characteristic of LMD is the 'use' of a lot of art (see below, Table 2). The technical conditions of reproduction have replaced earlier conditions of producing and consuming artworks and LMD takes advantage of these new technological conditions. The extensive use of artworks in the newspaper not only 'supports' and 'frames' its news articles in a completely different way, but even contributes to the 'construction' of the paper's corporate identity and –consequently- image. Concerning 'frames' we restrained ourselves from entering in an investigation/discussion taking into account tools and concepts of the framing theories. However, this remains a potential 'temptation' for further research.

Though the works of art lose their 'aura' in the age of mechanical reproduction, this reproduction creates a new liaison and intermediation between art and society. As Eagleton (1994: 39) reflects "*In the aura as in the imaginary, there occurs a mystifying interplay of otherness and intimacy; And this is nowhere more marked than in the commodity, which combines the allure of the mythically untouchable Madonna with the instant availability of the mythical whore*". In other words, the reproduced work of art does not lose its value, though there are new dimensions to be seen or as Eagleton suggests "*the auratic object…rewrites its own history…*" It is most probably through this process that work of art also gains its political dimension, «*the political task of liberating an object, then, takes the form of opening up its unconscious-detecting within it those chips of heterogeneity that it has been unable quite to dissolve*» (Eagleton, 1994: 33). All that, constitute the value of the reproduced work of art function in a *metonymic* relation with LMD. It is the newspaper now that, with the use of art- achieves to present a 'particular' identity and to inseminate multiple meanings in the reading of the news articles.

Table 2: Number of Artworks per issue

Issue	Number of Artwork
October 2011	17
December 2011	26
February 2012	39
March 2012	17
April 2012	16
May 2012	17

LMD is a pole of knowledge, *un pôle de savoir*, in an archipelago of media and news sources, and because of that in this geography of news and ideas LMD ranks high in a relevant hierarchy of *trustworthiness*.[4] LMD is basically a politically oriented newspaper with a focus on international, i.e. European and mainly Franco-phone world news (see Table 3). A rough typology of the texts contained in the LMD is the following: editorial, columns, commentaries, background stories, scientific articles, portraits, book reviews/ critiques, special thematic back covers.

Table 3: Number of political and social news per issue

Issue	Domestic Political & Social News	International Political & Social News
October 2011	6	15
December 2011	1	13
February 2012	2	20
March 2012	3	11
April 2012	6	10
May 2012	7	19

Just like a global web provides 'knowledge' and an entire world of info and data, the LMD, similarly, generates and shapes an eclectic mine of opinions. However, *unlike* the ambiguity and the frequent lack of 'accuracy' of the web's data, LMD has established a rather steadfast conviction of a well-respected imprint –inspired by the authors, scholars, researchers and artists who 'animate' it- and this aspect is shared by a large percentage of the readers (2,4 million readers and 72 editions globally).

LMD is a particular ecosystem in the news world; it's an evolved 'species' that urges for a *redefinition* of the content, rather of the concept, of the news. News is traditionally defined as a report of recent events, previously unknown information, or

something having a specified influence or effect. Newsworthiness is determined by specific news values, sometimes called news criteria (Corrigan, 1990; McCombs *et al.*, 1996: 52-3). As Bignel (1997) has shown, though the news criteria are adopted by both newspapers and the TV, the news selection and presentation may differ. News is the communication of 'selected' information on current events which is presented by print, broadcast, Internet, or word of mouth to a third-party or mass audience. LMD doesn't belong in this category. It surely selects the news it presents, criticizes, analyzes, but all is steeped in the eclectic frame of its own particular *visual logic* mentioned above.

Concluding Remarks

The LMD's high-minded seriousness refers to a restricted circle of educated and informed people who make up the core of its readers. LMD cultivates eclecticism and a particular *taste*. Taste makes it possible to introduce the project of a socialization even of an in-dissociable aesthetic civility of any possible publicity. This aesthetic civility serves in posing the socializing bond of civilization and appears at the beginning of the 18th century from Shaftesbury, or 'Lord Ashley' (Brugère, 2000: 31-3). Lord Ashley early noticed (1711)[5] that one can realizes that it's not only principles that govern our lives, but also the *taste* (Shaftesbury, 1978 [1711]: 177). He admitted the existence of a force born from pleasure by the aesthetic contemplation that governs humans. In this sense, taste doesn't introduce merely the malleable universe of pleasure by opposing the rigidity of rules and principles. It is spread out in a social *lieu,* specific more or less, necessarily collective and prescriptive, susceptible to standards or rules.

In the case of mass communication there's seemingly a double movement of de-realizing, in one hand, and of producing a new reality that comprises of a *standardization* of behaviours, objects, ideas and people, all leading to a *uniformity* (Soulage, 2007: 202).[6] In our case LMD avoids this standardization and the consequent uniformity. Eventually, contemporary art and consumption culture, as much diametrically opposed as they may be, and everything else in between, they co-

habit and co-exist in different places being in the same *cultural continuum*, though art is been gradually and imperceptibly de-sublimated and literalized (Amey, 2007: 12).

Régis Debray phrased it eloquently in his *Vie et mort de l'image* (1992), where he wonders whether the era of the images could have merely been a short parenthesis between the time of the 'idols' and the time of the 'visual' that we have entered. The updating of the invisible codes of the visible, dissipate and vanish, in any case, some persistent and lingering myths those of the 'history of the art' or the 'culture of the image'.

During the millennia the images acquainted men with a system of symbolic correspondences, the cosmic order and the social order, well before the linear scripture had managed to form senses and minds. Hence the pictograms of the Paleolithic era, when nobody could "read and write"; hence the Egyptian and the Greek civilization, after the invention of the scripture. The *vitraux*, the reliefs, and the statues transmitted Christianity to illiterate communities afar. Those, were not in need of an iconological reading code in order to apprehend the *secondary meanings*, the symbolic values of the leaning, of the Holy Trinity and Crucifixion. These images, and their associated rituals, affected the subjective representations of their 'spectators' and, therefore, contributed to the formation, maintenance or transformation of their own situation in the world (Debray, 1992: 71). In America, a society completely dominated by the visual, they have a saying: "The less you have to see, the more you have to say" ignoring the current and all-time claim that the visible in not readable (Debray, 1992: 72-74). In our case, LMD readers claim for a more integrated *image-text* reading code depicted in their newspaper.

In the recent decades social scientists have come to understand social life by looking at how it is constructed through ideas that people have about it. Culture is not just a bunch of things but a process that represents the give and take of meaning shared between members of a given group. Berger (1972: 9) uses the expression *ways of seeing* to refer to the fact that 'we never look just at one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves'.

McLuhan in the 60s defined *medium* as the technology used to transmit messages. As Rose (2012: 37) argues 'the term medium, though, can also be used to refer to a specific kind of cultural text, such as 'news' or 'soap opera' (in a similar fashion to 'genre'). In the era of mass media, however, particular kinds of technologies tended to carry their own sorts of texts. So a medium is also often understood as *both* the technology of transmission *and* the sort of images it carries'. Roger Silverstone (1994) called this the *double articulation* of the notion of medium. Mitchell (2005: 198) has developed an even more expansive definition of medium. For him a medium consists of the '*entire range of practices that make it possible for images to be embodied in the world as pictures'* (Rose, 2012: 37)

Le Diplo, precisely, depicts in its monthly world, a particular total of practices that effectuate an embodiment of images and thus forms an indivisible and inseparable entity of a different *medium piece*, very fresh, progressive, cool, and in the same time, serious, *lefty*, sensitive, socio-centric, and even elitist- in a positive aspect.

In a world of vast and extremely rapid transmission and imparting of news, data and other general info, the citizens need a rule, a *criterion* and a *filter* to spot on the significant or important ones. The decline of the 'paper' news symbolizes this failure, when faster media and vehicles spread the news globally. LMD animates in a very personal profile this *criterion* focusing mainly on the European and the broader francophone public life. The printed news nowadays address to informed and aware citizens who anticipate a reflective thought and selective approach to the *miscellanea data volanta*, the unshaped volumes of various info and quasi-news flying all over the globe.

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NOTES

[1] https://sites.google.com/a/plutobooks.com/lmd/ (accessed on 4.4.12).

[2] According to the French Property site, under "Paid-For French Newspapers", in: http://www.french-property.com/reference/french_newspapers/ (accessed on 5.4.2012).

[3] Henry Samuel, 2009, "US authorites divert Air France flight carrying 'no-fly' journalist to Mexico" , *The Telegraph*, 24.4.2009, also available on-line:
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/5217186/US-authorites-divert-Air-France-flight-carrying-no-fly-journalist-to-Mexico.html (accessed on 5.4.12).

[4] Fournier, M., (coord.) 2008. « Géographie des idées. Les nouveaux pôles de savoir », *Sciences Humaines,* n : 189, janvier 2008, p. 28-31. For a detailed compendium of the term 'places and poles of knowledge' one can refer to a monumental publication of a research conducted by almost 70 scholars and edited by Christian Jacob (2007).

[5] Anthony Ashley Cooper (1671-1713) the Third Earl of Shaftesbury was an author and moralist, sometimes called Lord Ashley. He was a proponent of an optimistic philosophy that held that man had an innate moral sense and that all in nature was in harmony. His writings were collected in *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions*, *Times* (1711). He was red by Diderot, Leibniz, Hume et al.

[6] For a complete account on the arts, the power and the communication see Soulage, 2007: 196-207.