



## THE "ORDER OF THINGS" IN MEDIA CUBE: TRANSPARENCY AS A DESIGN TOOL IN NTV NEWS STUDIO

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### Abstract

In this study, the design of NTV News Studio, which is qualified as a revolution with respect to news studios is analyzed as architectural. The new news studio of NTV brings a different and innovative approach to traditional studio designs. The purpose of this study is to determine the innovations brought by NTV News Studio and probing the reasons for its being qualified as a "revolution". In this context, employing a methodology benefiting from the interpretations by Michel Foucault in his book "Order of Things" about how Diego Velazquez's painting Las Meninas has changed a conventional order, the order of NTV News Studio has been analyzed.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Considering the news studio designs in general, although some technological modifications have been made, a traditional approach has been continued from past to present. The new news studio of NTV, which is qualified as a revolution with respect to news studios and selected as the 2011's best set of the year in the Set Madness competition arranged by Newscast Studio in USA, brings a different and innovative approach to these traditional designs. The main subject of this study is reviewing the current order of NTV News Studio and determining the order it has changed by utilizing the interpretation and analysis of the painting "Las Meninas" of Diego Velazquez, which is known as a work that has changed a customary order in the visual studies, that has been reviewed in detail by Michel Foucault within the introduction section of his book "Order of Things".

Michel Foucault starts the first section of his seminal book "Order of Things" (1966) by analyzing and interpreting Las Meninas. Las Meninas (The Maids of Honor) is a 1656 painting by Diego Velázquez, the leading artist of the Spanish Golden Age, exhibited in the Museo del Prado in Madrid. At first glance, the painting seems to represent a simple theme describing a little princess in focus, who is surrounded by the palace staff. However, Foucault draws attention to other elements in the painting reversing this simplicity. The painter himself looking towards the spectator, working on a canvas with his pallet and brush at his hand, the reflection of two faces (King Philip IV and Queen Maria Anna), a man who is about to step in or step out. These three elements, unlike other figurations represented in the painting, lead us to inquire which of them actually subject of the painting is. Who is the one that has been represented? Who are they? Are we observing or being observed? Foucault's interpretation implies how a routine order is disturbed with the addition and use of different elements. It is the assumption of this study that, The "News Cube" which was qualified by its designers as a revolution for news studios, changes the routine "order of things" with its unique design, similarly. In this context when analyzing News Cube, this study will unveil its strategy from Foucault's interpretation of "Las Meninas".

### 1.1. “Order of Things”: Michel Foucault’s Analysis of Las Meninas

In the first chapter of his book, Foucault discusses what is actually represented in the “Las Meninas. The work’s complex and enigmatic composition raises questions about reality and illusion, and creates an uncertain relationship between the viewer and the figures depicted. Las Meninas is a very significant painting because it represents the disturbance of the conventional order. It is claimed by the art theorists that Las Meninas is the only example, which creates the illusion that the observer is observed. In Las Meninas, there are eleven figures together with the reflections on the mirror (Figure 1)



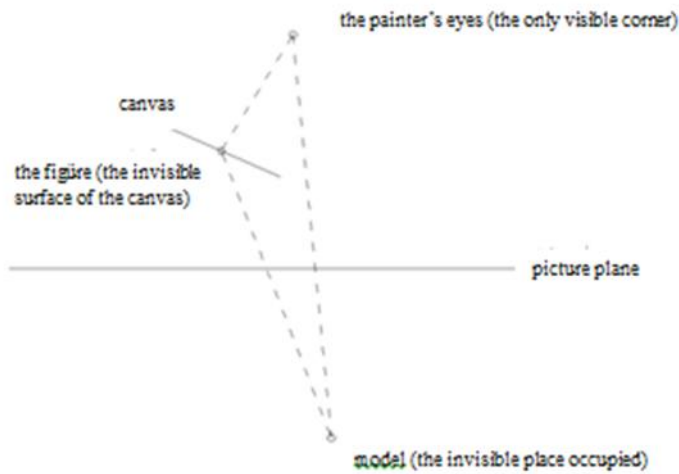
**Figure 1.** Figuration of Las Meninas

Searle introduces figures of the painting as follows:

On the Infanta’s right kneeling to offer a red buicaroon a silver tray presumably filled with the perfumed water then drunk in the Escorial is Maria Augustina Sarmiento. On the Infanta's left leaning toward her is another maid of honor, Isabel de Velasco, daughter of the Count of Colmenares. Both girls are good looking young aristocrats, expensively dressed, wearing elegant wigs. All of the standard authors say that Isabel is bowing or curtsying deferentially toward the Infanta, but closer scrutiny reveals that she is not paying the slightest attention to the Infanta; she is looking intently at-well, we will get to that in a minute. On her left is the squat ugly figure of a palace dwarf, Mari-Barbola, who as Trapier writes "came into the palace service in 1651 and received various favours throughout the years, including a pound of snow on each summer's day in 1658." Palomino describes her as having an "aspecto formidable." Beside her is another dwarf (some authors call him a midget as distinct from a dwarf), Nicolasito Pertusato, who has his foot on the back of a sleepy looking dog in the foreground. Behind Maria Augustina is the painter himself, Diego Velazquez [1].

According to Foucault, the painter who shows himself clearly in his full height, without being masked by the big canvas is the fundamental element in the painting [2]. For him, Velazquez exhibits his presence in two different ways, both real and representative. Evaluated in both senses, his place in the painting is undeniably important. Velazquez’s presence in the painting canvas the painter of Las Meninas is naturally regarded as one of the real components in the whole “order”. However, it is his representative image in the painting, which disturbs the perception of the spectator in regard to his role.

The representative image of the painter is the bridge that builds up a relation between the painting and its spectator. According to Foucault, as the face of the painter is turned towards the spectator of the painting, the role of the spectator becomes complicated. Therefore, for Foucault, the painter's gaze that appears to be looking at the spectators indeed creates “a virtual triangle” between the painter himself, the models he is portraying and their representations on the big canvas (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** The Virtual Triangle

The spectators neither see the model nor their representations on the canvas since their representations were supposed to be painted on the backside of the canvas. The point where the models should stand in the imaginary sphere is completely the same place where the spectator stands in reality. According to Foucault, however, the spectator has an additional role. He adds that: “Though greeted by that gaze, we are also dismissed by it, replaced by that which was always there before we were: the model itself” [2]. The original model is reflected in the canvas (the painting within this painting) and that representation is reflected in the mirror. The models are King Philip IV of Spain and his wife Queen Mariana of Austria themselves. In *Las Meninas*, the conflicting relationship between the painter's gaze and the actual spectators refers to the complex relationship between viewer and the image, which, for Foucault, maintains a continuous exchange.

The second criterion that makes *Las Meninas* “the picture of the picture”, for Foucault, is the canvas occupying the left side lengthwise. The spectator can only perceive the backside of the canvas but cannot see what the artist, namely, Velazquez paints on it [2]. For Foucault, “the order of things” starts to change with the presence of this inverted canvas. He states that: The tall, monotonous rectangle occupying the whole left portion of the real picture, and representing the back of the canvas within the picture, reconstitutes in the form of a surface the invisibility in depth of what the artist is observing: that space in which we are, and which we are [2]. When the painting is viewed carefully one realizes the mirror at the back wall, hanged among other paintings with its function and the image it reflects, is another important element in the painting. The inversion of “the order of things” that starts with the portrayal of the painter within the painting and the inverted canvas continues with this mirror. The shadowy man, who is depicted at the back, on the stairs out of the luminous door, is another significant figure of the painting. As described by Foucault:

...a man stands out in full-length silhouette; he is seen in profile; with one hand he is holding back the weight of a curtain; his feet are placed on different steps; one knee is bent. He may be about to enter the room; or he may be merely observing what is going on inside it, content to surprise those within without being seen himself (Foucault, 1970, 37).

This shadowy man, who seems to be placed accidentally at the rear of the picture, for Foucault, is one of the most important elements that ensure the painting's significance. It is the last element that completes the inversion of “the order of things” that starts with the depiction of the painter in the painting and the mirror image of models. According to Foucault, the role of this shadowy man resembles to that of the mirror:

“Like the mirror, his eyes are directed towards the other side of the scene; nor is anyone paying any more attention to him than to the mirror” [2].

## **1.2. An Architectural Reflection of Foucault’s “Order”: NTV News Studio**

NTV News Studio is located in a massive glass cube named as “News Cube”. The architectural project of the cube is designed by Erik Ulfers from Clickspring Design office, located in New York, United States. Erik Ulfers explains his project in following words:

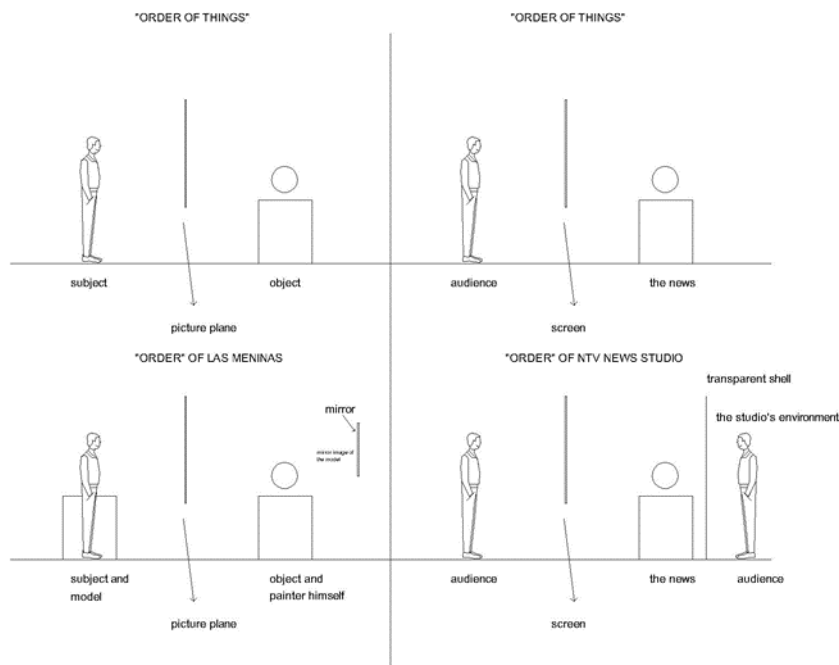
Traditionally, production of broadcast news has been confined to “black box” studios, and although this arrangement serves the more pragmatic aspects of broadcast production (i.e. complete lighting, visual and acoustic control) there is a separation between the broadcast and the world upon which it is reporting, wrote Clickspring Design. Dogus Media and Clickspring Design have brought this longstanding tradition into question by choosing to redefine the broadcast environment in ways that allow an interaction between a broadcast and its contextual surroundings. The studios are encased in a glass envelope, which is bisected by a public stair; the studios within the envelope and the public circulation along the grand stair and the perimeter of the envelope begin to weave together in ways that demystifies and democratizes the broadcast production process. The high degree of transparency allows visitors access to view and understand the news from a unique perspective, since the previously hidden mechanics of editorial and production are in plain sight. Visitors and employees have the opportunity to become a part of the production by appearing on camera through the transparent envelope [3].

The News Cube is located in the Dogus Media Center’s new complex with the editorial and administrative offices and technical areas. In the cube, the designers locate both NTV and CNBC-e broadcast news studios. A huge stairs, which is located in the middle of the transparent cube, separates the two studios from each other. According to its designers and owners, the news-broadcasting studio of NTV brings a new and different approach to traditional settings in the studio designs. NTV’s glass construction singles out within the traditional news studios with its transparent and innovative identity. That is why; Doğuş Media Group, who is the owners of the cube, describes the studios as the “News Cube revolution” in Turkey (Figure 3). When the arrangement of NTV News Studio is examined, it is really seen to bring a new and different dimension to the design of news studios with both its design and some technological properties it has. Just like Las Meninas, which differs from other paintings of its field by disturbing the tradition with the elements it contains such as the mirror and its reflection, the presence of the painter himself and his models who are thought to be staying at the same position with the viewers on the canvas he works on, some elements in the unique design of NTV News Studio as well break the classical perception of studio design creating a new layout. When the design is examined, the transparency of the studio stands out as the most important element breaking the traditional settings. Its designers and users attribute this transparency as revolutionary. As it is asserted, the transparent broadcast environment they present, along with its visuality, also reflects their understanding of reporting and develops a different and positive point of view in the audience with respect to the programs and the channel.



**Figure 3.** The News Cube, [personal archive]

In "Order of Things", Foucault has interpreted the differences that the painting features and the novelties it has brought about. Following his interpretations, it can be said that, referring this painting the traditional borders between the artwork and the spectator can be removed and the positions of the both in terms of perception can be interchangeable. As in the case of Las Meninas, NTV News Studio brings a new dimension to the conventional studio designs in terms of perception. It appears that, NTV News Studio, with its new design, removes the borders between the audience and the programs and programmers. As it is schematically explained Figure 4, both Las Meninas and NTV News Studio reverse the routine order. In fact, both of them have similar features. While in Las Meninas the spectator can be both observer and observed object, in NTV News Studio the audience experiences the same situation due to the transparent shell of the studio environment. At the same time, this transparent shell allows the audiences/visitors around the studio to watch everything inside the studio from outside, like the shadowy man in Las Meninas.



**Figure 4.** "Order of Things" schematic explanation by Prof. Dr. Ayşen Savaş

In conclusion, when the design of NTV News Studio is examined, the most important matter to be dwelled on its transparency. In order to uncover and justify the underlying reasons of the assertions, it is necessary to examine all dimensions and to interpret the use of the concept of transparency in this studio, which also has an important place in architecture and interior designs. In line with the consequences we reach, the idea "the viewer's becoming the viewed one", expressed by Foucault in Order of Things, and the "transparency", that has been identified as the principle element changing the order.

## 2. TRANSPARENCY AS AN ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT

According to the dictionary definition, the first meaning of transparency is a material circumstance that of being permeable to light. This property of the material provides an ability to see the back of the objects. Other than its dictionary definition, different meanings have been assigned to the word "transparency" throughout the history within the social life. Besides its meaning as a physical property, it has also been used as a cultural and social identity. It has sometimes become the distillation of the different life quests or critical states, sometimes a fashion wave and sometimes the subject of the critical reactions. Briefly, from fashion to art, from poetry to literature, from politics to justice, transparency as an adjective has a crucial premise in any disciplinary border. Nevertheless, in addition to the term's social connotations, it creates an optical condition which designates a critical spatial order in a work of art, as defined in the work of Gyorgy Kepes entitled "Language of Vision", published in 1944. According to Kepes:

If one sees two or more figures overlapping one another, and each of them claims for itself the common overlapped part, then one is confronted with a contradiction of spatial dimensions. To resolve this contradiction one must assume the presence of a new optical quality. The figures are endowed with transparency; that is they are able to interpenetrate without an optical destruction of each other. Transparency however implies more than an optical characteristic, it implies a broader spatial order. Transparency means a simultaneous perception of different spatial locations. Space not only recedes but also fluctuates in a continuous activity. The position of the transparent figures has equivocal meaning as one sees each figure now as the closer now as the further one [4].

Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky separated the condition of being "transparent" from the concept "transparency" and determined it as "clearly indefinite". In Rowe and Slutzky's words:

1. Transparency is the quality or condition of being transparent; diaphaneity; pellucidity
2. A picture, print, inscription or device on some translucent substance, made visible by means of light behind
3. A photograph or picture on glass or other transparent substance intended to be seen by transmitted light

### Transparent

1. Having the property of transmitting light, so as to render bodies lying beyond completely visible, that can be seen through.
2. Penetrating, as light
3. Admitting the passage of light through interstices (rare)
4. Open, candid, ingenious.
5. Easily seen through, recognized, or detected; manifest, obvious [5].

According to Rowe and Slutzky, transparency as a concept can be accepted as both a specification of material and an illusion of perception, created by the sequential organization of different non-transparent materials. They, therefore, analyzed "transparency" under two different groups: Literal and Phenomenal. According to them, literal transparency deals with the material's physical appearance as in its dictionary definition. In Architecture, therefore, "literal transparency" connotes the transparent materials through which the space behind can be easily perceived. On the other hand, they describe "phenomenal transparency" as a far more subtle experience that can be fictionalized with nontransparent materials, as well. For Rowe and Slutzky, the phenomenal transparency is grounded on the phenomenon of the "perception of eye".

While the term “transparency” literally defines the non-opaque characteristics of substance as in the example of glass, Rowe and Slutzky proposed that a similar perception can also be obtained as a result of a permeable organization, that is assembled by various non-transparent materials, as in the example of wire-mesh [5].

In addition to Rowe and Slutzky’s definition, Kepes gives emphasis to the perception of phenomenal transparency, which could only be achieved by the “simultaneous perception of telescopic objects”. For the most theoreticians, spider’s web is one of the greatest examples of the defined situation (Figure 5). The web isn’t transparent in itself, however, the space behind can be perceived. As visual perception and the material’s physical property are two significant entities of Rowe and Slutzky’s phenomenal transparency, its connotations could be defined in both art and architecture. The Stonehenge (Figure 6), is defined by Eroğlu, the author of “Architecture and Transparency”, as the first architectural work that represents a phenomenal transparency [6].



**Figure 5.** The Spider’s web [URL-1]

**Figure 6.** Stonehenge [URL-2]

For Rowe and Slutzky, however, the representation of both transparencies in art gives more clues about the meaning of concepts. They claim that the literal transparency is derived from cubist painting and the machine aesthetic, whereas the phenomenal transparency is probably derived from cubist painting alone. They exemplified these two types of transparency by comparing and analyzing Picasso's “The Clarinet Player” dated 1911 and Braque's “The Portuguese” dated 1911 (Figure 7). According to them, a pyramidal form is perceived in both paintings, but the technique that forms the pyramid differs.

In their words:

Picasso defines his pyramid by means of a strong contour; Braque uses a more complicated inference. Thus Picasso's contour is so assertive and so independent of its background that the observer has some sense of a positively transparent figure standing in a relatively deep space, and only subsequently does he redefine this sensation to allow for the actual lack of depth. With Braque the reading of the picture follows a reverse order. A highly developed interlacing of horizontal and vertical gridding, created by gapped lines and intruding planes, establishes a primarily shallow space, and only gradually is the observer able to invest this space with a depth which permits the figure to assume substance. Braque offers the possibility of an independent reading of figure and grid: Picasso scarcely does so. Picasso's grid is rather subsumed within his figure or appears as a form of peripheral incident introduced to stabilize it [5].

Rowe and Slutzky stated that any Cubist canvas of 1911-1912 could serve to illustrate the presence of the both orders or levels of transparency, that is, literal and phenomenal. Involving the fusion of temporal and spatial factors, the Cubism of that period, for Rowe and Slutzky, was “a premonition of relativity” that invokes the fourth dimension. They described the typical Cubist motive as consisting of “figures...intersecting, overlapping, interlocking...building up into larger and fluctuating configurations” [5].



**Figure 7.** Picasso's *The Clarinet Player*, 1911 and Braque's *The Portuguese*, 1911 [URL-3 & URL-4]

Taking into account all these definitions and interpretations, transparency leads up to broad meanings. As previously mentioned, literal transparency is related to physical properties of the material like a glass curtain wall, whereas phenomenal transparency refers to more qualified spatial organization. Consequently, transparency together with all the meanings it incorporates has a crucial place in art, design and architecture.

## 2.1. The Literal Transparency in Architecture

The concept of transparency, which is interpreted in various ways, thus acquires a physical, organizational as well as symbolic identity. In architecture, it is mostly associated with façade, which constitutes the outer shell of the construction. As the literal meaning of transparency corresponds to the transparent materials, the façade of architectural works that is designed according to this concept shows variations in regard to the degree of its materials' permeability: transparent and translucent. The term transparent refers to the first state where the permeability of the material is at its maximum. Transparent materials show the objects behind clearly without deformation and allow all light to pass through. Although there are plenty of different transparent materials in nature, glass is the most widely used one. Its utilization shows improvement with the development of technology.

Instead of showing up explicitly just as transparent materials do, translucent materials arouse curiosity about space, behind the walls. Also translucency is used to create a mystic atmosphere. The mystic nature of translucency both conceals and implicates the interior. Gülru Mutlu, in her master thesis, *Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris: The Interpretation of Architectural Space As Void*, interpreted Rem Koolhaas' façade formation in the buildings. For her, the translucent façade is defined as an element that as, "neither reveals any clues about the building, nor is understandable or domestic for the inhabitant" [6]. According to Mutlu's thesis, Anthony Vidler, author of *The Architectural Uncanny*, interprets the solid-void model of the building as an entity that changes the role of glass. In his words: "glass once perfectly transparent, is now revealed in all its opacity". As Mutlu stated, Vidler defines this translucent façade as a "refusal of mirroring", a façade that both absorbs the "interior representation and external reflection". According to Vidler, the translucency of the façade allows us "neither to stop at the surface nor to penetrate it, arresting us in a state of anxiety" [7].



## 2.2. The Phenomenal Transparency in Architecture

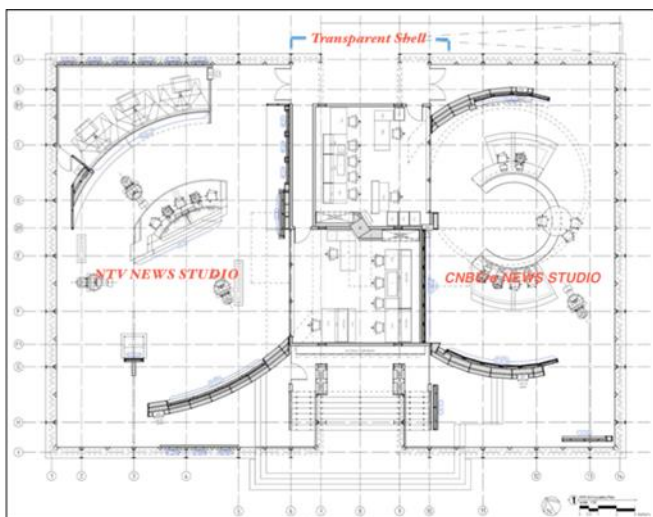
The phenomenal transparency, which is defined by Gyorgy Kepes in his *Language of Vision* related to more advanced interpretations of transparency, refers to a simultaneous perception of different spatial locations. Apart from the transparency definition of Kepes, Rowe and Slutzky have defined phenomenal transparency as “seeing objects interpenetrating each other and maintaining by each object of its integrity by attributing the shared component to itself” [5].

Phenomenal transparency can also be created by combining and organizing non-transparent materials and elements sequentially. As exemplified by Rowe and Slutzky, the grid-like structures created by using non-transparent surfaces in certain intervals with different qualities and quantities and the simultaneous perception that occurs as a result of the masses and spaces on the structural elements conceive this kind of transparency [5]. The process of seeing, as in the translucent material, involves both the object behind and the non-transparent object. Here the transparency is perceived by means of the emptiness created by organization, instead of the material’s permeability.

In addition to its lexical meaning, phenomenal transparency could be interpreted as a figurative concept, as well. Here, rather than perception of a material characteristic or an organizational situation, it could purpose a new ideology. Namely, it can be considered as the embodiment of the concepts such as honesty, clarity, comprehensibility, simplicity and ingenuousness, or in other words, as a conceptual transparency.

## 3. THE NEWS CUBE: A TRANSPARENT STUDIO IN THE INTERIOR SPACE

When the utilization of the transparency concept in architecture is examined in detail, it is seen that the term transparency not only represents the physical condition of the material, but also expresses a physiological condition, triggered by the simultaneous perception of various spatial compositions. It comes into being in various forms, either as an inherent physical characteristic of the material, as a result of an organization or as conceptually. As the transparency in architecture has mostly existed in equivalence with the façade, the interpretations were mostly on its role that develops a relation between the interior and exterior of the architectural work, in other words, the physical environment, the site, the city in a sense. Its utilization as an interior design element, however, had found approval for a few decades with its both literal and phenomenal meanings. The use of transparency in the interior space had shifted many notions of interior organization. NTV News Studio, as can be seen from its plan in Figure 8, is placed into a glass cube called "News Cube" and it sets an important example of the use of transparency in interior architecture in Turkey.



**Figure 8.** The Plan of News Cube

### 3.1. The Critique of Transparency in NTV News Studio: Literal or Phenomenal?

The literal transparency of the News Cube is distinguished as the major design fundamental of Clickspring's design. As the boundaries of broadcast studios, the designers proposed an independent cubic shell, that as constructed by steel-glass, and this decision allows the users to see the objects behind the walls of the studio. According to Rowe and Slutzky, this type of a transparency based upon transmissivity is ordinary, public and obvious [5]. However, for the designers of Clickspring Design, the "literal transparency" allows the News Cube to provide a broadcasting ambiance where the news broadcast and its environment can communicate. In addition, this transparency as seen in Figure 9, enables the visitors and those outside the studio view the news delivery and sees it from a different perspective. Thus, it supports the interaction of the broadcast process and the offices out of the cube where the news are prepared (Figure 9). However, the users of News Cube approach the design rather critically. In the interviews with the employees, they mentioned that this transparency is somewhat inconvenient for them both in physical and in psychological sense. Here, the causes of this inconvenience can be epitomized under two categories: The first one is the technical disadvantages caused by the transparent shell. They remarked that during the broadcasting, the studio's transparency brings about various problems in regard to lightning and reflection due to the use of glass, which is a highly reverberating. The second one is, rather physiological. The independent and transparent form of the cube creates a kind of "panopticon" experience for the users. They stated that they were uncomfortable with the setup in general and expressed their dissatisfaction caused by the psychological discomfort either because it distracts attention or because it connotes the anxiety that the employees are observed. In other words, the users complained about the sense of surveillance, created by the studio environment.



**Figure 9.** NTV News Studio [personal archive]

However, the second category, developed upon the idea of surveillance in architecture is not new. Michel Foucault analyzes and interprets a similar situation in his book *Discipline and Punish* by using Jeremy Bentham's model prison, Panopticon (1791), as a metaphor. Panopticon is a circular structure around a central tower and its inmates located in the ambient cells illuminated by natural light from the exterior walls. In Panopticon, the inmates were exposed to the gaze of the central inspector. The Panopticon described by Foucault as an architectural mechanism, a pure architectural and optical system<sup>ll</sup> was a medium that controlled the relationship between observer and observed object. In the News Cube, there is a similar situation. Its spatial arrangement establishes a kind of surveillance over its users as the automatic functioning of power. When looked at the spatial arrangement of the News Cube, it can be seen that there

is an administrative office on the top floor. The huge stairs, which is located between NTV and CNBC-e News Studios ascends up to this office. This arrangement creates a kind of Foucaultian “seeing machine” as if the workers are being observed by the administration from the top, just as the Panopticon did. In this context, it can be said that the pressure of invisible gaze creates uneasiness on the employees like the Panopticon’s inmates. Consequently, the literal transparency of News Cube disturbs the privacy.

This situation is particularly for studio’s workers. Audiences do not perceive the News Cube’s transparency in this way. In this context, the studio’s transparency should be analyzed on the side of audiences as well. Just as the picture plane in the *Las Meninas* that reflects illustrated composition, the cameras in the NTV News Studio display broadcasting. In other words, while the spectators view the painting through picture plane in *Las Meninas*, the audiences view the studio through screen that is reflected by cameras in NTV News Studio. For this reason, audiences could view as far as cameras reflect. Due to the studio's transparency, the audiences of the broadcast program perceive all the workers of control room and the whole working environment behind the anchorperson (Figure 10). Neil Postman interprets this situation in his article "The News" Conscientious Objections as follows: Workers transmit to the audience that news is urgent and it requires overhauling constantly by seeming busy in front of the camera. The workers on the background emphasize the importance of the central reporter, namely, anchorman and his/her domination over both the workers and the news [8].



**Figure 10.** The Control room of NTV News Studio [personal archive]

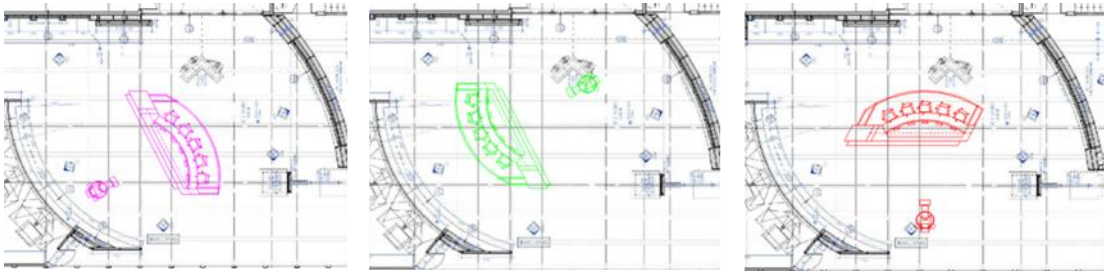
The massive blue LED walls in the studio (Figure 11) acts as a kind of barometer and when the newsbreak started to be broadcasting the blue walls are transformed into red as if warning the employees about the start of the program (Figure 12). Being transformed into a parametric scene, this wall creates a dynamic ambience for the audiences, as well, with the phenomenal transparency it evokes. As in the Kepes's definition of transparency, the transparency of the News Cube expresses more than a visual property, proposing a broader spatial order. In the NTV News Studio, the “order” undergoes a constant change due to the technological features of the vertical walls. In addition to the LED wall, the anchorman’s desk is another feature that subverts the studio’s order into alternative settings. As this desk could be rotated in certain aspects, the camera looks towards a different background and the audience can perceive the different shots of the studio (Figure 13). In fact, every different position created by the desk evokes a different sequence of planes such as led walls, anchorman desk and the glass shell and consequently different phenomenal transparencies. The superimposition of changing layers refers to broader spatial order by creating alternative perceptions of transparencies.



**Figure 11.** The Blue Led Wall of the Studio      **Figure 12.** The Red Wall of the Studio

[personal archive]

[personal archive]

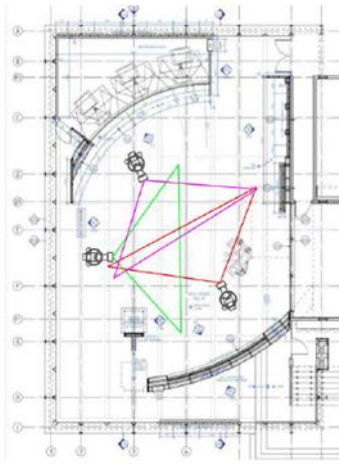


**Figure 13.** Changing Location of the Desk

As Rowe and Slutzky stated in their article, feeling for both literal and phenomenal transparency derives from Cubist paintings [11]. Bruno Zevi, expresses similar approach to Cubist painters' expressions in his book *Architecture as Space*, as follows:

I see and display an object, for example a box or a table. I see that object from a perspective and draw its three dimensional portrait from this point of view. However, when I rotate the box at by hand or when I turn around the table, my point of view changes at every step forcing me to make a new perspective at every step. So, the object's reality is not completely within the three dimensions of the perspective. In order to be able to capture the object completely, I should display it from infinite number of points of view with infinite number of perspectives. Therefore, there is another element included in the traditional three dimensions: Simultaneous handling of these different points of view [9].

Cubist painters have manifested this notion by drawing the appearances from several points of view of the same object overlapping in one picture. Here, the simultaneous perception of multiple appearances of an object may also be considered as the simultaneous perception of the transparent material and the object behind in transparency. In other words, many Cubist paintings depict objects from multiple viewpoints and these multiple viewpoints conflict with each other. A similar situation can be seen in the NTV's News Studio. Because the studio is located into a cube made of glass called the "News Cube" and that the place of the anchorperson's desk can be changed, both the spectators at home and the studio audience can see the studio from multiple points of view as seen in Figure 14. In this way, it can be interpreted that, the transparency of NTV News Studio shares similarity with transparency created by Cubist paintings.



**Figure 14.** Multiple viewpoints from camera

### 3.2. Transparency as a Concept: A Poetic Interpretation of Corporate Identity

The owners of the channel interpret the cubes transparency rather constructive. In the interviews with the designers and users of News Cube, it is indicated that, the channel owners have intentionally wanted a transparent identity to be represented by the design. In accordance with this request, the designers have placed the studio into a completely transparent cube. The purpose here is to bring a different and innovative approach to the traditional news studios by subverting the closed box of conventional studio into an open-honest-transparent construction. The channel owners believe that this concept gives a more transparent identity to the program, as well, since it reflects all the production process together with news. This insight indicates that the utilization of transparency in NTV News Studio is rather a consequence of conceptual approach. As examined in the previous section, the transparency has been the source of inspiration for various significant architectural works as a conceptual interpretation. The conceptual transparency, which has sometimes emerged in the constructions as a symbol of honesty, here has been intended as a means of reflecting the transparent and honest journalism of the channel. In this context, I believe, the transparency of NTV News Studio rather reflects the lexical figurative meaning of the terms. Beyond being a material characteristic or a situation subsequently created by visual perception of superimposed layers, it is interpreted as a qualification of an honest, open and comprehensible attitude. Referring to user experience, even though a transparent studio environment brings various physical disadvantages, the designer's insistence on the transparent shell was due to the conceptual approach, in other words, due to the corporate identity of the channel.

This conceptual dimension of the transparency of the studio pretends to change an ongoing order, as is the case in *Las Meninas* of the painter Velazquez. The architectural language created with this intent presents a considerable example of transparency's application. The concept of transparency in interior space as a poetic interpretation of corporate identity with all its so-called aspects has inserted a constructive ideology to the interior space via the transparent shell of the News Cube which is designed to reflect the channel's identity and its open-honest-transparent journalism.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the introduction of “Order of Things”, Michel Foucault questions what really is represented in the painting *Las Meninas*. The painting can be identified as “the representation of the representation”, since it is the only painting in which the viewer is included among the figures depicted as subjects. According to Foucault’s interpretations *Las Meninas* changes the conventional “order” by subverting the place of representation through his unique composition. It is the assumption of this study that in NTV News Studios, there is a similar destruction of order. Its architectural analysis therefore is conducted with a methodology formed on Foucault’s interpretations. When the interior design of NTV News Studio, which has a completely transparent studio environment and different than the closed box of other news studios, is examined it is seen that a very similar situation to *Las Meninas* occurs: “the observer becomes the observed object”. The transparency of the shell stands out as the major factor that subverts the conventional progress.

Having examined the transparency concept, especially referring to Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky’s seminal article “Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal,” one can say that apart from being a concrete phenomenon that can be easily perceived from an ordinary perspective, it incorporates new identities depending on the changing context and it manifests itself in different forms as well in the discipline of architecture and design. Firstly, transparency was used for taking light into the interior space by using transparent materials making the objects behind visible. Also it has sometimes emerged as a perceptual one created by combining and organizing various non-transparent materials and in other times as conceptually with its figurative meaning by standing for an ideology. The design of NTV News Studio, which is an important example of the use of transparency in interior architecture, reflects various forms of transparency. First of all, since the glass cube of the studio is placed indoor, one could be interpreted that the utilization of transparency is not because of any physical reasons such as a need for natural light. The purpose of this transparent concept that has been created in line with the requests of the channel owners is to make visible the entire process of the news program, from production to broadcasting, thus representing explicitly the whole production process to the audiences. In this concept, the design approach of studio setup in closed box has changed into a liberal and transparent broadcast environment where the visitors and all employees can observe the entire process and even become a part of the broadcast as long as they enter into the camera view. The channel argues that, this transparent environment thus reflects their journalism approach. Nevertheless, the independent and transparent form of the cube creates a kind of “panopticon” experience for the users.

However, the claim that a news program can reflect its the sense of impartial and honest journalism by creating a transparent studio environment should be questioned. In the United States of America, the saying “camera uses the reality economically” is used commonly to describe the relationship between the television and the reality. Particularly the show world has used wise visual tricks and illusions in television from the beginning, as it does in the performing arts and other fields. This saying, which ironically sets forth the relationship of television with the reality, on the other hand indicates the technological and economical limitations of camera. These two realities underlie also the TV journalism. Once the challenging and limiting factors as a part of being visual combine with the concerns of being fast and economic, a new sense of journalism with a higher meta value emerges where the reality is re-constructed apart from the classical journalism definitions. The sentence “The revolution will not be televised” is probably one of the best describing this new journalism approach.

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