Academic Architecture and the Constitution of the New Model Worker

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Introduction

In this paper we explore organizational architecture and interior design insofar as it represents a technology of interpolation that permits various forms of identity to become privileged over others. Rather than consider traditional corporate buildings and the effects they may or may not have on employees already in situ, we look at another site of the production of the working subject, namely the university. In doing so we identify certain developments within the architecture and design of this particular environment which, in our view, seek to pre-empt and pre-form a working subjectivity congruent with the demands and expectations of the labour markets of advanced contemporary economies such as the UK.

Our decision to focus on an aspect of university architecture is not driven purely by theoretical concerns, however. It also reflects an empirical interest in the recent enthusiasm shown by such institutions for the commissioning of architecturally striking buildings. In 2008, for instance, the *Times Higher Education* - the UK 'trade' paper for academics and associated professions - ran an article focusing on this very issue. What came across most clearly in this was the view that an important way by which institutions might present themselves as 'accessible havens of cutting-edge intellectual endeavour and innovation' (Oxford, 2008: 41) was to build striking, contemporary buildings. As Graham Henderson, vice-chancellor of the post-1992 Teesside University pointed out in relation to a new campus building in the town of Darlington, with the provision of a building that is 'transparent, filled with light, curvy and welcoming' (Oxford, 2008: 44) the University has witnessed a significant increase in student numbers.

We report in this paper on research undertaken at another post-1992 UK institution, *Glasgow Caledonian University* (GCU). Our study specifically focused on the University's recently constructed library known as *The Saltire Centre*. While we will explain more about this building further into the paper, our choice of research site was based on the fact that at the time of its completion the Saltire - as it is commonly referred to - was a striking and arguably mould breaking example of contemporary university architecture. Described in a supplement on innovative university libraries in *The Guardian* newspaper as 'one of the best-loved and most used landmark buildings on a UK campus' (Hoare, 2008: 2), the Saltire was conceived of and built as a radical departure from the traditional style and function of the university library. As we will detail, it was not so much a storehouse for printed material as a meeting place for learners. As such, it has undoubtedly not only changed the face of the GCU, but has set a benchmark for future library designs across UK higher education.

This paper argues that new library spaces such as the Saltire represent a significant departure from library spaces usually found in Universities. This new space was part of not just the redesign of the library, but broader attempts to solidify a particular identity for the university as a whole. This was achieved through significant effort being put in the aesthetic management of the space. These measures attempted to create a sense of movement, fluidity and ultimately encourage what one of the managers called 'a deinstitutionalized' feeling to the space. This new space also further reinforced the Universities' collective identity as being a space that encouraged practicality and real world relevance. These attempts at aesthetic management did not just shape the image that the organization hope to project of

itself, but also the way students were supposed to think of themselves and experience their use of the building. We argue that the Saltire building created an 'identityspace' which interpolated students as 'new model workers' who were to become adept at negotiating the flexibility and collaborative forms of group work demanded by the new economy. Although this model identity was certainly challenged in a range of ways, it remained the dominant identity lurking within this new library.

In order to make this argument, the paper commences with a considering the role which organizational space plays in shaping identity. We then move on to considering recent work on organizational architecture, particularly drawing on the idea that organizational space works through processes of enchantment, emplacement and enactment (Burrell and Dale, 2008). Using these three concepts as a our analytical guides, we then provide some background to our study of the Saltire centre, the history of its development, and the details associated with the design of the centre. Next, we look in more depth at how the centre creates an image of a new model worker and how this fitted into the broader identity that the organization aimed to foster. We then analyze the changing nature of this building with reference to processes of enchantment, emplacement and enactment. We conclude the paper by considering how the various processes we observed in the Saltire are linked to creating identities that are consider appropriate for the 21st century workplace.

Architecture, Design and Identity

As readers of this journal will no doubt be aware, mainstream discussions of organizational architecture tend to have little to do with the materiality of buildings or the aesthetics of interior design. Rather, they usually concern themselves with what we might otherwise term organizational structure; namely the ways in which roles, responsibilities and procedures are distributed within an organization and how these might be represented in and across various media (cf. Nadler and Tushman, 1997). Of course structural hierarchies are not only frequently 'made' to resemble vertically dominant constructions such as the ubiquitous pyramid, but the spatial distribution of such hierarchies are, more often than not, also housed within hierarchically ordered buildings (Baldry, 1999). Nevertheless, our concern here is with more than simply the architectural reproduction of organizational hierarchies. Rather, it is with the ways in which architecture, and the spatial and aesthetic outcomes it generates, serve particular – though not necessarily uncontested – regimes of identity formation.

As the likes of Markus (1993, 2006), Clegg and Kornberger (2006) and Dale and Burrell (2003, 2008) have all observed, it has long been recognised that building design is intrinsically tied up with relations of power and identity. Perhaps the most often cited voice in this respect is Michel Foucault (1979, 1996) who is, particularly in the field of organization studies, best known for his concern with the location and identification of particular types of bodies within the confines of physical institutions and the buildings that accommodate them. Most familiar in this respect was his referral to Bentham's design for a panoptic prison (Foucault, 1979). This has subsequently become perhaps the most ubiquitous of metaphors for architectural and spatial power, as well as for the moulding of the purported 'docile' subject of modernity. Foucault's contribution to the analytics of architecture, power and identity undoubtedly lies in the recognition that practices of subjectivisation are themselves spatially located and that particular architectures embed spatial configurations in ways

that contribute to the possibility of such a process. Nonetheless, his denaturalisation of the subject – as well as its subsequent resuscitation within the ebbs and flows of historical contingency - is not in itself without precedent. His erstwhile mentor, the Marxist philosopher, Louis Althusser (2008), viewed the subject in somewhat similarly anti-essentialist terms as something which comes into being though processes of interpollation; namely the way in which the individual is drawn into a relationship of identification with a particular subject position that accords with the demands of a dominant ideology.

Within the field of spatial philosophy perhaps the greatest influence on how we might understand the spatial and architectural dimension of individual identity is that bequeathed in the work of Henri Lefebvre (1991), and what Soja (1996) has subsequently described as his 'spatial trialectics'. Influential upon a number of writers, particularly in the field of organization studies (cf. Taylor and Spicer, 2007; Watkins, 2005; Dale and Burrell, 2008; Zhang et al., 2008), Lefebvre's claim that space is a social product identifies the ongoing interplay between identify forming activities of subjects interacting in space and the abstract representations and designs of space that provide the material context within which identity processes might emerge. This recognition of both material constraints and opportunities provided by space and its production, has led to Lefebvre emerging as a primary resource for those wishing to move beyond a purely representationalist account of organizational architecture. That is, it leads one to ask questions about space, and the architectural practices that contribute to its production, as an active contributor to what we would term the *identityscape* of contemporary organizational life.

Architecture, Landscaping and Organization

Leaving to one side for the moment these observations, however, perhaps it might also be useful at this juncture to speak briefly about some of the work within the field of organization studies which has also touched on these themes, albeit in different ways. The most current and extensive treatment of the relationship between architecture and organization is that to be found in Dale and Burrell's (2008) *The Spaces of Organization and the Organization of Spaces*. Building on previous work concerned with aspects of the built environment and its organizational implications (Burrell and Dale, 2003; Dale, 2005; Dale and Burrell, 2003), this book offers an important insight into not only the role architecture plays both as an expression of organizational power and ambition, but also its centrality to the organization of space so characteristic of modernity. As the authors are well aware architecture, organization and power have long been amenable bedfellows. Since antiquity organizational authority has been established and buttressed with the help of grand architectural statements. Nor was the rise of industrial modernity any less significant in this respect. As the likes of Guillén (1997, 2006) and Kersten and Gilardi (2003) have documented, industrial architecture - from the modernist symbolism of the Eifel Tower to the imposing menace of the Detroit factories – has not only a significant aesthetic character, it has also played a powerful role in the formulation and management of corporate identities and the projection of apposite aspirations.

This historical legacy notwithstanding, however, is it probably not inaccurate to assert, as have the likes of Berg and Kreiner (1992), that the latter half of the twentieth century has witnessed an unparalleled transformation of organizational

buildings into what they describe as 'impelling symbols of corporate virtues and managerial intentions' (p.43). Operating as media of meaning construction for both employees and clients, corporate architecture in particular has become increasingly fulfilled the role of anything from totemic symbol, uniting employees around a common goal and vision, to the physical embodiment of the organization's history and values. Furthermore, when talking about corporate architecture it is no longer sufficient merely to refer to the external or structural design of such buildings. Of equal importance are the ways in which the internal building is design. Following Gagliardi (1992, 1996), we might term this aesthetic landscaping of such interiors. This practice has also emerged as prominent preoccupations of commentators and designers within both the business and architectural professions.

Of particular note here is the apparent identification of the needs of an increasingly knowledge driven economy with novel and innovative forms of office design which prioritise the ludic, innovative architecture of space and interior design. Take, for example, Myerson and Ross's (2003: 148) description of the offices of *Exposure*, a London fashion marketing agency:

> Standard workstations are off the agenda. Instead, each staff member was given and individual desk, albeit secondhand. The result is a richly eclectic interior designed to express the idea of a 'walk through the markets of the world'. Hybrid, invented styles such as 'Moroccan Techno' and 'Danish Punk' coexist without really blending. Indian fabrics jostle with an old Japanese tea steamer on wheels; chain mail curtains demarcate areas; two red crosses from First World War hospital tents adorn Shah's [one of the managing directors] all-white private space.

This particular office style is an example of what the authors see as a 'neighbourly' design in which social interaction and interplay is encouraged amongst all levels of employees. It is thought to be an exemplar of a range of innovative and yet functionally orientated modes of interior design.

While such radical stylization might be somewhat less in vogue as a consequence of the current economic climate, there is little evidence to suggest that interior landscaping is any less significant for those concerned with producing a desired corporate image for both clients and employees alike. Indeed, such landscaping is as vital to the architectural endeavour as the structure and exterior design of the building itself. As Cosgrove (Cosgrove, 1985; Daniels and Cosgrove, 1988) observes, the underlying principle of landscaping is that it is a cultural and material process, a 'cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings' (Daniels and Cosgrove, 1988: 1). It is not, therefore, simply decoration, but sits integrally at the heart of the symbolic production of architectural space. It enables one to manipulate one's environment so as to generate a particular manner of *perceiving* and *feeling* organizational reality, a way that transcends the purely intellectual faculties and provides a powerful technology by which identity is resourced and potentially realigned.

Combined then, structural architecture and the interior landscaping that accompanies it, draws our attention towards the ways in which organizational buildings might contribute to the prioritization of particular modes of employee

identity and the behaviours that derive from it. In their aforementioned text, Dale and Burrell (2008) have specifically commented on the ways in which Lefebvre's (1991) concept of conceived space, or as they term it, organized space, points to the conscious design and construction of certain organizational structures; design which aims to foster certain modes of identity and agency. In doing so they identify a tripartite process which provides a useful means of analysing the ways by which power is enacted both in and through such spatial arrangements.

This consists firstly of *enchantment*, which resonates with what Gell (1992) has referred to in terms of cultural anthropology as *technologies of enchantment*. For Dale and Burrell (2008: 48) enchantment points directly towards the 'fusion of the material and symbolic' which characterises so many major architectural structures, structures which are, to return to Gell (1992: 43), concerned with 'securing acquiescence of individuals in the network of intentionalities in which they are enmeshed'. Thus, from the towering skyscrapers of global financial centres to the temples and cathedrals of faith and religiosity, from the interior of one's local bank to that of the nearest undertaker, space, imagery and the construction of a material narrative are all viewed from this perspective as contributing to the power of organizational architecture which seeks to control and order as it enchants.

The second is that of *emplacement*. This refers in its most general sense to the location of particular activities, and indeed bodies, within rigidly conceived geographical or spatial locations. In essence, this encapsulates an architectural practice of spatial discipline by which all things are kept in their place and, to invoke the vernacular, all things have a place. Citing Foucault (in Dale and Burrell, 2008: 54) in support of this argument, they note with approval his observation that 'discipline sometimes requires enclosure, the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself. It is the protected place of disciplinary monotony'. This is, therefore, the spatial power of regulated location, be it within the confines of the prison cell, the factory or, more locally, the position of one's office or desk with a spatial hierarchy.

The third and final process they identify is that of *enactment*. Unlike the previous categories that emphasise the power of a relatively fixed spatial location, enactment emerges though the lived usages of space and the ways in which it flows through and interacts with the conceived spaces of organization. It refers to the ways in which various spatial encounters and the responses we have to them are habituated onto the body and in the ways we come to favour particular forms of identity over others, both of which we might, and very often do take with us into other spaces and environments. Enactment, therefore, might serve to both challenge and confirm prevalent forms of spatial ordering, dependent on the possible intersections of experience, power and ways of seeing and doing that inhabit the individual at any given moment. Before we go any further with this line of thinking, however, it would perhaps be appropriate to introduce the particular building that forms the empirical element of the paper and why, in our view, it is so significant in terms of the contribution it might make to an exploration of these issues.

Exploring the Saltire

As we stated in the introduction, the building under discussion here is the *Saltire Centre* which can be found at Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) in the city centre of Glasgow, Scotland. The research itself was carried out over a period of several months and comprised of a review of relevant literature regarding the centre's conception, design and subsequent functioning, interviews with both users and employees of the centre, observation of its use across the day and evening and, finally, the taking of photographic images of both it interior and exterior.

GCU is itself what is commonly referred to in the UK as a post-1992, or 'new' university. These are universities which had previously been technical colleges or polytechnics and tended to have a more vocational or technical focus. Formed in 1993, largely from a merger of Queens College Glasgow and Glasgow Polytechnic, the professed mission of GCU is a stridently vocational one with the majority of its progammes orientated towards the achievement of career relevant qualifications. Furthermore, most of these qualifications are often marketed as of direct relevance to the growth of the Scottish economy – particularly ICT, retail and tourism, and the large Scottish public sector - something that has taken on added relevance in the post-devolution climate. It is within this environment that plans were devised for a new kind of library; one free from the shackles of traditional notions of library use and academic study, and that would be both a building and a institutional resource that could make an integral contribution to the mission and identity of the University.

The history of the Saltire itself is one that mixes the physical and spatial needs of the University and its city centre campus with a genuine experience of student ambitions and a degree of personal ideology and self-aggrandisement. Prior to its construction, GCU, which had over several years consolidated its resources into a single city centre campus that housed a traditional academic library replete with a large number of books and standard library shelving. Entry into, and exit from the building was closely controlled via turnstiles that were permanently staffed by library custodians. Academic librarians and support staff were reasonably accessible and could often be seen around the floors, in part undertaking a disciplinary function by keeping students in order and, for the best part, quiet while using the facilities.

Towards the end of its life, however, the library was also supplemented by what was known as the *Learning Café*, a hybrid space combining a franchised coffee bar with banks of computer terminals, sofa and table combinations - all of which provided power and network access – and which were complemented by a design rich environment making it a very popular social and working space amongst both students and staff. The importance of the ultimate success of the Learning Café for the vision that became the Saltire Centre cannot, we would suggest, be underestimated. For it not only demonstrated that there existed a cross-section of members of GCU prepared to use such a space, but also that it could actively and positively contribute to student learning, particularly in relation to group collaboration for which it had become a particularly popular venue. Buoyed by this success, the then Pro-Vice Chancellor (PVC) for academic services, and champion of the Learning Café, turned his attentions to his much larger vision for the Saltire. It is perhaps worth noting that the PVC in question considered themselves to be very much a project champion of the building having contributed to a number of Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) reports on the relationship between architecture, space and learning believing

strongly in the power of architecture to foster and sediment particular forms of personal identity:

> We spend a lot of time trying to change people. The thing to do is to change the environment and people will change themselves. (cited in JISC, 2006: 24) .

The Saltire is formally described as a *Library and Learner Support Centre*. Since its opening in January 2006 it has won several awards, including a Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) award, a Scottish Design award, and a Lighting Design Award for its external light displays. The exterior design of the building is both relatively unremarkable and yet, at the same time, striking (Figure 1). The bulk of the five story building is constructed of glass and metal and clearly owes its debts to the high modernism of the two 1960's tower blocks which it sits between and effectively connects over two levels at four points. Indeed this location is, in part, central to the building's envisaged function as a campus hub, connecting one side of the campus to the other and providing what has, by default, become a main entrance to GCU. At night, the aforementioned external light display is quite spectacular with a rear glass wall of layered pulsating lights, dancing spotlights internal to the building and the beam of revolving light moving up and down its cylindrical tower giving the building the outward appearance of a nightclub as the evening draws in. The tower itself is interesting in that in contrast to the rest of the modernist exterior it nods to a more vernacular architectural vision covered as it is in perforated copperplate. This produces a somewhat more postmodern pastiche of the towers and turrets of Glasgow's west-end, the home of the city's ancient University of Glasgow.

As we have already noted, the building was conceived of as a campus hub, both physically and culturally. Internally, therefore, facilities include a 600 seat social space and expanded learning café, 1800 non-cellular study spaces, and a 'One Stop Shop' for all student services including counseling, careers, registry services, and student finance. Open to the public, it is ICT driven with, at the time the research was undertaken, 400 hundred desktop computers, 150 on-loan laptops, public access Wi-Fi throughout the building, and power points available on all desks and tables throughout the building. This move to ICT centered provision, including a vision of an e-book centered future has, of course, had to find a way of dealing with what was described as the 'legacy of paper'. In terms of books this has largely been addressed by the replacement of traditional shelving with a limited number of electric stacks, the kind commonly used for archiving printed material.

The interior of the building has been described in somewhat breathless terms by the learning and technology guru Professor Stephen Heppel as 'a place of endless possibilities where dreams can come true' (GCU, 2006). One enters the building on what is the first floor along what at the time was a rather drab concrete corridor. However, as one looks to the left the view is notable, looking across and down onto the lower floor with its market place or trading floor feel. Here one sees rows of computers, 'The 'Base' (Figure 2) which is the issue desk and 'one-stop shop' previously referred to, the learning café and various inflatable study zones etc. A giant mural artwork by the young Scottish artist Toby Paterson catches one's attention as does the noise and interactions generated by the users themselves (Figure 3).

Overall the interior is designed around the increasingly popular concept of the building as a city or 'townscape' (see Dale and Burrell, 2008: 114) replete with districts, landmarks, nodes and paths. Each floor is designed to be experienced as a specific district with its own character and function. So, in this context, the lower ground floor as we have already noted is the market place with facilities ranging from food and drink to library and other university services available here. As one travels up the building, the idea is that the usage and atmosphere of each floor alters, with the top floor designated as a silent 'district', appropriate for individual, private study. Central to the professed ethos of the building was what its Assistant Director described as *deinstitutionalization*. This revolved around the belief that in an increasingly networked and collaborative economy traditional modes of regulation were inhibiting of certain and desirable learning practices such as group collaboration and the utilisation of multi-media information sources. Thus, in the Assistant Director's own words, in order to create an independent but equally cooperative learner what was required a building that 'set boundaries subtly'.

This was achieved, or at least attempted, in several observable ways. As already mentioned, the lack of direct supervision of users, minimal security measures and the lack of prohibitive signage such as one might expect in a traditional library environment such as those that prohibit talking or eating or some other non-studious activity contributed to a sense of liberalism in how the building could be occupied and put to use. This is not to say, however, that control was not exercised in other, more subtle ways, which brings us back to the importance of landscaping in general, and a form of aesthetic spatial management, in particular. The aforementioned urban theme of the building was complemented throughout by a design strategy that not only sought to integrate the various sections of the internal environment but that would exercise a regulative function also. As the Director of the Centre explained it:

> We are trying to use it on an aesthetic metaphor. Down in Level 0 the graphics are a vibrant aesthetic. If you look at the graphics it is an image of Glasgow [Figure 4], it is that type of stuff. When we started we actually tried to create some streets using umbrellas. This floor [Level 1] is all about circulation hence the graphics with the birds in flight, the aeroplanes, the world map. The second floor as you go up the building is a quiet landscape. The top floor is domestic graphics, domestic images because the idea is that you are working on your own, you are more likely to be at home, a quiet environment. We have different zones, a noisy vibrant zone, a quiet area, domestic, different landscape, you know, different areas in-between. We use things like colour because again if you look at the building, this is circulation, reds, vibrant moving colours. The top level is more of a purple, more philosophical, more subdued.

This aesthetic management of the internal space of the building and its occupants was thus presented as integral to its perceived mission; to produce self-directed but collaborative individuals. The kinds of visual cues alluded to in the above quote were further supplemented not only by auditory signals such as piping of ambient 'market' noises on the lower floor, the use of a female 'shush' as one entered the silent study upper level, and the different dialects that accompanied lift announcements at each stop, but also by the bodies of the users themselves as they

enacted the ethos of the building by moving, collaborating and generally making flexible use of the space and its facilities.

Learning to be a New Model Worker?

In this part of the paper we unpack some of the issues alluded to thus far. Fundamentally our observations have led to the view that it is possible to discern in the Saltire Centre an architectural contribution to the prioritising of a particular mode of identity. Referring back to the Althusserian terminology alluded to previously, what we are suggesting is that it is through its architectural and design features that the building interpolates those who study within it. It seems to hail or call them into a particular mode of self-identity in relation to themselves and others. This process is not one simply premised upon identification with the organization within which it is located through the status of employee or user. Rather, it reflects a more universalistic orientation to work and status within a relatively specific economic and socio-cultural context. That is, such a building appears highly congruent with the mission and aspirations of an institution which professes a particular function in relation to the economic development of its host nation; namely to produce a collaboratively orientated, ICT skilled labour force suited to employment in an increasingly service oriented, globally competitive national economy.

Now, as we noted in the introduction to the paper, it is possible to identify a similar set of aspirations being linked with similar expressions of architectural ambition across a number of UK universities. As such, the Saltire represents perhaps just one case or empirical illustration of a larger process. Yet if the idea that organizational architecture and design can contribute to the fostering of particular modes of identity is as significant as say Dale and Burrell (2008) have suggested, then the Saltire represents a particularly rich and contemporary example of this. Externally, by virtue of its very iconicity, the Saltire establishes a mediating relationship which mobilises its distinctiveness from traditional ideas of a university library in order to offer its students a very clear signal as to what an alternative vision of a university education might offer them. Interestingly this view is expressed in an interview with one academic user, albeit in what they might view as more negative terms when they observe that;

> …to some extent the Centre might be a statement of the inferiority complex to the post-92 universities as they try to be brash and bold and innovative and see that as the means by which they can counter the traditions of the past which they don't have.

Yet while this particular user might view the 'brash, bold and innovative' as a statement of inferiority, it is one which appeared to have struck a particularly resonant chord with many of the student users of the building. Often they appeared to revel in the clear differentiation the Saltire represented between their own values and aspirations and the idea of a stuffy and out of touch university education, embracing as they believed, in the words of one user, an 'entrepreneurial, go for it type of spirit'.

Certainly in this context the building has emerged as a marketing department's dream featuring across the university's publicity material. As debates about the future of libraries, particularly academic variants, increases in pace and scope, the Saltire has

become something of a benchmark for such buildings. In some ways, one gets the feeling that its popularity is an outcome of its perceived 'engaged vulgarity', offering as it does a totemic structure for its students that not only allows, but positively encourages, a break with traditional notions of university scholasticism. One amusing illustration of this is a particular posting on the *YouTube* internet site which is a response to a student made animation based on the BBC television series *Dr Who*. This features the Saltire Centre as the location of a meeting between the Doctor and his enemies, the Daleks. Here a proud GCU student declares how 'strathy's library may be all dignified and shit, but we got daleks!'[1]. Thus, while the Saltire and, by implication, GCU might not be 'all dignified and shit', what it does offer is an environment of exploration, a flexible place which might be re-imagined in different ways and within which practical skills, such as animation, might flourish.

Architecture and the Organization of Space

In this penultimate section we revisit the spatial categories of Dale and Burrell in order to think through some of our empirical observations. First and foremost there can be little doubt that the Saltire is a building fundamentally characterised by a strategy of architectural *enchantment*. Its striking design and creative use of an internal landscaping that is both aesthetically rich and congruent with contemporary motifs of movement and the promise of technology is one self-consciously orientated towards the nurturing and valorization of a particular identity position. That is, perhaps unsurprisingly, one favorable to the aspirations and values of the building and the University as a whole. It offers an aesthetically ludic version of the library aesthetic - one seemingly far more closely aligned with a 'play' ethic (Kane, 2004) than that of a more traditional Presbyterian orientation to the pursuit of hard work in the cause of self-affirmation. Frequently described as 'buzzing', 'vibrant' or, alternatively a place where you can 'relax' or 'chill' in our interviews, however inclined or disinclined towards the architectural merit of the structure itself, it was hard to deny the impact the building appeared to have on those who used it on a frequent basis or the sense of energy and purpose it communicated to the occasional visitor.

Yet there was more than simply a process of enchantment at stake in the ways in which the redesign and aesthetic architecture of the building operated. As already noted, the aesthetic management of the building was itself a component element of engendering a particular identity orientation to academic work; one that dissolved the perceived boundaries between the academic, the social, and the vocational worlds. In relation to Dale and Burrell's (2008) typology, the aesthetic management of the space was integral to the *enactment* of the building. The deinstitutionalization it allowed facilitated the structural emphasis on flows and movements, which again echoes Dale and Burrell (2008: 117), this time in relation to their observations regarding the 'valorisation of liquidity' often found to characterise much contemporary corporate architecture. The student users of the building physically entered into the flexible and collaborative working environments for which they were deemed to be destined through their movements across the different zones or districts of the Centre and the self-management that the aesthetics of the building requires of them; moving from consumer to teamworker to independent researcher (rather than scholar) and back

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[1] A reference to Strathclyde University, one of the city's older institutions.

again as the rhythm of work and the building itself ebbs and flows throughout the day. As one student user described the building it was 'less bureaucratic', orientated as it was to a celebration of movement and networking – both virtual and embodied.

Despite the ethos and architectural valorization of movement and flow one cannot, however, also overlook the role of *emplacement* in the context of the building's success. For while the ethos of the building itself is one that promotes internal movement as Dale and Burrell (2008: 53 *emphasis added*) put it, emplacement aims to ensure that 'everything and everybody are put in their *rightful* places'. The Saltire embodied and encapsulated a message, by virtue of its design and architectural distinctiveness, that for those students who either do not feel that a traditional university education is right for them, or who do believe that their class, gender or ethnicity would not easily be granted such an experience, that this 'space' is, in effect, your 'place'. While internally de-differentiated - both functionally and culturally – it generated its own somewhat perverse symbolism of segregation within the city. Not only did it, by virtue of its connectedness to the other University buildings, encourage a greater separation of its students from the external environment, its reinvention of the library from a space of isolated scholarly devotion to a place of socialised learning, claimed a knowledge both for and of its occupants that was distinct from that claimed by its rival institutions.

Concluding Thoughts

In this paper we have, drawing upon a range of theoretical and empirical resources speculated on the character of the Saltire Centre and the role that its architecture and design plays in the aim of constituting an historically apposite *identityscape*. Our initial reading has been very much one of, to use Lefebvre's (1991) term, an abstract space. One conceived of in such a way as to serve the production of an identity position in tune with the contemporary workplace in general and one that resonates, in particular, with the rhetoric of the 'modernised', technologically driven knowledge economy. Through a range of processes, including those identified by Dale and Burrell (2008) as enchantment, emplacement and enactment, the Saltire is, in our view, an illustration of an exercise in the architectural and spatial production of what Thrift (2005) has described as *fast subjectivities*. That is, it is a building which is designed to engender individuals who are 'more active, more creative', and more capable of self-regulation.

By acting on the bodies and perceptions of students, the intent is to configure self-regulating, collaborative and team-focused subjects – the perceived characteristics of knowledge workers in the 21st century economy. In particular, the Saltire is a building that materializes an alternative ethic of learning; one that actively denies the differentiation of knowing and doing. Through the design and landscaping of flows, rhythms, images and sounds the building engages the academic legacy of a university sector with which both the University and its students struggle for recognition but, in doing so, seeks to engender an alternative type of post-HE identity. Not only is the building itself a mark of 'distinction' – a modern flexible space, congruent with the institutional mission and student aspirations – it is, furthermore, the staging ground for the ongoing production of a post-bureaucratic model worker.

None of this is to suggest that such a process is in any sense total or complete. Throughout the research that contributed to the writing of this paper it was continually apparent that much that the architecture and design of the building sought to achieve was never perfectly realised nor regarded without critical comment. Throughout the building there was also a constant sense of the reassertion of Lefebvre's category of *lived space*. Reports of students sleeping on beanbags and in areas designed for group work were commonly reported while less frequent but nonetheless informative instances of students using personal electrical equipment including hair-straightners and razors at the table power points also pointed to a form of embodied disruption of the building and its aspirations.

Equally, there was abundant evidence that much of the aesthetic management system of the building was, at least at first sight, failing to instill the desired behaviors and attitudes into many of the Saltire's users. In particular, it was evident that the aesthetic cues had not been sufficient to maintain desired levels of quietness for some students who not only resisted much of the ethos of the building but ultimately began to force changes which would undermine the integrity of the building's self-management system. These included an increased use of directional signage, more direct surveillance of users via more frequent custodian patrols, the extension of silent study status down at least one extra floor of the building, and the provision of individual, screened study carrels which had deliberately been excluded from the original interior design of the Centre.

Yet even here it was never entirely clear that such activities were themselves not already being assimilated into the logic of the building. Certainly one discussion had with a senior library member regarding the use of electric hair straightners in the building led to the conclusion that if the Saltire was designed to help equip students with skills transferable to the contemporary labour market, then encouraging them to attend to their personal grooming before say, giving a class presentation, was no bad thing. Certainly, in many respects, the Saltire represented something of a paradox. Despite the rather unsavory notion that it might perhaps qualify as little more than a new, if somewhat gilded factory for a new age, its appeal to young men and women who may well be the first in their families to enter into full-time higher education is undeniable. It represents a formidable example of the architectural production of an identityscape that combines spatial and symbolic deregulation with aesthetic re-regulation in order to foster an intellectual and indeed embodied ethic of innovation, collaboration and the dedifferentiation of knowing and doing. Furthermore it is a model that is clearly being admired and now replicated across the UK university sector. Yet whether such an ethic of design will simply entrench old inequalities, or perhaps render them increasingly meaningless is not something that will be answered solely in the districts of the Saltire Centre, but rather will increasingly characterise the ways in which such learning spaces are both conceived and lived for some time to come.

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Figures

Figure 1. The Saltire Centre – Front Elevation

Figure 2. Level 0 – 'The Base'

Figure 3. Level 0 'Market Place'

Figure 4. Level 0 Learning Café with Glasgow Mural