
“Welcome to Manchester”: Heritage, Urban Regeneration, and Michael Winterbottom’s *24 Hour Party People*

By Joe Barton

Mutability is the epitaph of worlds
Change alone is changeless
People drop out of the history of a life as of a land
Though their work or their influence remains

Isabella Banks, *The Manchester Man* (1876)

“Everything [except Joy Division’s music] is merchandising.
Merchandising of memory.”
Peter Saville (2007)

Isabella Banks’ 1876 novel *The Manchester Man* irrevocably ties the fortunes of its Mancunian protagonist Jabez Clegg to those of his native city during the first half of the nineteenth century, the rags-to-riches journey personifying Manchester’s own rapid transformation from manorial township into what Peter Hall notes was “without a challenge, the first and greatest industrial city in the world”.^[1] The passage from *The Manchester Man* cited above, in which Banks reflects upon the legacies of both individuals and wider historical forces, can also be found on the headstone of the Manchester-based “broadcaster and cultural catalyst”^[2] Anthony H. “Tony” Wilson (1950-2007). Against a backdrop of “absolute [socioeconomic] decline” in the city wrought by large-scale deindustrialisation,^[3] Wilson became an active champion of local creative talent, co-founding both the Factory Records music label and The Hacienda nightclub: Manchester institutions which would form key focal points for the development of British popular culture between the late 1970s and early 1990s.

Given that subsequent urban regeneration efforts in the city have often sought to seize upon the prestige of Manchester’s “vibrant contributions to popular music”,^[4] it is perhaps unsurprising to find that by the time of his death, the association between Wilson and the transformation of his beloved city seemed cemented by obituaries which mourned the loss of “Mr Manchester”.^[5] The excerpt from *The Manchester Man* is appropriate then, as, in threading together the themes of socioeconomic

mutability and the legacy of influential figures, it captures the sense in which regional accounts of upheaval and transformation continue to be understood through the memorialised and mythologised lives of specific individuals. Moreover, as contemporary pressures exerted upon post-industrial cities like Manchester to maintain global economic competitiveness[6] lead to the valorisation of local and regional heritage, these “epitaphs of worlds” become rife with tensions, their narratives not just functioning as urban myth, but fuel for –and products of– the neo-liberal cultural industries: the “merchandising of memory”, as Peter Saville, former graphic designer for Factory Records and current Creative Director for the city of Manchester, puts it.[7]

“Mutability is our Tragedy, but it’s also our Hope”

Michael Winterbottom’s 2002 film *24 Hour Party People*, a comic re-telling of the Factory Records story, constitutes one such potential site of tension. Like Jabez Clegg in *The Manchester Man*, the professional and personal fortunes of Tony Wilson (played by Steve Coogan) become the lens through which Manchester’s recent history is refracted and distorted. Unlike *The Manchester Man*, however, the placement of Wilson as protagonist and narrator ironically comments upon the credit often solely attributed to “Mr. Manchester” with regards to the city’s regeneration, and nods towards the affectionate hostility that was traditionally directed towards “wanker” Wilson by his fellow Mancunians.[8] Alongside an account of Wilson’s tumultuous television career and strained personal relationships, the film depicts his early championing of the Sex Pistols in 1976; the creation of Factory Records and signing of post-punk band Joy Division in 1978; the suicide of their lead singer Ian Curtis and subsequent transformation into New Order in 1980; the success of the Hacienda and Happy Mondays at the height of the “Madchester” acid-house boom in the late 1980s; and Factory’s financial implosion in 1992.

Indeed, the well-worn narrative device of channelling historical mutability through the life of the individual is explicitly acknowledged in the film when Wilson encounters a homeless man (Christopher Eccleston) claiming to be the medieval philosopher Boethius. Expanding on his concept of the Wheel of Fortune (in a thick Salford accent, nonetheless) the vagrant philosopher opines “It is my belief that history is a wheel [...] good times pass away, but then so do the bad. Mutability is our tragedy, but it’s also our hope”. Appropriately, given the film’s exaggerated portrayal of Wilson as pretentious intellectual, he responds to this philosophical advice with a nonchalant “I know”. Of course, Wilson’s riposte is also directed at the audience, trashing the symbolism of the scene in order to establish that the film’s creators are fully aware of the pitfalls of this very narrative device, but are choosing to use it anyway.

This article is concerned with these tensions between cinematic fiction, urban legend and historical fact. Moreover, in establishing a sense of *24 Hour Party People's* overall contribution to the ever-expanding Factory mythos, this article aims to place the film in relation to what Steve Quilley has termed the “Manchester script”: the PR narrative, espoused by local authorities and property developers alike, that “the city has been reborn as a postmodern, post-industrial and cosmopolitan city, standing in Europe’s ‘premier league’”.^[9] To do this, the article will firstly explore the issues surrounding Manchester’s culture-led regeneration in more detail, with particular interest in both how the Factory legacy has, willingly or otherwise, been implicated in such schemes. In exploring the promotion of the film and its relationship with some of Factory’s key figures, the article will then consider the ways in which the film appears to reinforce the Manchester script. However, in interrogating the film’s reflexive, playful dealing with historical fact and personal account, the article will also aim to highlight the ways in which *24 Hour Party People* can be read as a sardonic subversion of this script and its attendant top-down, neo-liberal narratives, in keeping with the anarchic tradition of Factory Records and the Hacienda.

“Excess of Civic Pride”

For those sympathetic to the spirit of the city’s sub-cultural heritage, the half-complete image painted by the Manchester script raises pivotal concerns, as it obscures the very socioeconomic issues which played a key role in fuelling Manchester’s now mythologized creative achievements. As former Hacienda DJ and Manchester historian Dave Haslam argues, much of the spectacular creativity of Factory and its creative contemporaries consisted of cathartic and transcendent ways of dealing with the city’s “disintegration” during the period of Thatcherite restructuring.^[10] Indeed, this notion of a holding out against wider economic forces informs the 1976 film essay *Joy Division: a Film by Malcolm Whitehead*; a riposte to neo-liberalism which figures footage of the band rehearsing in a disused factory as a symbolic form of “resistance through art and culture”.^[11]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXYsu4do3Go&t=24m10s>

Joy Division: a Film by Malcolm Whitehead

The neo-liberal landscape of Manchester in the early 2000s, however, would make such acts of resistance appear futile. At the same time as acid house, the collectivist hedonism with which the Hacienda sought to counter the “individualistic thrust of Thatcherism”, reached its creative peak in the late 1980s, Manchester City Council had confirmed its abandonment of municipal socialism in favour of a “pragmatic strand of

interventionist neo-liberalism” which Peck and Ward summarise as “talking up, making over and trickling down”. [12] While they argue that this approach meant that Manchester city centre “has been comprehensively reconstructed, both physically and culturally, in ways that would have been hardly imaginable 15 or 20 years ago”, it remains the case that, for all of the visible fruits of regeneration, “many of the city’s underlying social and economic problems have been displaced rather than solved”. [13]

As Matthew Wilson notes in his account of the city’s transformation, these concerns prove even more pressing when one considers how “once marginal cultural entrepreneurs” such as Peter Saville “have become central in the regeneration process, many now holding significant positions of authority within the governing structures of the city”. [14] As local authorities grew increasingly wise as to how the efforts of bottom-up enterprise had revalorised inner city property, and created a network of jobs in the creative and night time economies, they “began to see the benefit in co-opting wider cultural forms” and their progenitors into public-private regeneration schemes like Marketing Manchester. When describing the motivation behind transforming the Factory offices depicted in *24 Hour Party People* into the nightclub FAC251, for example, former Joy Division and New Order bassist and Hacienda co-owner Peter Hook echoes this official line, arguing that such projects use “the past as a stepping stone into the future”. [15]

Irony, heritage, and the contemporary night time economy at Peter Hook’s FAC251

Not all commentators share this optimistic interpretation of the role of Factory in Manchester’s culture-led regeneration. For Owen Hatherley, the Factory-themed cocktails on offer in the luxury bar of the Beetham Tower, and Urban Splash’s transformation of the working-class Salford terraces razed by the New Labour Pathfinder Initiative into homes for affluent first-time buyers, are indicators of the gentrifying demands of private capital which shape planning policy in the neo-liberal era. [16] Indeed, Hatherley might have added the transformation of the Hacienda into “iconic office space”, which forced *24 Hour Party People*’s producers to build a facsimile nightclub interior on the other side of the city, even if they did manage to shoot exterior shots at the original Whitworth Street location (see Fig. 1). Revealingly, the film’s simulacra dance floor appears to contradict Wilson’s claim, made in 1998 when the Hacienda was sold to property developers, that he did not care for “museum culture”. [17] With this in mind, it is worth taking seriously Hatherley’s charge that *24 Hour Party People* is mere “Mancunian auto-hagiography” which, like culture-led urban regeneration more generally, duly empties cultural

products of their oppositional content.[18]



Figure 1: The former site of the Hacienda night club in Manchester, April 2011. Photograph taken by the author.

Evoking “heritage” when discussing British cinema does, of course, require some qualification. The focus of this article is the relationship between *24 Hour Party People* and the very specific narratives at work within the cultural industries of contemporary Manchester, and while the notion of cinema evoking, reiterating, and deconstructing a particular local heritage is central to this focus, that is not the same to claim that *24 Hour Party People* is to be considered “heritage cinema”. As Claire Monk notes, “heritage cinema” is a deeply problematic term which can only be “most usefully understood as a critical construct rather than as a description of any concrete film cycle or genre”, [19] and as such, this article will refrain from mapping such a potentially unproductive label onto *24 Hour Party People*. In the same essay, however, Monk points towards Moya Lockett’s work on an “alternative canon” of British cinema which includes *Quadrophenia* (Franc Roddam, 1979) and *Get Carter* (Mike Hodges, 1971); work which is perhaps more relevant in its concern for bottom-up appraisals of cinematic sites of regional identities. [20] Pivotaly, Lockett locates the construction of identities in these films in the context of New Labour’s own attempts to construct an entrepreneurial national identity which, as Tony Blair outlined in a Design Council report, should “use the strengths of our history and our character, and built on them for the future”. [21] As Toby Miller notes,

New Labour's "modernisation" of the British film industry shared the same "commerce-culture relationship" dilemma that characterised much of its Third Way policies.[22] Of course, it is this same tension, between supply-side imperative and cultural credibility, which define both Manchester's own culture-led regeneration and *24 Hour Party People*.

As a production, the film is marked by these tensions. On the one hand, it is an independent labour of love ("modern history existing for its own sake" [23]); funded by director Michael Winterbottom's own company, Revolution Films, in association with Coogan's Baby Cow, Film Four, the Film Consortium and the Film Council, and which, according to *IMDb.com*, failed to gross more than a £1 million in the UK between April and December 2002.[24] However, the film is also an unabashed vehicle for a plethora of recognisable Mancunian and British comic actors, going some way to confirm Miller's notion of how cinematic treatments of cultural heritage can also be opportunities for contemporary British image making. In addition to Manchester-native Coogan, the film features Smug Roberts, Peter Kay, Ralf Little, John Tompson, and Fiona Allen, all from the Greater Manchester area; *Coronation Street's* Elizabeth Dawn; and prominent roles for well known British character actors and comedians Paddy Considine, Andy Serkis, Simon Pegg, Rob Brydon, Keith Allen, and Dave Gorman. The cumulative effect of this rapid succession of famous faces is that of an advert for regional and national comedy talent, mapping an image of Manchester's entrepreneurial present onto a depiction of the entrepreneurial efforts of figures from Manchester's recent past.

At a superficial textual level, *24 Hour Party People* appears to display similar moments of tourist-friendly nostalgia. In one sequence, Wilson moves through a sea of clubbers, and, as they rave in slow motion, he turns to the camera to provide some historical context for the proceedings:

Manchester. The birthplace of the railways, the computer, the bouncing bomb. But tonight, something equally epoch-making is taking place. They're applauding the DJ. Not the music, not the musician, not the creator, but the medium. This is it: the birth of rave culture. The beatification of the beat. The Dance Age. This is the moment when even the white man starts dancing. Welcome to Manchester.

Even if scriptwriter Frank Cottrell Boyce pushes the portentous overtones of the speech towards absurdity, the scene nevertheless exudes the tone of tour-guide, one which is duly accompanied by illustrative footage and stills of the bouncing bomb and the Manchester Small-Scale Experimental Machine, the first stored-program computer built at the Victoria University of Manchester in 1948, nicknamed 'the Baby' (see Fig. 2). Just

as *24 Hour Party People* built its own Hacienda, so too was a replica Baby built for Manchester's "Digital Summer" 1998, the multimedia festival devised by Marketing Manchester to celebrate the creative and scientific heritage of the city.[25] Furthermore, interviews with figures like Haslam, Saville, Shaun Ryder and Bez, included as extras on the DVD release of the film, are characterised by a similar tension between demotic pluralism and authoritative lecture: do the talking heads offer contradictory accounts to further complicate the attempt to reduce Factory to tourist-friendly myth, or do they reinforce the process? While, in the case of these interviews, it is much closer to the former, the same cannot always be said for the film's account itself. Towards the end of the film, when Wilson reflects on Factory's financial woes, the tone of his monologue approaches the elegiac. Accompanying an aerial shot of Manchester by night, Wilson's voiceover intones:

Most of all, I love Manchester. The crumbling warehouses, the railway arches, the cheap abundant drugs. That's what did it in the end. Not the money, not the music, not even the guns. That is my heroic flaw: my excess of civic pride.

Underscored by the solemn plainchant of Paul Oakenfold's remix of the Happy Mondays' "Hallelujah", Cottrell Boyce's script wavers from playful irony to a tone of spiritual reverence appropriate for an alleged auto-hagiography. Furthermore, the speech appears to compound several of the clichéd Manchester narratives observed by commentators. The monologue itself returns to two familiar media images of the city: dilapidated Victoriana and "Gunchester" gang warfare,[26] while the contrast between these twin images of material and social urban decay and the fiery red lights of nocturnal Manchester, suggest a "Phoenix from the Ashes" metaphor of economic and technological progress which echoes the triumphalism of the Manchester script. In such instances, it becomes difficult to entertain film-critic Xan Brooks' suggestion that Cottrell Boyce is 'just honouring its narrator's self-mythologising tendencies'; in these moments, the film appears to suspend ironic distance to actively make its own contribution to the myth.[27] Taken together, the Oakenfold soundtrack and knowing-yet-reverent comments become an example of what Urbis[28] co-founder Justin O'Connor terms the "moral and political bankruptcy of the post-rave urban growth coalition", for whom Wilson "represents its saddest failures".

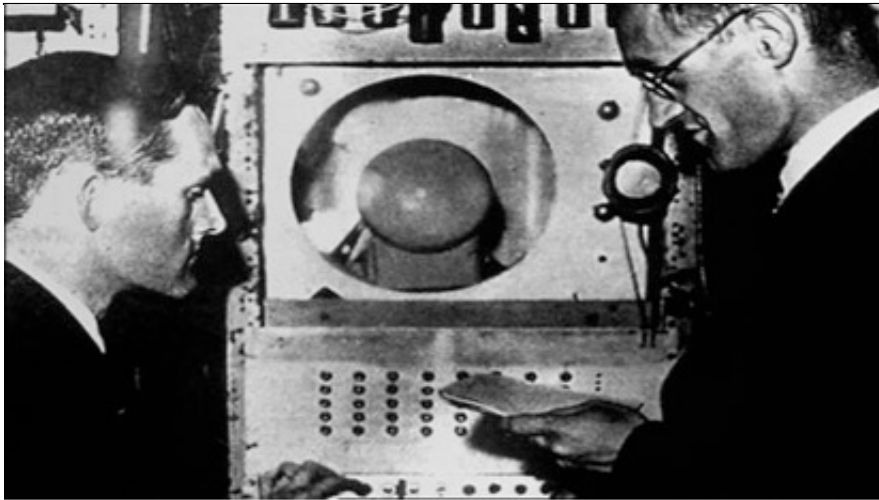


Figure 2



Figure 3

Of course, it would be mistaken not to acknowledge the self-awareness that underpins, and perhaps even undermines, the instructional, promotional and triumphalist tendencies of *24 Hour Party People*. However, as the promotional material for the film suggests, this rubbishing humour can also be seen as making this heritage more palatable and attractive: not merely neo-liberal “talking up”, but reassuringly ironic “talking down”. The theatrical poster for the film is indicative of this portentous-yet-coy approach to selling cultural heritage. The poster consists of a triptych featuring the Happy Mondays vocalist Shaun Ryder (Danny Cunningham), Ian Curtis (Sean Harris), and Wilson, the respective captions for the three Mancunian figures reading: “Poet. Genius. Twat” (see Fig. 4). Again, the crux of this punch line returns to the film’s self-aware refraction of Manchester’s history through

the life of an individual. “Poet” and “Genius” are epithets attributed to the unreliable narrator (the “Twat”), and as such, are to be dismissed as pretentious indulgence. Suggestions for beatification, instead, are deferred to an abstract, chaotic notion of the Manchester cultural scene as a whole: the eponymous *24 Hour Party People* of the film’s title. That the film was issued with a prestigious Factory Records categorisation number (FAC 451), and starred many real life Mancunian musical figures[29] further conveys the sense in which these cinematic subjects tacitly offer their blessing of the film’s account, enabling a kind of self-perpetuating reinforcement of the text’s authority and authenticity. Indeed, the real-life Wilson himself appears in a cameo as a television producer (an appearance immediately pointed out to the audience by Coogan-as-Wilson) Despairing at the pretentious fictional Wilson for regurgitating Boethius’s sage words on individual fate while presenting the aptly titled game show, *Wheel of Fortune*, the real-Wilson’s appearance as “a minor character in my own story” simultaneously rubbishes and authenticates *24 Hour Party People*’s account.



Figure 4: Poster. Image used with the kind permission of <http://www.cerysmaticfactory.info>.

“Have You Never Heard of Situationism, or Postmodernism?”

The reflexivity of *24 Hour Party People* and its implications for the Factory myth, however, cannot be overlooked. Indeed, in the existing scholarly work which makes reference to *24 Hour Party People*, it is this very reflexivity that is most frequently commented on, particularly with a general gesture towards the tropes of literary postmodernism. James Leggott notes how the film draws “satirical energy” from the collision between Wilson the “self-conscious intellectual” and the “working-class authenticity” usually associated with popular culture (and, one could extrapolate, its on-screen depictions),[30] while Alan Kirby finds a historical location for the film in the “halcyon days of high

postmodernism”.[\[31\]](#) Indeed, postmodernism, Situationism, and “the free play of signs and signifiers” are all name-checked in the film itself when Wilson is forced to defend Joy Division’s Nazi-inspired name, while later in the film, he addresses the camera to confirm that he is “being postmodern. Before it was fashionable”. *24 Hour Party People’s* propensity towards such tropes, however, can also be understood more specifically as stemming from its relationship with the Factory mythology.

Rather than the readings of Leggott and Kirby, then, *24 Hour Party People* can be seen as using the very same postmodern devices which informed the syndicalist spirit of Factory to undermine the sense of “icy authority” often attributed to its public aesthetic.[\[32\]](#) Indeed, the real Wilson is keen to locate Factory’s soul as firmly opposed to both the *dirigiste* urban planning of post-war Labourism,[\[33\]](#) and the monetarist economics of neo-liberal champion and Conservative minister Sir Keith Joseph,[\[34\]](#) a war on two fronts against top-down politics of the mainstream centre left and right which Haslam similarly identifies in the creative communities of the period.[\[35\]](#) As such, the film’s historical unreliability becomes its source of vitality. Only when the Manchester script is scrawled with postmodern graffiti –the extra diegetic captions, the freeze frames, the computer generated UFOs– does it become the *24 Hour Party People* script. These considerations of oppositional narratives become all the more relevant when considered in relation to Winterbottom’s subsequent film projects. In an interview about his film adaptation of *The Shock Doctrine*, Naomi Klein’s 2009 critique of neo-liberalism as political project, Winterbottom explained:

Naomi’s argument is against what she perceives as the dominant narrative, the dominant idea. The events she picks out span my adult life. For me it was about making people see them in a different light [...] Milton Friedman seemed extreme at the time of Thatcher’s election, but the last Labour government seemed to be living under the same ideology as Thatcher. *It is important to show alternatives.*[\[36\]](#)

While it would be conjecture to suggest that this notion of showing alternative narratives to neo-liberalism informed *24 Hour Party People*, it is nevertheless important to note that Winterbottom is more generally concerned with challenging political orthodoxy by offering contentious counter-narratives (consider the controversial *The Road to Guantanamo*, 2006, for example). With this in mind, it is worth considering *24 Hour Party People’s* narrative and stylistic techniques in more detail.

The comic intercutting of archive footage allows *24 Hour Party People* to maintain an ironic distance from the history it depicts. When Wilson attends the influential Sex Pistols gig at the Lesser Free Trade Hall on 4 June, 1976, the scene is constructed from a combination of re-enactment

and actual concert footage. Journalist Ryan Letts (Rob Brydon) wields a Super 8 camera (see Fig. 5), and as he turns to film the stage, the camera pulls away and cuts to a long shot of actors portraying the Sex Pistols. For the inevitable close-up, however, actual footage is inserted. While this flourish of editing adds a sense of historical spontaneity (the real concert footage is particularly shaky) and perhaps even a sense of documentary authority, it also proves something of an in-joke for aficionados of pop music lore, given that the number of individuals who have claimed to have been at the concert has steadily and implausibly grown over the years.[\[37\]](#) Rather than make a similarly compromised claim at historical accuracy, the film instead frames concert footage *within* the diegesis: as Letts' Super 8 camera suggests, this is history through the deliberately twisted eyes of *24 Hour Party People*.

A flurry of real concert footage ensues, with Coogan's flustered Wilson comically inserted into the pogoing audiences of Iggy Pop, Siouxsie and the Banshees, The Jam, and The Stranglers. This is, of course, a cinematic device perhaps most notably deployed in *Forest Gump* (Robert Zemeckis, 1994), whereby Gump, the narrator-protagonist, is digitally integrated into historical footage of twentieth century US icons like JFK and Richard Nixon. As Tiso Giovanni notes, the act of viewing these moments is marked by an "ontological paradox whereby the seamlessness of the insertion from the point of view of its photographic realism should be - but isn't - negated by the fact that spectator is fully aware of the deception. Or, to put it another way: we admire how real those images look precisely because we know that they have been forged, and the manner in which they have been forged."[\[38\]](#)

This paradox is constructed in a much less sophisticated manner in *24 Hour Party People*. Coogan is not pasted into the same frame as Iggy Pop, nor is John Lydon digitally manipulated to speak Cottrell Boyce's script; part of the comic appeal of these scenes is their crude construction, and the notion that anyone would accept their ontological veracity is deliberately risible. Indeed, just as Wilson-the-Narrator is the postmodern prophet to Gump's ignorant messiah, self-consciously commentating on pop culture history rather than unwittingly inspiring it, so too does *24 Hour Party People* represent the ambiguous, sarcastic riposte to *Forest Gump's* assured, deeply reactionary negation of popular struggle in America.[\[39\]](#)



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

While linear plot exposition is not necessarily a prerequisite of the authoritative biopic, neither is anachronism a typically desired feature of the historical account. Again, *24 Hour Party People* willingly exploits the distancing effects of chronological play, having Ian Curtis and Martin Hannett appear at the final night at the Hacienda when it had already depicted both of their funerals, and leaving its supposedly 1970s mise en scène littered with anachronistic satellite dishes and car registration plates. When Wilson is depicted filming a filler interview with an elderly former canal worker for Granada news in the late 1980s, these themes of memory, wilful anachronism, and postmodern historicising become subtly intertwined. Hoping to tease out a series of nostalgic Victorian images which, as this article has previously explored, typically litter media coverage of the city, Wilson asks his interviewee “what do you remember about the canals in those days?”. Unexpectedly, the man replies: “Very little”. His hopes for stereotypical recollection shattered, Wilson asks his camera man whether any of the footage is salvageable. As *24 Hour Party People*’s own camera operator pans to show the diegetic Granada camera man, with Wilson declaring that “I don’t think we’re going to be able to use much of this”, the Merchants Bridge, built in 1995 and thus jarringly anachronistic, becomes clearly visible. The apparent contrast in the standards of Wilson’s diegetic film project and those of *24 Hour Party People* again initiates an ironic dialectic with its audience, warning them not to take the film’s truth claims too seriously, given that they apparently cannot even be bothered to check for basic continuity errors.



Figure 8

These deliberate confluences of urban myth, retrospective accounts, obscure in-jokes and wilful invention reach their alienating zenith

following the depiction of a sexual encounter between Buzzcocks/Magazine vocalist Howard Devoto and Wilson's wife in the toilets of the Russell Club, the site of the inaugural Factory gig. As the camera tracks away from the toilet cubicle, the real Howard Devoto, dressed as a janitor, addresses the camera to admit "I definitely don't remember *that* happening." (see Fig. 7). A freeze frame occurs, as Wilson, via a voice-over, explains to the audience what has just happened, and relays Devoto's insistence that the affair is a work of fiction; at this juncture, the text undermines both its portentous narrator and itself, warning the audience that no detail in its account of the past can be completely trusted.



Figure 9

In drawing his history of Manchester's contribution to popular culture to a close, Haslam argues for the "urgent need to find a less glamorous but more profound definition of 'regeneration'" centred around the needs of social groups that have been typically air-brushed out of most PR-friendly urban renewal initiatives.^[40] While a commercial endeavour like *24 Hour Party People* shares little of this bottom-up imperative -the cinematic resistance in the radical tradition of Malcolm Whitehead's *Joy Division*, perhaps- it nevertheless displays an ambivalence towards the triumphalist Manchester script to the extent that it does not quite meet Hatherley's charge of "egregious" auto-hagiography.^[41] Instead, *24 Hour Party People* is marked by a contradiction between its affection for Factory's oppositional ingenuity, and its own contribution to the on-going culture-led regeneration of Manchester which ultimately acquiesces to the neo-liberal forces that Wilson originally attempted to resist. *24 Hour Party People's* depiction of drug-related violence in what is implicitly understood to be the Moss Side district of the city perhaps captures this tension most saliently. As Haslam has noted, Moss Side and areas like it are conspicuously absent from accounts of Manchester's regeneration;

when they do receive media attention, it is invariably in the form of sensationalist and reductive accounts of gang violence.[\[42\]](#)

Indeed, when *24 Hour Party People* engages with these issues, they remain marginal: drug gangs as comic irritant for Wilson and the Hacienda, and as such, South Manchester council estates and their residents are only gleaned as part of a brief montage of drive-by shootings and late night drug buys, before the film's gaze returns to Wilson's ramshackle regeneration. The blurred, obscured cinematography of these fleeting shots proves unintentionally symbolic, capturing the sense in which *24 Hour Party People* ultimately shies away from a truly critical representation of Manchester's culture-led regeneration. Whether it follows that the film is a hagiography is debatable. However, what is certain is that, while the film's ironic distance from Mancunian myth-making goes some way to distinguish it as an artefact set apart from neo-liberalism's crassest eviscerations of local heritage, this same aloofness ultimately finds *24 Hour Party People* silent on exactly the subject matter that Wilson and his contemporaries would no doubt be very loud.

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Joy Division: Their Own Story in Their Own Words DVD. Directed by Grant Gee (2007; Universal City, California: Universal, 2007).

[1] Peter Hall, *Cities in Civilisation: Culture, Information and Urban Order* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1998), 310.

[2] Wilson's occupation according to his headstone.

[3] Jamie Peck and Kevin Ward, "Placing Manchester," *City of Revolution: Restructuring Manchester*, ed. Jamie Peck and Kevin Ward (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 1.

[4] Brian Robson, "Mancunian Ways: the Politics of Regeneration," *City of Revolution: Restructuring Manchester*, 37-8.

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[7] *Joy Division: Their Own Story in Their Own Words* DVD. Directed by Grant Gee (2007; Universal City, California: Universal, 2007).

[8] Bonus material, *Joy Division: Their Own Story in Their Own Words* DVD.

[9] Steve Quilley, "Entrepreneurial Turns: Municipal Socialism and After", *City of Revolution: Restructuring Manchester*, 91.

[10] Dave Haslam, *Manchester, England* (London: Fourth Estate, 1999), 164.

[11] *Joy Division: Their Own Story in Their Own Words* DVD. Directed by Grant Gee (2007; Universal City, California: Universal, 2007).

[12] Peck and Ward, "Placing Manchester," 12.

[13] *Ibid.*, 5.

[14] Matthew Wilson, *Pills, Thrills, and Property Development: the Role of Pop-Cultural Entrepreneurs in the Regeneration of Manchester City Centre* (Slide Rule Press, 2012) Kindle DX version. Chapter 5, paragraph 8.

[15] "Peter Hook's Guided Tour of Manchester", *Manchester Evening News.co.uk* 28 January 2011, accessed 20 August 2012.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPXABHKA8es&feature=related>.

[16] Owen Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain* (London: Verso, 2010), 137, 149-150.

[17] Haslam, *Manchester, England*, 266.

[18] Owen Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain*, 120.

[19] Claire Monk, "The Heritage Film Debate Revisited", *British Historical Cinema*, ed. Claire Monk and Amy Sargeant (London: Routledge, 2002), 183.

[20] Moya Luckett "Image and Nation in 1990s British Cinema", *British Cinema of the 90s*, ed. Robert Murphy (London: British Film Institute, 2000), 88.

[21] *Ibid.*, 90.

[22] Toby Miller, "The Film Industry and the Government: 'Endless Mr Beans and Mr Bonds'?", *British Cinema of the 90s*, 44.

[23] Xan Brooks, "24 Hour Party People" *Sight and Sound*, May 2002, 55-56.

[24] "Box Office/Business for 24 Hour Party People", accessed 13 August 2012, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0274309/business>. Unfortunately, no other sources are available to verify this figure. No information is available as to the film's budget.

[25] Haslam, *Manchester, England*, 256.

[26] *Ibid.*, ix.

[27] Brooks, "24 Hour Party People" *Sight and Sound*.

[28] Urbis, now housing the National Football Museum, is an exhibition space built as part of the regeneration project following the 1996 IRA bombing, whose construction was funded by the Millennium Commission and Manchester City Council. Its exhibition remit previously accommodated several exhibitions that drew upon Manchester's industrial and cultural heritage.

[29] Besides Wilson himself, these include: Paul Ryder and Roweta of the Happy Mondays, Mark E. Smith of the Fall, Mani of The Stone Roses, Howard Devoto of The Buzzcocks and Magazine, Clint Boon of Inspiral Carpets, Vini Reilly, Hacienda DJs Jon DaSilva, Mike Pickering and Dave Haslam.

[30] James Leggott, *Contemporary British Cinema: From Heritage to Horror* (London: Wallflower, 2008), 90.

[31] Alan Kirby, *Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure Our Culture* (London: Continuum, 2009),

[32] Brooks, "24 Hour Party People" *Sight and Sound*.

[33] Wilson, *24 Hour Party People*, 53-54

[34] *Ibid.*, 132.

[35] Haslam, *Manchester, England*, xxi-xxix, 171, 228, 275-6.

[36] Daniel Trilling, "The Film Interview: Michael Winterbottom", *New Statesman*, 18 June 2010, accessed 13 August 2012, <http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/cultural-capital/2010/06/michael-winterbottom-killer-violenc>, emphasis added.

[37] Haslam, *Manchester, England*, 110.

[38] Giovanni Tiso, "How to be a Retronaut", *Bat, Beam, Bean*, 7

November 2011, accessed 13 August 2012, <http://bat-bean-beam.blogspot.co.uk/2011/11/how-to-be-retronaut.html>.

[39] Thomas B Byers, "History Re-Membered: *Forrest Gump*, Postfeminist Masculinity, and the Burial of the Counterculture", *Modern Fiction Studies* 42.2 (1996), 421.

[40] Haslam, *Manchester, England*, 275.

[41] Owen Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain*, 120.

[42] Haslam, *Manchester, England*, 240.

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Frames # 2 BAFTSS 21-11-2012. This article © Joe Barton. This article has been blind peer-reviewed.