Jacques Godbout's Alias Will James

The relationship between Quebec and America has been of great interest to Jacques Godbout, writer and filmmaker, for many years. His latest film, a documentary, called Alias Will James, tries to investigate this relationship through a study of the Western writer, Will James, who was really Ernest Dufault, born in St. Nazaire d'Acton, Quebec. Will James had fabricated for himself an identity true to the image of the authentic cowboy, born and bred in the far West and this even in his autobiography.

In the last years of his life, when some of his books had been made into successful Hollywood films, he was terrifically that his true identity would be found out and that he would be accused of being a fake. But, even so, he still came back to Quebec, to see his mother and eat taffy. Like another well-known American Quebecois writer, Jack Kerouac, he became an alcoholic at the end of his life and died of sclerosis.

To tell this story, Godbout has adopted a form of film collage which is becoming quite prevalent in the new documentary films coming out of Quebec. In these films there is a collage of different cinematic modes being used, both in the visuals and in the soundtrack. Thus, some of the soundtrack consists of an actor (whom we sometimes see on the screen) reading from Will James' novels and his autobiography.

Sometimes this voice-over is superimposed on images of the places concerned, the wide-open spaces of the Far West or the jail in Carson City where he spent time for cattle rustling. We also see images of the little village in Quebec where he spent time for cattle rustling. We see images of the little village in Quebec where he spent time for cattle rustling. We see images of the little village in Quebec where he spent time for cattle rustling. We see images of the little village in Quebec where he spent time for cattle rustling. We see images of the little village in Quebec where he spent time for cattle rustling.

Jacques Godbout has certainly made an interesting and thought-provoking film.

Mary Alemany-Galway

Morley Markson's Growing Up in America

In the interest of honesty it must be admitted that the critic comes to this film with certain skewed preconceptions. My wife comes from Worcester, Massachusetts, and has had to battle all her adult life with the furrowed brows of Canadians who have never heard, much less can pronounce, the name of her home town. To get around this she has developed a kind of capitalized Worcester history that she can spew out in 89 seconds.

Worcester is where Fred gave his first American lectures; it is where Goddard started the U.S. rocket program; it is where the inventor of the birth control pill comes from (well, actually, he comes from the little town next door), and, my wife finishes with a triumphant flourish, Worcester is where Yippie Abbie Hoffman was born.

Abbie Hoffman is always at the end of the line because she can add, for those who want to know more, that he was good friends with her next-door neighbour (now lawyer to the Rock Stars); and for those who are really interested, she notes her family knew the Hoffman family from long-standing. What she doesn't generally reveal is the parsed-lipped analysis which her family indulges in when the A. Hoffman name is brought up. The word, from one and all, is that "he broke his father's heart." By this they mean a literal heart attack and a more figurative attack on the heart.

I indulge in this discussion because its images—a montage of Worcester-related things and grieving Hoffman parents—kept reappearing in my mind during Morley Markson's cinematic remembrance of times lost if not entirely past.

Twenty years after the height of hippidom the grouping together of the film's star subjects, including the famous Mr. Hoffman, is as eerie as my wife's Worcesteriana.

What Markson has done is go back and visit a number of the people who originally appeared in his 1971 documentary Breathing Together: The Evolution of the Electric Family. Then they were all adjectives: hairy and hip, druggy and revolutionary, sexy and poetic; men (interestingly not women) whose politics-hating politics put them less on the same side than in the same (maybe outer) space.

Now they have become middle-aged occupational nouns: social activists, lawyer, father, poet, student, and businessman. Only Black Panther Fred Hampton escaped the slow, grammatical death out of youth by fixing his future under the career heading of "dead".

The technique the movie uses to revisit its past is both an interesting of the earlier film and a