

ic category of a productive subjective activity, through which differences that are in many respects defined as cultural attributes, contribute to the self-recognition of the subject in the process of forming the identity. In this activity the subject triumphs over history as well, or in other words, the (abstract) subject's freedom is manifested also in his freedom from the determinations of history. However, this triumph happens to be an illusory imposition of the subject: history, as a rule, strikes back in a form of "events". In any case, films reacted to a correlation with history especially through their reflexive approach to identity. Therefore, we can say that there are common features between different approaches to identity in the European cinema in different periods. The notion of identity concerns a number of its enunciations that touch upon philosophical subjectivity, psychological subject, an ethnic entity, the political agent, and so on. All these different aspects of identity, which are naturally in most cases, but not necessarily so, inscribed in constructions of fictional characters, are manifested in films from different periods of European cinematography.

European Modernity: Decentring Identity

Modernist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, as I hinted at the beginning of this chapter, addressed the theme of identity in an ideologically subversive manner. Among many definitions of ideology, I am choosing here a very minimalist one, which joins a representation of reality and a system of domination. This subsequently means that a subject (person, citizen, man, woman, etc.) is defined within an order, which includes economy and morality, culture and education, politics and media, sports and traffic, language and religion and many more such conceptual pairs or oppositions. As the period of post-war prosperity on the both sides of the iron curtain opened a space for a new self-definition of younger generations, a great number of the European films of the period addressed the position of individual in a society in a manner, which uncovered the illusory stability of the world. These films addressed the so-called alienation,⁴ they opened a view on social inequalities and poverty in a world supposedly without poverty, and they contributed to the decentred ideas of order in a manner that ironically paralleled the absurdist theatre. All these messages and

4 The notion of alienation was largely used at the time in the intellectual discourses of existentialism and in some trends within the New Left, especially those, which were discovering the "young Marx" and which worked with ideas of the critical theory of the Frankfurt school. The term alienation itself could be a starting point for taking a deconstructive view of the period.