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BITEF Before and After 1989: Representation to Deconstruction of Social and Cultural Paradigms

Ivan Medenica here analyzes the cultural shift that the Belgrade International Theatre Festival (BITEF) experienced after 1989. From its beginnings in the late 1960s until the end of the 1980s, BITEF was a representation of the dominant multicultural, modernist, and progressive paradigm of Yugoslavia's cultural policy. This was not an unambiguous position. On the one hand, modernist values were imposed by Tito's authoritarian regime and, on the other, they were confronted with the conservative tendencies both in politics and the arts. As a multicultural and progressive platform, BITEF was one of the biggest victims in the field of the arts of Slobodan Milošević's nationalist regime in the 1990s and the wars in former Yugoslavia. After the fall of Milošević in 2000, a complex period of tension started between the 'reborn' urge for democratization and internationalization, on the one hand, and persistent nationalism and conservatism, on the other. Due to its tradition, reinforced artistic ambitions, and international reputation, BITEF regained its fame. Its position today, however, is quite paradoxical. It is an anti-traditionalist and multicultural festival – within a culture and society that are becoming traditional and rather claustrophobic. Ivan Medenica is a Professor of Theatre at the University of the Arts in Belgrade in Serbia and has received the national award for theatre criticism six times. His publications include *The Tragedy of Initiation, or the Inconstant Prince: The Classics and Their Masks*. Medenica is also the artistic director of BITEF.

Key terms: cultural performance, cultural policy, festivals, curatorial concepts, modernism, Yugoslavia, Tito.

THE BELGRADE International Theatre Festival (BITEF), the major international artistic festival in Serbia, was one of the main representations of the dominant cultural paradigm in Yugoslavia from the 1960s until the 1980s, although not an unambiguous one. A radical political, social, and cultural shift happened in Serbian society at the end of the 1980s and this made an impact on BITEF's position as well. My main thesis is that this festival acquired a paradoxical position after 1989. Due, first of all, to its international reputation, BITEF kept its status of being one of the leading events of Serbian culture, although it was no longer a direct representation of this culture since it had started to deconstruct its values, which had developed during the past three decades. This situation had evolved along with the distinction being made in theatre festivals between cultural and artistic performances.

From the perspective of performance studies, theatre festivals, at least those conceived in a complex way, can be seen as interconnecting cultural and artistic performances. This may be an ambiguous view because artistic performances, according to anthropologist Milton B. Singer, are already contained in cultural performances.¹ To presume that festivals interweave artistic and cultural performances, assumes a general, clear, and unambiguous theoretical distinction between these two categories, and doing so can be a difficult task.

Erika Fisher-Lichte proposes two major criteria for differentiating between them, one of which is very fruitful. It presupposes a different position or function that the state of liminality has in these two kinds of performances. In artistic performances (theatre, opera, ballet, contemporary dance, musicals), the state of liminality can transform us (or *does* transform

us), and transformation is a goal in its own right; that is, it does not last any longer than the performance itself; it does not transcend the latter. In cultural performances (rituals, political events, weddings, trials), the state of liminality is experienced as a 'rite of passage', a transgression from one identity to another, and it lasts after the end of the cultural performance.² In other words, the crucial distinction is the notion of 'social intention', which is immanent in cultural performances but not in artistic ones.

If so, how can one conceptualize theatre festivals as a crossing point between these two types of performance? At first glance, festivals are merely a sum of different artistic performances of one or different genres (theatre, dance, opera, and so on) concentrated in a rather short period of time and organized around a more or less developed curatorial concept. Yet theatre festivals, more than the artistic performances of which they consist, are representations of certain cultural and social paradigms, and have a potential to change them. Social intention, which is crucial for the distinction between artistic and cultural performances, is not an essential element of theatre works, but it is, or could be, the most important feature of festivals.

Festival-specific temporal and spatial framing makes for an intense and extraordinary experience concentrated within a short period in a more or less restrained space; and it invites all kinds of side programmes, such as lectures, conferences, and debates, which sharpen the social, political, and cultural foci of the festivals in question. To put it in a radical way: within thoroughly conceived festivals, theatre works are just *an alibi* for vivid debates of all kinds whose aim is not only to make a strong impact on the theatre scene as such, but also on social, political and cultural backgrounds. In other words, festivals are more *discursive* than the performances that constitute them, and this is how well-thought-out theatre festivals can be perceived as cultural performances.

BITEF: A Brief Historical Perspective

Theatre director Mira Trailović and dramaturg Jovan Ćirilov, supported by liberal, leftist

intellectuals, conceived BITEF, and it was officially founded by decree by the City of Belgrade in 1967. Trailović's most important support came from Branko Pešić, the legendary Belgrade Mayor during whose term the Yugoslav and Serbian capital turned into a truly modern city. BITEF became Belgrade's first international arts festival.

The 1960s were the period of the highest prosperity in Tito's Yugoslavia. The main reasons for this economic and political change, characterized by liberalism and an opening towards the West, were Tito's 1948 rejection of further collaboration with the Soviet Union, which resulted in western credit lines and loans streaming into the country. At the beginning of the 1960s, a radical switch occurred in the country's foreign policy and its geostrategic orientation. Together with the presidents of India and Egypt, Nehru and Nasser, Tito launched the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in 1962 – a *third path* between two parts of the world divided by ideology ('the Cold War'). The movement gathered almost all African states, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, many Latin American countries, and – one of few countries in Europe – Yugoslavia.

Irrespective of such positive economic, diplomatic, and political trends, post-war Yugoslavia was not an authentic liberal democracy in western terms. In the absence of free elections, a single political force, the Communist Party, and its leader President Tito, with a strong cult of personality, led the country. The regime established a labour camp on the Goli Otok in the Adriatic Sea for political opponents of pro-Soviet orientation. Given these controversies, it is possible to agree with sociologist Teodor Kuljić, who labels this period and model of governance as 'authoritarian modernization'.³

The notion of 'authoritarian modernization', besides referring to the political, economic, and diplomatic characteristics of Yugoslavia from the 1960s, can also refer to the country's cultural politics. Already in the 1950s, post-war modernist tendencies in the arts and culture won the battle over the traditional ones concerning 'realism' – in other words, much earlier than in other socialist

countries. What does the victory of *modernism* in the arts have to do with *authoritarianism*? Serbian theatre scholar Ksenija Radulović refers, on this issue, to Ivan Vejvoda, a leading expert in the political sciences:

Vejvoda reminds us that the pre-war tradition of the avant-garde had also been strong in Serbia, not the least because some modernist authors from the period between the two World Wars went on to become part of the political establishment in the socialist society. Some even held high-ranking political positions after the war.⁴

It was a kind of paradox: modernist, liberal tendencies in the arts and culture were not pushed forward by ideological dissidents, as was the case everywhere else in Eastern Europe, but by a strong part of the political and cultural establishment.

BITEF, then, was conceived and launched in the period when Yugoslavia was adopting modernist, progressive, and liberal values. That is why BITEF, as the international festival of contemporary 'new theatre tendencies', could be seen as one of the best – if not *the* best – (self-)representations of the new Yugoslav cultural policy based on modernism, progressive artistic and social concepts, and a special kind of interculturalism. This interculturalism bridged both the ideological gap between the West and the East during the Cold War period and the cultural gap between European/western cultures and those coming from what, at the time, was called the 'Third World'.

The best example of this interculturalism is the very first edition of BITEF. Legend has it that it was at the first BITEF in Belgrade in 1967 that the famous Polish theatre guru Jerzy Grotowski met, for the first time, one of the leading companies of the American avant-garde, the Living Theatre, and its founders Judith Malina and Julian Beck. Grotowski had presented *The Constant Prince*, and the Living Theatre, Brecht's *Antigone*. Still according to the legend, that was the beginning of their collaboration, which led to Grotowski's lectures, workshops, and residency in the United States. Notwithstanding such radical figures, the first edition of BITEF was opened by a production of traditional Kathakali dance from Kerala, India.

Did BITEF go beyond representation and have the agency that we, here, attributed to festivals seen as cultural performances that could develop, change, or radicalize cultural and social paradigms? The answer is in the affirmative. BITEF represented current dominant modernist values, although this did not pass without controversy and opposition. Intellectuals of modernist orientation, who were highly placed in the political establishment, encouraged the cultural shift towards the modernist paradigm, while, on lower levels of reception and decision-making, there was a great deal of resistance and opposition to BITEF as such, thus including its dominant paradigm.

Milena Dragičević Šešić, a leading Serbian scholar in the study of cultural policies, stresses that BITEF fulfilled its aim 'in spite of both conservative (theatre critic circles) and ideological-dogmatic governing circles'.⁵ The author is right on the general level, but her identification of the sources of opposition is not completely justifiable. Co-founder of BITEF Jovan Ćirilov consistently drew attention to the fact that BITEF had had an important impact on the development of Serbian criticism, while making almost no impact on Serbian acting schools. In other words, the opposition to BITEF's modernist tendencies that had come from local professional circles was not led by critics but, unfortunately, by artists.

The very fact that it had to put up a struggle against opposition did not automatically mean that BITEF stepped beyond the paradigm it represented, or that it succeeded in enlarging and reshaping this paradigm from within, and yet it did this very thing. Dragičević Šešić rightfully gives all the credit for BITEF's *subversive activity* to the curatorial skills of Trailović and Ćirilov:

As a part of Yugoslavia's cultural diplomacy, BITEF did not allow its role to be reduced to the representation of freedom of Yugoslav society in the world divided by the Cold War; with its selection practices it pursued its own policy of building the world of cultural relations aside [from] and despite geopolitical boundaries.⁶

What were the manifestations of this enlargement from within? BITEF's programme was

not an accumulation of different performance cultures and their more or less official representatives. On the contrary, it was an authentic, creative dialogue between different cultures, social and cultural positions, mainstream and margins, and tradition and innovation:

BITEF therefore removed borders and walls, exceeded the conventions of genre, built new festival narratives – and new bridges of the still unglobalized worlds. It was a platform on which the New York scene stood on an equal footing with the amateurs from the city of Puna (India), [the] Moscow State Theatre with [the] Mexican university theatre, and Berlin's avant-garde theatre next to the children's theatre from Banja Luka.⁷

Besides the radicalization, reinforcement, and emancipation of the intercultural dialogue, BITEF refashioned the modernist cultural and social paradigm by introducing 'identity politics' into Yugoslav public discourse by promoting minority identities. Keeping in mind that identity politics are a feature of postmodern thought, one could say that an early introduction of these politics into the public discourse was a (*subversive*) *performative gesture* immanent in cultural performances: a postmodern reshaping of a modernist endeavour. BITEF also

became an important platform for the promotion of women's voices through Ellen Stewart, Nuria Espert, etc., the presentation of the marginalized . . . theatre voices (queer theatre), theatre of transgender persons, persons of various disabilities, and radical political voices of the oppressed within the 'completely free' western culture (suppressed ethnic minorities).⁸

BITEF has remained, until today, a landmark of identity politics in Serbian society and culture, related, first of all, to the human body and sexuality.⁹

1989 and its Aftermath

The year 1989 was among the most decisive periods in both Serbian and BITEF's history. June 1989 saw a spectacular celebration of the 600 years since the Battle of Kosovo in front of almost two million spectators/participants – in effect, a symbolic enthronement of Slobodan Milošević as the new Serbian leader.

Milošević's famous (or notorious) speech at this rally is widely perceived to be the harbinger of the wars, two years later, in former Yugoslavia. He had 'referred to the future: the new battles are to come that require boldness, firmness and readiness for a sacrifice'.¹⁰ Mira Trailović died in August 1989. In November that year came the fall of the Berlin Wall. That event was the symbolic peak of the historical process that was shaping Europe: the disintegration of 'state socialism' and the acceleration of European unification. Even then, before the start of the Yugoslav wars, it was obvious that the country, which had been in crisis at least since President Tito's death in 1980, would no longer be this *ideal world* between two sides of an ideologically divided Europe and the whole world. The 'third path' was no longer needed.

How was BITEF to keep playing its roles of meeting point and dialogue and exchange between performance cultures and their protagonists on two sides of an ideological gap when this very gap had been rapidly decreasing? Two years later, the challenge that BITEF had faced in 1989 looked minor. The wars in Yugoslavia began, generated by Slovenia's and Croatia's intentions to leave the federal state and Serbia's lack of willingness to cope with this challenge. Yugoslavia was covered in bloodshed. Milošević's regime was perceived as responsible for the wars, and one of the first consequences that Serbia felt was the embargo imposed internationally on political, economic, cultural, and other levels of international collaboration. Each aspect of life was strongly affected by the embargo, including culture.

Reading all of BITEF's repertoires since its beginnings reveals especially striking information, gathered by the Russian scholar Natalija Vagapova in the only monograph published about BITEF – *BITEF: Theatre, Festival, Life*.¹¹ In 1992, BITEF did not justify the letter 'I' in its title, since this edition of the festival was by no means international. Except for one minor show, all the productions were Serbian. Jovan Ćirilov, who had succeeded Mira Trailović as the artistic director, tried to overcome the crisis in this startling way.

His decision was controversial, and faced open opposition. The most radical reaction, at

least on the symbolic level, was the one made by a respectful critic of the weekly *NIN*, Vladimir Stamenković, who decided not to write about BITEF or to follow its events. Ksenija Radulović and I discovered, when researching the performing arts in Serbia in the 1990s (published in the theatre journal *Teatron*), how Stamenković and Ćirilov explained their different positions regarding 'BITEF under international embargo'. Ćirilov put it this way: 'Life experience and intuition have been telling me – if we stop BITEF one year, it might be cancelled forever.'¹² Stamenković observed:

I stopped going to BITEF out of respect for the grandiose work of Mira Trailović and Jovan Ćirilov who, over the past twenty-five years, turned Belgrade into one of the world-leading theatre centres . . . I didn't accept that BITEF should become one of the Potemkin villages which Milošević used in an attempt to prove that we still live in a normal society . . .¹³

The dilemma was difficult and both positions were justified. We know, today, that BITEF survived the two years of sanctions, but nobody could say whether this happened due to the compromise Ćirilov made or in spite of it. This strong moral, professional, and political dilemma proves the thesis that, in the field of culture, BITEF was one of the biggest victims of the international embargo against Serbia. A multicultural state was falling apart, and the same destiny befell the leading representation of its cultural paradigm based on modernist, progressive, and multicultural values.

It could be asked here whether BITEF was a victim of these circumstances or an accomplice, of sorts. The word 'accomplice' is surely too heavy, but it is used here only to refer to the question of how (if at all) Serbian cultural institutions and platforms, including BITEF, reacted to the wars in former Yugoslavia and, more precisely, what the Serbian responsibility was for them. It has to be admitted that, during the most devastating war actions in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbian cultural institutions were more or less silent. One of the first anti-war performances in Serbian institutional theatres was *The Last Days of Humankind*, based on a famous play by Karl

Kraus and directed by Gorčin Stojanović for the Yugoslav Drama Theatre. It was presented at the 28th BITEF in 1994. But what of 1992 and 1993? In these two years, the only anti-war theatre was in the non-institutional, independent scene, like *This Babylonian Confusion*, the street performance of Dah Theatre in 1992.

International sanctions started to 'fade out' in the mid-1990s and, in this same period, the wars in former Yugoslavia came to an end. (The Dayton peace agreement was signed at the end of 1995.) The exception was the war in Kosovo, which started in 1998 and finished with the NATO bombardments of Serbia in 1999. At the end of this decade, BITEF regained its international character. This was slowed down in 1999 when, a few months after the end of the bombardments, the international character of BITEF was justified, first of all, by the performances of some old friends of the Festival such as Eugenio Barba.

An era of new optimism and the urge for vivid international exchange resumed after the downfall of the Milošević regime. Anja Susa, who was a co-selector of BITEF from 2006 to 2016, remembers this period in the following way: 'One might say that, after the dark times of the 1990s, this was the time of some kind of "new internationalism" which exploded in Serbian culture both on the institutional and the independent scene.'¹⁴ But Susa carefully remarks that the change was the result of a generally positive atmosphere in the whole of society and not because of the cultural policy, as had been the case when BITEF was founded:

In spite of a very good climate and the official support to the Serbian culture in the beginning of the 2000s, it is neither easy nor true to say that it was a part of some defined cultural strategy of the State, as it was in the 1960s. It was more a general feeling of joy after the years of repression . . . The lack of real strategy and vision was very clear, which created the possibility to leave the Serbian culture after 2000 almost entirely in a somewhat arbitrary position and completely dependent on the level of competence of individuals who were appointed by different political parties.¹⁵

Luckily, the majority of 'individuals . . . appointed by different political parties' were competent. (Milošević's government was

replaced by a large democratic coalition made up of many parties.) However, the happy circumstance did not cancel risk, which was omnipresent, and, step by step, after some dramatic political events, the lack of cultural strategy began to trigger negative consequences. After the assassination of prime minister Zoran Djindjic in 2003, pro-EU enthusiasm started to disappear and, after 2008 and the global economic crises, a neoliberal spirit started growing in Serbian society, which provoked severe cuts in the budget for culture, as always happens in similar circumstances.

Although these features were easily recognizable from the beginning as symptoms of a right-wing political and economic switch, only recently did it become obvious that they were sketching a neoconservative cultural paradigm. Some elements of this paradigm are the following: an extensive bilateral cultural exchange with Russia and China (including an unsuccessful opening of a Serbian cultural centre in Beijing); state support for films based on Serbian history; *obsessive* care for the traditional Serbian Cyrillic alphabet (there is a Serbian Latin alphabet as well, but from the perspective of Serbian nationalists it is alien, non-orthodox or non-Orthodox); and decisive and non-transparent state support for the anti-globalization (in this particular context it means 'anti-western') private projects of the renowned filmmaker Emir Kusturica in the Mokra Gora natural park.¹⁶

BITEF Today

It is preferable to avoid as much as possible any comment on the most recent period of BITEF's history (from 2016 until today), because this is the period in which I have been the festival's artistic director. But some facts are noteworthy and do not require elaborate interpretation. In September 2016, the 50th edition of BITEF was opened with a Chinese performance titled *6&7*, choreographed by Tao Ye – the first of my term of office. Superficially, it could immediately be pointed out that the choice of a Chinese performance for such a significant event as the opening of the festival is proof of BITEF's starting to adapt to

the new dominant cultural paradigm, as described above.

Yet this would be completely wrong since the performance was of contemporary dance and was radical in its minimalistic and abstract choreography. Although its underlying Taoist principles were recognizable, it was hardly a work that China would offer to represent national art in a bilateral cultural exchange. (The negotiations BITEF had with Tao Dance Theatre were direct: they did not include either Chinese or Serbian cultural and diplomatic authorities.) Tao Dance Theatre is an independent company and receives minimal state subsidies (less than 10 per cent of its budget). Such points show that inviting the Tao Dance Theatre to BITEF did not represent a new Serbian cultural policy – one oriented towards Chinese state culture – but was the deconstruction of such an approach.

The same goes for the presence of Russia since 2016. In her 2016 article 'Political Theatre in Europe: East to West, 2007–2014', Maria Shevtsova offers an overview of contemporary Russian political theatre: from small, independent companies dedicated to new playwriting and documentary theatre (Teatar.doc, Praktika, Teatr post) to the productions of institutionalized theatres directed by famous figures such as Lev Dodin, where performances 'can have political dimensions without being dominated by politics'.¹⁷ The latter, she suggests, can be achieved by shifting from politics to (recent) national history, although not uniquely in this way. She also points to a production by the far less politically indirect director Konstantin Bogomolov, who also leans on historical cues.

Shevtsova is an expert in classical and contemporary Russian theatre, which I am not. That could be the reason why my curatorial investigations about political theatre in Russia in the last few years did not yield results, although I had some idea about the work of such artists as Bogomolov and Dmitry Volkostrelov, to whom Shevtsova refers, and was especially interested in Volkostrelov in whose *bijou*, a ten-minute-long performance *The Soldier*, I became much interested in 2017, when the artistic focus of BITEF was on durational performances. Shevtsova discusses *The Soldier*

and its ellipses regarding contemporary political concerns in her article.

But there is another, objective reason why I could not find politically engaged Russian theatre. Besides the examples that Shevtsova gives, political theatre in Russia, on a general level, is a rather rare phenomenon, or it is too allusive. Having in mind the Serbian bizarre and self-destructive adoration of Putin's regime (due to the fact that it does not recognize the independence of Kosovo), as well as BITEF's tradition of politically provocative and/or subversive theatre, one can understand (although not necessarily approve) the reason for which I am interested only in political theatre when it comes to Russia and why, at the same time, I am not interested in an allusive but a direct approach to the present situation in Russia. For this reason, the only Russian work presented at BITEF on my term was the installation *Eternal Russia*, created by Marina Davydova and produced by HAU Berlin. It deals with the persistence of authoritarianism in different periods of Russian history and finishes with a criticism of Putin's regime. In the current Serbian public discourse it was seen almost as blasphemy, and that is exactly how I wanted it to be perceived.

In the case of BITEF, the aforementioned 'era of new internationalism', which started with the fall of Milošević in 2000, was more like an 'era of Europeanism': non-European pieces were rather rare. The situation changed in 2016. Since then, BITEF has presented pieces from China, Singapore, Indonesia, Iran, Lebanon, Israel, Nigeria, and Brazil. The intention is to continue in this way and to present even more performances from the non-western world, especially from the cultures that once belonged to the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Although this movement is nowadays politically irrelevant, its legacy persists, especially in the field of culture:

One of the best examples of this legacy is the Museum of African Arts in Belgrade, a unique institution of this kind: its collection is not based on a colonial past which Serbia and Yugoslavia did not have or, in other words, on a theft of cultural heritage, but uniquely on gifts . . .¹⁸

Serbian cultural policy is not taking care of this unique heritage, which is completely

wrong, because this heritage could be its very special, authentic, and valuable feature. The intention, then, is to strengthen this exchange at BITEF, and it can be seen as a challenge to official Serbian cultural policy.

Certainly not of least importance is the fact that Serbian performances in the main programme of the last few editions of BITEF placed the local social and political situation in a critical perspective. These targeted a very wide range of social and political phenomena that chimed with the contemporary view, as Shevtsova puts it, that 'Nothing is absolute, universal, or essentialist about political theatre'.¹⁹ In other words, when speaking of contemporary political theatre, 'It is no longer possible to assume that the term refers to a homogenous aesthetic style or a unified political agenda, if it ever did.'²⁰ Heterogeneity provides that everlasting theme of Serbian nationalism (*The Patriots*, National Theatre Belgrade, directed by Andraš Urban); authoritarian governance and citizen complacency regarding this kind of regime (*Tartuffe*, Serbian National Theatre Novi Sad and National Theatre Sombor, directed by Igor Vuk Torbica); and alienation and dehumanization of individuals in neoliberal capitalism (*Why Does Herr R. Run Amok?*, Yugoslav Drama Theatre, directed by Bobo Jelčić).

Several more general facts may be added to these concrete examples of the presence of Chinese, Russian, and other non-western as well as Serbian theatre at BITEF during its recent period. Some of the most dynamic western European theatre cultures – German, French, Belgian, and Swiss – are permanently present at BITEF, offering, for the latest editions, thematic foci resonant not only on the global level but also on the local, Serbian level as well. The foci were: the European crises precipitated by the visible sufferings of migrants; assessments of non-liberal democracies and other forms of populism and autocracy; and the decomposition of the notion of community. Combined, these facts point to a clear conclusion: not only does BITEF not represent the social, political, and official cultural policy paradigms of Serbia today, but it also opposes and challenges them.

Is BITEF, then, under threat? It is not comfortable, as a representative of a modernist,

liberal, and multicultural paradigm, to exist in a society that after 1989 – albeit with a break between 2001 and 2004 – started economic austerity, was authoritarian and populist in political terms, and claustrophobic, as well as anti-western, in cultural terms. Furthermore, as a subsidized institution, the Festival was caught up in these circumstances. There are no serious political attacks and pressures on BITEF and its leaders, although the festival – as stressed in the preceding paragraphs – did not compromise its cultural and social background and it has remained a progressive, ‘left-wing’ event to this day.

Here we come to the deep paradox of BITEF. Due to its tradition, reinforced artistic ambitions and international reputation, BITEF is still one of the leading manifestations of Serbian culture, although it is no longer its truthful representation. It is one of the most expensive festivals in Serbia but, rather than reproduce the country’s mainstream values, it deconstructs them. The actual BITEF *paradox* could be formulated in another way: this anti-traditionalist and multicultural festival is still one of the major labels of a culture and society that, after 1989, have become more and more traditional and claustrophobic.

With its strong potential to subvert dominant values and destabilize cultural and social paradigms, BITEF is a true ‘cultural performance’. It is an event that has the agency to challenge and even change our identity and our lives in general.

Notes and References

This article has been developed from a paper titled ‘The BITEF Paradox: From Representation to the Deconstruction of Cultural Paradigms’, presented at the conference ‘1989’s Loose Ends’ at University College London on 7 November 2019.

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