Jean-Claude Bernardet: a tribute [a]

Jean-Claude Bernardet: uma homenagem

Interview with

JEAN-CLAUDE BERNARDET

by FÁBIO ROGÉRIO [b]

ABSTRACT / EDITORS' NOTE

The Editorial Board of *MATRIZes* appreciates when interviews submitted to the journal are conducted with pioneering researchers who have had a strong influence in their field of study, considering that the relatively broad format of this type of text can foster the recapitulation of significant aspects of their trajectories and self-reflective discussions. From this perspective, one name remembered was that of Jean-Claude Bernardet, an author whose contributions have been fundamental to Brazilian film studies. With a personality as multifaceted as that of his mentor, Paulo Emílio Sales Gomes, Bernardet passed away on July 12 of this year, leaving an important mark on national culture as a critic, actor, screenwriter, filmmaker, translator, writer, professor, and university researcher at the School of Communications and Arts of the University of São Paulo (USP). As a way of paying posthumous tribute to Bernardet, the journal reached out to people close to him to verify the existence of any unpublished interviews, and came across filmmaker Fábio Rogério, who kindly shared some materials that had not yet been released in print. Thus, an interview conducted on December 1, 2019, at the Fest Aruanda Hotel in João Pessoa, Paraíba, was selected and edited, in which Bernardet discusses aspects of his biography and his relationship with Brazilian cinema.

RESUMO / NOTA DOS EDITORES

O Comitê Editorial de *MATRIZes* aprecia quando as entrevistas submetidas à revista são realizadas com pesquisadores pioneiros e com forte influência no campo de estudos, tendo em vista que o formato relati vamente amplo do texto pode favorecer a recapitulação de aspectos significativos de suas trajetórias e discussões de caráter autorreflexivo. Nessa perspectiva, um nome lembrado era o de Jean-Claude Bernardet, autor com contribuições fundamentais aos estudos cinematográficos brasileiros. Com personalidade tão multifacetada quanto a de seu mestre Paulo Emílio Sales Gomes, Bernardet faleceu em 12 de julho deste ano, deixando uma marca importante na cultura nacional ao atuar como

[a] The interview was conducted on December 1, 2019, in João Pessoa, Paraíba, and part of it was published on June 22, 2024, in episode 86 of the Conversas de cinema podcast on Spotify.: https://open.spotify.com/episode/0pGprWrjslHfG7d6bFqbrA?si=Wnr6CWwsSluEM6lU0Q4y_Q.

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crítico, ator, roteirista, cineasta, tradutor, escritor, professor e pesquisador universitário na Escola de Comunicações e Artes da Universidade de São Paulo (USP). Como forma de prestar uma homenagem póstuma a Bernardet, a revista sondou pessoas próximas a ele para verificar a existência de alguma entrevista inédita, chegando ao cineasta Fábio Rogério, que gentilmente mostrou alguns materiais ainda não publicados na forma impressa. Assim, foi escolhida e editada uma entrevista realizada em 1º de dezembro de 2019, no Hotel do Fest Aruanda, em João Pessoa, na Paraíba, na qual Bernardet explana sobre aspectos de sua biografia e de sua relação com o cinema brasileiro.

MATRIZes: In which city in Belgium were you born?
Jean-Claude Bernardet: Charleroi.

MATRIZes: What do you remember about that city?
JCB: Nothing. I stayed there only for a few months. I was born during a trip in 1936.

MATRIZes: Where did you go after that?
JCB: Paris.

MATRIZes: How long did you stay in Paris?
JCB: Thirteen years.

MATRIZes: What memories do you have of your childhood in Paris?
JCB: The war. Basically, the war. The end of the war. Basically, everything revolves around the war.

MATRIZes: And after Paris, where did you go?
JCB: I went to the south of France, Nice. We stayed there for a few months, and then we came to Brazil.

MATRIZes: Did you come with your family?
JCB: Yes. My father (André Maurice Pierre Bernardet) came first, and we followed him a few months later.

MATRIZes: What is war?
JCB: The fear of bombings, the lack of food, and various episodes. One day, a bomb fragment fell very close to my mother; I didn't see it. She was outside and came back completely terrified, as she could have died—episodes like that. Sirens, running to the basements, the shelters, things like that.

MATRIZes: Did you come to Brazil fleeing the war?

JCB: No, because the war ended in '44. We came to Brazil in '49. So, I started high school in France.

MATRIZes: How was your arrival in Brazil?

JCB: We arrived in São Paulo. The idea of Brazil is an abstract idea, isn't it? Just as it is with any country. Arriving in Campina Grande in 1949, for instance, is arriving in Brazil. Arriving in São Paulo in 1949 is also arriving in Brazil, but it is totally different. So, we arrived in São Paulo, and I don't remember how we got there—I think because we came by ship to Rio. And then I don't know if we took a plane; anyway, one fine day, we were in São Paulo and stayed in a building, a very tall hotel called, if I am not mistaken, Hotel São Paulo. And we had a room on a very high floor. Then my mother (Olga, his stepmother) opened the window and said: "this city frightens me." So, that was the view we had of the city. It is a city—and it still is, by the way—harsh, violent, difficult. In a way, the film I made, entitled *São Paulo: Sinfonia e cacofonia*, expresses this view of São Paulo.

MATRIZes: You have been living in São Paulo for 70 years.

JCB: Seventy years. I have been living in São Paulo for seventy years, with some intervals, because my wife (Lucila Ribeiro Bernardet) and I lived in Brasília during the period of the famous University of Brasília. We arrived there in '65, when the film course was opened, and we stayed—I don't know how many months, but it was a matter of months—because there was the crisis, the dismissal of the teaching staff, which must have happened around November '65. My wife stayed in Brasília to see what would happen politically, and I, shortly after the dismissal, went to Rio to try to find work, because we had absolutely nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing. I stayed a few months in Rio, then my wife came. The story went as follows: there was a publishing house, which still exists, called *Civilização Brasileira*, which published the journal *Revista Civilização Brasileira*, which had an important cinema section. Alex Viany was the person in charge of the cinema section, which was becoming increasingly significant. Then, there was a project to create another journal dedicated to cinema, removing the cinema section from *Civilização Brasileira*. Ênio Silveira had this project, Alex had this project, but the following happened: censorship was not prior; it was after the fact. *Civilização* would publish books and, after they were released in bookstores, the books would be banned. In other words, the financial balance of the publisher was severely compromised. To the point that this journal project was postponed to the following

month. This happened for several months, and at a certain point, my wife and I were at a friend's house. The person asked: "It's not possible to stay here until next month, until next month, is it?". So, we returned to São Paulo. And then I ended up joining USP, after some setbacks, but I ended up joining. So, things stabilized a bit until AI-5, when I was banned by AI-5, and then came another moment of great financial disturbance. In '64, I had already lost everything, because the *Última Hora* journal was no longer running. The Cinematheque—forget it. Those were the two places where I worked. So, I joined a publishing house where I had already worked in the '50s. I joined that publishing house around '56. I had already worked quite a lot. They took me back. And then, after Brasília, a second financial collapse; after AI-5, a third collapse. So, over the years, I would rebuild myself and, after AI-5, already with a daughter (Lígia Ribeiro Bernardet), without resources and with no prospect of obtaining any. So, it was a very difficult moment. Then I went to Chile alone—I mean, I went to a festival in Chile with several Brazilian artists, but without my wife or my daughter. There were already some Brazilians isolated in Chile. I made contact with professors, and one of them, (Fernando) Perrone, told me there might be a chance to find a position, a job at Universidad de Concepción, but he couldn't decide that at the moment. I had to return to Brazil, send all the documentation of what I had done at the Cinematheque, at USP, in Brasília. And that, based on this documentation, there would be a possibility, no certainty. When I returned to São Paulo, still in '69, I made this proposal to my wife—this was during (Salvador) Allende's campaign—and she said to me: "I will not go to Chile because what happened in Brazil will happen there." And, in fact, in '73 there was the coup. She told me she would not go to any African country, nor any Latin American country; if we were to go into exile, it would be Paris, New York… The Czechoslovak consul at the time, the ambassador, I don't know, made me a scholarship offer to go to Prague. I started to think about it, but Czech is a very difficult language; anyway, I started to think about it. And, talking with him, I realized that the scholarship was only for me. I said: "no, wait a minute, I am married, I have a daughter, so, it's not possible." So, I didn't go. Later, I really decided to stay in Brazil, I mean, it was a determination: not to practice self-exile. And then I managed to find some odd jobs. For example, I made two films with João Batista de Andrade (*Paulicéia fantástica* [1970] and Eterna esperança: Sem pressa e sem pausa, como as estrelas [1971]). These films were produced by the State Cinema Commission. Obviously, I couldn't receive money from the State. So, my name was replaced by the name of a friend, who is credited[1]. It was evident that the president of the State Cinema Commission knew about this—in fact, not only did he know, but he was the

[1] Panorama of São Paulo Cinema was a project developed by Jean-Claude Bernardet and João Batista de Andrade, funded by the State Commission of Cinema, and resulted in three films directed by both: *Paulicéia fantástica; A eterna esperança: sem pressa e sem pausa, como as estrelas*; and *A Cia. Cinematográfica Vera Cruz* (1949–54). Jean-Claude had been stripped of his political rights and, therefore, could not be officially remunerated. The solution found was to place Maria Rita Galvão's name on the contract signed between João Batista, Maria Rita Galvão, and the State Commission of Cinema. *A Cia. Cinematográfica Vera Cruz (1949–54)* is the third film under that contract and was completed with a running time of 45 minutes, but not in the way Jean-Claude and João Batista had intended. The initial idea was to produce an analytical film about the role of Vera Cruz in Brazilian cinema. In a conversation with João Batista, he recounted that there had been a meeting with Walter Hugo Khouri and William Khouri at Servicine, a production company owned by Antonio Polo Galante, in São Paulo, and both expressed concern that a critical film about Vera Cruz might be produced. João Batista stated that he was pressured to make a non-critical film, but ruled out any threat of reference to the National Security Law during the conversation with the Khouri brothers. After the meeting, João Batista and Jean-Claude decided not to make the original analytical film and chose instead to produce a film listing Vera Cruz's productions, without any commentary.

one who proposed it. Once that decision was made, it had to remain absolutely hidden. But we were editing the film at a company called Líder. Naturally, I was seen in front of the moviola. Well, this reached certain ears, and one day they told Batista: "if you continue working with him, we will denounce you under the National Security Law." Then Batista went back to Líder and said to me: "look, so-and-so said this, leave immediately. Leave and do not return." That was the third film, so we abandoned it. But, in parallel with this, I was approached by the Goethe-Institute. And I do not speak German, but they were very interested in what I was doing. So, we did two projects with the Institute, mainly the one in Salvador, but also the one in São Paulo. In Salvador, they asked me to teach a film course, an intensive course, a week or fifteen days long, and they paid me regularly for it. This was also arranged with the Goethe. That allowed me to travel quite a lot throughout the Northeast. So, this was a time when I often went to Paraíba, to Campina Grande, where there was—or perhaps still is—the Museum of Modern Art (now the Museum of Art and Science of Campina Grande), where there were people like Bráulio Tavares, Umbelino (Brazil). So, I taught many courses there, and we held film screenings with discussions, etc. I went as far as Fortaleza, Recife, etc. I would go to film clubs, and there were also discussions about how to raise current political issues without provoking actions that could justify any intervention by the police or other institutional bodies. So, I did that for a long time. With the director of the Goethe in Salvador, I went to Germany. He managed to have me serve as a jury member at a German festival. My expenses were covered, and after that festival, which was the Oberhausen Festival, we traveled to several places. In Munich, he obtained 21 hours of Nazi production, Nazi film production. Not from the Nazi era, but produced by the Nazi State. And, of course, all in German, with no subtitles in any language. We returned with that material and held a major seminar called "*Cinema e Política*." We held it in Rio, Brasília, Salvador, São Paulo, and Curitiba, we could not. The Goethe in Porto Alegre said it was not possible to address this theme because of the Nazis who existed there. I stayed at the Goethe with a teacher for quite some time to listen to those recordings and everything the speeches said, in order to prepare for the seminar. So, it was a lengthy job, I used my memory as much as I could, to the point that, in São Paulo, on the first day of the seminar, after screening a Hitler speech, someone, for example, asked me a question in German. Then I said: "but I do not speak German." "No, but you understand German because you said that Hitler had said, etc." Then I said: "no, I only did that because I know the speech by heart." Today I have forgotten that speech. That, in São Paulo, provoked a reaction from conservative Jews, who believed that the Nazis were

much stronger than we were. I mean, showing a screening with critical analysis did not alter anything in the power of the Nazis. Then they spray-painted the Goethe building. Goethe put up a sign on the facade, a notice saying that I was not German, that I was not Jewish, and that I was a film critic. Well, that wasn't very convincing. Then we held a meeting with Jewish intellectuals in São Paulo, professors from USP, a writer, a publisher, etc. These people truly supported me, people like Jacó Guinsburg from (the publisher) *Perspectiva*, Roberto Schwarz, in short, many people who supported Jean-Claude, who had to continue, who could not interrupt this work. That seminar went very well, and later, in São Paulo, with Schwarz, I held two seminars. One was very good, which was about Tiradentes. And what interested me was to present Tiradentes in the various forms of expression that posterity had given him. So, historiography, fictional literature, cinema—obviously cinema, right?—theater too, because there was that play *Arena Conta Tiradentes*, which had been staged in '65, and visual arts, the panel by that famous Brazilian painter…

MATRIZes: Portinari.

JCB: Portinari's panel, and for that, there were several professors specialized in historiography, visual arts, etc. It was very good, really very good. Part of it took place, I don't remember exactly where, I think at the Museum of Image and Sound, and the classes moved around because, for instance, *Arena Conta Tiradentes* had been revived by a group at the time we were holding the seminar. So, there were classes in the theater with the actors, explaining Augusto Boal's dramaturgy; in the visual arts, there were two classes, one in the usual classroom, which was about the iconic evolution of Tiradentes from ensign to his Christ-like representation. And for the panel, the class was held in front of the panel, with the professor showing this and that. So, I can even say it was something brilliant. For me, coming from Brasília, from the University of Brasília, there was a somewhat ideal function there: not to stay only in cinema, only in theater, but to show how culture intersects. All right, there is this film, that moment, that novel, to take the figure of Tiradentes in the diversity of its representations in various languages—all that worked very well. In fact, the seminar lasted four months, and people stayed for the full four months. Later, I did Getúlio Vargas, which was not as successful, but in the same spirit. For some reason, it did not go as well. However, something quite interesting happened. There were many history teachers in the Getúlio Vargas seminar; in Tiradentes, not so much, but in Getúlio, there were many. One day, after the screening of a documentary from the Press and Publicity Department, a teacher said the film showed that Getúlio Vargas had great popular support,

a large popular audience. I asked him to explain. And then, at the moment of the speech, there is a strong reaction of applause, of support. I said to him: "can you explain that to me? Because I did not see that in the film." There are shots of Getúlio at the podium, speaking, and there are shots of the crowd. Did someone tell you that was the same event? Editing exists in cinema, and even if the sentences fall over Getúlio, sound editing also exists. Therefore, through this, you can analyze a propaganda document, but you are not in a position—or at least you would need to conduct a much more complex image study than we can do now—you cannot state that this crowd responds in that way to that speech. So, that was the most important thing that happened in that seminar. It marked the teachers a lot: to have a more critical view of cinematographic documents. Not to see them as the presentation of a truth, but rather as a construction about an event. Therefore, it helps to understand ideology, editing, but not necessarily the event that would supposedly be documented. That was up until around '77, '78. In '78, there were elections. And then… I was doing other things as well with Goethe, but then the German Embassy asked Goethe to cut any ties with me. So, in the middle of a project, they told me: "thank you very much." It is also possible, and even likely—not certain, but likely—that I was not as cautious politically as I should have been and that I may have gone too far at times, but in any case, that happened. In '79 came the Amnesty Law, and USP ended up applying that law—I don't remember exactly if it was in '79 or in '80. Then I returned to USP. My perception at the time, and I still have it, is that I spent 11 years stripped of my political rights, and for me, it was good. It was great. Because if I had stayed at the university, I would have been subjected to all the pressures. At the School of Communications and Arts (ECA)—at the time it was not called ECA, if I am not mistaken—there were internal pressures from committees on students, on professors. I avoided all that and, on the other hand, I did very interesting things.

MATRIZes: And your work as a film critic at the newspaper *Opinião*?

JCB: And, besides those things in the 1970s, I was also a film critic for the newspaper *Opinião*. So, it was a time when I also stopped living in São Paulo because of the newspaper. I lived, and I lived very poorly, and later I ended up living with (Júlio César) Montenegro. Because I used to live in Lapa, in the Lapa hostels. It was really tough as hell. In some hostels, the rooms were cells, practically barred cells, and all, so you wouldn't get robbed or raped. Very violent. One day, I came back to one of those hostels; when I arrived, there was a crowd in front. "What happened?" A guy had been murdered in the hostel. I told Júlio: "this can't go on, let's figure something else out." Because *Opinião*

paid very little, really very little, and then we were in a huge contradiction, because it paid very little, but, on the other hand, we didn't want to go on strike, because our work had a practically national political significance, the newspaper had that reach, and so we were not going to interrupt a political action. And (Fernando) Gasparian, who was the owner of the newspaper, in a way, took advantage of that. Once, I spoke personally with Gasparian because I was really at the breaking point, absolutely at the breaking point. And, on top of that, I also worked at the publishing house, I was a collection editor, and he also didn't pay me there. So, one day I said to Gasparian: "but how do you expect us to live like this?" And he said: "I project your names nationally. You wouldn't have the reputation you have if it weren't for the newspaper." Well, fine. But for me it was really at the limit. And, since I had that cinema collection at (the publishing house) *Paz e Terra*, and since I couldn't get either the newspaper or *Paz e Terra* to pay me, one day I decided to do the following: after several promises that were not honored by Gasparian, I arrived very early at the publishing house, before they opened the doors. Then, when someone arrived, a secretary, I went in and sat on a bench, a sofa right next to the door of Gasparian's office. Then, when Gasparian arrived, I said: "look, here's the thing: you owe me a considerable amount of money—well, 'considerable' is relative. And you promised to pay me, but you didn't. So, here's what I'm going to do: I'm going to occupy your office. I'm going in with you now, and I'll only leave when you've paid me." So, I stayed there, he working. Around eleven o'clock, he said to me: "now I'm going to receive someone. I'd like you not to be here." I said: "fine. I'll leave, sit on the chair next to your door. When your visitor leaves, I'll come back in immediately." I did that. And so we stayed like that for a few hours. Finally, Gasparian calls the secretary and says: "oh, issue his check." The secretary comes back, hands the check to Gasparian and, to me, a receipt, asking me to sign it. I sign the receipt, Gasparian signs the check, the secretary leaves with the receipt, Gasparian hands me the check, and says: "there are no funds." Fine, now I already have the check. And he said: "no, I ask you to wait three days." And indeed, three days later, there were funds, and I deposited the check. But it was a struggle, you know? It was a struggle. So, you see how the 1970s were intense, right?

MATRIZes: How was your return to USP?

JCB: In 1980, when I returned to USP, they asked me to give the inaugural lecture. I gave the inaugural lecture, talked about various things, I don't remember what, but one thing was very clear: when I came back, I found the professors very sad. And in that inaugural lecture, I told the professors: "your

skin is gray. Mine isn't." And that precisely because I hadn't spent that decade under the pressures they suffered, the constraints of all that. I was a person in that decade with many problems. For example, at *Opinião*, the following happened: a censor in the newsroom. A censor banned one of my articles in its entirety. I said to Júlio: "but what's in that article?" Well, the following week, he bans another one entirely. Well, then he said to me: "look, write something really light." So, I wrote, if I'm not mistaken, about women, something like that. And the article was banned. I think I had written about *Tartuffe*. Then we were like, surprised: me, Raimundo (Pereira), Júlio. We concluded that my name had been banned. So, we used a pseudonym. And for a while, the newsroom didn't know, only Raimundo and Júlio. Júlio said to me: "look, now write an article really pushing the limit." And I wrote an article, I don't remember which, maybe about Palestinian cinema, I'm not sure, and then it went through. So, it was proven that the problem was my name. Now, why they banned me at a certain moment was not understood; why didn't they ban me from the start? Now it's coming to me… It's that I had been to Africa, I had been to Algiers for a Third World cinema congress. And that's why I had some knowledge of Palestinian cinema. And if that leaked somehow—because, actually, I didn't go straight to Algiers: I went to Paris, stayed at a film critic's house for a few days, and then went to Algiers. And I didn't return directly, I came back to Paris. I don't know if that information got out, but, in any case, that's it. And that is much better than having stayed at the university. There was a lot of that idea in the so-called progressive field: the situation is terrible, but "better me than a right-wing guy." It was never very clear to me what was genuinely political in that statement and what was just maintaining a situation that brought in money every month, in short, maintaining a certain stability. And that the political motive was often an alibi that allowed one to stay in the position with a good conscience. So, that's how I returned to the university.

MATRIZes: During that period in the 1970s, roughly eleven years of setbacks in your life, did you ever think about moving to France?

JCB: No. What I had done at the beginning of 1964, after the *Cadeia da Legalidade*, was think: since I am a foreigner, something could end up happening to me. So, I applied for Brazilian nationality, which, in an absolutely infernal bureaucratic system, did not come through. But all of that was proceeding slowly, slowly, but it was proceeding in such a way that naturalization was eventually granted during the Castelo Branco government. That gave me a certain security: that I could not be expelled, or at least not so easily, as a foreigner—a Frenchman could be expelled very easily, especially since at that

time I did not yet have a family, I wasn't married. So, I did that. In the 1970s, no. But I never thought about it. Not only did I never think about it, but I thought exactly the opposite. In the sense that no, that's not the way. It was hard many times—having to hide because you don't know what will happen, etc. But I also did not feel in a situation of such importance that I could be a target.

MATRIZes: Weren't you afraid of being arrested during the civil-military dictatorship?

JCB: In 1964, the following happened, for example: on the 31st, we were at the newsroom, at *Última Hora*, and the editor-in-chief, around one o'clock in the morning on the first, said: "the coup has happened. We are leaving and we will not return. I advise the journalists not to come back here." When that happened, I headed toward the *Teatro de Arena*. I was quite involved with the Teatro de Arena, and we started trying to set up an information network. We didn't stay in the theater, because it was somewhat dangerous. So, we circulated through the streets, and when someone had any information, they passed it on to another person circulating, and so on. I did this for I don't know how long, but eventually I thought I needed to take a shower because, strictly speaking, I stank. Then I thought: "well, it's not safe to go to my apartment," I had a small studio somewhere. So, I thought: "I'll go to my father's house to shower." When I got there—because I walked part of the way—I arrived late. My father said to me: "someone just called. You cannot return to the city center. They looked for you in the newspaper, at the theater, at USP, at the Faculty of Letters, it's impossible. I'll hide you." It wasn't that simple; it was much more complicated. My father asked: "now, what are you going to do?" I replied: "I don't know. I simply don't know." He said he would hide me. So, he set up a plan. What happens with my father is that he had been part of the Resistance during the Second World War. So, he had vast experience in clandestine operations. Sabotaging trains, things like that, he knew well. Then he gave me a serious lecture: "you were not trained for clandestinity, you don't know what it means to hide, you have no system." Then he took me to the countryside, to a place he knew, and I asked him to look for some of my friends who were in the same situation. Gianfrancesco Guarnieri had already gone to Bolivia. I didn't know very well what the situation of Cecília Thompson and her children was. So, I asked him to look for Cecília to see if she needed anything, but she came from a good family. So, he searched for these people to see what could be done for them. He did that; he provided great support during the 1960s and later even told me about the things he had done that he had kept secret. So, I went into hiding like this. One fine day, Rudá de Andrade showed

up. Rudá managed to get my father—he was tough—to reveal the place where I was. So, without my knowledge, Rudá appeared one day. Then Rudá told me he didn't know if the police were still looking for me or not. And there was no sign that they continued searching. So, it wasn't feasible to stay in the middle of the woods like that. He then set up a plan to see what the police would do. He scheduled a screening of a film by Sergei Eisenstein—I don't remember which one, it wasn't *Potemkin*—but one of Eisenstein's films, which I would present. This was widely publicized. Rudá handled a lot of press relations, the Cinemateca, and its connections with the press, making contacts with various social columns so that I would be photographed a lot. So, here's what happened: this was at the *Diários Associados* auditorium. I arrived in front of the building in a car, stayed in the car, and the audience was allowed to enter. There were several elevators, and when the room was full, they cut off all elevators—meaning the *Diários Associados* themselves—except one. I went up in that remaining elevator, and then it was cut off; there was no way to reach the floor where I was. I gave this lecture, which must have been the worst lecture of my life, but I delivered it on Eisenstein. When I finished, and just before the film screening, the lights in the room were turned off, and I was made to leave. I went down in another elevator they had connected, got in the car, and returned to the countryside. We waited a few days, including a Saturday and Sunday, when the columns published more photos. Some photos were published, I don't remember. We waited, waited, waited, and the police did not react. It was then agreed that I would return to São Paulo, but that I would not set foot in the Cinemateca. So, I did a series of things. I traveled across the state with an art film festival—this was under the Adhemar de Barros government—but without provocations, even to earn some money. And there was no further provocation from the police. Another thing happened. I don't remember the exact date. In any case, after the dismissal in Brasília, several university architects had found a private college where they set up a projects department. I was approached by one of them, whom I knew from Brasília, evidently. And he said: "look, we ask you to take charge of the department." "but I'm not an architect, how can I?" "yes, but the only solid name we have is yours. And we are not very well-known yet, so it's yours." Well, I did that, and, obviously, I dealt only with absolutely and exclusively administrative matters, meaning I could not intervene in the merit of the projects department. And I had to form the faculty for this department, because the architects from Brasília were not numerous enough—that is, those who adhered to this project. So, we requested CVs, which were sent to a certain person. One day, a CV arrived—no, several arrived—but I saw one that seemed the most solid,

and the architects agreed. So, we held a departmental meeting. The department secretary attended, though I had not invited him. It wasn't so strange. I said to the secretary: "you will prepare the minutes. Summarize what each professor says and make the minutes." Then the professors began to give their praise. I did not ask for votes. I first asked for considerations on the candidate's CV. The considerations were excellent. And it went smoothly… the various professors, I don't know, four or five, I don't remember. In the middle of this round, the secretary said: "I hope you know what you are doing." I replied that I did, but what I was asking him was just to make the minutes. After this first round of considerations, I requested a vote. And unanimously, the architect was accepted. Then the secretary stood up, toward the door, turned to me, and said—I don't remember exactly, but something like: "you shouldn't have done what you did." And I said: "no, I did exactly what I was supposed to do, which was the choice of the professors." He said: "but I don't agree with that. And the police chief doesn't either." Then we thought it was better if I didn't return. So, I spent very little time at this college in the interior of São Paulo; I must have received half a salary at some point, something like that, meaning it didn't resolve the department nor my financial situation.

MATRIZes: What city was this in the interior of São Paulo?
JCB: I don't remember.

MATRIZes: And what city did your father hide you in?
JCB: It wasn't a city. I never knew. It was really a small farm in the middle of the woods. And this, for example, was part of being in hiding: you didn't know where you were. You depended on networks, on information. It was a house; a man worked there, a Spanish laborer, whom my father knew because of that. He worked somewhere—I don't know where—and in that house there was his wife, obviously, and two girls, about eight and ten years old. And these girls went to school in the morning, came back, had lunch, and in the afternoon stayed at home. Since I had nothing to do, I created a small school with them: inventing stories, telling stories, doing arithmetic games, arithmetic play, things like that. And it was very good. They would have lunch, nap a little, take a siesta, and then be eager to start again right away. It was really good.

MATRIZes: How long did that last?
JCB: Not very long, about three months. Already in 1964, when I was being sought, my father made an analysis with me, I mean, he asked a question: "what does the police know?" Because we didn't know, we were really

inexperienced at the time. Then my father said: "well, they probably don't know this." See, my brother Jean-Pierre had recently gotten married and moved house. For example, if they were very informed, they probably didn't have that information yet. Things like that. Later, it was verified that, indeed, they were a bit in the dark. It was later discovered that, according to them, I was considered a link between the Brazilian Communist Party and the French Communist Party. The thing is, I had absolutely no connection. First, I was never a member of the French Communist Party, although I had been politically active. I was in a cell, but I never joined. And the French Communist Party—I got more information about it much later: I returned to France, and then I was taken to visit the Communist Party (French), mostly just to see the building, which is a building by… I don't know if Le Corbusier or Niemeyer, one of the two. It's a fantastic building.

MATRIZes: It's by Niemeyer.

JCB: Yes, it's by Niemeyer, but I had no connection to it. So, that was just a fantasy because of my name. On the other hand, on April 1st, the police came to get me from the newspaper, in the newsroom. Clarice stayed at the paper, Clarice Herzog, Vlado's (Vladimir Herzog's) wife. She stayed in the newsroom and later told me the following: the officers who came looking for me didn't find me—obviously, they didn't find me—but they went to accounting. They asked for information, didn't get the answers they wanted, and asked an employee whether I was a man or a woman. And the person who answered said: "she's a woman." Because of Jean—you understand Jean in French, but Jean is a name…—so that must have been what caused the confusion. But, to tell you, that police force was poorly informed. And then, it seems they eventually found out I wasn't a woman, and on the 2nd, they went back there and arrested the person who had given the wrong information. That's what Clarice said happened; I never had proof of that or anything. In fact, I would have liked to meet the person who protected me. Because no one in the newsroom doubted I was a man, so the information she gave to the police, or the misinformation she gave, was clearly a deliberate act. It's not possible, after more than a year at the paper, that they didn't know. But when I asked Clarice, she said they didn't know who it was. Only within the newspaper did that information circulate, but they didn't know who it was, and that was fine. Better not to know, you understand? Even today, there are some things that a friend—now very old—and I think it's better not to reveal. Even about things from '64.

MATRIZes: Do you see any parallel between the political and social situation in Brazil in '64, before the coup, and today?

JCB: Look, here's the thing: I have a strong resistance to making historical analogies. Part of my work on *Os Inconfidentes*, by Joaquim Pedro (de Andrade), which is an admirable film, is precisely about that. Historical analogy does not work. It means projecting the meanings, the possible meanings of a current situation, onto a historical event. And then there are two problems: the historical event does not accept those meanings, and on the other hand, you miss the opportunity to understand the factors and political forces at play in that past moment, you understand? To the point that *Os Inconfidentes*… a very, very well-known professor—I forgot his name—wrote a book at the time, published in Portugal, about Brazilian uprisings and revolutions. *Os Inconfidentes* has nothing of a popular revolution. It was a revolution of the elite. An elite that already held considerable power, including financial and institutional power, and wanted total power. They did not accept that their power—they were getting richer—would be limited by the Crown. And of course, that does not appear in the film. Because in the film, all the poets, magistrates, etc., are turned into intellectuals of the 1970s. It is a harsh critique that Joaquim makes, but the relationship of those 1970s intellectuals with political action and revolution was obviously not the same as that of the *Inconfidência*. So, to answer your question, I think it is a mistake to make that connection. Or to try to establish a similarity between the situation of '64, or pre-'64, and the current situation. That prevents you from seeing the particularities, the specificity of this moment. Of course, understanding the particularities of the moment is very difficult, but I think it is a completely different moment. I think the civil-military dictatorship was still a dictatorship of a certain nature—neoliberal in character, with developmentalist traits, nationalist traits, etc.—which, obviously, no matter how much Bolsonaro may have claimed to be nationalist—I mean, today he does not pursue that policy, does he? I mean, he was convinced by various military and financial factors not to do that—but there is a sentence that guides me a lot. First, in Bolsonaro's campaign and in this government—this government, I don't know exactly to what extent, but in any case, in the campaign for sure—there is a certain internationalism of the far right, right? Steve Bannon, who is the leader of what is called *The Movement*, the far-right movement, and which includes several other formations besides Brazil and the United States, among them Hungary. Recently, Viktor Orbán gave a speech in which he said the following: "we are building a new society." And in the speech, it is stated—he uses the word democracy—that a democracy is not necessarily liberal. Liberal in the sense, not of neoliberalism, but liberal in the

sense of being open to contradictory opinions, etc. I think this is, for me at least, a fundamental reference. Bolsonaro is building a new society here. This means that we are in a revolutionary period. Revolution is generally considered leftist, so some political analysts prefer to use the word counterrevolution. So, we are in a counterrevolutionary situation that entails a structural change of society. This is happening. And this structural change also implies our extermination. It is not that there is no money—there is no shortage of money, you understand?—but the cutting of universities, etc., is a conscious policy of exterminating our production. But there is another equally serious thing, which is this: the left—I'll put many quotation marks here—has no project. So, the left managed to carry out an operation that is at least surprising, which is to make Bolsonaro not only its main, but its only political reference. That is why we talk so much about Bolsonaro, as if we had no one else to talk about. At home, for example—I say "at home," I live with a guy—we don't talk about Bolsonaro. We don't react, in quotes, even to the nonsense he says, because he does not really say nonsense. And because that is, in a way, internalizing Bolsonaro. When I say political reference, it is a negative reference; but it is still a reference. When Lula, after leaving prison, started declaring—at least I read this, obviously, in a newspaper like *Folha de S.Paulo*, but my secretary selects various texts and blogs, etc.—it is more or less unanimous that he chose Bolsonaro as his focus of attack. By doing this, he renders a great disservice to Brazilian society. Lula's current role seems to me very negative. I have, so to speak, for various circumstances, including cinematographic ones, moved through some peripheral areas, working with filmmakers who make audiovisual works in peripheral neighborhoods. I work with someone from Capão Redondo. So, this is in São Paulo, but we also went recently to Belo Horizonte. We worked in occupations, watching films, showing films, etc. And you do not hear talk of either Bolsonaro or Lula. These people are organizing themselves at various levels of organization. And there are political organizations, yes, social movements that are organized, and smaller organizations, like schools, daycare centers, in occupations, in short, things like that. And this organization is infinitely preferable to cursing Bolsonaro. I spoke at length with a man who is the national president of Unidade Popular. We spoke at length with this man, and there was no reference to Lula, nor… they are not political references for that part of society. So, this man I work with from Capão Redondo, I conducted several interviews with him on various subjects that, little by little, I will publish—I have not yet published them because I am almost blind, my work is very slow. I have a secretary, but I want to see everything and edit. So, it is very difficult, you understand? So I take a long time, you understand? But

I will publish them. And this man, for example, made a film called *Filme dos outros* (by Lincoln Péricles).

MATRIZes: Lincoln Péricles?
JCB: Do you know Lincoln Péricles?

MATRIZes: I know who he is, but I am not friends with him.
JCB: Well, he's a fantastic guy. Have you seen *Filme dos outros*? Do you know how it was produced?

MATRIZes: The footage came from stolen cell phones.
JCB: Yes, exactly. Footage—that's the first part—and then there's the rap. Nowadays, he doesn't like the film that much anymore, because he finds it too repetitive. Some people think that this is a serial device. But when you see it for the first time, it's quite shocking. I wrote a short note about it: the receiver as an artist. *Receiving as an aesthetic act*. I'm really connecting with these people. I did an interview, a few interviews in Belo Horizonte as well, also in the occupations, with very, very active young people.

MATRIZes: The Brazilian left today…
JCB: There is no Brazilian left, there isn't. One of the things that happened—this must have been around 1962, something like that—and, although I wasn't a party member, I used to attend a cell. I don't remember the people who were in that cell, but there were about ten people. Among them—the only one I remember—Paulo José. They practiced what they called vertical democracy, which is Stalinism. Then a guy would come in and tell us how things were, what we were supposed to do. So, you see? That thesis that we were not at the moment of socialist revolution, we were at the moment of the bourgeois revolution, we had to make the bourgeois revolution, which justified any alliance with those bourgeois. Paulo José and I always criticized that. There was even a Bible published in Moscow in Portuguese. So, it had all the information you wanted. And all the necessary truths were in that book. Paulo José and I really would not adhere to it. And we started, unintentionally actually, but anyway, to irritate that guy who couldn't practice vertical democracy, because there were two odd fellows who always asked improper questions. To the point that one day he said that certain people wanted to talk to us, not to the cell, only to Paulo José. And one fine day, then, we were taken to a room at what was then the Faculty of Letters at USP, on Maria Antônia Street. We were taken to a rather grand room, like a room for important ceremonies. There were two

chairs and, in the back, there was a table. All of this was very dark, as I remember. And in the back, there were several people sitting behind a table—one of those imposing tables, with sculptures, lions, whatever. Among those people, my impression is that there were four. In any case, with absolute certainty, there was Mário Schenberg and the architect who designed the building of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism and Design (FAU), right? (Vilanova) Artigas (must have been Carlos Cascaldi). Well, I have these lapses of dimension, really. Then they asked us to sit and they opened the session as follows: "this is not a trial, but we would like to talk to you so you understand." When you hear that it's not a trial, obviously, you are being judged. I mean, there was no punishment, nothing happened. And then Schenberg moved away from the table, came to sit near us, took a chair, sat close to us, and started to talk to tell us how… anyway, to tell us the truth, right? I don't know if you have an image of Schenberg, but Schenberg was quite a fat, heavy man, and he talked non-stop, with his eyes closed. And we listened, in a rather monotonous tone, and we listened—I don't know for how long—to Schenberg. Maybe two hours. I don't know, I don't know. Afterwards, Schenberg asked us to think about what he had said. Well, I don't remember, obviously, what Schenberg said, but I know that what was running through my head was: "what's going to happen to us? Where is this going to lead us?" But afterwards, I don't remember if I went back or not. Recently… well, not recently, some years ago, I asked Paulo José, already quite ill, if he remembered. Then, talking with him, he said yes, he remembered. And this, I was in Rio. Then I asked if he would agree to try to reconstruct the situation we had gone through, and he said yes. But then it didn't happen. I was passing through Rio, for some festival, some screening, whatever. And then I had to go back to São Paulo. Afterwards, I wrote to him a few times, but he didn't follow up or forgot, given the health condition he was in. So, what remains is my memory. But Stalinism is that, and they were all Stalinists: Schenberg, (Oscar) Niemeyer. Niemeyer was terrible. Niemeyer was terrible. In Brasília, with me, he was a horror. I, well, was in the course… does this still interest you?

MATRIZes: Yes, very much.

JCB: I was in the program, as you know, in '65, and I left with a resignation. The resignation was led by the coordinator of Physics, who was (Roberto Aureliano) Salmerón—not exactly that name, or something like that—and some people, some professors, and many teaching assistants were against it. Finally, there was a meeting of the eleven coordinators at the Physics coordinator's house, and, by the end of the night, the vote was in favor of the

resignation. What this Physics coordinator preached was the following: it would be such a strong act that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) would react, and the dictatorship would be forced to reinstate us. And, in fact, Unesco reacted, sending a note: "what a pity, we deeply regret it, something like this shouldn't happen." The reaction did not go much beyond that. In any case, here is what happened: Pompeu de Sousa, who was responsible for the Institute of Communications, Journalism and Cinema—the Institute didn't formally exist yet—arrived on campus soon after, very early. We met on campus, and he told me: "I was outvoted, we resigned." Paulo Emílio (Sales Gomes) was completely against it, and he told me: "no, Paulo Emílio, we resigned. Now, the only person who cannot resign is you. You're going to stay here." "Why should I stay here?" And my situation was as follows: teaching assistants had to pursue graduate studies. So, I had a dissertation ready, which became *Brasil em tempo de cinema*. And Paulo Emílio, who was my advisor, had asked me for other parallel works; I did a paper on literature, etc. The only thing left was to finish a paper on Mário de Andrade, and the defense was scheduled for early December. Pompeu told me: "no, if you resign, you lose everything. All the credits are lost, everything." "I'm not going to stay here for a title. I did this research, fine, but I won't stay for a title." So I resigned. I went to Rio to look for a job. In December, there was in Brasília—I think it was called, at that time, the First Week of Brazilian Cinema, which is the seed of the current Brasília Festival. Then I went back to Brasília for that week, and Pompeu came to me and said: "look, they're speaking very badly of us, saying we're always on strike, that we don't work, that we do nothing. I'm going to ask you to do a mock master's thesis defense." So we did this mock defense with Paulo Emílio, Pompeu, and me at the table—I don't know if there was another, because usually there are three. Then, people in the room spoke up; some people were called upon. The first to speak was (Paulo César) Saraceni, who obviously didn't like the text.

MATRIZes: The text was the one that later became the book *Brasil em tempo de cinema*?

JCB: Yes, with some changes, because the defense was in '65 and the publication in '67. In the changes, *Terra em Transe* (by Glauber Rocha) was included. I don't quite remember if I saw *Terra em Transe* or if I read the script, I don't remember exactly. In any case, I added something about *Terra em Transe*, and later Alex (Viany) and Glauber (Rocha) asked me to remove it because it could give hints to the censorship. The film hadn't been released yet. That could draw the censors' attention and give them arguments. So, I left a small

reference to *Terra em Transe*, but that part of the text was removed. Well, this brings me to another point. I went back to São Paulo and, in '67–'68, the following situation took place: after the departure of the faculty, the university had to quickly rebuild a teaching staff, including at the Central Institute of Art (ICA). The ICA students did not like the new faculty at all. They went on strike, and after about a year, the Rectory gave in and appointed a restructuring commission for the ICA, formed by the Brazilian Lawyers Institute and the architects of Brazil. Three architects came, and this commission was formed, which called professors to recompose curricula, etc. In the field of cinema, there was no cinema program; it had been planned, but it was like at FAU—there were courses in cinema planned. So, they called two people: Maurice Capovilla and me, to work on this restructuring. During this restructuring, the following happened: toward the end of '68, there arose a perception within the commission and among the professors that, if they organized, in addition to the overall restructuring, a very condensed program during the end of '68 and the '69 vacation period, we could achieve a course load that would allow students to lose not two semesters but only one. That was done. There was this restructuring work, and there was teaching work. One day during this period, Niemeyer came to visit the ICA. Niemeyer had been the coordinator until his resignation and had voted in favor of it. The director of the commission, who eventually became the director of the ICA, introduced the team present and introduced me. I already knew Niemeyer, because I had made a film, *Brasília, contradições de uma cidade nova* (Joaquim Pedro de Andrade), and we — Joaquim and I — often went to his house, to Lúcio Costa's house, etc., to talk. He shook hands with several people, and when he got to me, shouting, he said: "you should not be here." Then I understood what was in his head. I began to explain that I had not been called by the Rectory, that I had been called by the commission, and that I came after a year of strike. Therefore, I was part of the students' project and not of the Rectory, but he began to shout so much that no one heard what I was saying, no matter how much I tried to raise my voice, you understand? And well, at some point, he left; I left, you understand? But that was very much Niemeyer: brutal Stalinist, authoritarian, no dialogue. I hadn't switched sides, nor had I ever supported that Rectory at any time. I could do this in Brasília because I was already a professor at USP. USP professors could not leave the state without authorization from the Rectory. USP's Rectory would never give me that authorization. Therefore, Rudá de Andrade, who was head of the department, arranged my teaching hours so that I could be absent for ten or fifteen days. With a holiday here, a weekend there, it gave a good stretch to be able to work in Brasília. So, I was in Brasília in a relatively

continuous manner, and later AI-5 caught me—the so-called 25 from USP—caught me in Brasília. Ah, here's how I found out: one fine day, one fine night, I decided to go to the cinema. At that time, screenings were continuous; you could enter in the middle of a session and catch the beginning of the next. At one point, I entered between the two screenings, the two sessions. There's that glass window, and several professors were signaling to me, I was supposed to meet them, and I signaled no, that I was going to catch the beginning of the session. Finally, I understood that something was happening. I left, and they told me: "look, you've been dismissed. We don't know what's going to happen. All the radio stations are saying it, through USP, etc., all the radio stations are dragging us through the mud, insulting us with swear words, right?" Then one of the guys from the commission told me: "we don't know what's going to happen, so you're not going home now, you're going to… I'll take you somewhere, you're going to hide." No one on the list was arrested, at least, right? So I went back, I went to São Paulo, but I made a route: I went to Belo Horizonte, I went to other places, etc.

MATRIZes: Why is *Brasil em tempo de cinema* dedicated to Antônio das Mortes? (Antônio das Mortes is a character played by Maurício do Valle in the films *Deus e o Diabo na terra do sol* and *O dragão da maldade contra o santo guerreiro*, both directed by Glauber Rocha).

JCB: It is dedicated to Antônio das Mortes with the opening words, or at least with the second: this quasi-autobiographical essay is dedicated to Antônio das Mortes. That is because, on one hand, I identified very much with Antônio das Mortes, with the fact that he is wavering, being on one side and also on the other, etc. I feel that way too, not so much politically, but due to the two cultures that shaped me, the two nationalities, and the fact that I had an unforgettable childhood in France, very marked by the war. Then people say: "ah, but you've been here for 70 years, you are Brazilian." No, it's not like that, it's not about the number of years. I did not complete secondary education—I mean, I completed the course, but I don't have a diploma because I am terrible when it comes to diplomas. And so I failed Philosophy. Philosophy was a subject in which I actually did well; I liked that subject, but I would freeze in front of the exam, so I got a terrible grade. There was a retake, three months later, after the holidays. And then I did the following: I decided to really study a lot, a lot, a lot, a lot. I studied (Jean-Paul) Sartre through an author, a disciple of Sartre, recognized by him, who wrote a popularizing book on his thought. Of course, I wasn't going to understand *Being and Nothingness*. I studied Sartre, then I went to the retake; again, I didn't get a high enough grade, because

Sartre wasn't even in the syllabus, and I think they didn't like him much, right? So I decided that, fine, I wasn't going to continue in that direction. In any case, in this book popularizing Sartre, the author Francis Jeanson lays out the concept of the "bastard" in Sartre's work. I absolutely identified with that concept: the individual who does not identify with anything, who is in several places at once, and has no very clear genealogy. I identified very much with that. That is, the work I did for the retake didn't produce results as a retake, but I learned a lot, and that concept ended up being—I can't say a formative concept, because I was about 19 at the time, I imagine—but a concept that contributed to creating the image I have of myself and the image I try to project publicly.

MATRIZes: What attracts you to contemporary Brazilian cinema today?

JCB: One of the factors I must take into account is the fact that I have a serious eye condition and see the screen blurred, hazy. Sometimes I have to ask the person next to me. As happened yesterday, for example: I was next to Amilton (Pinheiro) and got confused between two actresses, whom I thought were different, but I wasn't quite sure. So, my perception is very impaired. Moreover, after 80, 81, I also began to have hearing problems. Now I'm without hearing aids, but in the cinema and in the theater, I sometimes have a lot of difficulty catching the dialogue. Therefore, it would be false to say that I have a very well-formed opinion. In any case, I have a certain tendency to be very critical of the so-called auteur films, which, in my view, are not always competent and are extremely complacent. That bothers me a lot. Now, if you ask me which film has impressed me the most lately, I can mention *Azougue Nazaré* (by Tiago Melo), *Bacurau* (by Kleber Mendonça Filho and Juliano Dornelles), maybe another, but the one that really impressed me is a short film titled *Filme dos outros* (by Lincoln Péricles), partly made with material from stolen cell phone memory cards, produced by a filmmaker from Capão Redondo, a peripheral neighborhood of São Paulo, which, at one time, was considered the most violent in the city and was later, more or less, pacified, quieted down by the PCC, which really dominates that region of São Paulo, in many regions, in fact, right? This film, because of its production and device, is truly transgressive, as it starts from an act repudiated by society in general—the theft of an object, in this case, a cell phone—and transforms that act into the raw material of an aesthetic gesture, which I consider an innovation in our cultural milieu. There are many films from the periphery; many of them I like, but let's say they are documentaries or interviews, with interesting situations. In the case of Lincoln's film, there was an aesthetic gesture that stands apart from everything else being made. So, much so that this film by Lincoln circulates a lot, it

even ended up in Germany, if I'm not mistaken. The film, not him. Lincoln has something very interesting: in a way, he engages with the line of thought I have laid out since the 1960s, including in *Brasil em tempo de cinema*, according to which the representation of the people is produced by the middle class. I don't know if I was that clear, I don't know if I am now, but the book somehow exploded and was so rejected because of this central line of thought, even though the concept of the middle class was not very explicitly developed by me. In fact, I didn't know how to do that; the lack of knowledge was not just a matter of misinformation, but also an absence of bibliography. I mean, Brazilian sociology was not interested in intellectuals, in artists, etc. I mean, Sergio Miceli, perhaps, was already beginning to publish those books, but the books of his that were very important, I read later. But there is a film that quite strikingly marks, in my view, these limitations we had in relation to sociological works on the middle class, which is the film by (Arnaldo) Jabor *A opinião pública*, which is a film about the middle class, the somewhat lower middle class, not entirely, but somewhat lower, and which uses the thesis of the white-collar class by (C. Wright) Mills, an American sociologist who had already published several books. And I didn't read that book; I knew about the existence of the white collars, but I didn't use them and ended up confronting the concept on my own. In any case, I was very criticized at the time, very, very, very criticized. In fact, someone told me: "your concept of the middle class has no foundation, no theoretical grounding, nothing." But it turned out it worked. It has worked to this day. In a text about *Bacurau*, written by someone from Unicamp, Fernando Ramos, he revisits *Brasil em tempo de cinema* as a certain matrix of thought. And it is through this matrix that he relates to an aspect of Kleber Mendonça's film. With Lincoln, what happens is this: Lincoln rejects the image of the people constructed by the middle class. I am going to publish an interview with him; we have already had many conversations about this issue. The perspective he has on the periphery and the *quebrada*[2] is not the perspective of the middle class, and the middle class does not see the *quebrada*. It only sees itself. I find this very interesting, and my contact with him is good; I am really taking this line of thought into account. Another person I am relatively close to is Francis Vogner (dos Reis). We have just published a co-authored text. I don't know if it is in that text or in a rather intense correspondence, maybe in an email he sent me; in any case, first, I need to introduce Francis a little. He is from Diadema, an industrial region of São Paulo, and came to Brazilian cinema through *pornochanchada*[3]. I don't remember exactly when he was born, around 1980. When he was a slightly older child and already in adolescence, the *pornochanchada* period in the cinema circuit had already passed; however,

[2] Used as informal slang to refer to a neighborhood, community, or place.

[3] Is a genre of sex comedy films.

television channels used to show *pornochanchada* around eleven at night, 11:00/11:30 p.m., and he and his friends would watch those films because it was their chance to see naked or nearly naked women. That was his gateway to Brazilian cinema, and that shapes a perception totally different from ours. For him, cinema was that. You understand? I mean, the settings, the gestures, the way of speaking, all that was part of his world. Only later did he come to Glauber (Rocha) and Cinema Novo, etc., only later, with some surprise, because that was not his Brazilian cinema. And then he began to study Paulo Emílio (Sales Gomes), Ismael Xavier, me, etc. He has a very interesting reflection on *A marvada carne* (by André Klotzel). *A marvada carne* is a film that aims to be popular, based on popular tales from the countryside of São Paulo, but what he sees is a popular cinema with middle-class mediation. He uses this word: mediation. Whereas *pornochanchada* is popular cinema without mediation, *A marvada carne* cannot rid itself of this mediation, resulting in the fact that it is not popular. It is a reflection that I find very interesting and quite innovative in the conception, in the reflections, or in the history of Brazilian cinema, something that no one had brought up before, right? So, I am identifying more with this group of people. Lincoln, in particular, because he is the response to what I wrote in *Brasil em tempo de cinema*. Among the most striking films for me in recent years is indeed *Filme dos outros* (by Lincoln Péricles).

MATRIZes: You…

JCB: Wait a moment, I will add something then in relation to *Brasil em tempo de cinema*. Indeed, for me, Lincoln (Péricles) is a response, half a century later, but it is a response. Now, there is another equally fundamental response for me, which is the response of (Eduardo) Coutinho. In a seminar held around me, Coutinho said that there were many disturbing ideas in my work, but when he entered cinema, there were other things he found very dogmatic, etc. And it is true, I did in the 60s, ah, things like that, perhaps still in the 70s, sometimes quite dogmatic, but at one point he said: "*Cabra marcado para morrer*, the second one, I made for him." Me. You understand? I was in the room and I was like: "pahhh." But interesting, I don't know if he made it for me or not; in any case, when he qualifies himself in the film as an intellectual, the National Student Union going there, in a way, he responds to that, I mean, at least he takes into account ideas that are expressed in *Brasil em tempo de cinema*. So, the two very strong responses were those two. And Coutinho said that not so long ago, well, I don't know, about five years since I saw that seminar. And it was very important for me, also for the following reason: the one who was Coutinho's friend was my wife (Lucila Ribeiro Bernardet). Coutinho, to

me, was always a more distant person. However, it happened that Coutinho called me because of a text, once or twice, but we never had a more familiar contact. I never sat in a bar with him, never drank cachaça or beer with him. However, between him and me, there is a very intense dialogue, and this dialogue takes place through our works. I think he has a lot of intuition, a number of things that I wrote. One thing that marked me a lot is that, when I published the small essay on *Cabra marcado para morrer,* I began with a quote from Elizabeth Teixeira and ended with a quote from Walter Benjamin. Walter Benjamin is not quoted in the film, but I felt the whole issue of the theory of history, the ruins of history; I felt all of that watching the film, I watched that film many times. And then he told me: "look, I was very surprised by the quotation from Walter Benjamin, because during the film I was reading Walter Benjamin. And you noticed." Only at the end of his life did some closeness occur; we traveled together, etc. But this, for me, is very important: to have an approximation to the work, not because I know the filmmaker who told me: "ah, I'm going to make this film, look at this film, ah, I edited it like this." No, but through the work. This is one reason, including, in Rio, when I was living there and working at (jornal) *Opinião*: I did not frequent the bars, the pubs, etc. I did not go. There is a bar where those filmmakers used to gather, which was Antonio's. And one day Gustavo Dahl asked me to go with him to Antonio's. I was very close to Gustavo: "no, Gustavo, I don't go to those places, etc.". Then he told me: "no, come today, because Paulo Francis is there; I would like to introduce you, he wants to meet you, so, let's go." Then I went to meet Paulo Francis at Antonio's, and it was the only time I ever set foot there. And that gave me greater freedom, you understand? Not that I would have stopped writing what I wrote, but I didn't have to say: "oh, so-and-so is my friend, how can I write this? He will get upset." That's more or less how things happen. So, I absolutely wanted to escape that hypocrisy, and I did. For better or worse, anyway, good texts or not, I think I escaped that. That certain worldliness, that environment of bars, of premieres… I rarely go to premieres, it is very rare. I hate it, because after the screening, there will be a big fuss, with music that does not even match, you know? It happened with a certain filmmaker, a very good friend of mine, who praised the film to the director. Then we left, he and I, and I said: "so-and-so, how can one like that film?" He said: "I don't like it. It's terrible." "But you praised it." "but so-and-so is my friend, I will not be rude." I believe I absolutely escaped that.

MATRIZes: How do you deal with finitude, with the idea that life has an end?

JCB: I deal with it well. A series was made about elderly people, with elderly people, by Sergio Rozemblit. And one of the episodes is with me. Sérgio later told me: "look, I am quite detached from death, but I have never seen a person as detached as you." So, I have no problem. The other day, we were working, and someone in the group, looking at the phone, said: "a friend of mine passed away. And he has been a great friend since adolescence, I don't know what." He was quite moved. Then he said: "he was so… he is sort of young, around 40 years old, he had a heart attack." And then I said to Rubens (Rewald): "your friend's death is a death that deserves applause. These sudden deaths are brilliant." Then he said: "no, but he had so many projects." I said: "the dead have no projects." Rubens: "no, but he was going to do this, that." I said: "Rubens, that is not dead people's thinking, that is living people's thinking." The doubt I have is what will happen to get there, I mean, whether I will become dependent, whether I will be paralyzed, or whether I will be in a wheelchair. Therefore, nothing frightens me at all. M