

# Luiz Gama and the racial satire as the transgression poetry: diasporic poetry as counter-narrative to the idea of race <sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This article interprets and analyzes the cultural production of the poet, journalist, mason, abolitionist, lawyer and political leader Luiz Gama. The city of São Paulo was the area of his accomplishments, best location for the emergence of a diasporic identity politics. Prioritized, the analysis of his poetic narratives, how Luiz Gama wore race, identity, modernity and memory of slavery to mediate social reality and ethno-racial relations.

## Resumo

Este artigo interpreta e analisa a produção cultural do poeta, jornalista, maçom, abolicionista, advogado (rábula) e líder político Luiz Gama. A cidade de São Paulo foi o espaço de suas realizações, lugar por excelência para o surgimento de sua identidade política diaspórica. Priorizamos, nas análises de suas narrativas poéticas, o modo como Luiz Gama usava a raça, a identidade, a modernidade e a memória da escravidão para mediar a realidade social e as relações étnico-raciais.

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## Keywords

Identity. Race. Modernity. Racial satire.

## Palavras-chave

Identidade. Raça. Modernidade. Sátira racial.

1

This article is part of a wider study developed in the doctoral thesis in Social History defended at PUCSP in 2014: *Luiz Gama, um intelectual diaspórico: intelectualidade, relações étnico-raciais e produção cultural na modernidade paulistana (1830-1882)*.

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GAMA, Luiz. *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas de Getulino*. 3rd edition. São Paulo: Bentley Junior, 1904. I make use of this edition, fully digitalized version by the Institute of Brazilian Studies (Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros). Available at: <[www.ieb.usp.br/online/index.asp](http://www.ieb.usp.br/online/index.asp)>. Accessed on: June 24, 2013. The original version can be found at the Mario de Andrade Municipal Library of São Paulo.

3

As shown in the cover of the second edition of *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas de Getulino*. Rio de Janeiro: Tipografia de Pinheiro & Cia., 1861. The third edition dated from 1904, with 234 illustrated pages, edited by Bentley Júnior in the city of São Paulo, with the preface by Coelho Neto. The fourth, in 1944, by Publisher Cultura, organized by Fernando de Góis. The fifth edition was organized by J. Romão da Silva in 1954, by the publisher Livraria Casa do Estudante. It is considered as the last edition the one prepared by Lígia Fonseca Ferreira, *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas e outros poemas* – Luiz Gama, published in 2000.

4

Letter from Luiz Gama to Lúcio de Mendonça reporting his own bibliographic data, dated from July 25, 1880. Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Coleção Manuscritos Avulsos.

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Ibidem.

6

Ibidem.

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São Paulo, *Correio Paulistano*, November 21, 1869. Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira da Fundação Biblioteca Nacional. Available at: <[www.hemerotecadigital.bn.br](http://www.hemerotecadigital.bn.br)>. Accessed on: October 10, 2012.

8

Idem.

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SODRÉ, Nelson Werneck. *A história da imprensa no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira S.A., 1966. p. 235.

10

That is what Délio Freire dos Santos informs in the introduction of the fac-similar edition of *Cabrião*. In: CAGNIN, Antonio Luiz. *Diabo Coxo*. São Paulo, 1864-1865. Ed. Fac-similar. São Paulo: Edusp, 2005, p. 13.

11

Lígia F. Ferreira, in the Introduction of *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas e outros poemas*, presented the difficulties of personal (a black, former slave), textual and poetic matter with the release of the work. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2000, pp. XIII-XCIII.

*Primeiras Trovas Burlescas de Getulino* constituted the only book of Luiz Gama (Bahia, 1830–São Paulo, 1882). The first edition<sup>2</sup> was released in December 1859, in São Paulo, by Tipografia Dois de Dezembro; the second one, "correct and expanded"<sup>3</sup>, as the author warns, in Rio de Janeiro, by Tipografia de Pinheiro & Cia., in 1861. In this volume, there are 13 poetries from José Bonifácio de Andrada (o Moço) included, dated from 1850 and offered to Luiz Gama. With *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas*, Gama enters the restrict circle of the letters of São Paulo imperial city. By the time he was 29 years old, he presented the society an anthological work that expresses, among other things, the experience of those who lived the racial rifts. *Trovas Burlescas* expanded an area socially restricted to the black people, henceforth the centrality of this study.

This work was the first intellectual production of Luiz Gama. The social and political satire was intrinsic to his personality. The decade that precedes the releasing of the book was marked by intense agitation in his youth. He was dismissed "for public service's sake". Accused of causing "turbulence" and "sedition"<sup>4</sup>, he was mandatorily dismissed in 1854 for insubordination, once he threatened an officer who insulted him. As a slave, carrying his insurgent stigma, he was repelled by many buyers "for the simple fact that I am 'from Bahia' ('baiano')", which "was worth it!"<sup>5</sup>, he exclaims, in his jesting manner.

Analyzing the conditions that led him to his dismissal from the job as amanuensis in his article published more than ten years after the event, his critic attitude before the vertical power relationships can be noticed:

It is not found in any of these provisions the establishment of the obligation for the subordinate employees to treat their superiors with subservient vassalagem; and even less any other official or law officer of diverse hierarchy<sup>6</sup>.

His dismissal had a strong impact, in such way that his mordacious way and his satirical flair gain fame:

I am aware that some people judged my dismissal apocryphal and forged for fun, to revile the good sense and the image of the police chief<sup>8</sup>.

This reconstruction does not intend to affirm that his work was born from this turbulent phase, but emphasizes that the satirical poetry choice as a style and literary device to ridicule the hypocrisy of a literate, authoritarian, enslaver society, presented itself more consonant with Gama's personality.

In 1865, *Trovas Burlescas* was sold in *Correio Paulistano* office for 2\$000 réis (19th century currency), price which was kept until 1879. During all this period, his work was being announced in *Correio Paulistano* newspaper.

After leaving the public service, Luiz Gama tries to balance his budget as a typographer in 1865 in the *Ypiranga* and *Cabrião* newspapers (1866–1867), in the legal area and, sometimes, in journalistic activities. Nelson Werneck Sodré says that, despite *Diabo Coxo* (of which Gama was one of the founders) was welcomed, being compared to *Semana Ilustrada*, present since 1860, "it was impossible to keep it, due to financial hardship"<sup>9</sup>. The *Cabrião* costed 500 réis (19th century currency), the price of a lunch<sup>10</sup>. Gama starts to act systematically as a lawyer from 1868. Luiz Gama dedicated himself alone to the preparation of the first edition of *Trovas Burlescas*<sup>11</sup>. The income from the career as a lawyer is comple-

mented with the sales of the second edition of *Trovas Burlescas*. Regarding the sales of his work, we found the following announce from February 17, 1870, published in *Correio Paulistano*:

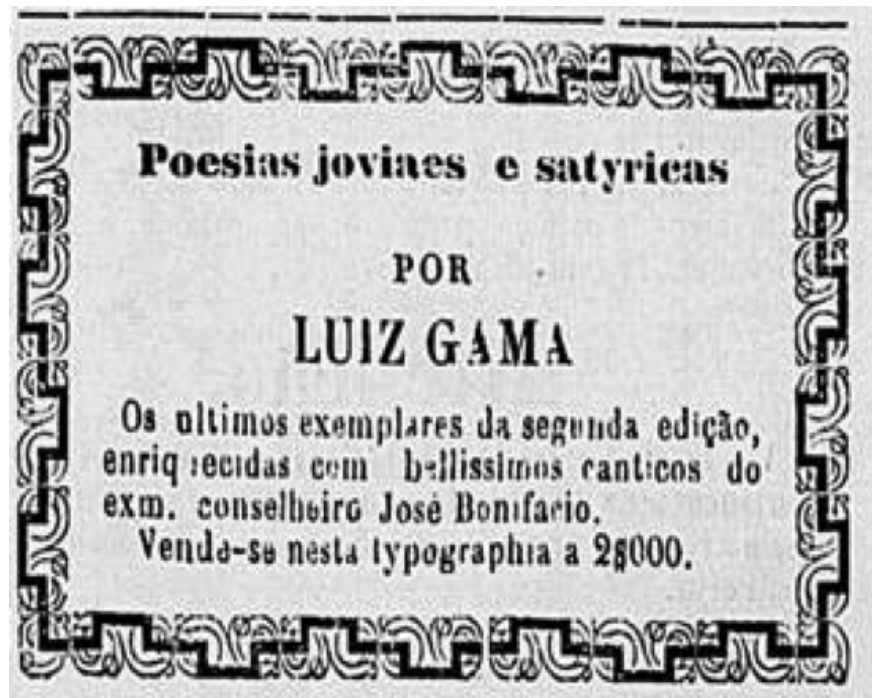


Figure 1- *Correio Paulistano*, February 17, 1870. It is read in the advertisement: *Poesias joviaes e satyricas por Luiz Gama*. The last copies of the second edition, enriched with *bellissimos canticos do exm. conselheiro José Bonifacio*. It is sold in this typography for 2\$000 (19th century). This advertisement was reproduced in the attachments "Documentation and Iconography" of the work *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas e outros poemas*, organized by Ligia Fonseca Ferreira (Martins Fontes, 2000).

12

The researcher Eduardo de Assis Duarte analyses the criteria that constitute and/or distinguish a Brazilian production by African descendants from the set of national letters. The referred author still affirms that Luiz Gama shares with Maria Firmina dos Reis, this later is an African descendant from Maranhão, the status of "pioneer" writers of the Afro-Brazilian literature. DUARTE, Eduardo de Assis. *Literatura afro-brasileira: um conceito em construção. Estudos de Literatura Brasileira Contemporânea*, nº 31, Brasília, p. 11, January-June, 2008. Ligia Fonseca Ferreira considers him as the first Afro-Brazilian poet, In: *Luiz Gama: poemas, artigos, cartas, máximas*. São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de São Paulo, 2011. These statements are contrary to that from Edson Carneiro, in whose work *Antologia do negro brasileiro*, written in 1950, sustains that Henrique Dias, who lived in the 17th century in Pernambuco, was the first literate black. Finally, the fact is that in the second half of the 19th century it was possible to find a reasonable amount of non-white literate people, and the current state of the art of the African descendant literary studies in its discoveries has been dedicating itself to bring out these silenced ones. RISÉRIO, Antonio. *Textos e Tribos - poéticas extraocidentais nos trópicos brasileiros*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Imago, 1993. p. 75.

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BOSI, Alfredo. Culture. In: CARVALHO, José Murilo (org.). *A construção nacional 1830-1889*. Rio de Janeiro: Publisher Objetiva, 2012. p. 232.

14

Expression used by W. E. B. Du Bois.

15

Theory of the Double consciousness, by William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868-1963). DU BOIS, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 2003, p.9.

16

Letter from Luiz Gama to Lúcio de Mendonça... Op. Cit.

17

Idem 25.

18

Ibidem.

To analyze Luiz Gama pioneer or non-pioneer spirit is not the intent of this study<sup>12</sup>, it is to understand his work inside a specific historical process. We can notice, both in his literacy process and in his effort to become a literate black man, a great commitment on entering the universe of the cultural life of a growing nation, of " a nation searching for identity<sup>13</sup>". It is exactly the condition as a black that transforms Gama into a diasporic intellectual, since he lives a duality and finds himself divided between statements of racial particularities and appeals to modern universals<sup>14</sup> that transcend race<sup>15</sup>.

Since then, he "spent his days reading"<sup>16</sup>, he was copyist, used to write for the clerk Major Benedito Antonio Coelho Neto's office, with whom he became friend. As amanuensis, he became closer to adviser Francisco Maria de Souza Furtado de Mendonça, full professor of the School of Law, from whom he affirms to have earned esteem and protection, besides "good letter and civility classes"<sup>17</sup>. He was named amanuensis of the Police Secretariat between 1856 and 1868. "I made myself a lawyer ran to the criminal tribune. So it is my job today"<sup>18</sup>. By means of friendship and proximity to the extra academic legal universe, Luiz Gama entered the "bachelor-like" and political life as a profession.

In a society marked by racial hostilities, having access to the literate city presupposed proving to have a reasonable humanist and scientific education. The poetic writing with Gama was also a weapon, an exercise that sought to answer the injunctions of this enslaver society, marked by racial hierarchy.

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BERND, Zilá. *Introdução à literatura negra*. São Paulo: Publisher Brasiliense S.A., 1988. p. 21.

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Idem, p.12.

21  
Ibidem, p. 22.

22  
FANON, Fanon. *Pele negra, máscaras brancas*. Salvador: EDUFBA, 2008. p. 27.

23  
BERND, Zilá. Op. Cit. p.29.

24  
Idem, p.42.

Zilá Bernd questions "what is black literature?". The author recognizes that the artistic sensibility is not intrinsic to any ethnic-racial group<sup>19</sup>, in order to avoid an ethno-centric essentialism. But, she points out that the black poetry creates its representative territory "in the discursive procedure of her inquiry itself"<sup>20</sup>. It is when the "enunciating persona" emerges, when these subjects "reterritorialize" the poetry system of representation:

In this sense, it is needed to highlight that the concept of black literature is not attached neither to the skin color of the author, nor to just the theme used by them, but emerges from the textual evidence itself which consistence is given by the appearance of an "enunciating persona" that wants themselves black. Assuming the condition as a black and enunciating the speech in first person seems to be the greatest contribution brought by this literature, constituting one of its most expressive stylistic markers<sup>21</sup>.

This "enunciating persona" is a creative subjectivity, it is Gama's desire itself to elaborate a reading and interpretation of the ethnic-racial relations through poetic practice. It is a conscience that enunciates an ignored identity: "When the world faces me, I want it to see a resounding kinky hair Orpheus". An Africa, which lineage is denied "among Ginga's grandchildren, my parents". It identifies a noble origin against the idea of a people without history: "My mother, who is from a steep prow, comes from the race of the most famous kings". It announces openly their origins: "If I who belong, native from Angola".

The appearance of this enunciation subject comes forth inside a field of political dispute on affirmation of an identity. Gama gives the satirical-racial poems a political meaning, resulted from a racial subordination experience, releasing strikes to a "white" model closed in its whiteness<sup>22</sup>. The complexity of the racial domination is reflected through his *enunciating persona*, but also reveals and expresses the "awareness of all the community to which he belongs"<sup>23</sup>. By expressing the dramas and the conflicts of the black men and women, but without detaching from the literary demands, Gama's *enunciating-lyric-persona* also appears in some moments as one of *us* (black community), when he expresses dilemmas, wishes and ways of life of the black colectivity. The discussed topics – slavery, freedom, Africa, the city, the heroes – are the ones that highlight the most the *us* in the enunciation.

Today, sad, you don't sing,  
As once did in palmares;  
Today, slave, at the manors  
Neither swayed by the worshiped breeze;  
Nor bonded to your chirps  
- By the bald dark rocks -  
Of the sliding waterfall.

His poetic act amplified his existential drama, giving him a wider political range, "because he starts representing the condemnation not only of that isolated act, but of the society that authorizes him"<sup>24</sup>. This existential drama reflected in his literary verve. In his writings, Luiz Gama had the usual gesture of "announcing the simplicity" of his verses and requesting compliance of his readers. This position is present in the first poem of the book, named *Protase*, which announces the satirical profile of the author and the construction process of his trovas burlescas.





Figure 2 – picture from the newspaper *Diabo-Coxo*, nº1, 1864. Sunday newspaper with 8 pages, 4 with illustrations (caricatures, portraits and daily routine scenes) and 4 with texts (articles, poetry, news, reviews, jokes, riddles, etc.), in which Luiz Gama e Sizenando Barreto Nabuco de Araújo, Joaquim Nabuco's younger brother, were active. *Diabo Coxo*. São Paulo: Edusp, fac-similar edition, 2005.

25

Hegel understood the Africans as not only prehistoric, but also pre-political. In: GILROY, Paul. *Entre Campos: nações, culturas e o fascínio da raça*. Translation by Célia Maria Marinho de Azevedo et ali. São Paulo: AnnaBlume, 2007. p. 79.

26

Luiz Gama, *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas de Getulino...* Op. Cit.

27

ARAÚJO, Jorge de Souza. *Retrós de espelhos: o romantismo brasileiro com lentes de aumento*. Ilhéus (BA): Editus, 2011, p. 477.

28

Luiz Gama. *Radical Paulistano*, July 29, 1869. Arquivo Público do Estado de São Paulo. Available at: <[www.hemerotecadigital.bn.br](http://www.hemerotecadigital.bn.br)>. Accessed on: October 10, 2012.

Although Gama demonstrated full ideological conviction of his racial particularity through his activism and his journalistic work, it is possible to notice a sensibility regarding the social and philosophical judgment<sup>25</sup> that raised doubts on the cognitive capacity of the black. It becomes evident in the first page of *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas* in the epigraph of authorship of the Portuguese playwright Faustino Xavier de Novais: "However if someone sees them/ Then mock them, about me/Defend me, and so say!/Each one gives what they have". Which, along with the verse "Crude productions of uncultured mind,/In times of constructed shameless scandal;/But daughters of a mind that doesn't pay,/Lousy flatter to perjurer souls<sup>26</sup>", not only express a "poem pretense" that "disguises a desire, of absence of technical domain", as Jorge de Souza Araújo<sup>27</sup> suggests. In the analysis of his productions, we notice that the preoccupation before the literate culture of his time was not only in the literary field. His inquietude or insistent search for justification, for adapting himself to the standards, also appear in his journalistic writings.

Then, be clear, once and for all, that my great interest, unshakeable interest which I will keep forever, regardless the strongest setbacks, is the complete, free of charge, guarantee of the rights of the neglected who run to my humble knowledge on the matter<sup>28</sup>.

Souza Araújo and Elciene Azevedo just realized this intellectual "disguise" in *Trovas Burlescas de Getulino*. As for Lígia F. Ferreira, in the re-edition of *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas & outros poemas*, even if there is a wider panorama regarding the difficulties of editing and writing of the first book by Gama, she emphasizes that he "pretends to endorse the representation of the whites in that time convinced of the inborn inability of the

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"A matter of freedom" ("Questão de liberdade"). Luiz Gama. Correio Paulistano, Saturday, March 13th, 1869. Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira da Fundação Biblioteca Nacional. Available at: <www.hemerotecadigital.bn.br>. Accessed on: October 10, 2012.

31

FANON, Frantz. *Os condenados da terra*. Juiz de Fora: UFJF, 2005. p. 52.

32

Idem.

33

"It is symptomatic, therefore, that Luiz Gama insists all the time in evidencing – with a tone so full of humility that is annoying – that he knew that his place was not among literate men, because, after all, he was a former slave black man. His criticism was made within a manorial logic, putting himself exactly in the position in which a lord would like to see him, without damaging or directly transgressing the domains of dependency". AZEVEDO, Elciene. *Orfeu de Carapinha – A trajetória de Luiz Gama na Imperial cidade de São Paulo*. Campinas: UNICAMP, Research Center in Social History of the Culture, 1999, p. 56.

34

In the chapter "About Violence" (Sobre a Violência), the context of Fanon's reflections is the African decolonization movement, but are highly relevant to our analysis, Op. Cit., p. 60.

35

GAMA, Luiz. *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas de Getulino...* Op. Cit.

36

STEPHAN, González. *Economías fundacionales. Diseño del cuerpo ciudadano*, by CASTRO-GÓMEZ, Santiago. *Ciências Sociais, Violência Epistêmica e o problema da "invenção do outro"*. In: LANDER, Edgardo (org.). *A colonialidade do saber – eurocentrismo e ciências sociais*. Translated by Julio Cesar Casarin Barroso Silva. Buenos Aires: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciências Sociais, 2005, p.173.

37

I base myself in the positions of the anthropologist Walter Mignolo in *Histórias Locais, projetos globais – colonialidade, saberes subalternos e pensamento liminar*, text in which he defends that in a transnational world one shall not link language, literature, culture and territory to the national ideologies. Thus, he supports that "literary studies must be redefined and matters resulting from the eastern expansion and from global interconnections since the end of the 15th century must be discussed", which point to transimperial, transcolonial, transnational and cultural studies. MIGNOLO, Walter D. *Histórias Locais, Projetos Globais – colonialidade, saberes subalternos e pensamento liminar*. Belo Horizonte: UFMG, 2003.p. 299.

38

Idem.

blacks to perform spiritual activities (...)”<sup>29</sup>. This “disguise” comes across other types of production and, ten years after his first book, she persisted on the idea that it possessed a “humble knowledge on the matter”:

I, obscure man by birth and social condition, and of little intelligence, have never considered, in my natural exile, that the blind fatality could one day drag me to the press, in these fortunate times of constitutional licks, to an illustrated population as of this modern Brazilian Athens certainly is, to support the overwhelmed rights of the unfortunate poor, victims drawn to the dreadful sacrifice that is captivity, by the naïve whims and by the paternal charity of the today's civilized Christians, face of remarkable men, acknowledged and legally credited jurists to whom the and almost divine national government, in a blessed hour, trusted the sacred priesthood of the honorable judicature<sup>30</sup>.

"It was the settler that made and still makes the colonized"<sup>31</sup>. As colonized subject, Gama sees himself in the middle of a conflict of values between the modern civilizing project and the “brutalization” of the captivity. We understand this intellectual “disguise” as product of the antonym of the slave-holding modernity, once it obligated the blacks to improve themselves through “universal” values of the writing skills, subjugating their knowledge. Since childhood, it was already clear for him that this chosen world, “interdiction spreader”<sup>32</sup> had to be systematically questioned in a critic way. The tone of his writing, aside from combatant, had an strategic style in which he assumed his limits, submitting himself to invert the senses – which, in my eyes, is not “really annoying”<sup>33</sup>. The slavery did not bring only physical violence; the diaspora brought incommensurable symbolic violence:

The violence that affirmed the supremacy of the white values, the aggressiveness that impregnated the victorious confront of these values against the ways of living or thinking of the colonized makes, quid pro quo, the colonized giggle in irony when these values are evoked before them<sup>34</sup>.

Through the verses, Gama explores, in a critic and ironic tone, the academic and epistemological racism. In a satirical tone, he shows us the place of a diasporic subject, “de-territorialized”, unable to produce and consume science, given their intellectual capability and their human condition:

Sciences and letters  
Are not for thee;  
Black from the Coast  
Is not a person here.

Sorry, my dear friend,  
There is nothing I can give you;  
In the land the ruled by *white*,  
We're deprived even of thinking!..<sup>35</sup>

For González Stephan<sup>36</sup>, “writing was a practice that, in the 19th century, responded to the need for ordering and establishing the logic of ‘civilization’ and that anticipated the modernizing dream of the creole elites”. The diasporic intellectuality of Gama resides in the rupture of the symmetry and of the “complicity between language, literature, culture and nation with the geopolitical order and the geographic boundaries”<sup>37</sup>. Once the “language and literature were part of state ideology”<sup>38</sup>, which objective

To Angel Rama, these subjects were bearers of a capital importance in the moment of the social and structural formation of the colonial America, from the relation between letters and society. RAMA, Angel. *A cidade das letras*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1984, p.43.

40

The spaces were: *Ensaio Literários* (1846), *O Arrebol* (1849), *Revista Mensal do Ensino Filosófico Paulistano* (1851), *O Acaíaba* (1852), *Ensaio Literários do Ateneu Paulistano* (1852), *O Guaianá* (1856), *Revista Paulista* (1857), *O Acadêmico do Sul* (1857), *Memórias da Associação Culto à Ciência* (1859), *revista da Academia de São Paulo* (1859), *Ensaio Literários do Club Científico* (1859), *O Kaleidoscópio* (1860), *O Timbira* (1860), *Revista Mensal do Instituto Científico* (1862), *Imprensa Acadêmica* (1864), *Tribuna Liberal* (1867), *Radical Paulistano* (1869) e a *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* (1838). These, among others, were spaces that materialized the ideas of the literate city. ADORNO, Sérgio. *Os aprendizes do poder – o bacharelismo liberal na política brasileira*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1988. p.175-176.

41

GILROY, Paul. Op. Cit. p. 79.

42

SILVA, Antônio de Moraes. *Dicionário de Língua Portuguesa*. Edition fac-similar of the second edition from 1813, Rio de Janeiro: Oficinas S. A Lith-Tipografia Fluminense, 1922, p. 370.

43

CAMILO, Vagner. *Risos entre pares: poesia e comicidade no romantismo brasileiro* (2nd generation). 1993. Master's dissertation (Master's degree in Language) – Language Studies Program, University of Campinas, 1993, p. 19.

44

MARTINS, Heitor. *Luiz Gama e a consciência negra na literatura brasileira*. Salvador: Afro-Ásia Journal – Center of Afro-Oriental Studies of the Federal University of Bahia, nº 17, 1996.

45

GILROY, Paul. *O Atlântico Negro – modernidade e dupla consciência*. São Paulo: Ed.34; Rio de Janeiro: University Candido Mendes, Center of Afro-Oriental Studies, 2001, p. 43.

46

The date is defined by SCHWARCZ, Lilia Moritz. *O espetáculo das raças – cientistas, instituições e questão racial no Brasil (1870-1930)*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1993, p.57.

47

Idem, p.57.

48

Édouard Glissant defends the thesis that “the cultures of the world put in contact with each other transform themselves in a fulminant and absolutely conscience way, alternating among them, through irredeemable shocks, of ruthless wats, but also through conscience improvements and hope that allows us to say – without being utopian, even being – that today's humanities are hardly abandoning something in which one would be obstinate to a long time ago – the belief that the identity of one being s only validity and recognizable if it is exclusive,

was to maintain the Brazilian society undivided and harmonious, even if presented nationalist political postures, Gama represents a black literature, more precisely a satirical-racial anthology, which disturbs the construction of the imaginary homogeneous community that is, according to Benedict Anderson, the nation.

Imbued with a double consciousness, Luiz Gama, did not spare efforts to enter this specialized social group, of those who handled the pen with functions involving power<sup>39</sup>. Sérgio Adorno names this social group as academic publicists, because of its bachelor nature, gravitating around São Paulo Law Academy. They had means for their publications at disposal, in a moment that the literary, scientific and journalistic productions shared the same space<sup>40</sup>.

His caustic pen arises in this paradoxical circumstance, in this environment of antinomies of the modern age, which seeks to answer the arbitrariness of a race-mediated modernity<sup>41</sup>. For this purpose, he made use of the satire that, according to the edition from 1813 of the *Dicionário de Língua Portuguesa* by Antônio de Moraes Silva, is a “censorial poem of public or one's, customs and flaws”<sup>42</sup>. This style was in evidence among the “young men” graduated in the Law academy. It is important to emphasize that the satirical poem only started to be significantly explored with the second romantic generation<sup>43</sup>, starting with *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas* de Getulino. Although often used, the satire was not appreciated as a literary genre. “Luiz Gama, if not of all Brazilian literature, is at least the most important satirical poet of Romanticism”, Heitor Martins supports<sup>44</sup>.

When we establish a parallel between literary production and race in the Brazil from 1800, we try to highlight the weight that race has in the context of cultural production and political life in the second half of 19th century. The postulates regarding race, of Portuguese inspiration, were already fully established in the settlement centuries. In the historical moment of Luiz Gama there is a configuration and a cultural model of its own, with particular shapes in dealing with the misfortunes of the race. Gilroy, quoting the studies of Nancy Stepan on race and Science, observes that “before the consolidation of the scientific racism in the 19th century, the word ‘race’ [was] used almost the same way that the word ‘culture’ is used today”<sup>45</sup>. This is not the way race appears in Gama's intellectual production: we have evidence of it much more as political category of representation and identification.

1870 marks, in Brazil, the beginning of theories such as positivism, Darwinism, evolutionism, which played the central role in the development of the history, sociology literary and, mostly, ethnographic studies<sup>46</sup>. Even before the “success” in the academic and social environment of the postulates that affirmed “the human races, while ‘diverse species’, should see hybridization as a phenomenon to be avoided”<sup>47</sup>, Luiz Gama vehemently negated this construct of modernity through his poetic imagination. Contrary to the “reason-logical” thought and its predictability, Gama, in his reflections, shows a counter-narrative, an esthetic sensibility regarding the looked down upon ethnic-racial contacts and relations, as a historic possibility of creolization<sup>48</sup> of a nation in process of identity affirmation.

Gama demonstrated a special appreciation for the poem *Saudades do Escravo*, by José Bonifácio de Andrada (o Moço), and for the fact that he had offered and shared one of his works to be part of the anthology *Trovas Burlescas* in its first edition.

different from every other possible being." GLISSANT, Edouard. *Introdução a uma poética da diversidade*. Juiz de Fora (MG): Publisher UFJF, 2005, p. 18.

This fine production [*Saudades do escravo*] was given to us by its distinguished author Dr. José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva; we publish it before our obscure volume to serve us as an Abracadabra, in the stormy seas of censorship and in the horrible bluntness of the sordid selfishness of the monopolists.

Slave – no, I did not die  
In the iron chains of slavery;  
There in palmares I lived,  
Have my heart free!  
In my torn flesh,  
In the bleeding faces  
I feel the tortures from here;  
From this miserable body  
My released spirit  
Didn't leave – kept me there!...

49

See chapter "Cheer the tired traveler" ("Anime o viajante cansado"): W.E.B. Du Bois, *a Alemanha e a política da (des) territorialização*. GILROY, Paul. Op. Cit. p. 223-280.

Gama's social experience as a black man and former slave, allied to his intellectuality, enabled him to understand the imperial socio-historical reality by means of a double consciousness: social and racial. The double consciousness, concept developed by W. E. B. Dubois<sup>49</sup>, refers to a conscience forged in both experience and memory of the diaspora and in the slavery.

On the front fools, Quixotic heroes /  
Rubber Barons of trafficking /  
I want to take to Sumano temple /  
These arks marked with ignorance<sup>50</sup>.

50

GAMA, Luiz, *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas de Getulino...* Op. Cit.

The verses constitute an anthology sustained in the contradictions of class and race of the enslaver society from both São Paulo and Brazil. They interpret the standing dominance social relations, among other topics, not necessarily political topics, for instance lyrical poetry carrying passionate sensibility. Through a satirical language, the hierarchical and authoritarian social structure are criticized, as well as its operation. Jorge de Souza Araújo grants *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas* a place of honor

[...] in the cast of our most remarkable epigramist, whose lineage, in the Brazilian literature, has in Gregório de Matos an indisputable primacy and excellence in the language of swindling and satire [...] <sup>51</sup>

51

See ARAUJO, Jorge de Souza. *Retrós de Espelhos...* Op.Cit., p 476.

The author still acknowledges in the poem *Farmacopeia* "the satirical genius of Luiz Gama beyond the epidermal resentment" <sup>52</sup>. I believe that it is not about a mere "resentment", but about living in a modernity that divided him between statements of the racial particularity and the appeal to the modern universals that transcend race.

52

Idem, p. 477.

The romanticism had in its core a particular group of literate that gathered Law students of the city of São Paulo. The *Revista da Sociedade Filomática*<sup>53</sup> called its appreciators to produce local poem inspired in the nature. So Justiniano José da Rocha expresses himself, in 1833:

53

Created by the academics from the School of Law of São Paulo, Carlos Carneiro de Campos, Francisco Bernardino Ribeiro e José Inácio Silveira da Mota. ADORNO, Sérgio. *Os aprendizes do poder...* Op. Cit., p. 174.

However when I pay attention to our landscapes, the customs of our peasants, in one word, the American untouched nature, still offers paintings as pure as it is to the poet who wants to paint it; when I remember that the blue sky of the tropics was not sang yet, that not even one gifted poet had their lovers resting in the mild shades of our mango trees, I dare to wait that our poetry, majestic, rich, variable, and brilliant, like the nature that inspires it, will not have anything to envy regarding the Corydon European descriptions, always lain under tired beeches<sup>54</sup>.

54

See ARAUJO, Jorge de Souza. *Retrós de Espelhos...* Op. Cit., p.21.



55

Dante Moreira Leite in *O caráter nacional brasileiro*, cited by ARAUJO, Jorge de Souza. *Retrós de Espelhos...* Op.Cit., p.26.

56

SCHWARCZ, Lília Moritz. *Racismo no Brasil*. São Paulo: Publifolha, 2001. p.21.

57

BOSI, Alfredo. In: ARAUJO, Jorge de Souza. *Retrós de Espelhos...* Op.Cit., p. 25.

58

CHAUI, Marilena. *Brasil – mito fundador e sociedade autoritária*. São Paulo: Publisher Perseu Abramo Foundation, 2007. p.9.

59

FANON. Frantz. *Pele Negra, Máscaras Brancas...* Op. Cit., p. 33.

60

Idem.

61

For Joaquim Nabuco, it was the slavery that transformed a "thinking man into a purely animal state", arising, thus, the objectified slave. Actually, the slave objectification appears in historiography, in 1860, in Perdigão Malheiro's work. For Sidney Chalhou: "The problem of the objectification of the slaves gains a wider dimension. The legal definition of the slave as 'thing' also becomes a social condition, with the pretension of understanding or describing the historical experience of the blacks". This position is in CHALHOU, Sidney. *Visões da Liberdade – uma história das últimas décadas da escravidão na corte*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2011. p.42.

62

BHABHA, Homi. *O local da cultura*. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 1988. p.59.

63

RISÉRIO, Antonio. *Textos e tribos...* Op. Cit., p.20.

64

See DUARTE, Eduardo de Assis. *Literatura afro-brasileira...* Op. Cit., pp. 11-23.

65

Luiz Gama, *Correio Paulistano*, November 10, 1871. National Library Foundation, Available at: <[www.hemerotecadigital.bn.br](http://www.hemerotecadigital.bn.br)>, consulted on August 20, 2013.

66

BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *A cultura popular na idade média e no renascimento – o contexto de François Rabelais*. São Paulo: Hucitec, 2010. p. 81.

67

Idem, p.81.

Nevertheless, not all the romantic poets carried out this esthetic speech. The third generation of romantics was marked by political and social militancy. The conservative language of the romantic thinking that tried to neutralize the different, sentenced the native to the past, "a figure of the past and, therefore, did not represent a menace to the standing order, especially to the slavery"<sup>55</sup>. Luiz Gama shows a politicized different, a menace to the *status quo*, to the hegemony of the whiteness. The guiding ways to the romantic poetry, as the *Revista da Sociedade Filomática* postulated, showed an imperialist notion of the local culture, especially when referring to peasants as extension of the nature. The nature, in its exoticism, awakened more interest than the alterity<sup>56</sup>. The images of the subjects (natives, blacks) in the romantic thinking, when making a "frank extolling of the settler"<sup>57</sup>, spoke for the other and looked for refounding the founding myth, indispensable to the formation of the national identity. For Marilena Chauí

(...) founding myth is the one that does not stop from finding new means to express itself, new languages, new values and ideals, in such manner that, the more it appears to be something else, the more is the repetition of itself<sup>58</sup>.

Luiz Gama made a new poetic language of the nation emerge or had it become necessary, an unofficial language, which would enable talking to the others about the existence of the black otherness<sup>59</sup>. From *Trovas Burlescas de Getulino*, the racial relations start constructing a literary theme in a critical way. For the individuals of color who lived the effects of the colonial experience, "to speak" was "absolutely to exist to the other person"<sup>60</sup>. Gama lived a unique historic experience when he represented himself. It does not mean to endorse the dogma of self-representation, in which only the blacks could speak of themselves as essential part of a racially subordinated social group.

The place Gama entered authorized him to express the world view of himself and of a devoid of literary work socio-racial segment. The idea of the black as objectified<sup>61</sup> contributed to the non-recognition of their poetic capabilities. *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas* makes the way of the other amid the relations of dominance, earns its power of signifying, "of establishing its own institutional and opposition speech"<sup>62</sup>. The compelling power<sup>63</sup> of Gama comes from his diasporic social experience, from his position as a deterritorialized subject, from the place between. These are the places, the lands of the black literature<sup>64</sup> which provides the materials for the poetic representation of the blacks in their historically repressed desires.

In the historical moment in which slave property was the focus of both public and private political debate, arises a black man with a production that tries to satirize this objective reality. Luiz Gama used the language of the laughter as a counter-narrative that sought to unmask the "administrative and judiciary corruption"<sup>65</sup> by showing the "truth revealed through the laughter"<sup>66</sup>. The laughter creative force, Mikhail Bakhtin assures,

(...) could never be an instrument of oppression and brutalization of the people. No one ever could make it official. It always remained a liberation weapon in the hands of the people<sup>67</sup>.

The laughter has a particular value inside an enslaver society, once it disorientates challenges the manorial authority. The laughter in Luiz Gama appears as sarcasm against the lack of integrity of the abolitionist laws.

68

Analyzing the place of the poetry of Luiz Gama, who at times is seen as a standard, and at other times is mistreated, it is possible to see him in the pantheon of the literates in *História da Literatura Brasileira* by Silvio Romero and, at the same time, see him as "a mere formal mimicry of the stanzas, about customs and flaws of the epoch," in *Antologia dos Poetas Brasileiros*, by Manuel Bandeira.

69

OLIVEIRA, Sílvio Roberto dos Santos. *Gamacopéia: ficções sobre o poeta Luiz Gama*. 2001. Thesis (Doctorate in Theory and History of Literature) – State University of Campinas, Institute of Language Studies, Campinas, 2004. p.214.

70

BERND, Zilá. *Introdução à literatura negra...* Op. Cit., p.40.

71

Ibidem, p.41.

72

Ibidem, p. 45.

73

Coelho Neto was born in Rio de Janeiro, in 1864, he was a novelist, a critic, a playwright and member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters (Academia Brasileira de Letras). When he prefaced *Trovas Burlescas*, he already possessed literary and political notoriety. He participated in the abolitionist campaign beside his friend José do Patrocínio and, in 1899, he wrote the novel *A Conquista*. He was a federal deputy in Maranhão in 1907 and in 1928 he was elected Prince of the Brazilian Prose Writers. Coelho Neto was one of those legitimizing instances, whose critic comment can be divided between esthetic (absence of beauty in the form) and politics (that goes straight for the target).

74

Luiz Gama, *Emancipação*. *Gazeta do povo*, December 1, 1880. In: FERREIRA, Lígia Fonseca. *Com a Palavra Luiz Gama...* Op. Cit., p. 151.

75

ADORNO, Sérgio. *Os aprendizes do poder...* Op. Cit., p. 157-234.

76

SKIDMORE, Thomas. *Preto no Branco – raça e nacionalidade no pensamento brasileiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Paz e Terra, 1976. p.22.

The literary review<sup>68</sup> understood the esthetic of *Trovas Burlescas de Getulino* limitedly. The reviewers, in their most part, considered it a work of poor esthetic value. This consideration prevailed over its political value.

Gama subverted the poetic expressions of the western culture:

Classical poetry	Black Poetry
Greek and Roman muses	Guinea muse
Light skin	jet-black color
White marble	denigrated granite
Lyre/flute/French horn	calabash/d'uruncungo/marimba
European science	Candimba science
Epic form/epic object	epic form/satirical object <sup>69</sup> .

The esthetic value does not determine the sacralization of a work, as Zilá Bernd informs. What decides the future of a work are the legitimating instances: they possess a decisive influence in its acceptance or in its exclusion in the literary history<sup>70</sup>. Her hypothesis is that "the greater the disruptive and revolutionary potential of the standing order a work contains, the more the risk that one of the instances (...) "may hinder its path and conservation"<sup>71</sup>. Supported in Bernd's reflections, I believe that the space enshrined to Luiz Gama is not linked only to the esthetic value, but to the ability that his productions had of facing the racial reality, "of revealing the hidden faces behind the masks"<sup>72</sup>.

In the preface of the third edition of *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas de Getulino* (1904), Coelho Neto<sup>73</sup> wrote regarding the verse of Luiz Gama

If does not prioritize for the beauty and form, if does not sparkle in artistic labor, if the rhyme, sometimes, is extremely poor, it is free like the arrow, silva, goes straight to the target, pierces it and keeps quivering.

Gama had pretensions for beyond the literature. He made political use of the writing as mediator esthetic activity, having in mind the relations of interethnic conflict. We shall not forget that the reading public of his work was predominantly white, and Gama was aware of it. The very title of the work *Trovas Burlescas* refers to his intention of being comic and his poems indicate his pretensions of not becoming a standard.

In this sense, we try to highlight, in the analysis of the selected poems, the racial satire, the force with which he tried to express the dilemmas of the race, the poetry as a discursive process, in its political involvement, and, mainly, uncovering the racial codes that were subjacent the program of nation and of modernity which was being being built. Luiz Gama had no doubts on the weight attributed to all those of dark epidermis in the economic structures:

This color is the origin of the wealth of thousands of robbers, who insult us; may this conventional color of slavery, as the speculators suppose, similar to the ground, through the dark surface, terminate volcanoes, where the sacred fire of freedom burns<sup>74</sup>.

For Sérgio Adorno<sup>75</sup>, the literature occupied a spotlight in the aesthetization of the political thinking. The literary production was an instrument to promote the "civilizing" process towards a rupture with the remnants of the colonial period. Until the publication of *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas*, the Indianism (indianismo) was "socially and intellectually fashion among the elites"<sup>76</sup> and, in the same decade that Gonçalves Dias vulgarized the Indi-

77

MARTINS, Heitor. Luiz Gama e consciência negra na literatura brasileira. *Afro-Ásia*, Salvador, no. 17, p. 88, 1996.p.88.

78

TODOROV, Tzvetan. *O homem desenraizado*. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 1999. p. 142.

79

HALL, STUART. *Da Diáspora – identidades e mediações culturais*. Belo Horizonte, MG: Editora UFMG, 2003. p. 393.

anist poetry, Luiz Gama satirized the idea of race and gave a value attributing, esthetic and political prominence to the African culture. His poetry intended to promote a symbolic revolution, when he turned to the bases of the mental structures of the society and when he showed poems with reflexive propositions in the ways of racially seeing and thinking about other people, in a moment in which there is a "privilege of the Indianist ideology as Brazilian identity builder, in detriment of the acknowledgement of a black contribution"<sup>77</sup>.

Gama presents himself as an intellectual with the voice of the imagination<sup>78</sup>. He made and appeal to the transformation, to the memory, to the tradition, to the healthiness, to the deterritorialization feeling. He lived with the experience of "exile" and "loss", making him feel both "alien" and "familiar"<sup>79</sup> in the place he inhabited. More than introspective poems, Gama presents, in his productions, the physical and psychological effects regarding the ones who lived the horror of slavery, whose identity was forged in the modern western world. In the reference to Luiz Vaz de Camões, in *Os Lusíadas*, it is possible to notice that there is his main source of inspiration for the epic style and use of heroic images. Sebastianism and diaspora, although they configure as differing historic events, they carry aspects in common: the idea of a past that can be retrieved, the pain and suffering from a feeling of loss:

Oh muse from Guinea, of jet-black color  
Statue of denigrated granite,  
To whom the Lion gives away and surrenders,  
Stripped of the atrocious wild fury;  
Lend me the urucungo calabash,  
Teach me to brandish yout marimba,  
Inspire the cadimba science in  
Lead me to the ways of highness.

He emphasizes the beauty of the black, of the black women, at the time that their image was loaded with stereotyped representations. Such attitude was at least defying to the literary tradition.

When the swift breeze, in between the underskirts  
Waves the hidden cambric,  
Allowing the lustful eyes see  
The smooth shiny ebony legs.

In the poem *Quem sou Eu?*, Luiz Gama shows a striking political critic to social identification and differentiation, besides, in satirical tone, mocking all ranking forms and systems, concluding that everything is mixed. In contrast with the image of ethnic superiority, of the whites, built by the colonial discourse in order to preserve ethnic privileges, Gama responds that identities are hybrids "in everyone there is a relative of mine". We can notice, also in the poem *Quem sou Eu?*, his first concerns on the judiciary system, which years later would mark his journalistic, political and lawyer career, as well as his practice in court, defending the enslaved involved in manumission disputes. From the literary point of view, Bernd states that the poem

goes in the counterflow of the literary schools of the 19th century for revoking, in the poetic field, the social hierarchic system which demanded respect and reverence to the nobility and to other representatives of the dominant class<sup>80</sup>.

80

BERND, Zilá. *Introdução à literatura negra...*, Op. Cit., p. 53.

The author leans on reflexions from Bakhtin in *Problemas da poética de Dostoiévski* when he says that "All the distance among the men is eliminated and a specific carnival category comes into force: the free family contact among men"<sup>81</sup>.

81  
Idem.

I do not tolerate the magistrate,  
That with careless pride,  
Sells the law, betrays justice  
- Brings injustice upon all -  
Strictly depresses the poor,  
Grants shelter to the rich, to the noble  
Only finds hideous the crime  
By the beggar, who is depressed.

In *Quem sou eu?*, there is an epigraph by Augusto Emílio Zaluar, which shares the same interrogative question:

Who am I?  
Does it matter who?  
I am an outcast troubadour,  
Bringing written on my forehead  
This word - Nobody!

According to Luiz Gama, the miscegenation was something so complex that the words black, white or mestizo did not seem to resolve or handle this complexity. Therefrom the insurgent question: *Who am I? (Quem sou eu?)*, answers the mocking offenses from the slavery supporters, who call slaves the goats<sup>82</sup>.

82  
MENUCCI, Sud. *O precursor do abolicionismo no Brasil (Luiz Gama)*. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1937, p.93-94.

This episode that would have caused offense was never reported by Luiz Gama; at least we did not find proof of that. Actually, there are some stories passed on from the publication of Sud Menucci, resulted from memories of "people who remember the great black man, or who lived together with other people that knew him". The fact is that Gama responds this prejudiced practice with his verses. For Menucci, everything happened when, in an audience in which Gama, as a lawyer, needed to listen the Brigadier Carneiro Leão, "man who liked to refer with visible pleasure to his own aristocratic descent, and would do every time he thought it fitted, and even when it did not fit allusions to his badge, the black man interrupted him to clarify a point, as follows."<sup>83</sup>:

83  
Idem.

- So, cousin affirms that he saw...  
- Who is the cousin? - The Brigadier asked, astonished with that lack of respect.  
- You Sir, naturally - insisted Gama.  
- But whose cousin?  
- Well, mine, for sure.  
- Your cousin? - exploded the nobleman in burst of rage. But based in what kinship?  
- Don't give me that! - The lawyer concluded smiling. - I always heard that goat and sheep are related. And closely related<sup>84</sup>.

84  
Ibidem.

Gama is positioned critically against this stereotyped representation of blacks. *Quem sou eu? or a Bodarrada* gave him the "right to enter the gallery of satirical poets/prophets from Brazil"<sup>85</sup>, notes an important Brazilian literary critic, Silvio Romero, one of the first to trace a criticism about Gama<sup>86</sup>.

85  
Cited by SILVA, J. Romão da. *Luiz Gama e suas poesias satíricas*. Rio de Janeiro: Publisher-Library Casa do Estudante do Brasil, 1954, p.96.

86  
Silvio Roberto's position. OLIVEIRA, Sílvio Roberto dos Santos. *Gamacopéia...* Op. Cit., p. 181.

The satirical approaches to racial mixtures in the literature had its greatest exponent in the colonial period with Gregorio de Matos, in *Brazil's*



87  
VERÍSSIMO, José. *História da literatura brasileira*.  
Rio de Janeiro: Editora Record, 1998. p.103.

*Miracles, Hell's mouth (Boca de inferno)*, expresses his particular "aversion to blacks and mulattos, who he, as a matter of course, calls the dogs" <sup>87</sup>.

[...] to be mulatto,  
to have tick's blood  
your estoraque from Congo  
the body smells like mondongo,  
it is a cipher of perfection,  
miracles of Brazil, they are<sup>88</sup>.

88  
Idem, p.104.

The racism of Gregório corresponds to the statutes of cleansing or purity of blood <sup>89</sup> that prevailed in Portugal and in the colonies since the 16th century.

89  
See the entry "Racism" ("Racismo"). In: VAINFAS, Ronaldo. *Dicionário do Brasil Colonial*. São Paulo: Publisher Objetiva, 2000, pp.500-501.

For I am clean and white  
Went to Bahia wretched  
.....  
I do not know what birth is for  
In this contaminated Brazil  
For a white and honorable man  
Without other race<sup>90</sup>.

90  
Ibidem, p.103.

Gregório was an inspiration to Luiz Gama. In the poem *Retrato de um sabichão*, Gama uses a poem of Gregório in his epigraph.

Go as portrait  
By consonants,  
For I am Timantes  
With a toucan's nose with duck's color.

The racism experienced by Gama is a remnant of the politics of "infected races", now focused on biologizing criteria of modern raciology. While "purity" for Gregório denied miscegenation, for Gama the miscegenation denied the idea of racial superiority.

Nowadays, the question remains emblematic, as observed by the musician Caetano Veloso: "I think the Brazilian racial confusion reveals a profound miscegenation"<sup>91</sup>. It is precisely through this confusion that comes up the need of thinking about hybridity<sup>92</sup>. For Homi Bhabha, the societies that have gone through the historical experience of colonization fully lived under the sign of irony. The colonization, when promoted in the same space a juxtaposition of a "set of contradictory and conflicting values"<sup>93</sup>, where "each set questioned and relativized the other"<sup>94</sup>, it established in the "native", an acute awareness of the irony.

91  
VELOSO, Caetano. *Verdade tropical*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997. p. 500.

92  
SOUZA, Lynn Mario T. Menezes. *Hibridismo e tradução cultural em Bhabha*. In: ABDALA, Benjamim Jr. (org.). *Margens da Cultura – mestiçagem, hibridismo e outras misturas*. São Paulo: Publisher Boitempo, 2004. p.114.

93  
Idem.

94  
Ibidem.

If I am black or goat  
Matters little. What can it?  
There are goats of all the castes  
Because that species is very vast...  
There are gray, there're striped  
Dun,[...] spotted,  
Black goats, white goats  
And, let us all be frank,  
Some commoners and other nobles,  
Rich goats, poor goats,  
Important and wise goats  
And also some crooked...

Here, in this good land,  
 Some butt everything, all of them bleat;  
 Nobles, counts and duchesses,  
 Rich ladies and marquesses  
 Deputies, senators,  
 Gentlemen, aldermen,  
 Vain beautiful ladies  
 In their prideful nobility;  
 Superb young princes  
 Proud noblemen  
 Friars, bishops, cardinals,  
 Imperial braggarts,  
 Poor people, noble people  
 Within all of them there are relatives of mine.

As much stratified as the society from São Paulo was, no one escaped from the *bodarrada*. This poem wants to demonstrate that the roles and the social relations between individuals could not be sustained by racial superiority/inferiority, once the color is an empty signifier. There is, here, a social call to rethink the place of color prejudice based on racial purity in a miscegenated society.

In the 19th century, the travelers saw Brazil as a big "racial laboratory". Louis Agassiz, Swiss who has been to Brazil in 1865, for example, was quite adamant about the historical experience of the mixture of races. Therefore, he wrote in his travel reports:

(...) that anyone who doubts the evils of the mix of races, and includes a misunderstood philanthropy to tear down all the barriers that separate it, come to Brazil. Will not be able to deny the consequent deterioration of the amalgamation of the races, more general here than anywhere else in the world, and that quickly puts out the best qualities of white, black and indian, leaving an undefined, hybrid and deficient in mental energy type<sup>95</sup>.

95

SCHWARCZ, Lilia Moritz. *Racismo no Brasil...* Op. Cit., p. 25.

The fear of miscegenation is evidenced in the very expression of the everyday use in the 19th century: goat. The term refers to an iconic image of the social imaginary: the devil figure<sup>96</sup>. The mix of races would have generated a "diabolical" race. Here, the comicality indirectly mocks the monogenic scientific arguments<sup>97</sup> dominant in the 19th century, which believed that mankind was united and that the links between different human groups could degenerate them, argument that contributed to the fears of the white intelligentsia. Luiz Gama took a political look at miscegenation, more directly in the way society represented the otherness, positioning himself with critical autonomy, as protagonist and historical subject:

96

For some researchers, the figure of the Devil would be present since the foundation of Brazil. Ronaldo Vainfas, specialist in colonial history, explains that the first to interpret the appearance of the word was Frei Vicente. "The explanation that Terra da Vera Cruz and Santa Cruz received the name Brazil because of the flaming red wood and that is because the Devil, who had lost the control over the old European Christendom, would find refuge in America". VAINFAS, Ronaldo; SOUZA, Juliana Beatriz. *Brasil de todos os santos*. Rio de Janeiro: Publisher Jorge Zahar, 2002. p.09.

97

SCHWARCZ, Lilia Moritz. *O Espetáculo das Raças...* Op. Cit., p.48.

In Pluto's domains,  
 A goat guards the Quran;  
 In the lundu and in the modinha  
 The bodinhas are sung:  
 Because if everyone has goat tail,  
 Why so much caprice?  
 Let there be peace, let there be joy,  
 Loosen and play the goatness;  
 Cease, because, the early morning,  
 Because everything is *bodarrada*!

It is noticed an ironic compliment to the "hell" of miscegenation. Devil, goat and cabrião were current expressions in productions of Luiz

98

For Antonio Luiz Cagnin, the inspiration for this name came from the novel *Le Diable Boiteux* which had a great success in the 18th century. The book tells the story of Asmodeu, a poor, lame devil imprisoned in a bottle. When he was freed by a student, he granted the young one the power to see, through people's ceiling and walls, what happened with the people inside their houses. Preface of the book version of the newspaper *Diabo-coxo*. In: *Diabo Coxo*, São Paulo, 1864-1865. Written by Luiz Gama; illustrated by Angelo Agostini. Ed. Fac-similar. São Paulo: Publisher of the University of São Paulo's, 200, p. 14.

99

For Délio Freire dos Santos, this name owes its origin to the "influence of the French newspaper-novels, from Sue, Frederico Soulié and Dumas-Marquet, creating characters universally known as D'Artagnan. But the main character of the newspaper-novel was the infamous 'Cabrion'". In: AGOSTINI, Angelo et ali. *CABRIÃO – semanário humorístico* (1866-1867). Ed. Fac-similar. Introduction by Délio Freire dos Santos. São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado, Arquivo do Estado, 1882. p. 24-25.

100

GAMA, Luiz. *Diabo Coxo*. São Paulo: Publisher of the University of São Paulo, 2005, p.14.

101

Text presented on May 21, 1995, in São Paulo. In: FERREIRA, Lígia F. *Primeiras trovas burlucas & outros poemas...* Op. Cit., p. LXVIII.

102

Letter from Luiz Gama to Lúcio de Mendonça... Op. Cit.

103

Gazeta da Tarde, Rio de Janeiro, November 22, 1880. Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira da Fundação Biblioteca Nacional. Available at: <www.hemerotecadigital.bn.br>. Accessed on: October 26, 2013.

104

OLIVEIRA, Sílvio Roberto dos Santos. *Gamacopéia...* Op. Cit., p. 215.

105

GLISSANT, Edouard. *Introdução a uma poética da diversidade...* Op. Cit., p. 148.

Gama. His first illustrated newspaper was called the *Lame-Devil (Diabo-Coxo)*<sup>98</sup>. *O Cabrião*<sup>99</sup> was also a newspaper that immensely contributed in his creation and production. The devil figure appears in his writings as "moralizing agent, critic of the society and its mistakes"<sup>100</sup>. The devil as a character, in the Gama's productions, has the function of "exposing and punishing these criminal or ridiculous, stupid or proud individuals". It is in this tone that character Lame-Devil greets his readers on the front page in the newspaper.



Figure 3 - Illustrative image of the Lame-Devil newspaper, edition No. 3, 1864.

For Antonio Cândido, in *Literatura negra como forma de resistência*, Luiz Gama was one of the few intellectuals of 19th century that launched direct attacks on "definition of whiteness"<sup>101</sup>. In his most famous text, the autobiography addressed to his journalist friend Lúcio de Mendonça, in 1880, Gama casts doubt on the certainties of racial purity. Said: "My father, I do not dare to say I was white, because such affirmations, in this country, constitute serious danger before the truth, regarding the sensitive presumption of human colors"<sup>102</sup>. He sought to break the propositions about race considered "true", presenting critical positions that deconstructed its discursive framework.

It is not the aim of this article to make propositions that lead Luiz Gama to the place of "founder" of the blackness movement, in the patterns in the contemporaneity, even though in 1880, some of his abolitionist companions recognized him as "the illustrious mulatto lawyer of São Paulo"<sup>103</sup>. For Sílvio Roberto, Gama did not elaborate a project that forged the blackness<sup>104</sup>, interpretation that has been supported by Lígia Fonseca Ferreira in her article "Negritude', 'Negridade', 'Negrícia': enquête sémantique et historiquesur trois-concepts-voyageur". As much as the affirmation of the idea of race leads to the subordination of the other in Brazil, there is no historical continuity of discriminatory practices. The situation experienced by Luiz Gama presented a configuration and its own cultural model of discrimination.

Although Luiz Gama did not forge a blackness project, we notice his constant struggle in "defense of African values and the black diaspora"<sup>105</sup>,

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SILVA, J. Romão da. *Luis Gama e suas poesias satíricas*. Op. Cit., p.70.

that somehow, retorted the scientific definitions of the modern thought. "He was, above all, an apostle on service of a cause"<sup>106</sup>, affirms Júlio Romão da Silva, responsible for the fifth edition of *Trovas Burlescas de Getulino*. Subsequent movements for blackness built a narrative from the selective representation of Gama's memory.

In the poem *There goes the verse*, we notice how the African diaspora nourished his imagination, the formation of his own and social conscience. The poetic, emphasizes Édouard Glissant, "is not an art of the dream nor of the illusion, but a way of conceiving oneself, of conceiving the relationship with oneself and with others and express it. Every poetic constitutes a network"<sup>107</sup>.

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Late at night, feeling my head  
Full, as a blazing volcano,  
Light feather I wielded, immediately  
I was weaving the thread of thoughts.  
Invoked the nymphs so they could see  
From my avid estrus, the fire;  
And then, hovering in the sky,  
Were they from the proclaimed poets

Oh, muse from Guinea, of jet-black color  
Statue of denigrated granite,  
Before whom the Lion surrenders,  
Stripped of the atrocious wildness fury;  
Lend me d'urucungo calabash,  
Teach me how to brandish your marimba,  
Inspire in me the science of candimba,  
To the ways of highness, lead me.

The glory, I want to bring down from the old poets.  
From the time of the mighty heroes;  
The men, Camões – shine like gold,  
Decanting the Barons of my homeland!  
I want to engrave in the clear columns  
Obscure power of stupidity,  
And the fame of taking the vile foolishness  
To remote regions of the old Bactria!  
I want that the world, facing me, see,  
A resounding kinky hair Orpheus  
That the lyre despising, for pettiness,  
To the sound decants of the majestic Marimba;  
And, who another Arion among the other Delfins,  
The avid pirates deceiving –  
The fierce paddle they brandishes,  
With style which praises the adust Lybia.

With profound knowledge  
Great achievements of luminous people,  
That the trickery portentously moving  
Haunts the mind, astounds the nature!  
Sly order voters,  
Deputies, Ministers, Senators,  
Bailiffs [,] Diplomats,  
Those who recite the primer of slyness.

In the poem *Minha Mãe*, the subjective conditions of the diaspora and the objective conditions of the slavery come together to give mean-



ing to the close relationship with his mother. From his relations that were fragmented and interrupted by the slavery, he rebuilds, through memory, the condition of his mother in an imagined and imaginary Africa. "From queen in Libya to slave in Brazil". He also expresses the impossibilities of living according to the African way of life from a different time, other than slavery, because of his color. "Of freedom were myth/ Black color of slavery". He pointed that his mother dedicated herself to pray, "an infinite prayer", given "our lost beliefs" in this "land of captivity".

In this poem and in his memory letter, Gama characterized his mother as ornery, soft, restless, vengeful and endowed with activity. This last quality would have been due to her participation in a slave insurrection in Bahia. It is clearly noticed that the diasporic intellectual let themselves be influenced by these constructions in such way that their personality present similar characteristics. This emotional relation created in his narratives nourished the formation of his political identity.

My mother  
Was very beautiful and charming,  
Was the most pretty black,  
Queen from the adust Libya,  
And poor slave in Brazil!  
Oh, how I miss  
Her comforting caresses,  
When with her young children  
She'd play with joy.

We were two – her care,  
Dreams of a beautiful soul;  
She, the simple palm tree,  
Born in the fawn sand.  
In the round ebony arms,  
Of love, the fruit hugged,  
And our lips brought together  
A kiss of yours, which was life.

When the pleasure opened  
Her lips like a purple lily,  
She pretended martyrdom  
In the shadows of solitude.  
The snow-white teeth  
Of freedom were myth,  
In the face, the pain of the afflicted,  
Black color of slavery.

The dark eyes, proud,  
Two stars were glimmering;  
They were shooting stars  
Protected by human body.  
They were sparkling mirrors  
Of our lives, the first,  
They were the final light  
Of our lost beliefs.

As tender as missing someone  
On the cold ground of the grasslands,  
As sweet as the daisies  
On the sunshine of April.  
In the grave and gloomy gesture,

Like the space/vacancy/emptiness that floats,  
Placid mind – it was the moon  
Reflecting indigo skies.

If alongside the penitent,  
To God she prayed contrite,  
Had an infinite prayer  
Like the toll of the bells;  
The tears that rolled down  
Were pearls,  
From beautiful eyes spilled  
In the land of captivity.

Luiz Gama recovers the aspects of the Afro-Brazilian culture by means of memory, traces, remnants, present in the language, in the daily life. *Primeiras Trovas Burlescas de Getulino* shows a hybrid lexicon, in which there are words of the daily life and strong references to Africa: marimba, urucungo, candimba, jet-black color, (azeviche), muse of Guinea. He plays with the languages, demonstrating the hybridity in the formation of the Brazilian linguistics. Gama thought and wrote in those different languages. This act is defined by Walter Mignolo as a kind of *linguajamento*, a language that is not limited to syntactic, semantic and phonetic rules, but that "are strategies to guide and manipulate the social domains of interaction"<sup>108</sup>. In short, this kind of parlance is a cultural practice and a fight for the people<sup>109</sup> in respect of the hierarchization of the language.

It can be noticed, through the verses, what this diasporic intellectual understood for identity, its process and especially its relational condition and how the subjects identified themselves (self-concept):

If the nobles from the land, stuffed,  
In Guinea have buried relatives,  
And, giving away the ancestry, or severe addictions,  
Forget, the men of color, their patrician;  
If mulattoes of white color,  
Already judge themselves superior,  
And, bowed to the mania that dominate them,  
Despise the black granny:  
Don't be shocked, oh news reader,  
For all in Brazil is rarity<sup>110</sup>.

Gama presented a poetic image of a hybrid social history that threatened the cultural authority by questioning the idea of a pure identity or the subordination of the black participation. The questioning about the racialized identities under the white racial supremacy disturbed the image of the nation, in which the black participation was only exalted in the functional and economic aspects. Joaquim Nabuco was sympathizer of this interpretation, when he affirmed that the black was the "main instrument of occupation and maintenance of our country"<sup>111</sup>.

The poems with racial bias present the problems of the subjective perspective of belonging and of the culture. The diaspora as a category of analysis allows us to deconstruct the image of equal nation and rooted belonging. The diaspora presents the complex interlacing of peoples and cultures, "the metamorphoses of individual identity that defy the purity in the 'contact zones'"<sup>112</sup>.

The racial satire was a transgressor poetic exercise, with a view to the place of emergence of this production: a literate society which racial, political

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MIGNOLO, Walter D. *Histórias locais, projetos globais...* Op. Cit., p. 309.

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Idem, p. 310.

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MENUCCI, Sud. *O precursor do abolicionismo no Brasil...* Op. Cit., p.97.

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NABUCO, Joaquim. *O Abolicionismo*. São Paulo: Publifolha, 2000. (Coleção grandes nomes do pensamento brasileiro).

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GILROY, Paul. *Entre Campos...* Op. Cit. p.145.

and literary speech was controlled, given its "powers and perils", seeking "to dominate its random events, evade its heavy and fearsome materiality"<sup>113</sup>, considering the fear of miscegenation in its civilizing and revolutionary aspects.

Through the satirical writing mediated by a diasporic thought, by a historical and critic conscience, Luiz Gama contributed to reconfigure the cartography of the racial belonging in a historical moment in which the literary thinking sought the rooting by idealizing image-symbols of nationality.

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