



Inaesthetics of Performance in the Black Nazarene Procession

Jazmin Badong Llana

Department of Literature, De La Salle University-Manila

jazmin.llana@dlsu.edu.ph

*First presented at the 'What is Performance Philosophy? Staging a New Field' International Conference, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK, on 11-13 April 2013, with support from the DLSU Faculty Development Program.

Abstract: The subject of the paper is the procession of the Black Nazarene of Quiapo, Manila in the Philippines, held on the 9th of January. Theorizing pilgrimage as performance, I am exploring the productive uses of Alain Badiou's concept of 'inaesthetics' in thinking about the performance of pilgrimage as an event where the people who have nothing come to be something, where the subject appears from out of the 'void of the situation'--appearance as subjectivation, but, also, being counted and escaping the count. The paper explores how the procession is organized, supervised, and policed by the church and the state but becomes a site for individual expression and display of piety as well as a site of a metonymic struggle for spaces and shares in the power of the sacred. That performance is/might be a kind of thinking presents the exciting possibility of describing how the 'people who have nothing' think. If in looking at their performances one can see what and how they think and if this thinking can be recognized as valid and legitimate, then they who are commonly construed as having nothing to say may be counted for something. But if their performances think, what might be the thoughts generated and are there ways of accessing them? The paper argues that the performance itself becomes the articulation of these thoughts, the saying that need not be translated into other modes of expression, and therefore can only be apprehended or accessed by a process of witnessing and bodily engagement, a co-performative methodology that in Bikolano culture has its expression in the practice of *anduyog*.

Key Words: performance; pilgrimage; performance as thought/performance philosophy; Black Nazarene devotion; inaesthetics