

The Pilandok Narrative in Philippine History and Society

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Who is Pilandok?

- A mouse deer with a weird relationship with the python
- A prankster in Maranao folktales who plays tricks in order to get the better of others
- Pilandok is often the underdog, poor and powerless who subjects the rich, the powerful the greedy and the corrupt to circumstances which exposes their stupidity, thus the powerful become powerless

Sample story

- Pilandok and the Crocodiles (See Youtube video)

Why Pilandok?

- Pilandok could be the “Filipino everyman” powerless yet clever
- He uses the trick or prank as his main tool in challenging authority
- His cleverness is also his weakness. He walks away laughing at the success of his pranks but he seems to have no self reflection and understanding of his own power

What Pilandok signifies

- The failure of the “trick” or the prank to challenge misrule, unjust governance and authority.
- It is not enough to unseat perceived unjust rulers and “misgovernors”. Power relations and power structures should be challenged with strategic visions, the building of institutions that guarantee empowerment.
- People need to reflect on what “people power” means

Historical “Pilandok” Moments

- The rift between the magdalo and the magdiwang - Bonifacio’s Pilandok moment
- Marcos and the people power revolution
- Estrada and people power EDSA 2

Pilandok and the Recycling of Power Structures

- Trickery or the use of prank to challenge power structures results in the recycling of these structures.
- E.g. the crocodiles would still be there waiting for Pilandok's next important errand