

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

It is an attempt to present a more realistic situation of women's actual participation in politics in the Philippines as national and local politicians and as women citizens. There seems to be a prevailing belief that the Filipino women among Asian women have attained higher status because they have transcended most of the social and cultural constraints that other Asian women have been subjected to in their respective societies. It seems presumed that Filipino women having access to better education have also equal access to opportunities outside the homes including careers in politics. Because of the freedom that Filipino women have gained, they have openly participated in politics as active members in the national legislature and local governments in voting and campaigns during elections as well as in political mobilization for a cause. Women have also served in the bureaucracy. From the day that the Bill of Rights, which allowed the people to exercise the freedom of speech; association and assembly for redress of grievances, was introduced in the Philippines during the American colonial period, women political participation has been quite visible. When women were granted the right of suffrage in 1936, which was the gain made by the demonstrations and lobbies by the women suffragettes, some women did not just stop at voting and campaign participation but also launched their candidacies for elective offices despite the odds that they had to hurdle.

Women politicians have gone a long way since then. The Filipino women had competed strongly in a profession considered the preserve of astute men wherein competence was not the only criterion but adeptness in the art of statecraft as well as in political manipulation. Through the years, women got themselves elected to almost all positions available in the Philippine political system such as in the Philippine Legislature, the governorships of provinces, the mayorships of cities and municipalities, lesser political positions such as councilwomen of provinces, cities and municipalities as well as headships of barangay councils, the smallest

units of government. Finally, a woman for the Presidency was legitimized by the Filipino people during the people power mobilization on February 22-25, 1986. Since the postwar period women have also occupied positions in the Cabinet and performed administrative functions in the bureaucracy. Women, too, have been appointed to the Judiciary - from the Justices of the Supreme Court down to the lesser courts all over the country. Women have also participated in the making of the Philippine Constitutions of 1973 and of 1987. In the contemporary period, some ordinary women citizens have organized peasant and labor movements or have become members of these movements to pressure the government for the creation of policies beneficial to their groups. In the period of the '70s, a few women's organizations had developed in opposition to the authoritarian rule of President Marcos.

Women find it difficult to comprehend the ideas of gender and sex. It's crucial to distinguish between gender and gender inequality in order to prevent knowledge from becoming contaminated. The uncertainty around sex and gender makes the separation of roles between men and women in society ambiguous. "Sex" is the term used to categorize the two human sexes according to the biological characteristics inherent to each sex. Gender differences exist in the physical structure, reproductive systems, chemical and hormonal makeup of the body, and biological traits (Sumar, 2015). Gender ideology is what leads to gender inequity. Women are subjected to harmful norms, values, and ideas by society. Gender ideology also assigns men the role of dominators in all circumstances. Men and women must have the same opportunities and rights as other people to engage in politics, law, economics, sociocultural, education, and the military in order to equitably enjoy the advantages of progress. Achieving gender equality also involves getting rid of prejudice and structural unfairness against men and women (Falabiba, 2019).

The Kingmaker, a scathing portrayal of entitlement, extravagance, and corruption, begins as an Imelda Marcos profile before expanding to show the Philippines in danger. Imelda Marcos is a prominent figure in Philippine politics. She served as the First Lady of the Philippines from 1965 to 1986 during the

presidency of her husband, Ferdinand Marcos. Imelda Marcos was known for her extravagant lifestyle and collection of thousands of pairs of shoes, which became a symbol of the excesses of the Marcos regime. During her time as First Lady, Imelda Marcos held significant power and influence. She played an active role in the government, holding various positions including as a governor, cabinet member, and member of the National Assembly. She focused on infrastructure development, arts and culture, and urban beautification projects, particularly in the capital city of Manila. However, Imelda Marcos and her husband's rule was marred by allegations of corruption, human rights abuses, and the imposition of martial law from 1972 to 1981. The Marcos regime was accused of suppressing political opposition, censorship, and using military force against dissent. Ferdinand Marcos was eventually ousted from power in 1986, and the couple went into exile.

Imelda Marcos made a political comeback after returning to the Philippines in the 1990s. She ran for public office multiple times, including unsuccessful bids for the presidency and the vice presidency. Despite her controversial past, she has retained a significant following among supporters of the Marcos family. It's important to note that the political legacy of Imelda Marcos is a subject of debate and controversy in the Philippines. While some may view her as a prominent political figure, others criticize her for the alleged corruption and human rights abuses that occurred during her time in power. Documentary filmmaker Lauren Greenfield, who focused on the nauseating excess of the privileged in *The Queen of Versailles* and *Generation Wealth*, would seem to have found the perfect subject matter in this. Of course, it's entertaining to watch hate on Marcos because of her willful ignorance of the circumstances behind her ill-gotten wealth. However, Greenfield goes beyond simple caricatures to investigate how the former First Lady and her despot husband Ferdinand plundered a country and fled in shame, only to plan an unsettlingly near comeback to power. In the opening scene of *The Kingmaker*, Greenfield lets Marcos tell her own story while the camera enters her apartment, which is furnished with fine furniture and pricey paintings. After marrying Ferdinand, who aspired to be president, she rapidly established herself as the force behind the throne, assisting him in governing a dictatorship that subjected

the Filipino people to martial law for a number of years. After her husband passed away, she turned her attention to electing her son Bongbong to the vice presidency, with the goal of becoming president in the future. The wife's dynastic politics behind her husband's power is a strategic maneuver to maintain control and influence over political decisions and policies. By positioning herself as a behind-the-scenes power player, the wife can ensure that her family's interests are protected and advanced, even when her husband is in office. This allowed her to maintain a strong grip on political power and influence, effectively extending the reach of the dynasty beyond just her husband's tenure. One strategy often employed by the wife is to groom and support family members for political positions, creating a network of loyal allies who will uphold the dynasty's legacy and protect its interests. As long as the author reads the results of theses, journals and articles from other authors who have previously conducted research on this film, none of them have discussed the feminist side, especially the role of gender inequality in this film. What is always discussed is political matters because it is prominent in this film, therefore the author decided to conduct another research from the previous one, namely regarding gender inequality from the film *The Kingmaker*.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

This research is intended to answer the following questions

1. What are the representations of Imelda Marcos' political transformation in *The Kingmaker* that reflect power and gender dynamics?
2. How can a postmodern feminist perspective be used to analyze Imelda Marcos' influence on Philippine politics, as depicted in the film *The Kingmaker* movie 2019?
3. How does the movie *The Kingmaker* portray the duality between the public and private image of Imelda Marcos, and its impact on perceptions of gender and power?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

1. The documentary *The Kingmaker* highlights not only political but also cultural aspects of Imelda Marcos' life and influence. This study examines how cultural narratives and representations are constructed and propagated, offering valuable perspectives for media and cultural studies scholars.
2. The final project contributes to existing literature by offering a focused and in-depth analysis of Imelda Marcos through the lens of *The Kingmaker*. It bridges gaps in scholarship by combining historical, political, and cultural analyses in a comprehensive manner.
3. The study can be utilized as an educational tool in universities and institutions teaching Southeast Asian studies, political science, history, and media studies. It provides a case study that illustrates the complex relationship between political power, personal image, and historical narrative.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The results of this thesis research can add important knowledge to studying gender issues. This research also has theoretical benefits, namely being a foundation for future researchers who are interested in similar research to improve students' problem-solving skills.

1.5. Methodology of the Study

This research is qualitative research with the type of library research. This research seeks to understand how gender inequality is represented in the *The Kingmaker* film using descriptive analysis methods. Data sources were obtained from books, theses, journals and others. The primary data source used in this research is *The Kingmaker* film. This primary source is in the form of scenes or images that show gender inequality in *The Kingmaker*. This data is obtained from the Loklok application. Later, relevant data will be collected and examined through an analysis process.

1.6. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study aims to critically analyze the political transformation of Imelda Marcos as depicted in the documentary *The Kingmaker* through the lens of postmodern feminist theory, particularly drawing on the work of Judith Butler. Examination of how Imelda Marcos is portrayed in *The Kingmaker* Analysis of the documentary's narrative techniques, visual elements, and interviews to understand the construction of Imelda Marcos' political persona. Application of Judith Butler's theories on gender performativity and power to interpret Imelda Marcos' actions and public image. Exploration of how Imelda Marcos' identity is constructed and deconstructed within the political and social context of the Philippines. Contextualization of Imelda Marcos' role within the broader political history of the Philippines, particularly during the Marcos regime and its aftermath. Analysis of how historical events and political shifts have influenced her transformation and public perception. Investigation of the documentary's impact on public understanding and discourse about Imelda Marcos. Consideration of how media representations of female political figures shape and reflect societal attitudes towards gender and power.

This study acknowledges several limitations that may affect the depth and breadth of the analysis is based on the subjective interpretation of the documentary and may be influenced by the researcher's own perspectives and biases. The primary source of analysis is the documentary *The Kingmaker* While supplementary sources (such as historical texts, interviews, and media articles) will be used, the study's focus on a single documentary may limit the comprehensiveness of the analysis. The study is limited to the period depicted in the documentary and may not fully capture Imelda Marcos' political transformation over time, particularly events that occurred after the documentary's release. The application of Judith Butler's postmodern feminist theory, while insightful, may not encompass all aspects of Imelda Marcos' complex identity and political influence. Other theoretical frameworks could provide additional perspectives that are not covered in this study. Access to firsthand information and primary sources about Imelda Marcos' personal experiences and thoughts is limited, relying heavily on the portrayal and available

secondary sources. The study must navigate cultural sensitivities and potential biases in interpreting a controversial and divisive figure within Filipino society. These limitations are considered and addressed to ensure a balanced and comprehensive analysis while acknowledging the inherent constraints of the study's scope.

1.7. Status of the Study

This chapter will explain the status of the present writer's chosen literary work that has been used in another similar research. Through the research sought by the present writer, there have been several studies done on this movie among them. According to Ballon (2021) on the topic of "*The Machiavellians: Into the Dark Side of the Gold*" "The Golden Time" is widely regarded as referring to the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos' dictatorship and the controversial implementation of Martial Law. The one-hour and forty-minute film transported us back in time to criticize the dark side of the greatest era in the Philippine constitution as well as the ultimately revealed reality of the Marcoses' secret riches. It was elegantly entitled "Kingmaker," referring to the ever-magnificent and exquisite Machiavellian first lady, Imelda Marcos, who played such an important part in her adored husband's regime.

Alberto & Cruz (2022) wrote on their paper with a topic titled "*The Kingmaker*" *A documentary film by Lauren Greenfield*" More than 250 families were displaced to make way for the new residents. One woman, speaking to the camera in a memorable scene, says she'll never forget how the Marcos regime chose its pets over its people. Natural bamboo forests were cleared to create a quasi-savannah. Gazelles, impalas, giraffes, zebra, and waterbucks soon arrived. The island thrived, and it made for a perfect family getaway. But paradise was lost. Following a bloodless 'People Power' revolution, in which the populace railed against nine years of horrific martial law, the Marcos administration fell. And with it, Calauit. With no official gamekeepers and no knowledge bestowed to the remaining island residents, animals overpopulated. Giraffes with shorter necks were observed. It wasn't unusual for a male baboon to mate with his biological

children, and for them to mate with one another. "It's the damage you can't see that's most worrying," Parkinson tells the camera, reflecting upon his part in the Marcos empire. Imelda's reasoning for the whole charade was simple: "I just wanted to make things beautiful".

Cartagena (2023) writes in her paper on the topic of "*The Complex Legacy of the Marcos Regime: An Analysis of the Documentary 'The Kingmaker'*" In this movie, Imelda Marcos' political career is highlighted which was written and directed with significant emphasis on Marcos family's initiatives to repair the family's reputation and regain political power. This documentary is quite interesting to watch and has some genuinely spooky tales that make our skin crawl. Brutality, poverty, and corruption, as well as a focus on ego and extreme greed, are characteristics of the Marcos regime. The declaration of martial law, which demonstrates how people in those times were routinely tortured, is one of many arguments and lectures she heard and read about its regime. For a variety of reasons and in a few specific cases, the director performed a brilliant job. Marcos' administration was one of the most corrupt in the Philippine history. Even though the Philippines has long been a totalitarian regime, this remains one of the most challenging issues. It informed me and, in a manner, made me feel more enlightened. After the results of the discovery of the status of the study above, the author has not found a study with what the author will research.

1.8. Organization of the Study

- Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter provides a background of the study, problem formulation, research objectives, research significance, research methodology, scope and limitations, status of the study, and research organization.

- Chapter II – Review of Related Literature

This chapter contains the writer's explanation of the findings regarding the theme of the paper which provides an explanatory theory.

- Chapter III – Research Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used by the author to analyze the research problem.

- Chapter IV – Findings and Discussion

The results of this research produce a research problem formulation that is in accordance with the Judith Butler's postmodern feminist theory used by the present writer.

- Chapter V – Conclusion and Suggestions

In this chapter, there will be the conclusion of the results of *Behind The Glamour: Analyzing Imelda Marcos' Political Transformation In 'The Kingmaker' Movie 2019.*

