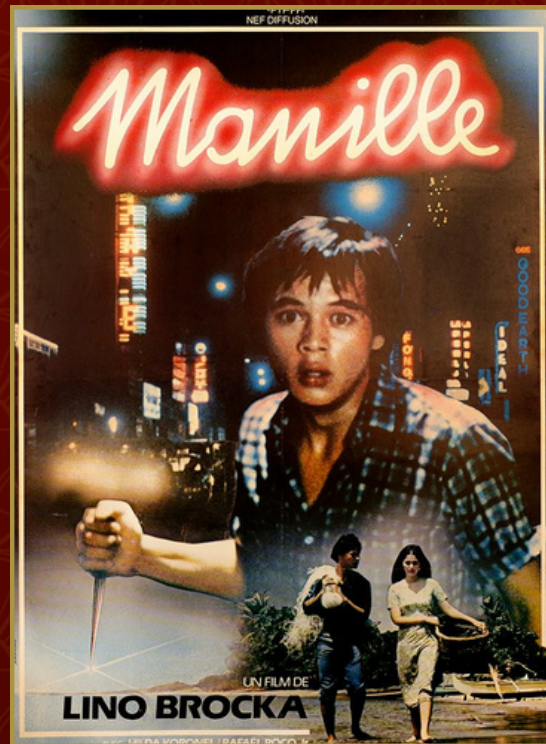
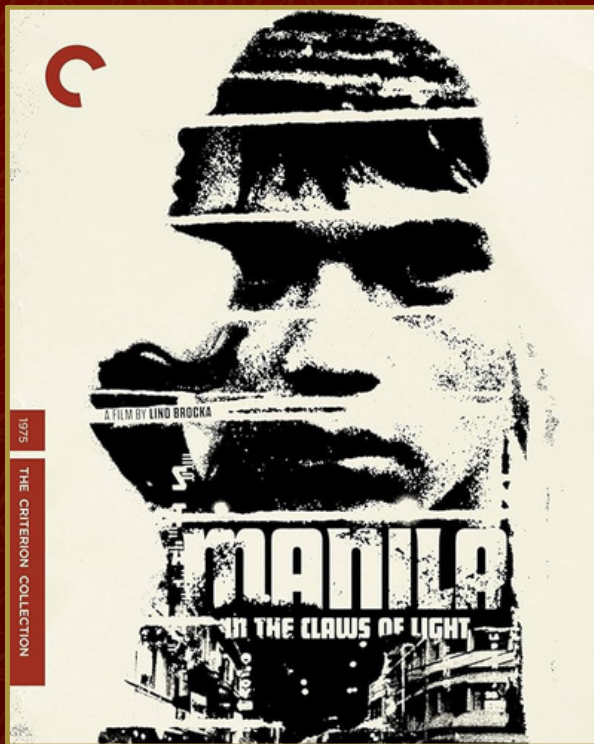


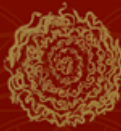
# Lino Brocka's Urban Protest Cinema: Deconstructing Social Realism in *'Manila in the Claws of Light'*

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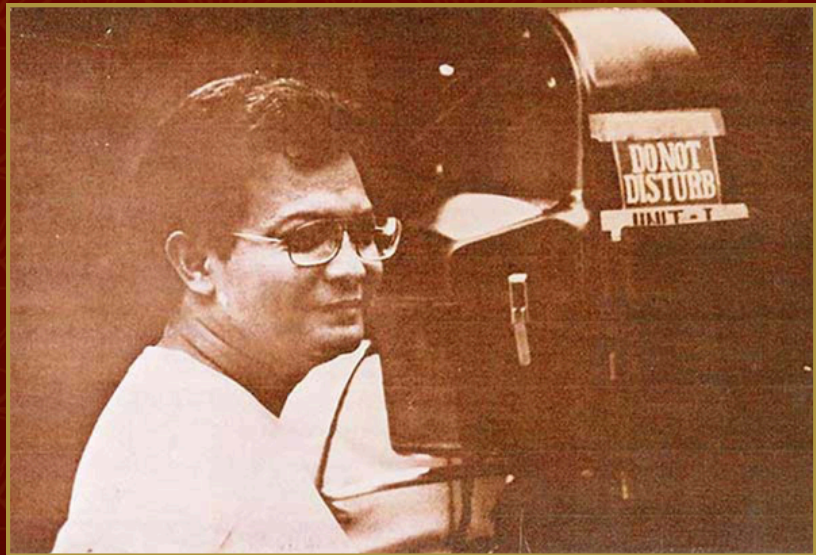


*Manila in the Claws of Light* (1975) is a significant Filipino film

Source: Amazon and IMDb (all images for reference)

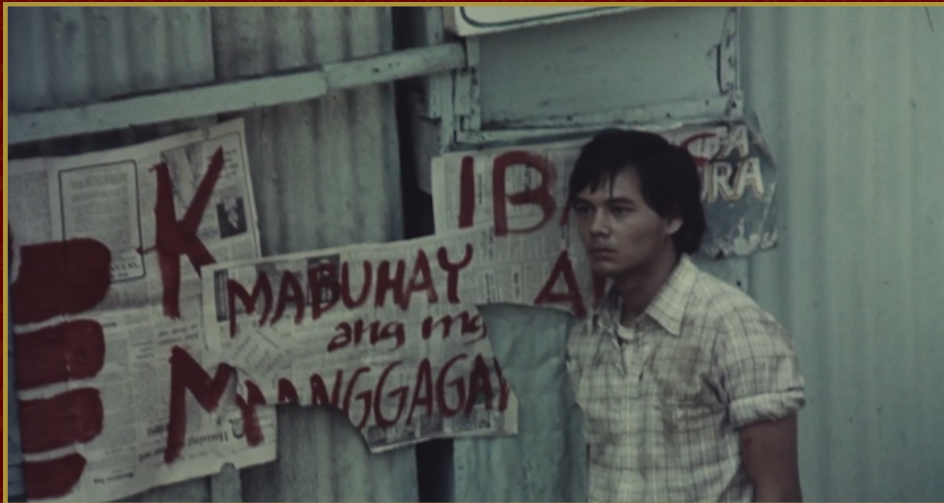
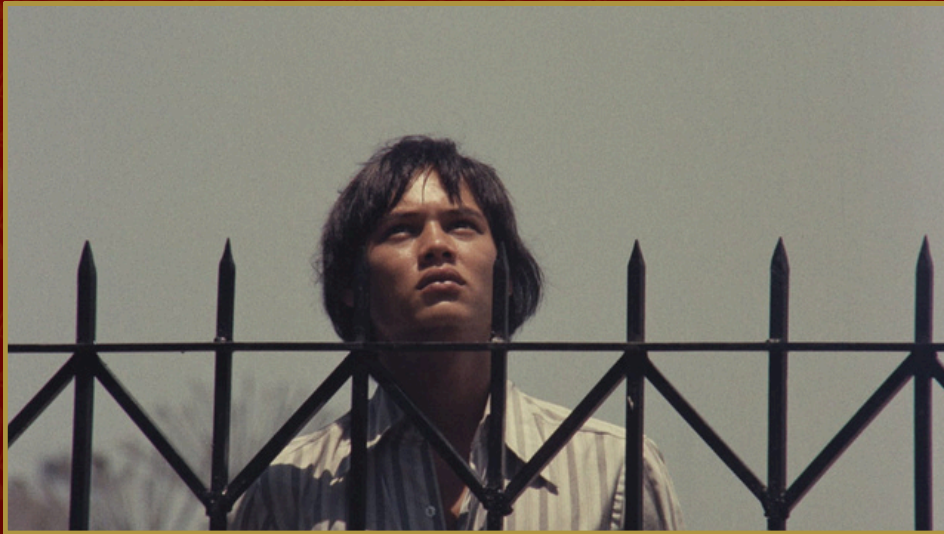
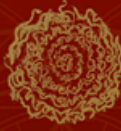


*Manila in the Claws of Light* (1975) is a Filipino neo-noir film directed by influential filmmaker Lino Brocka. The film is based on Edgardo M. Reyes' story *In the Claws of Brightness*, which was published in serial format in the *Liwayway* magazine in 1966 and later published as a novel. The film depicts the story of Julio Madiaga, a young fisherman who travels to Manila in 1970 in search of Ligaya, his girlfriend who was brought to the city to pursue her education. While trying to locate her, he has to navigate the difficult employment scenario in the city.



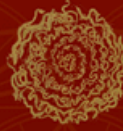
**Lino Brocka is a Pioneering Filipino Filmmaker**  
Source: Tatler Asia, and Bantayog ng mga Bayani

Lino Brocka is known for his urban protest cinema, his “artistic tradition of political resistance,” and his “articulate, yet unrestrained and brutally honest narrative voice” (Gaw, 2022). His works often shed light on social issues in the country, particularly on poverty, class inequities, systemic power structures and imbalances, corruption, and capitalism. His films reflect his “deep commitment to the underrepresented and the disenfranchised, criticizing the social structures that perpetuate inequality” (Buiser, 2024). His most well-known and landmark films are *Weighed But Found Wanting* (1974), *This is My Country* (1984), *Insiang* (1976), *Fight for Us* (1989), and *Manila in the Claws of Light* (1975).



***Manila in the Claws of Light* is one of Brocka's Most Prominent Urban Protest Cinema Works**

Source: The Criterion Collection, Tumblr, and Cinecentric



*Manila in the Claws of Light* is often considered “as much of a sociopolitical study of its time as it is of its lead” (Zheng, 2020). In this film, Manila is a space “suspended between social exposé and parable, juxtaposing naturalistic depictions of proletarian life with moments of dreamy lyricism” (Capino, 2018). Brocka doesn’t seek to glamorize the city of dreams; rather, his depiction is honest and authentic with a “raw, unfiltered, and grimy realism” (Zheng, 2020). However, the film is not without its share of “poised stylization” in jarring contrast; the cinematography also includes “panoramic shots and deep-space compositions emphasizing the breadth, congestion, and horrid majesty of sprawling shantytowns” (Capino, 2018).



**Manila as a City is Depicted with a Raw, Gritty, and Unfiltered Realism in the Film**

Source: IMDb

The film has had a pronounced impact on both Filipino and world cinema. It won Best Picture, Best Director, Best Cinematography, and Best Screenplay at the FAMAS Awards in 1976. It was named in the list of best films of the decade at the Gawad Urian Awards. It has been screened at the Berlin, Toronto, Locarno, Rotterdam, Vienna, BFI London, New York, San Francisco, Guadalajara, Doclisboa, and Udine Far East Film Festivals over the years. It has also inspired a stage adaptation that premiered in 2017.



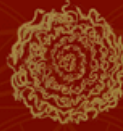
**The Film was Restored in 4K in 2013**

Source: Beyazperde

*Manila in the Claws of Light* was restored in 4K resolution in 2013 by the Film Development Council of the Philippines in collaboration with the World Cinema Foundation. This new version was screened at Cannes in 2013 as a part of the Cannes Classics section and released in the Philippines in the same year. The restored version won Best Archive Restoration Title at the FOCAL International Awards in 2014. The film has also been listed in Steven Jay Schneider's *1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die* compilation, being the only Filipino film to earn this distinction. The film thus remains an important study on social realism in the Philippines.

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## Image Citations:

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