

On the Working Poor
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The past couple weeks, I watched three films that, tied together, I found artistically superb, personally moving, and very thought-provoking. I streamed them on the Criterion Channel—a subscription service I recommend if you are a film buff—and Amazon Prime, but between Vudu and Google Play, you’ll be able to rent them.

In the order I saw them:

- “Sorry We Missed You.” British, 2019.
- “Measure of a Man.” French, 2015. There is a 2018 film with this same title. The one I’m referring to is with the actor Vincent Lindon, who won the best actor award at the Cannes Film Festival for his performance in this film.
- “I, Daniel Blake.” British, 2016.

“Sorry We Missed You” and “I, Daniel Blake” were directed by the great filmmaker Ken Loach, who, incidentally, was 83 when he made “Sorry We Missed You.” Loach co-wrote the film with his long-time collaborator, Paul Laverty. “Measure of a Man” was directed by Stéphane Brizé, who also wrote the screenplay.

What tied these three films together for me is that they were all dramas about the lives of the working poor, people rarely the protagonists in contemporary cinema. If this is a topic that interests you, you could also look into the films of Belgian directors the brothers Luc and Jeanne-Pierre Dardenne, (“The Promise,” “Rosetta,” “The Son,” “The Child”).

I suggest you watch the three films and see what comes out of it for you:

What was their worth as an artistic, aesthetic, entertainment experience?

What feelings, memories, insights into your life, did they prompt? What’s happened to you over the course of your life, what have you become, who you are to yourself and the world?

Do these films make any difference in how you perceive reality and think about things?--politics, race, social conditions, ideology, whatever you care about.

Do these films speak to what you are doing with your life and ought to be doing with it?

I hope you have as rich an experience with these three films as I did.