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# Reply to my Commentator - Hietanen

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# Reply to my Commentator

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Dr Noonan takes the gist of my paper a few steps further and raises important questions which I hope to explore in future studies. As for the present paper, I just wish to make a few clarifications.

It was not my intention to set out with a strict notion of what good argumentation is or what it should be. It may be that my *modus operandi* gives the impression of a higher degree of normativity than what is actually present.

When I state that an argument is defective or flawed, I primarily mean that it does not communicate or persuade *in context*. When the parties do not understand each other, we have failed communication. I wanted to describe how the language users communicate. My description of communicative problems should be understood as a part of this enterprise.

That something is wrong is not always clearly addressed by the discussants, but is nevertheless often easy to note. When Ilona's colleague at the clothing store asks if Nikander's first name Uolevi suits him (in Finland an unusual and outdated first name), and Ilona replies that it did somehow, the colleague answers: "Then I understand that you left him." This is an example of flawed argumentation, and in this case my evaluation is confirmed by Ilona's comment, "No you don't ..."

Dr Noonan asks whether it is "possible to understand working-class life through what they say alone in abstraction from how it is said." This question presents another question: Is it possible to depict working-class life in a film-manuscript? I think we would agree that it is not possible to a full extent, but that it is possible to convey enough to do such life justice—at least in a general sense. And if so, it is also possible to analyse and to describe it, based on the manuscript.

As regards the role of bodily expression, it seems to me that the characters' body language is in line with the taciturnity of their verbal communication. In any case the role of body language is easy to determine in the manuscript since the author needs to mention it explicitly if he wants the reader to notice it.

Certainly an analysis such as this one cannot possibly give anything more than some indications about the argument culture of the working-class. What can be said with certainty is only that the results show *how Kaurismäki has portrayed* Finnish working-class communication. My next step, were I to pursue this, would be to get natural language material to analyse—a difficult enterprise.

Different types and modes of social communication have different uses and occur in different contexts. The academic discourse has its uses, the professional other uses, and everyday working-class argumentation has its own natural context. Although in a certain

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sense foreign to me, I find a compelling beauty in the type of communication that Kaurismäki portrays in *Shadows in Paradise*.

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