

Donnie J. Self*

Reply to Professor Burnett

MISTAKES, LOGIC AND ETIQUETTE

Seldom does one like to admit a mistake, thus I sympathize with Professor Burnett in his attempt to rationalize his original misinterpretation of the limits of the discussion in my article and his attempt to place the blame on me for not giving a caveat full enough to help him understand. And while he suggests that others might have similarly misunderstood, no others have been brought to my attention, and there appears to be no basis for his assumption.

Finally, in logic there is a fallacy known as *argumentum ad hominem* (abusive). It amounts to one offering abuse when one can make no substantive criticism of a position. I contend that Professor Burnett has committed this fallacy when he refers to my article as "idle, analytic exhibitionism [rather than] a substantive discussion of a significant philosophic view." We frequently see this kind of name-calling behavior in popular politics, but it is inappropriate in serious scholarship. I would welcome more serious and substantive responses to my analysis, but with Professor Burnett's response I need only point out what he is doing.

*Professor, Department of Philosophy, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia