

wonders “if he is a human being”? How much enthusiasm would Hogan, Davis, Freedgood, or other members of the MLA exhibit if any of the aggressive insults by Edward Said that I quoted in that letter were turned against them?

Displaying scorn for professional and ethical norms, Edward Said’s unconscionable record of disparagement and distortion is not only his own problem. As apologetic attitudes toward his record confirm, it is also the acute problem of the organization he publicly represents. The imperious author of the derisive attacks cited in my original letter is now the officially authorized spokesman of the Modern Language Association of America.

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To the Editor:

That Edward Said responds to Jon Whitman’s examples of Said’s ad hominem attacks by writing an ad hominem attack on Whitman does not bode well. Whitman’s evidence of Said’s self-righteous scurrility is decoded by Said as an “oedipal rebellion” against himself, Whitman’s former teacher. I can’t think of a better confirmation of Whitman’s critique.

Of course, I’m probably just saying this because . . . let me see: because of resentment of Palestine? Resentment of Columbia? Because of Yale loyalty to Geoffrey Hartman?

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