



# The New Babel: Toward a Poetics of the Mid-East Crises

*Leonard Schwartz*

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*The New Babel: Toward a Poetics of the Mid-East Crises* evokes and investigates—from a Jewish American perspective and in the forms of poetry, essays, and interviews—the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, America’s involvement as both perpetrator and victim of events in the Middle East and Afghanistan, and the multiple ways that poetics can respond to political imperatives.

The poems range from the immediately lyrical to the experimental forms of the “Apple Anyone Sonnets” series, which relies heavily on the Arabic but has Shakespeare as its scaffolding.

In the essays, Schwartz calls on the power of poetry—and of some of the great poets in the Arabic, Jewish, and American traditions—to help rethink the battle lines of the contemporary Mid-East, with the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber looming large.

The interviews provide Schwartz’s discussions with Israeli poet and activist Aharon Shabtai, political philosopher Michael Hardt, and the late, great American poet Amiri Baraka.

In these creative, analytical, and conversational moments, Leonard Schwartz rethinks the battle lines of the contemporary Middle East and calls on the power of language as the essence of our humanity, endlessly fluid, but also the source of an intentional confusion there is a necessity to counter.

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