



The Power of Silence; Expressions of Silence in the novel *Silence* by Yehoshua Sobel

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This essay deals with *Silence* (2000), the first novel by Yehoshua Sobol, one of Israel's leading playwrights. The novel centers around a protagonist who, 8-days old, immediately understands both Hebrew and Yiddish, and chooses to silence them in speech and in writing almost his entire life of nearly eighty years. The novel focuses on the varied expressions of silence: its causes and functions in characterizing the protagonist and his relationships with other characters. The article analyzes the connections between silence and trauma in the Jewish-Israeli reality of an immigrant society and an emergent state, and the role of silence in the self-fashioning of the protagonist. The novel's **silence** has both meta-poetic and meta-linguistic aspects. The essay discusses these aspects through the theme of literary writing (the writing of the village's author, the writing of the father, the protagonist's abstention from literary writing till late in life), and considers silence in other of Sobol's works in various genres. Meta-linguistic aspects are discussed in relation to Hebrew literature through the author's interpretation of his novel in an interview with him. The essay offers a detailed analysis of the relationship between the protagonist and his father, also in comparison with other works by Sobol on the same theme, applying the evaluative criteria outlined above.