

# Silence: silence: a thirteenth-century french romance



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The writer begins *Silence* by calling himself Master Heldris of Cornwall and saying his wish not to have his work spread among wealthy people who don't know how to appreciate it. He refers to them as "the kind of people", which clearly shows his negative attitude toward those who he describes as "prizemoneymore than honor", or "want to hear everything but do not care to make a man happy with some reward they might wish to give".

The phrase "at the beginning of the work", or "before I begin to tell my story" are repeated three times throughout the opening: one at the start, one at the center, and one at the end right before the writer starts telling the story. This, together with strong words such as "command", "request", repeatedly reminds the readers of the writer's demand to preserve his work and of his deep hatred toward greedy people. The writer's strong feeling against avaricious men is expressed clearly: "I feel tremendously compelled, stung, goaded [into talking about this]", and "It bothers me terribly".

Several different negative words and phrases are also used to depict those people throughout the text: "greedy", "nasty", "petty", "fools", "intoxicated with Avarice", "those hateful men". He tells problems relating to those people from the perspective of a poet: "serve them well, as if they were your father: then you will be most welcome, judge a fine minstrel, well-received", or "very bad cheer and a sour face, that's what you'll always get from them" when you ask for something. The bitterness in each sentence and the clear descriptions shows that the writer seems to have experienced those problems himself.

He disgusts greedy people and views them as pathetic creatures that have a dreadful life as they try to "pile up wealth" and "yet afraid of losing it": "a <https://assignbuster.com/silence-silence-a-thirteenth-century-french-romance/>

man afraid is not at peace he is miserable and ill at ease. Wealth only makes a man mean-spirited and makes him toil without profit. All he does is soil himself" Greedy men " rob" world " of all pleasure", and lost their trust in everyone, even their own wives: " he doesn't want her spend any of it, " for one missing penny would mar the perfection of those thousands marks he lost sleep over".

The writer emphasizes that owning property does not make life easier nor brings one any " joy and festivity" if one do not know how to use and share it wisely: " lost sleep", " ill", " miserable", " stingy". Capitalizing Avarice, the writer refer to Avarice as a dangerous goddess who traps fools in her maze of wealth, let them honor her as " their sovereign lady and wet nurse", but betrays them, leaves them " drunk" and " intoxicated" and " driven to disgrace themselves". While hating those fools, the writer is seriously concerned and cry : " O greedy people, alas! las! ". He repeatedly refer to the " locked away" wealth as " disgrace", " shame", and even a dirty substance: " dung". Comparing unused wealth and dung, he further devalues property: " at least dung enriches the soils", while greedy men " abuse this earthy life" and " enclosed their courts with shame forever". Dung is often referred to as dirty and worthless, yet it has a function that benefits the planet, while wealth, often related to luxuriousness and enjoyment, neither brings comfort to its owner nor influence the world positively at all.

Several comparisons are also used near the end of the opening to address the same point: " assets are worth less than manure": " just as wheat is worth more than weeds", rose" more than daisy, goshawk more than falcon more than buzzard, good wine than stagnant water, bittern than magpie, and

most of all “ honestpovertyis of greater worth than a thousand marks without joys and festivity”. The comparisons start from small plants to birds to the main subjects: honest poverty versus useless wealth.

This proves that wealth and greed are inferior and shameful, while praises generosity as superior and honorable. At the end of the opening, after all the hatred has been expressed, the writer says he now can begin his story “ without a lot of fuss and bother”. Since the overall theme of the story relate to property and the problems relating to the right to own it, it appears that the writer does not just simply tell us his feeling toward greed and wealth but his main goal is to prepare us with a basic background of the story.

The transition from the opening to the story is thus smoother. The story begins with the description of King Evan as a wise king who “ maintained peace in his land” and apply strict rules to control his people. What King Evan has is wealth, power and respectso obviously troubles are unavoidable. This obviously connects to the theme mentioned in the opening, therefore, readers can catch up with the story more easily.