

ANCRENE RIWLE: MÜNZEVİ HAYATIN SINIRLARININ KİTABI; YALNIZLIĞI İLÂHLASTIRAN KİTAP

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ABSTRACT

Ancrene Riwle is a book which determines the restrictions of the life of an anchoress, and deifies solitariness. The work dwells on the secluded lives of anchoresses living in a cell attached to a church or a monastery with a window giving on to a reception hall so that they could speak to any guest, if only they are allowed to, without their having to leave their small rooms, and another window through which they could speak to their servants and with a third window for participating in ecclesiastical services. The windows symbolise the mirror of one's spirit, and little doors to a grave in the sense that anchoresses are not interested in the worldly affairs. In this context, the enclosure stands for the grave, and the funeral service takes place at the time of enclosure as a sign that the anchoresses were dead to world. In the work, which consists of eight books on the proper conduct of an anchoress, who should attain unprecedented glory on the eyes of God, the author is concerned with individual wholeness, moderation, creative thinking, commonsense and inward godliness, and he criticises the outward form under the pretext of piety. In comparison to the manuals of sins, treatises on confessional literature and the religious writings of the time, the Medieval clichés are overridden by the independent thought of the writer of Ancrene Riwle. For example, he says that the veils and wimples of anchoresses, that cover the head firmly, do not indicate a pious anchoress and remind one of Apostle Paul who did not determine the forms and traits of coverings on head. He also decries itching hair clothes or the hedgehog-skins that bleed the body to cause to atrophy the carnal pleasures. His interest in homey, flexibility, innovations and colloquial style in prose makes the writer a precursor of the reformation in religion, and the new-style prose-writing.

Key Words: Ancrene Riwle, anchoresses, a secluded life, religious verdicts, Medieval literature, bestiary.