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L'imaginaire des saintes



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Jeanne de Chantal, une spirituelle sans images ?

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- **Author:** Lencquesaing (Marion de)
- **Abstract:** This study deals with a paradox: we would like to talk about the weakness of a saint imaginary universe in the middle of the French seventeenth-century « culture de l'intériorité » (Mino Bergamo). Jeanne de Chantal (1572-1641), one of the most famous nuns of the Counter-Reformation, spiritually guided by François de Sales and canonised in 1767, wrote more than two thousand letters. These letters tell the spiritual experience hardly using images, or choosing topical images from the mystical Tradition. This phenomenon could be read as the symptom of a painful and worrisome lack: the Absence of God during the spiritual experience. How can the most singular can be conveyed with other people's words? Would it be a way to confess the failure of the mystic experience? This lacking language is a troubling sign of an unacceptable Absence. Thus, as a way to fill the emptiness, Jeanne de Chantal seems to rely on the materiality of three religious realities: the use of the Christian word, the marked body, and the prayer
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