

形 象^①

Image

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Abstract: As a critical term in religious studies, “image” is not easily defined even if the discussion is confined to the Christian and post-Christian West. This essay offers a detailed discussion on the history of this term. First, the author reviews the history of its usage from the first few centuries after Christ to the 8th century, when the controversy over the use of images as well as the religious meaning of “image” in the Eastern Orthodox Church reached its climax. Secondly, the author describes the 20th century understandings of “image” in American media culture, which demonstrates a sharp contrast to the earlier theological uses. At the end of the essay, the author points out the importance of “image” as a critical term in contemporary religious studies.

Keywords: image, Christianity, media culture

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