

In the first part of the thesis, the history of the icon origin and development is summarised, focusing on the history of the theological controversies of the iconoclastic disputes. The main topic of the thesis is the polemics with the assumptions of Leonid Uspensky (prominent representative of the icon theology), who used the icon theology to justify the superiority of the Eastern art, represented by icons over the western art.

To find the reasons for the differences in the art development in the East and the West, the historical and sociological context is scrutinised (including sociological, historical, economical and political perspectives) and subsequently, the arguments substantiating these differences are laid down. Consequently, the questions concerning the ontological icon status are scrutinised as well as the questions concerning the substance and the purpose of the art.

The concept of unique solution to the question of the ontological status of icon is questioned in the thesis and the antagonism between the approach of John from Damascus and the later representatives of eastern iconodules (iconophiles) is also discussed.

The question of the substance and the purpose of art is defined in the thesis in line with the work of prominent European philosophers, I. Kant and G.F.Hegel. Their conclusions are in direct conflict with the art definitions postulated by the advocates of the eastern orthodox art superiority.

Leonid Uspensky's point of view is evaluated as being significantly affected by Russian nationalistic sentiment, which towards the end of the 19th century also penetrated into the work of Russian art historians and theoreticians. The thesis does not reject the existence of the icon as a possible object of art. However, the fact that the real art does not have to necessarily originate within an ideological context is presented. Conversely, objects that originate as a result of an ideology are usually described as pseudo art or even as kitsch.