

The present thesis explores the critique of aesthetic experience in aesthetics of the second half of the 20th century. The aim is to defend the consistency of the notion of aesthetic experience and highlight its potential for aesthetics in the 21st century. The thesis points out certain historical and conceptual inconsistencies in the critique, and advances some arguments in support of tenebality of traditionally the main distinctive feature of aesthetic experience: disinterestedness. We focus on two dominant discussions in modern aesthetics that both built on re-evaluation and critique of the concept of aesthetic experience, namely the controversy about the aesthetic nature of art, and the so-called rebirth of theoretical interest in aesthetic dimension of nature (and other living environments). The thesis comprises ten chapters, each devoted to a particular facet of the concept of aesthetic experience. The chapters are arranged around the 'nuclear chapter' (IV) that articulates the methodological point of view, based on an open model of descriptive definition (drawn mainly from the work of Stephen C. Pepper).