

Contents

Introduction	9
1. The birth of the aesthetic man in Germany	13
1.1. The birth of the aesthetic man. Johann Joachim Winckelmann	13
1.1.1. The romantic rebellion	26
1.1.2. Critical voices: from Heinrich Heine to Georg Lukács	34
1.1.3. In defence of the romantic rebellion	43
1.1.4. The aesthetic revolution as an alternative to the mechanistic world view	55
1.1.5. The historical sense	67
1.2. Friedrich Schiller: Beauty and Freedom	87
1.3. Friedrich Hölderlin: Beauty and Revolution	93
1.4. Heinrich von Kleist: Radical Beauty	104
1.5. Richard Wagner: Regeneration of the culture	111
2. Nietzsche as culmination point of the aesthetic perspective	133
2.1. On Nietzsche's life	133
2.2. Nietzsche's criticism of historicism	137
2.3. Nietzsche's gospel of art	142
2.3.1. Dionysus against Christ	160
3. The ambiguity of the aesthetic revolution	169
3.1. The <i>Fin de siècle</i> : End or turning point? Between decadence and awakening	169
3.1.1. The <i>Fin de siècle</i> as a turning point	179
3.2. The conservative Revolution. A discourse	195
3.3. Stefan George: Art and 'Reich'	208
3.4. Oswald Spengler: retrograde prophet?	223
3.5. Thomas Mann: Aesthete <i>volens volens</i>	242

3.6. Gottfried Benn: architect of nihilism	266
3.7. Max Beckmann: the artist as the new god	289
3.7.1 Beckmann's Work	308
4. Epilogue	319
4.1. Martin Walser's novel <i>A Gushing Fountain</i>	319
4.2. The necessity of an aesthetic perspective for the modern era	324
Illustrations	337
References	339
Index of Names	351