CONTENTS

Acknowledgments xi Introduction xiii

PART ONE. AN AMERICAN AESTHETIC AND ITS TRAVAILS 1

The Burning Question 1

Measuring Up to Veblenism 7

Lagging Arts/Advancing Sciences 11

The Economics of Cultural Deficit 14

Angers of Influence 21

Technics, Technics! 24

Nature, God, Art, Science 28

God's Time/Government Time 30

Raw, Ripe, Rot 36

Transitions without Resolutions 41

Anxieties of Modernity 47

Case Studies: Adaptations to Veblenism 50

"The Normal Man" 54

viii Contents

PART TWO. CAPITOL OF BEST INTENTIONS 58
The Perfect Republic: Comparative Perspectives 58
Creation Ab Ova: How Washington, D.C. Came About (1783–1790) 64
The Southern Factor 66
Celebratory Histories: Old and New Style 70
Republican Virtue on Display 75
Waiting for Greatness to Happen (1820–1860) 81
From a National Aesthetic to Nationalist Art 88
The Washington Problem 93
Reacting to Rome et al. 100
A History of One's Choosing 108
Montgomery Meigs and the Remaking of Washington, D.C. 115
America's "Freedom"/Venice's "Justice" 120
The New Washington, D.C. 129
The White City 136
The Unbearable Lightness of the Void 140
Aesthetics of Death: The Mall and Beyond 145
Washington by Moonlight 160
Paraphrases of the Ideal/Allegories of the Real 165
PART THREE. AESTHETIC LIVES: THE LITERARY APPROACH 177
Beyond the Terrace 177
Math and Emotion 178
Bifurcated Minds 182
Pride of Knowledge 184

Contents ix

Costs of Knowing 186

Theories Incarnate/Forms Divine 190

Les Objets d'Art 196

Aesthetics of Fellowship 202

Create, Decay, and Destroy 206

Fatal Muses 212

Rivals to the Death 216

Piercing the Wall 220

Notes 229

Index 302