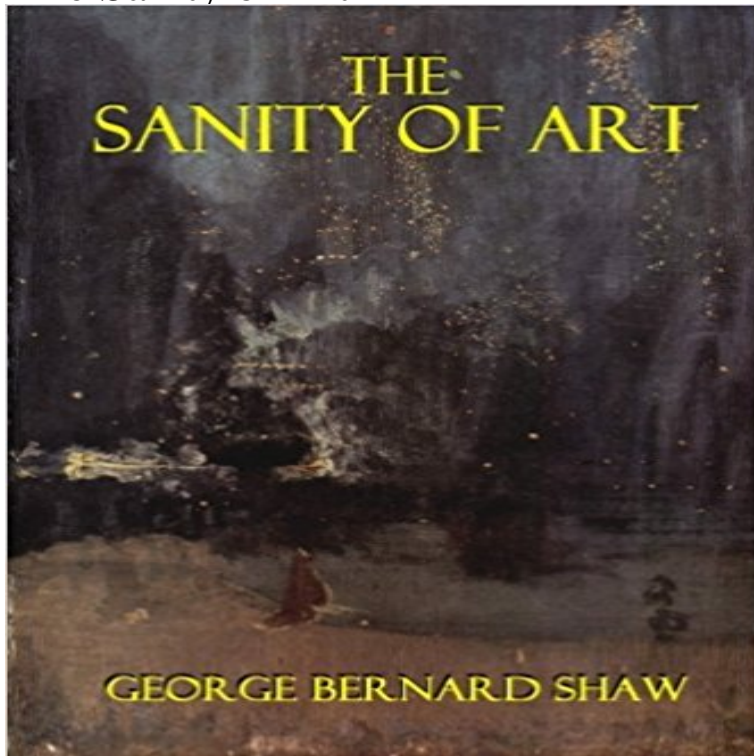


The Sanity of Art



Whether the republication in book form of Bernard Shaw's essay, *The Sanity of Art*, which is, as some will remember, a review and a refutation of Nordaus art ideas as expressed in *Degeneration*, had any purpose in appearing at the time of the issue of *On Art and Artists*, makes little difference in its usefulness in recalling the former wild vagaries of the would-be scientific critic. The same delightfully witty arguments with which Shaw defends Wagner, Ibsen, Ruskin and the others from the attacks of *Degeneration* serve equally well to deny the defamation of the artists taken up in this book of Nordaus. Yet the manifold absurdity of most of the fanatical statements seem hardly to need a reply what about the degeneration of a man who speaks of Whistlers women as perverted, whimsical beauties who wear remarkable and personal toilettes, which, except the face and often the hands, reveal not a fingers breadth of skin, yet, in spite of the interposition of silk and lace, cry out for the fig leaf. They are bundles of sick nerves that, from the crown of their heads to the tips of their fingers, seem to thrill with Sadie excitement. Rodin he attacks equally hysterically speaks of his impressionism and sexual psychopathy in the choice of themes, and calls him a spurious celebrity. It is a critic of the Bernard Shaw type, sure in his own opinions and beliefs, fighting on ground with which he is much more familiar than is a discredited scientist like Nordau and using the most telling forces of wit and irony as his weapons who can, as he has already done in his review of *Degeneration*, refute the ideas of *On Art and Artists* and make the refutation a delightful essay besides.

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