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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
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37a Letter sent to a newspaper by Mr. Schindeler, copy of which was sent to the Museum.

(Note: The essays referred to by Mr. Schindeler are the authoratative discussions of van Gogh's illness. - Alfred H. Barr, Jr.)

October 29th, 1935.

The Editor,  
Newspaper.

Dear Sir:

At the time of the opening of the first representative van Gogh exhibition in the United States, it might not be amiss to direct attention to the prevalent misconception concerning this painter; a misconception which was epitomized in the line accompanying the photo of a self-portrait in recent editions of several newspapers: Self-Portrait of Mad Dutch Painter.

The stubbornness with which press and public cling to the myth that van Gogh was, at least by implication, a chronic lunatic, is both amazing and disheartening to those who love accuracy and know something of the artist's struggling, toilsome and, in many aspects, inspiring life.

This is not the place for a comprehensive review of the events and circumstances that led to the reputation of madness; nor for a detailed refutation, based, let us say, on the internal evidence contained in van Gogh's voluminous correspondence and artistic oeuvre.

Let it suffice to point to the conclusions of two qualified investigators, Dr. Victor Doiteau and Dr. Edgar Leroy, who made an exhaustive inquiry into the painter's case, and published their findings in a work, titled: La Folie de Vincent van Gogh. After adducing abundant and convincing proof of the absurdity of the previously enunciated and rather divergent theories of (1) general paresis and (2) schizophrenia, Drs. Doiteau and Leroy confirmed the opinion of Dr. Walther Riese of Frankfort am Main and placed van Gogh's disorder in the cadre of epileptoidal psychosis, the symptoms having been easily classifiable as those of psychic or masked epilepsy, which first manifested itself in the 36th year of the painter's life.

Aside from this, nothing could be more apposite than the following quotation from a letter of van Gogh to his brother Theo. It was written from Arles, some six months before the first crisis. In elucidation it should be mentioned that van Gogh was an ardent admirer of the painter Monticelli, whose posthumous reputation paralleled

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elled the former's. He wrote:

".... And very often on returning from the task of balancing the six essential colors: red, blue, yellow, orange, lilac and green, I think of the excellent painter Monticelli, who has been made out such a drunkard and lunatic. Dry toil and calculation which puts the mind under extreme tension, like an actor on the stage in a difficult role, where he must think of a thousand things at once in the space of one half hour... I would like to see a drunkard before a canvas or on the boards." ( Or, one may add, a madman.)

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Edward Schindeler.

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