

Semblance, letter and taking action in psychosis¹

Author: Sandra Dias²

Van Gogh who is synonymous with style and revolutionized the field of arts, did not have his ex-sistence established since the naming function by his father, staying in front of an imaginary inconsistency the outcome of which occurred in life by taking action, taking his life.

The great artistic and literary production of this genius, fruitful and disturbing, leads us to question the restorative solutions that were possible in the structure, since the tragic ending indicates that its production has not reached the status of writing that would allow the registration of the subject. Recognized by art critics as the creator of a style, a singular aesthetic and an ethic that breaks away from contemporary values and rules to put his art in the service of social change, to establish equivalence between life and art that make this discourse possible, as an artifact, as a semblance, the only way we can question the truth.

*"The unconscious discourse is the emergence of a certain signifier function"*³, the semblance, which allows us to resort to discourse to infer how the subject locates himself in relation to the jouissance and extract the solutions used. The speaker is condemned as a semblance, this is a fact of structure, however the construction of the semblance is linked to the singularity of the case-by-case basis.

We will present the speech of this psychotic genius which was to elucidate the excess to which he devoted himself and that he was unable to translate into verbal images, as the *"jouissance only questions, only evokes, only corners, only elaborates from a semblance"*⁴ If all discourse comes from the semblance, we will examine how this discourse begins.

His place in the Other is located from the following milestones: it has the same date of birth of the brother who died a year earlier, receives the same name and has

¹ Trabalho apresentado na V Congresso Internacional de Convergência, Movimento Lacaniano para a Psicanálise Freudiana. Título do Congresso: O ato analítico: suas incidências clínicas, políticas e sociais. Porto Alegre, 22, 23 e 24 de junho de 2002

² Psicanalista, Membro Fundador do Espaço Psicanálise – São Paulo

³ Lacan, J. (1971) O seminário, livro 18: De um discurso que não fosse do semblante. RJ: Jorge Zahar Ed., 2009, pág.21.

⁴ Lacan, J. (1972/73) *O Seminário, livro 20: Mais Ainda*, RJ: Jorge Zahar Ed., 1982, pág. 124

the same number of his brother in the birth registry in the parish where the father was a pastor. What was the mode of positioning of the artist before the naming of the father?

In writing to his brother, he says he does consider himself a Van Gogh, refusing to reveal his surname thus revealing his symbolic non-insertion of his paternal lineage. He names himself Vincent, but without the logical negation required to constitute a place in the Other, to allow him to leave his other Vincent wrapping - the dead brother, which will lead him astray and lose the symbolic coordinates.

The father, the phallus, the wife and language itself, are different ways of operating with the semblance, that is: finding the resources to deal with the unbearable burden of non-relation between the sexes, in order to produce an opinion. Lacan indicates when the semblance is broken, it is the jouissance itself that comes gushing out.⁵

At a family visit, before his brother's grave, where one could see his name and date of birth, he asked "*Who will deliver us from the body of this death.*" The semblance that builds will not be that of the object, since in the psychosis there is no extraction of object, but the possibility exists for the psychotic to be referred to a discourse, the possibility the speaker speak with the Other and build a semblance that is verified, not by rupture, but by the discourse sustained over time.

In Arles, the third phase of his work started with the style that became known as Van Gogh set as a colorist (complementary color theory), with marks of the brush strokes (influences of pointillism), the formal Japanese language (the written trace of the Japanese print Ukyo-e), with intensity and mass of paint applied on the screen (sculpture effect).

He researches color with the main objective of capturing variations of light on objects in the world, his theory of color constituted a symbolic apparatus and gave him an optical instrument that aside from the Japanese stamping with its flat and ornamental character as compensation for the depth and its universal and formal language, enabled him to express the new, the modern.

⁵. Lacan, J. (1971) *O seminário, livro 18: De um discurso que não fosse do semblante*. RJ: Jorge Zahar Ed., 2009, pág. 114

Roque explains *"that, in color theory, the syntax governed by structuring colors by systems of opposing complements and the use of hues and the complementary juxtapositions allow us to better understand that the relationship between signifier and signified, between expression and content, is not fixed"*.⁶ The same complementary pair can mean the union as a fight, as seen in the painting *Café night* in which the painter says: *I tried to express with red and green the terrible human passions*⁷ in a letter to his brother he adds, *"I tried to express that the café is a place where someone can fall apart, become mad, commit crimes."*

The painter Gauguin is received with joy in the Yellow House, a fraternity brothers-painters in which he is assigned the post of abbot. He requires the student to align with his aesthetic design, that he change his theory, perspective and themes. Van Gogh, ultra-realistic, sought inspiration in nature.

Gauguin claimed that the true raw material of the painter was not reality but memory, and encourages him to work more with the head, from the imagination. In Van Gogh art and life are joined; in Gauguin, the work of art is complete, *"an image that encapsulates a worldview and a conception of human destiny"*.⁸

His paintings change abruptly, the semblance is broken. The rupture of the semblance causes the precipitation, the rain of letters, time to count the letters and reform the name. But Van Gogh believes in the image that art gives, his ego does not support itself in writing, but in an imaginary identification with Christ - the sacrificed son.

Beyond the empty pictorial Van Gogh, locates the void as such, but there are not written letters which allow one to situate the bodylanguage and allow new creations in the dissolution of semblances, because the signifiers belong to the Other, and the letter to the subject.

Gauguin challenges his concept of art, invites him to associate, but the imaginary having been dissolved, it is the signifier that appears in the real. Once the letter is not incorporated, in the face of the signifier that indicates an emptiness, it is the artist's own body that will fill it.

⁶ Roque, G. *Van Gogh, teórico del color* In *Anales de Investigaciones Estéticas*, num. 70, 1997, pág.80

⁷ Van Gogh, V. W. *Cartas a Théo*. Porto Alegre: L&PM, 2002, carta 533

⁸ Argan, G.C. *Arte moderna: do iluminismo aos movimentos contemporâneos*. SP: Companhia dasLetras 1998, pág. 53

After the break with Gauguin, he takes action, the self-mutilation of the ear, Van Gogh's signature is changed and he now signs with the letter V, a letter that if read could prevent the unraveling of the registries and alter the logic of the paranoid outbreak that began with "*Maerda, maerda, everything is yellow, I do not know what painting is anymore.*" "*I am the Holy Spirit, the sane Spirit*".⁹

Van Gogh's was working on the painting *La Berceuse* when the disease came to interrupt his work.¹⁰ *La Berceuse*, painting of a mother in front of a cradle, is a signifier that indicates both a lullaby as well as the woman who sings and the cradle. To listen to the lullaby indicates the presence of the voice he said he heard in a play go from witch's voice to an angel's voice from backstage. Voice of the maternal superego which situates the place of this child-martyr, Vincent's place in the phantom real.

In Van Gogh, art is the real in the work, the work is the real in the world, but he did not know how to extricate himself from this. If painting is to write the limits, his madness expressed itself in the act of painting a picture a day, an act of creation in which he permanently relives the traumatism. His last act of creation in life would join subject and object. Van Gogh goes to the field, where he fires a shot to his chest, his last words, addressed to Theo, were: "*La tristesse toujours durera.*"¹¹

Bibliography

ARGAN, G.C. Modern art: from illuminism to contemporary movements. SP: Companhia das Letras, 1998

ROQUE , G. Van Gogh, Color theoretician in the annals of the Institute of Aesthetic Investigations, num. 70, 1997

LACAN, J. The Seminar, Book 18: Of a Discourse that was not from the semblance. (1971) Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Ed., 2009

LACAN, J. The Seminar, Book 20: Encore (1972/1973). Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Ed., 1982

VAN GOGH, V. W. Letters to Theo. Porto Alegre: L&PM, 2002

⁹ Van Gogh, V. W. *Cartas a Theo*, Porto Alegre: L&PM, 2002, 337-346)

¹⁰ Van Gogh, V. W. *Cartas a Théo*. Porto Alegre: L&PM, 2002, carta 574

¹¹ Walther, I.F. e Metzger, R. *Van Gogh. La obra completa: pintura*. Madrid: Taschen, 2001

WALTHER, I.F. e METZGER, R. Van Gogh. The complete work: painting. Madrid: Taschen, 2001

Summary

Herein are presented the entanglements / simplifications that occurred during the brief life of the painter Van Gogh and the construction of an artifact, the speech as semblance, which supported his artistic production, and allowed him to address the real, support life and prevent an exit from the stage by taking action in his own hands. We consider the vacillation of the semblance and the rain of letters as the moment of reality's eruption that would have enabled him to reformulate his name and make himself a name through art, but the failure led him to sacrifice his self that took place for carrying out the direction taken without inventing a new signifier.

Key words

Semblance, Letter, Taking action, Psychosis, Van Gogh