

**Further texts :** By Thomas Svolos [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?cat=652](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?cat=652)  
New Lacanian School of Psychoanalysis : [www.amp-nls.org](http://www.amp-nls.org)

Circulated by the Newsletter of the New Lacanian School Congress 2018 :

**From:** NLS Congress 2018

**Subject:** NLS Congress 2018 - News from the Blog - 06/29/2018

**Date:** 29 June 2018 at 09:02:51 BST

**Reply-To:** NLS Congress 2018

Available [here http://nlscongress2018.com/index.php/en/2018/06/25/rectification-and-transference-by-thomas-svolos/](http://nlscongress2018.com/index.php/en/2018/06/25/rectification-and-transference-by-thomas-svolos/)

**This is the newsletter of the NLS Congress 2018. It will take place in Paris on June 30th and July, 1st.**

**The theme will be : In a State of Transference - Wild, political, psychoanalytic.**

# **Rectification and Transference by Thomas Svolos**

*June 25, 2018*

I got interested in the notion of rectification, which Lacan uses in “The Direction of the Treatment<sup>i</sup>,” where he describes rectification as the first stage in analysis: a rectification of the subject’s relations with le réel, reality, followed by the development of transference and then interpretation (Écrits, p. 500). The reason this attracted my attention early in my practice was my interest in understanding how people get engaged in working in an analytic way, particularly in a community like Omaha where it is not part of the culture. It was a question about how to begin a treatment and build transference. I want to develop a couple points about this. One relates to the direction of the treatment. In discussing rectification, Lacan talks about it in terms of establishing certain ego and object representations, some of the imaginary coordinates for how a subject situates his life, a mapping of the relationship with the reality but also, noting the ambiguity in the French le réel,

a precipitation of the symptom itself, the way in which a subject experiences the real.

Is this direction of rectification and transference different now? Let me start with one observation. In Miller and Laurent's joint seminar, "The Other Who Doesn't Exist<sup>ii</sup>," they talk about vertical versus horizontal societies. We should note that the United States is very much a horizontal society and not organized in the hierarchical way, say, of Europe, and I think in general, we see less verticality in our era of postmodernity. This sets up a shift in the possibilities of rectification and transference because in more hierarchically organized societies, the place of knowledge as being attributed to the master is more clear and may be a more fertile ground for the development of transference. We might also note that knowledge now is no longer embodied, but it is out there, everywhere. It is on the internet. Knowledge is in a different place today than it was, and this has an effect on transference.

Another point that we might make is that we are in, for better or worse politically, a post-truth society. The category of truth now has a different status than it did before. I think in the past, this search for truth was a driving force for analysis—for patients to discover the truth of their suffering or their symptoms. Note in Freud's era, analysis was driven by truth, even if at the end of analysis, one might end up encountering a certain irreducible Real to deal with. Today, however, the Real no longer appears at the end of an analysis, but it shows up in the first sessions (esp., say, with addiction). With so many people today, we start with this kernel of the real, and we then have to somehow engage a subject to develop a curiosity about it, to see what truth could be made out of that.

An Excerpt from "Psychoanalysis and the Psychoanalytic School in the United States: An Interview with Thomas Svolos"

---

<sup>i</sup> See [The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power:10th-13th July 1958 : Jacques Lacan](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138) or [here / http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138) p15 of Cormac Gallagher's translation : What I am saying is that it is in a direction of the treatment, ordered, as I have just shown, according to a process that goes from the rectification of the subject's relation with the real, to the development of the transference and then to interpretation, that there is situated the horizon within which Freud made the fundamental discoveries, which we are still living off, about the dynamics and the structure of obsessional neurosis. Nothing more, but nothing less either.

Rectification is mentioned twice more in 'Direction of the Treatment', from p19 of Cormac Gallagher's translation : You are surely right to make the signifier 'grand', included in the term of kinship, the origin, no more, of the rivalry played out with the father to catch the biggest fish. But this purely formal challenge suggests to me rather that he means: nothing doing (rien à faire).

There is nothing in common, then, between your procession, described as beginning from the surface, and the subjective rectification, highlighted above in Freud's method, in which, moreover, it is not motivated by any topographical priority.

---

It is because in Freud this rectification is also dialectical, and starts from the subject's own words in order to return to them, which means that an interpretation can be correct only by being...an interpretation.

To opt for the objective here is an error, if only because plagiarism is relative to the practices operating in a given situation.

<sup>ii</sup> The French transcription published : <http://jonathanleroy.be/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/1998-1999-LAutre-qui-nexiste-pas-et-ses-comités-déthique-JA-Miller.pdf>