



7-1-1999

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Recommended Citation

Laycock, S. W. (1999). Laycock, S. W. (1999). Narcissus and the echo of emptiness. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 18(2), 109–116.. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 18 (2). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.ciis.edu/ijts-transpersonalstudies/vol18/iss2/4>



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Narcissus and the Echo of Emptiness

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The passion of Echo and the rejection of Narcissus constitute a paradoxical unity. Echo has the last word. Her word is reflective, distanced, merely descriptive. Narcissus, engaged perception, cannot speak. For speech and concept assume disengagement. Echo gives voice to the silence of Narcissus, and cannot exist without it. Yet the word “silence” breaks silence. Echo conceives the inconceivable as “inconceivable,” and lapses into paradox. Narcissus enters into the inconceivable without conceptual distance. Far from “narcissistic,” in the ordinary sense, Narcissus is not in love with “himself,” but with what, for him, is the other. His engagement with the “other” precludes self-obsession. For the eye, there is no eye. And for Narcissus, there is no Narcissus. The dualism of subject and object collapses into the ineffable experience that Echo articulates.

“I N THE end,” Salis (1988) tells us, Echo is “nothing but the words of others, a voice that is the death of the living voice” (p. 85). This is undeniably so. But we must seek a deeper specification of that death. Juno punishes the loquacious Echo for concealing her husband’s dalliance with the Nymphs by depriving her of the originary capacity of voice: “You shall forfeit the use of that tongue with which you have cheated me, except for that one purpose you are so fond of—*reply*. You shall still have the last word, but no power to speak the first” (Bulfinch, 1979, p. 101). Receiving what she loved most, Echo became a shade, a sound-shadow, “nothing but the words of others,” to be sure, but also the last word, the final word, a word to follow all words. We cannot “say,” we cannot originate, a word without that word being subsumed, surpassed by its Echo. But to credit Merleau-Ponty’s (1969) insight, philosophy “does not seek a verbal substitute for the world we see, it does not transform it into something said, it does not install itself in the order of the said...” (p. 4). Echo is not merely the repetition of the word, the [re]sounding of the word, but the substitution of the word for

the world. Echo is heard when, instead of perceiving the rich and extraordinary presence before us, bursting with dynamism and possibility, engaging our vital attention through the negative pressure of its interrogative being, we pronounce, and thereby substitute, the pedestrian word “table.” “Table” is the last word—a word of finality and death. It supplants living presence. To “know” that this is a table is to presume that all of our questions about it have been answered, to foreclose exploration, and replenish interrogativity with the solid density of a presumed answer. Echo puts an end to all questioning. But for Merleau-Ponty (1969), “the existing world exists in the interrogative mode” (p. 103). The world *is* a question, and everything in it. The things of our world beckon us to awaken to them. The question is the heart of the mind. But when Echo is heard, the question grows cold, and the mind dies. It is here that the spirit of Buddhism is felt as liberation from the mind-death of Echo. For Buddhism refuses to assume the finality of any purported “answer.” No word ever deposits itself at the heart of experience without bursting into a thousand questions. “Beginner’s mind” is

unending attunement with the openness and interrogativity of experience. Every answer brings forth new questions. But more than this. An answer cannot be understood independently of the questions to which it responds. Response is resolved once again into question, as question is resolved into response. And there is no last word, no Echo. "I-don't-know mind" renders the calcified assumptions of an all-too-solid knowledge into the fluidity of curiosity and wonder. The world we experientially inhabit is not populated by densities and solidities that would fill up the gaps in our knowledge. Our relationship to the world is not one of repletion, but of an ever-renewed opening and emptying.

Though she brings death to the unwary, the unaware, the unawakened, Echo has a more benign appointment. Salis (1988) comments that, in Echo:

...the voice is drawn out into a space which, rather than being simply filled by the sound of the voice, claims it and in a sense takes possession of it. Here there is a spacing that disperses the voice while also giving back its sound, that multiplies it while also letting its sound echo back as if from other voices. Hearing the echo, one then experiences silence, not as the mere opposite of speech or sound but as the open space of the voice. (p. 86)

Echo "claims" voice as shadow owns its light-denying opacity. And to the extent that possession is self-investment, the very *self* of Echo is the living originary word, and more broadly, the live interrogative being, that it otherwise comes to supplant. The [re]sounding of sound invests itself, invests its *self*, in the primacy of sound. Echo is not only a parasite, living off the originary voice. Her very being *is* this voice. The death-of-the-voice could not exist without her prey. But in preying upon the voice, she preys upon herself. Just as desire would extinguish itself in its fulfillment without affirming itself as desire, so Echo must affirm the living word that she denies and brings to an end. She returns life to her victim. Sound is heard afresh in the cavernous space in which it is surpassed. And Echo, like the wrathful visage of a benevolent deity, pronounces upon sound and its [re]sounding, the beneficence of silence.

Echo and Narcissus, whom she passionately pursues, form a dyad, if not a couple. The two are united as much by Narcissus' rejection as by

Echo's passionate attachment. For rejection preserves the form of the rejected. And Echo is nothing but form. Echo is the death of voice. Narcissus—the "death flower" (from *narkao*) that opens the doors to the underworld—is the death of the eye. Gazing into a fountain of water, clear as silver, Narcissus beheld what the stories account to be "himself," and fell deeply in love with his "own" image. "He brought his lips near to take a kiss; he plunged his arms in to embrace the beloved object. It fled at the touch, but returned again after a moment and renewed the fascination" (Bulfinch, 1979, p. 102). It is easy to assume that Narcissus fell victim to the perennial error of mistaking appearance for reality. The image appeared to be an other, but—in *reality*—was himself. We are bemused and smug at the parakeet's similar error. It is said—we say—that the parakeet sees "itself" in the mirror and takes the image to be a rival bird. But again, this is *our* projection. This could serve as an adequate description of the parakeet's experience only if, at some level of cognition deeper than the optional construal, it *knew* that the image was itself. But neither we nor the parakeet, and certainly not Narcissus, could know what is not, and cannot be true. The logic of mirroring assumes an ineluctable distinction between original and reflection. Image is not object. And I can never be my reflection. In this respect, Narcissus and the parakeet command the better part of wisdom. In the Zen tradition it is said that the eye cannot see itself. And this is true even if we gaze into the image-eyes that peer back at us from the other side of the mirror. For the eye, there *is* no eye. That is not *me*, but a *reflection* of me. Narcissus could not, then, have mistakenly assumed that what was *really* himself was another. What greeted him in the silver waters was undeniably the appearance of an other. But we cannot say that it was *really* himself.

Bulfinch's (1979) interpretation of the Narcissus' predicament is classic: "He fell in love with himself" (p. 102). Thus, narcissism is simply self-love. But we know that this could not be the case. He fell in love with an image (that *was* already other to the original)—an image that *appeared*, moreover, to be an other. Edinger (1992) proposes that "Narcissus represents the alienated ego that cannot love...because it is not yet related to itself. To fall in love with the reflected image of

oneself can only mean that one does not yet possess oneself” (p. 161). But if the fervent outpouring of Narcissus’ love was directed toward what, *for him*, was other, we cannot say that he was incapable of love. Nor can we say that he could not love *another*. For certainly he did love another in a sense far more genuine than one who—*unlike* Narcissus—would recognize the image as an image and nonetheless maintain the outpouring of “love.” Prescinding from the postulated cognitive error, Narcissus’ love was undeniably authentic. Narcissus was not “narcissistic” in the sense of being given to excesses of self-love. But neither did he fall into “a frustrated state of yearning for a self-possession which does not yet exist” (Edinger, 1992, p. 161). His yearning was yearning *for another*, not for himself. It is only we, not Narcissus, who, in placing ourselves above the situation, see that the “object” of his desire was his own reflection. That is not Narcissus’ experience, but our own. And if narcissism, either as excess or as deficiency of authentic self-love, is possible at all, it is not possible for Narcissus, but only for those who, like ourselves, have the capacity to extricate ourselves from the immediacy of the experience, and survey the situation from the altitude of reflection.

The suggestive title of Golomb’s book, *Trapped in the Mirror* (1992), might seem to offer a better description. Unlike Alice, for whom the looking glass was a portal, a passage to a world beyond, an opening, and thus a freeing, for a world of magical, perhaps surreal, semblance, Narcissus could be depicted as imprisoned within the domain of semblance. But again, we must query whether this describes the experience of Narcissus or that of the reflective spectator. Being “trapped” implies an impediment to our will, a resistance, a desire to get out, to break down the walls, rupture the enclosure. If Narcissus had felt himself trapped, we should expect from him an effort to return from semblance to reality. But this, we know, is not how the story goes. Narcissus’ efforts were directed, rather, toward uniting with the semblance—or from his perspective, toward uniting with the elusive, vanishing other. For Narcissus, the face in the waters was *real*, not apparent. He had not fallen in love with a reflection—and certainly not with himself. Neither from his perspective nor from the vantage point of reflection can we say that he *himself* was

“trapped” in the mirror. In the immediacy of his own experience, desire reached out to an other. And the mediated standpoint of reflection refuses to surrender the distinction between original and image.

The lovely, and probably apocryphal, Zen story of the “transmission of the lamp,” the succession from Hung-jen, the fifth, to Hui-neng, the sixth ancestral teacher of the Zen tradition, puts Narcissus in proper perspective. Hung-jen knew that he would soon pass from this life, and determined that his successor would be the one whose insight, expressed in verse, was most trenchant. Shen-hsiu, a senior monk, highly regarded among the monastic community, composed the following gatha:

The body is the Bodhi Tree.
The mind a stand of mirror bright.
Take care to wipe it continually,
And never allow the dust to light.

Hui-neng, a simple rice-pounder of humble origins of whom no one would have expected great insight matched the first poem with his own:

There never was a Bodhi Tree,
Nor stand of mirror bright.
Originally, not one thing exists,
So where is the dust to light?

The story is much richer than I am able to convey here, and the need for interpretation much more extensive (see Laycock, 1994, for a more extensive interpretation). But much can be learned from confining ourselves to the “bright mirror” of the two poems. For Shen-hsiu, the mind is (like) a mirror. And Hui-neng retracts the analogue. “There never was a...mirror bright.” The two poems seem—on the surface—to contradict one another. But this interpretation is blocked by the surrounding narrative. Were the two poems to stand in a simple relationship of frontal contradiction, then one would be true, and the other unproblematically false. But Shen-hsiu’s poem was not simply “false.” For on awaking in the morning, the old master called his disciples, had incense burned before the poem, praised it, and declared that whoever should put the poem into practice would surely attain enlightenment. One cannot assume that such veneration would be heaped upon claims that the master knew to be false. But if not reciprocally contradictory, are

the poems then equally true—perhaps true from alternative standpoints, the one true from the perspective of practice, the other, from the perspective of attainment? But again, this simple relativism of respect is impeded by the narrative. For after all, Hui-neng did win the succession.

If neither is false, and yet the two are not equally true, are they then “unequally” true? Is Hui-neng’s insight “truer”? What did Hui-neng see that Shen-hsiu missed? On deeper consideration, Hui-neng’s line, “There never was a Bodhi Tree,” does not refute its mate, but rather amplifies it, displays its significance. If the mind is, indeed, like a mirror, then it must be mirror-like in the respect that, for the mirror, there is no mirror. The mirror reflects the color and form of whatever stands before it. But in principle, the one thing that the mirror cannot reflect is itself. Placing one mirror in front of another, what is reflected in the first is not “itself,” but a *reflection* of itself. At least we, who observe from the outside, must say as much. But what would the mirror say? Does the mirror “confuse” itself with its mirrored representation? Does it identify “itself” with the reflected image? Does it make a “cognitive” mistake? The eye cannot see itself. And “Even the sharpest sword cannot cut itself; the finger-tips cannot be touched by the same finger-tips. *Citta* [mind] does not know itself” (Murti, 1987, pp. 317-318). The mirror cannot (incorrectly) identify itself, confuse itself, with its image, since, for “itself,” there is no “itself.” The “self” (“itself”) of the mirror is exactly its self-effacement. Its presence, to “itself,” is exactly its absence. It is not simply that the mirror is self-effacing, that the mirror “itself” effaces itself, but that the presence of the mirror is exactly its ineluctable absence. To see it is exactly *not* to see it in deference to its reflection. For the mirror, self-identification is unthinkable. It cannot, in principle, identify *itself* with its image, because there is no “itself.” In this respect, we credit Wittgenstein’s (1974) recognition that “to say of two things that they are identical is nonsense, and to say of one thing that it is identical with itself is to say nothing at all” (p. 52: 5.5303). For the mirror, the mirror and its reflection are *not two*, original and reflection. But they are also *not one* (in contrast to two). To count—even to one—is to assume an external vantage point. From the

standpoint of the mirror, its image is numberless, transordinal.

From the standpoint of the mirror, also, there is no relationship, and certainly not a “relation,” that spans or unifies the purported duality of original and representation. Relationship is a phenomenon of the disengaged, third-personal perspective. From its own standpoint, the mirror does not stand in a relationship of representation, identification, even openness, to a purported “other.” There is no “other.” This is not to assume that there is only the mirror. For the mirror, *to be* is exactly *not* to be for itself. Dogen Zenji, the great thirteenth-century master of the Soto Zen tradition, declared that “Since there is no mind in me, when I hear the sound of raindrops from the eaves, the raindrop is myself” (in Kotoh, 1987, p. 206). But this is not to say that a mirror-like mind identifies “itself” with the raindrops. Rather, the only “self,” the only self-presence, that mind could in any way possess is the presence of the raindrops. And if subjectivity cannot be experienced as such, then the content of our experience cannot be described as “objects.”

“Narcissus,” then, names the openness in which being appears. But this openness is never objectifiable, never a being. And we can speak of openness and that which comes to fill it only from an external point of view. For Narcissus, there is no openness. For Narcissus, there is no Narcissus. And a fortiori, for Narcissus, there is no Narcissus in passionate, futile pursuit of “himself.” Indeed, Narcissus could not see the image in the silvery waters as himself. For the hermeneutic “as” entails a certain distantiation, a certain stepping-back, that enables a peripheral glimpse of the object that we construe under a given interpretive form. But the “self”—Narcissus “himself”—can never be glimpsed in this way. The image can never be seen “as” himself or “as” another. And the supposition that Narcissus is “narcissistic” is thereby cut off.

Are we, then, who stand outside, we outsiders, to be accounted wrong in our construal that Narcissus sees his own image? Is reflective consciousness that situates itself outside the event that it observes to be accounted wrong in its postulation of an intentional relationship spanning subject and object? In Merleau-Ponty’s (1969) insightful confession, “I should say that

there was there a thing perceived and an openness upon this thing which the reflection has neutralized and transformed into perception-reflected-on and thing-perceived-within-a-perception-reflected-on" (p. 38). Perception is not perception-reflected-on. Nor is the perceived the thing-perceived-within-a-perception-reflected-on. Far from laying bare what was there from the beginning, [dis]closing an intrinsic but unrecognized structure of live perception, reflection changes the subject. And we, as outsiders, are likewise incapable of seeing what Narcissus sees and seeing as he sees. But again, are we "wrong"? For surely, if we are, then Narcissus is "right." Who sees the image the right way? Narcissus does not see an image at all. Who sees the elusive youth the right way? We do not see the youth at all! And we can only say that the two points of view—the engaged and the disengaged—are incommensurable. We are not subject to delusive appearance. But neither are we "right." We simply cannot see what Narcissus sees without being engaged as Narcissus is engaged. The appearance/reality schema has no work to do here.

Nagel's (1979) famous question, "What is it like to be a bat?" might first be met with speculations concerning what it would be like *for us*—intelligent, human, humanoid—to be bats. We can imagine ourselves hanging upside down for hours, spreading our wings, flying blindly by sonar through a dark cave and eating bugs. But this does not respond to Nagel's question. Nagel asks what it is like *for the bat* to be a bat. And this question, if properly understood, is met by uncomprehending silence. We simply have no idea. The bat is a question mark. And any attempt to resolve or diminish its interrogativity is inevitably the insertion of our own perspective into the scene, and therefore a change of subject. Parsons (1976) observes that, "We continuously seek closure in our meanings and identities, yet we cannot tolerate the constrictions they lay upon us..." (p. 3). But our intolerance is hopeless. We live in a world of question marks. Narcissus is a question mark. What is it like to be a snail? A grasshopper? A carrot? What is it like to be Narcissus? We see as he sees only by becoming him, by ceasing to be what we are: outsiders.

But the issue is deeper still. Despite Sartre's (1971) postulation that the question is posed "on

the basis of a preinterrogative familiarity with being" (p. 35), we must say, with regard to the question marks that inhabit our experience, that "no answer ever preceded the question..." (Bataille, 1988, p. 36). The interrogative precedes the assertoric. And even thought, which purports to concern itself with the formulation of truth, is "suspended in the daze of the question" (Gillan, 1980, p. 142). In the enigmatic pronouncement of Fa-yen Wên-i, "Not knowing most closely approaches the Truth" (Chang, 1971, p. 239). It is the question, not the answer, that is the "truth." Thus, in Burke's admonition:

This question-knowing provides a reflective and intuitive access to Being which philosophers of intuition and reflection quickly sought to close up by trying to prove that the answer was already contained in the question; for them the "meaning" of Being was prior to the question, for it was contained a priori in the mind...(Burke, 1990, p. 88)

But a question that embraces its own answer is not a genuine question, but rather a rhetorical ploy. The question is a modality of openness. Sartre (1971) tells us that questioning is conditioned by "the non-being of knowing in man" (p. 36). Agacinski (1991) writes that "the status of the subject is inseparable from the status of the question" (p. 9). And in Merleau-Ponty's (1969) radicalized observation, "we ourselves are one sole continued question" (p. 103). But if so, then to the extent and in the respect that we are openness, we are not the saturating opacity of response. To the extent and in the respect that the nonbeing of knowing conditions us, we are not, then, conditioned by a quasi-indicative pre-interrogative familiarity with being. And if we genuinely *are* interrogative openness, then we cannot look "within" for the answer. For there is nothing to see. The authentic question is an abyss without hope of repletion.

There are two types of question and two types of answer. There are genuinely open questions that absorb their answers into themselves, suspending, engulfing them, in the free and boundless space of interrogativity. And there are the tight, contoured pockets of delimited openness that call for remainderless saturation. Responses float in interrogative space. Information fills it up, abolishes it. And to say, with Merleau-Ponty

(1969), that philosophy “does not raise questions and does not provide answers that would little by little fill in the blanks” (p. 105), is to say that philosophy opens itself to response, not to information. It may be, as Sartre (1971) tells us, that “the question is a kind of expectation; I expect a reply from the being questioned” (p. 35). But repetition is the death of the question, the death of ourselves as questions. And questioning is the life of the mind. If the “reply” expected were information, then questioning would be suicide. But “the interrogative is not a mode derived by inversion or by reversal of the indicative...” (Merleau-Ponty, 1969, p. 129). And this is because genuine questioning cannot be decisively put to rest. There is no last word—no Echo.

What is it like to be Narcissus? What is it like to kneel at the water’s edge and to see as Narcissus sees? We who stand outside, we outsiders, can assume Narcissus’ place only by importing the structures that inform our observations, the contrast of original and representation. We can construe our projection only in this light. We have never been bats. But we have all knelt at the water’s edge. We, as reflective observers, have all been engaged in immediate, prereflective life. And while our reflective stance provides no insight, our recollections do. We can collect ourselves, [re]collect, [re]member. In the rich suggestions of the German, we can enact *Er-innerung*: a deepened interiorization, a gathering, a drawing inward. *Sati*, the Pali for “mindfulness” or “awareness” still supports the resonance of the Sanskrit *smṛiti* which connotes remembrance, a keeping-in-mind. Presence of mind is rich with overlarded layers of the passed and the past. Presence is alive with absence. And it is because we are capable of gathering the petals of experience that have fallen along our path that we outsiders know what it is like not yet to be “outside.” And we are capable of comparing the womb of immediacy with the domain of post-parturition alienation. We know that Narcissus does not see an “image,” that, in his experience, there is no “relationship” to the other, and in fact, that there is no “other” at all—for there is no “same.” Merleau-Ponty (1969) is correct in his assessment that, “We must, at the beginning, eschew notions such as ‘acts of consciousness,’ ‘matter,’ ‘form,’ and even ‘image’ and ‘perception’” (p. 129). “At the beginning,” in Narcissus’ original

perception, there is no perception at all! In the words of Hui-neng’s poem, “originally [*ben lai*], not one thing exists [*wu i wu*].” The “beginning,” the “origin,” is not to be understood as a fundament, a *principium*, an arche. It is not the first element in a continuing series, but is rather transordinal. With resolvable paradox, we can say that the origin is exactly the absence of origin. And original awareness, as the repudiation of self-reflexivity, is the very absence of “itself” as the founding element of the subject/object order. *Sati*, the in-gathering of the mind in presence, is the [re]collection that, from this “original” stance, there is no origin, no mind, no subject, no self. It is the realization of *anatman*. In Merleau-Ponty’s (1969) words, “I do not perceive any more than I speak...” (p. 190). Echo cannot truly speak, she can only repeat. Her words are descriptive, articulatory, at best expressive, but not creative. Narcissus cannot speak because, for Narcissus, there is no speaker. Echo’s speech is a nonoriginal articulation of Narcissus’ original absence of speech, “The expression of what is before expression...” (p. 167).

We, then, we outsiders, play the part of Shen-hsiu. *For us*, the mind is a mirror. *For us*, the mind of Narcissus is mirror posed against a mirror. If this were wrong, Hung-jen would have driven us away and ripped down our poem. But we have not yet seen the extraordinary implications of our own external stance. If Narcissus is a mirror opening onto a mirror, then *for Narcissus*, there is no mirror, no image, no Narcissus. We cannot understand our own alienated description without being immediately transposed back into the “origin” (which is no origin). Bresson (1958) suggests that “The phenomenological description is at the limit unrealizable and interior experience ineffable” (p. 156). Reflection is not the awakening of selfless awareness. But the deepening of reflection inevitably leads in that direction.

Despite his indifference, his refusal of her attention, Narcissus forms with Echo a curious doublet, a “couple.” And now we know why. Narcissus, the “origin,” stands in no order of relationship to “himself” or to an “other.” He rejects Echo. But the rejection is a rejection of dualistic “relationship.” To the extent that his rejection is specific, what he rejects in Echo is her inability to attain the originary, her status as

outsider, onlooker. In Duméry's (1964) view, philosophy, like a parasite, "always comes after life. Philosophy is a recovery of life, but it cannot be identified with life...Reflection lives on concrete life" (pp. 5-6). And Echo is parasitic reflection. But to this extent, Echo is also reflection unaware of itself. In Merleau-Ponty's (1969) very different appreciation, "philosophy is the reconversion of silence and speech into one another..." (p. 129). The external vantage point of the reflective Echo provides a space of articulation, the possibility of interpolating the predicative tie between the objects and qualities of perception. Narcissus might see a red apple. Echo sees, and says, *that* the apple *is* red. Echo articulates, breaks silence. But Echo is always pursued by silence. Narcissus, the immediate, the original, cannot speak. For discursivity assumes distance. And Narcissus is not an outsider to his own experience. Hui-neng converts speech into silence with his realization that, for the mirror, there is no mirror, and converts silence into speech with the concomitant insight that the universal and ineluctable absence of the mirror is exactly its presence. "Outside" is converted into "inside," and "inside" into "outside." Echo becomes Narcissus and Narcissus becomes Echo. With seeming paradox, it is the negativity of Narcissus' rejection, his refusal of Echo, that enables the reconversion of silence into speech and conversely. If Narcissus had accepted Echo, had simply validated her reflective description, he would have taken into his own experience the polarities of subject and object, original and derivative, presentation and representation, that form and inform her analysis. He would, that is, have become an outsider himself, and, as Narcissus, would have vanished. The interplay of Echo and Narcissus is nowhere more evident than in Merleau-Ponty's (1969) intriguing exposition of the dance of philosophy:

The philosopher speaks, but this is a weakness in him, and an inexplicable weakness: he should keep silent, coincide in silence, and rejoin in Being a philosophy that is there ready-made. But yet everything comes to pass as though he wished to put into words a certain silence he hearkens to within himself. His entire "work" is this absurd effort. He wrote in order to state his contact with Being; he did not state it, and could not state it, since it is silence. Then he recommences...(p. 125)

Echo is condemned to repetition. But Narcissus is silent. She cannot repeat what he says. But she can give voice to his silence. She can "make it say...what in its silence it means to say..." (Merleau-Ponty, 1969, p. 39). And in this way, "language realizes, by breaking the silence, what the silence wished and did not obtain" (p. 176). If phenomenological description expresses ineffable immediacy, we must also see that "The absence of language is pregnant with the pure possibility of all language" (Coward, 1990, p. 101). Caputo (1993) recognizes that:

"Ineffability" is a high-powered discursive resource, the product of a language that has been refined and defined until it is sharp enough and nuanced enough to announce all this ineffability. "Unsayability" is a modification of what is sayable...By the time one has said that something is ineffable, or that one cannot say a thing, one has already been speaking for some time and one has already said too much. (p. 75)

Echo conceives the inconceivable as inconceivable. Echo sees that the formless differs from the formed by its form. As Bataille (1988) says, "*the word silence is still a sound...*" (p. 13). And in giving form to the formless, determination to the indeterminate, concept to the inconceivable, Echo indeed has the last word. But the word is a word of invitation, a word that beckons us to enter into the ineffable with Narcissus, as Narcissus.

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