

## Why Echoism?

In the comprehensive literature search, the only paper that engages with the phenomenon of ~~ee~~Echoism as a discrete psychoanalytic and clinical entity is by Davis (2005). In this paper, the echoistic patient herself is considered to suffer from a psychopathological condition. The paper describes the role of echoistic wives found in relationships with narcissistic husbands. Davis, in discussing a narcissistic-echoistic couple, acknowledges:

... the [narcissist] husband is seen as the afflicted party, a victim of his own narcissistic introversion. The [echoist] wife is seen only as playing a foolishly passive neurotic witness. Oddly, social forces all seem to have conspired to generate an amnesia regarding the fundamental psychology of the wife. (Davis, 2005, p. 138)

Davis' paper seems to set out to remedy this, and he makes some very interesting theoretical links between primary narcissism and echoism, as well as speculating upon the way in which Freud might have drawn more heavily upon the myth of Narcissus and Echo in what he describes as a "hasty generalization" in his theorisation of gender. Davis then veers away from the echoist as a subject worthy of interest in her own right, and the one whom we meet in the consulting room, to further theorise on emergent states of narcissism and echoism in the infant.

Davis' application of Echo's story as the paradigm for gender, development, and cultural treatment, both in society and in psychoanalytic thinking, is interesting and valuable but again moves away from the plight of the suffering individual. He does, however, recognise a "vicious circle

of echoism/narcissism”, and he discusses the need for a comprehensive study of echoism.

He concludes:

any therapeutic attempts to heal such a relationship must utilize techniques that address both the male’s narcissism and the female’s echoism. Indeed, what little literature that exists on this subject, which we have cited earlier in this article, seems to support this conclusion. Even though echoism is most commonly found in the woman and narcissism in the man, the converse and any variation therein does occur. We are confident that the psychoanalytic theory of echo-ism will prove most useful in developing a better understanding of these variations and any needed therapeutic techniques. It is probable as well that some therapeutic techniques that seem successful but need a stronger theoretical foundation may find some encouragement here. I can see so many directions where these observations can lead. But, these directions are probably better explored at length elsewhere. (Ibid., p. 149)