

S10-01

IS EMPATHY ALWAYS GOOD?

M. Rossi Monti

Università di Urbino, Urbino, Italy

Empathy is a complex phenomenon. First of all empathy means the capacity to understand someone else's state of mind or to identify with his emotional state. From this point of view, empathy plays a fundamental role in psychotherapy and has been studied as a fundamental therapeutic factor. It is true that an emphatic attitude can help other people and lead to a better understanding of their feelings. But empathy can also be used as a horrible instrument to manipulate and abuse the other. We can see this kind of malign empathy in perverted narcissistic relationships, in sadism or in torture, where the torturer can use empathy in order to figure out the most effective ways to make each of his victims suffer.