



# Splitting and Projective Identification (Classical psychoanalysis and its applications)

*James S. Grotstein*

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A demonstration that the mental mechanism known as splitting has too long been neglected illustrating that it is one of the two most fundamental aspects of normal and abnormal personality formation (the other being projective identification). The text suggests that its clinical importance in psychodynamic understanding and technique is in danger only of underestimation. The author takes the position that splitting occurs in all processes of normal discrimination and differentiation on the one hand and of normal and abnormal defence techniques on the other. Moreover, the reader is shown that people exist in splits to a far greater extent than we have believed. In Part two, Dr Grotstein explains and demonstrates that projective identification is the primary architect, along with splitting, of internal objects and other object representations. His view is that projective identification is the principal component of human communication and expressiveness and is a major factor in all defence mechanisms insofar as it facilitates splitting. The borderline patient cannot be understood without understanding the mechanism of splitting and projective identification.

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