The Third Experiential Area:
PROBLEMS OF RIVALRY AND GENITALITY

IN THE AREAS OF EXPERIENCE thus far considered, the child's interpersonal relations are relatively simple and consist, for the most part, in the various aspects of his relationship with his mother. We have noted the possibility of interpersonal relations somewhat more complex: the triangular relationships of a proto-Oedipal situation if the child's specific circumstances tend to bring this about; that is, if there is a younger sibling, or if his observations have led him to speculate on the possibilities of a unilateral or mutual nursing situation involving the mother and a rival. But such triangular relationships are far from being universally experienced in the two earlier areas, and it may be stated that the child in the oral and disciplinary areas of experience is principally related to the mother in a one-to-one, or linear, pattern, and that when a third person enters the picture, the child regards him with hostile, competitive feelings. The one not infrequent exception to this is the solution of the late oral phase in which the child may regard the father or older sibling as a potential substitute for the mother in a nursing situation. But this involves merely a displacement of one linear relationship by another.

W. V. Silverberg, *Childhood Experience and Personal Destiny*
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THE EMERGENCE OF ALLOEROTIC IMPULSES

Thus far the child’s play has tended to be either with one of the parents or an older sibling (occasionally with adult visitors to the household) or by himself (with toys). During the first three years of life the child has little opportunity and no great inclination to relate, in his play, with those of his own age. This was strikingly illustrated by observations made in 1924 and 1925 upon a group of children (aged two, three, and four) in the Home for Hebrew Infants. I was endeavoring to construct an intelligence test for such young children by presenting them with a standardized play situation (a group of six toys in a room apart from other children) and noting the items of behavior of children in these three age-groups with the various toys. In the course of this work I attempted to ascertain whether it would be possible to test more than one child at a time and observed that, while the two year olds and three year olds always played with the toys independently of each other, the four year olds would often begin to play cooperatively, though such attempts often ended in quarreling and fighting. This observation is, I believe, the same as that frequently made by child psychologists and is not merely the result of the special conditions obtaining in an institution.

At some time during the child’s fourth year, however, his greatly increased skill in language, muscular coordination, locomotion, and looking after himself in general, enable him to enter situations (playing in the yard or playground, playing in the street or going to kindergarten) in which he meets with other children around his own age and joins them in play and other enterprises. Such groups of playmates may be closely supervised by adults, as in kindergartens and some playgrounds, or much more loosely supervised if the locus of activity is in the yard or vacant lot or in a street relatively free of traffic. In the latter situations an older sibling (usually sister) of one of the children is often entrusted with this supervision and carries it out with varying degrees of conscientiousness and consistency, so that there may be in some cases a tyrannical supervision, in others none at all, with a great range of possibilities between the two extremes.