

largely confined now to a form of schoolboy punishment, with rhythmic whipping replacing the rhythmic pelvic thrusts of the dominant male. It is doubtful whether schoolmasters would persist in this practice if they fully appreciated the fact that, in reality, they were performing an ancient primate form of ritual copulation with their pupils. They could just as well inflict pain on their victims without forcing them to adopt the bent-over submissive female posture. (It is significant that schoolgirls are rarely, if ever, beaten in this way-the sexual origins of the act would then become too obvious.) It has been imaginatively suggested by one authority that the reason for sometimes forcing schoolboys to lower their trousers for the administration of the punishment is not related to increasing the pain, but rather to enabling the dominant male to witness the reddening of the buttocks as the beating proceeds, which so vividly recalls the flushing of the primate female hindquarters when in full sexual condition. Whether this is so or not, one thing is certain about this extraordinary ritual, namely that as a re-motivating appeasement device it is a dismal failure. The more the unfortunate schoolboy stimulates the dominant male cryptosexually, the more likely he is to perpetuate the ritual and, because the rhythmic pelvic thrusts have become symbolically modified into rhythmic blows of the cane, the victim is right back where he started. He has managed to switch a direct attack into a sexual one, but has then been double-crossed by the symbolic conversion of this sexual one back into another aggressive pattern.

The third re-motivating device, that of grooming, plays a minor, but useful role in our species. We frequently employ stroking and patting movements to soothe an agitated individual, and many of the more dominant members of society spend long hours having themselves groomed and fussed over by subordinates. But we shall return to this subject in another chapter.

Displacement activities also play a part in our aggressive encounters, appearing in almost any situation of stress or tension. We differ from other animals, 147