

such a situation can be seen to perform repeated and agitated scratching movements, which are of a rather special kind and different from the normal response to an itch. It is confined largely to the head region, or sometimes the arms. The movements themselves are rather stylised. We behave in much the same way, performing stilted displacement grooming actions. We scratch our heads, bite our nails, 'wash' our faces with our hands, tug at our beards or moustaches if we have them, or adjust our coiffure, rub, pick, sniff or blow our noses, stroke our ear-lobes, clean our ear-passages, rub our chins, lick our lips, or rub our hands together in a rinsing action. If moments of great conflict are studied carefully, it can be observed that these activities are all carried out in a ritual fashion without the careful localised adjustments of the true cleaning actions. The displacement head-scratch of one individual may differ markedly from its equivalent in another, but each scratcher develops his own rather fixed and characteristic way of doing it. As real cleaning is not involved, it is of little importance that one region gets all the attention while others are ignored. In any social interaction between a small group of individuals the subordinate members of the group can easily be identified by the higher frequency of their displacement self-grooming activities. The truly dominant individual can be recognised by the almost complete absence of such actions. If the ostensibly dominant member of the group does, in fact, perform a larger number of small displacement activities, then this means that his official dominance is being threatened in some way by the other individuals present.

In discussing all these aggressive and submissive behaviour patterns, it has been assumed that the individuals concerned have been 'telling the truth' and have not been consciously and deliberately modifying their actions to achieve special ends. We 'lie' more with our words than our other communication signals, but even so the phenomenon cannot be overlooked entirely. It is extremely difficult to 'utter' untruths with the kind of behaviour patterns we have been discussing, but not impossible. As I have already mentioned, when parents adopt this procedure towards 149