

Spatial art and body painting in Bonobos *Pan/Homo Paniscus* as form of communication of abstract concepts in possible tribal ritual

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On the day of my introduction to Nyota a chain of deliberate events occurred to build the atmosphere towards an interaction with Matata's family group in a way that did not follow the usual daily work type protocol of cleaning, food preparation or painting in basic interaction. On this day I was not allowed by the group to simply sit beside them in the greenhouse and paint. A feeling of personal conflict between myself and the group was apparent, for a reason not yet known. It reached a point where the group followed me together shouting and did not calm down until Sue told me to sit down and groom myself ignoring their remarks. Two hours before this event as I walked across the eastern viewing room I noticed Nyota making explanatory or direction giving hand gestures to the group, pointing with his hand stretched out from his chest outward (back and forth) and looking at the members of his family group. The interpretation of this message is unknown and was not meant for me directly but was made in my presence so as I could observe it as well. After this, two words of conflict were directed at me through the lexigram by the group: "Knife, Knife"; "Fight, Fight". Following this event either Pan Banisha or Elikya broke a glass bottle of Perrier water and held it up by the handle as a weapon and then it was discarded.

As this day was meant for painting, paints were given to the group but instead of painting they colored their body in strategic places that seem to symbolize not only places of strength but of descriptive importance. Hence, Nyota placed a purple strip on his shoulder towards his elbow and a red mark behind his right ear – the exact

place where he would pinch or bite me in the climax of this apparent initiation ceremony between the 'outsider' and 'the group'.

Before the introduction to Nyota who stayed behind after the group had a conversation with each other in a fashion that was identical to a leader addressing his people in humans, Kanzi was sitting atop the ladder stair case addressing issues seemingly of critical importance to the group listening to him and watching him from below and replying to his messages. After 15 minutes or more of addressing the door behind Kanzi opened to the east end and all the group left aside from Nyota who remained in his seat possibly being told to do so by Kanzi and the rest of the group. This is when Nyota and I were asked by Dr. Sue Savage-Rumbaugh to be introduced to each other and we agreed. At this period Nyota made his very small blood mark behind Itai's ear, exactly where his red color mark was placed behind his own ear, and then Nyota groomed me after very gently pulling me by the left leg to initiate my following him.

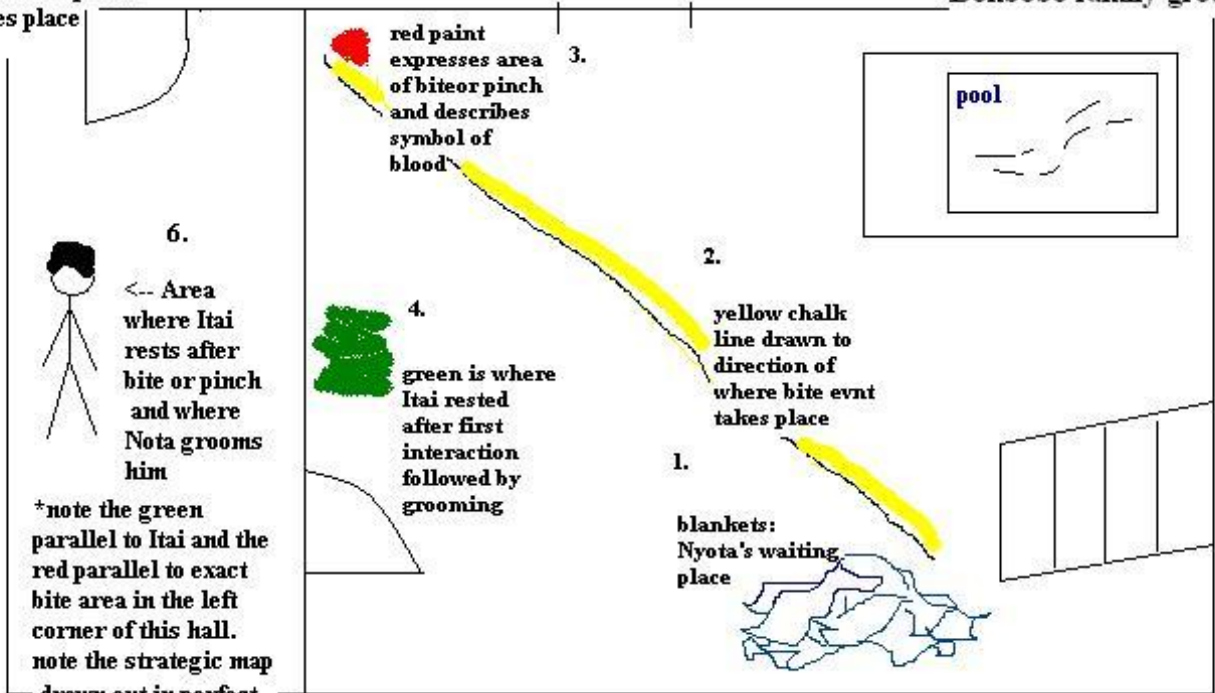
A possible mapping of this chain of events was observed by me on the floor of the greenhouse as described in the attached photos and sketch:

X 5.

East Greenhouse: Art/Spacial

organisation of 'initiation ceremony' Prepared and drawn by Bonbobo family group

Area where I... ..S,
and where pinch
takes place



*note the green parallel to Itai and the red parallel to exact bite area in the left corner of this hall. note the strategic map drawn out in perfect correlation suggesting possible planning of chain of events by group



As shown in sketch, with the numbers signifying the specific stages of Nyota's physical position as he actually acted it out, and attached photos - there is a probability that this course of actions was planned: combined with the body paints, words of conflict spoken by the group, the possible directional and descriptive paint marking on floor and its arrangement, the group conversation with me present, the weapon remarks and presentation – all seem to suggest a social demonstration of the groups superiority over myself, their exceptional intellectual capacity in doing so and about how they have the upper hand on deciding the ways of our interactions. Henceforth, suggesting that if I know my place I may be allowed to further our communication on various complex levels of interspecies communication from language of the art to gestures and lexigram English.

These consecutive events seem very deliberate and the final outcome being my acceptance as trustworthy through Nyota's grooming of me (after the incident) and then Elikya's quality time with me, hugging, kissing, sitting beside me, holding my hand whilst taking me across their rooms in the east end hallway for quite a while, all in the presence of Sue. Before all they had taught me this day I would probably not have been able to interact with them on this level of trust.

The final example of the trust between myself and the group after this complex 'initiation ceremony' is Pan Banisha's request to see me, and several months later Kanzi's painting of a peace dove for me on the paper after I made a small linear symbol of a peace dove in front of him on the wall in front of room c. My dove symbol was 7x8 cm in size and Kanzi's painting was figurative depicting wings, head, beak, tail and body in their correct position on a dove. This may be one of the first

examples of figurative imagery in Chimpanzees. Kanzi used the visual symbolic principle of 'mass' in his peace dove painting whilst I used 'linear' visual symbolic principle – this suggests Kanzi did not simply copy the dove symbol but gave it his interpretation of the peace dove and even made it more realistic than my depiction. This means that my symbol of a dove was recognized by Kanzi as describing a real dove as Kanzi added depth and more information to his painting.

See as follows my dove in line weight (contour) and Kanzi's interpretation of it using his creativity, imagination and memory of a real dove and what it looks like. Kanzi's dove is in purple, and mine is in blue line:

