

## Week5a Tuesday, April 28 Seminar Questions on Mithen I

*Focus on the questions Q1-Q5 in small groups. We will discuss questions Q6 and Q7 and any questions generated by the small groups in the full seminar.*

**Q1** Discuss the differences between the “two views of proto-language” (Bickerton vs Wray) presented in Chapter 1, pp. 2-4. (See also notes 10-14) Which view seems initially most plausible to you? Why?

**Q2.** Chapter 2 examines both similarities and differences between language and music that Mithen summarizes at the bottom of page 25. Discuss each of them? Which, if any, do you find most interesting? Why? How does the catalog of these differences lead Mithen to reject Pinker’s “cheesecake” view of music as well as to pursue his own version given the acronym HmMMMM? (p. 27)

**Q3.** Discuss how the discussion of language and music deficits in chapters 3 and 4 illustrate the double dissociation Mithen discusses in chapter 5 (p. 62). What is the relationship of the modularity model presented figure 5, p. 63 and the discussion of the distributed nature of musical processing? (p. 66)

**Q4.** What aspects of Infant Directed Speech (IDS) are important for Mithen (beginning of ch. 6). How does he handle the notion that proposed by Saffran (as we saw in last week’s lecture, by Kuhl) that children are “natural born statisticians (p. 75). How do these results relate to the claim that “language acquisition involves the ‘unlearning’ of perfect pitch” (p. 78). Do you think it lends any credence to the evolutionary parallel. (p. 79)

**Q5.** How does Mithen tie music to emotion in chapter 7. In particular, how does it relate to manipulation (see p. 101)

**Q6.** What conclusions does Mithen reach concerning communication in monkey and apes in chapter 8. What does he mean when he says that it is holistic, manipulative, multi-modal and musical. (p. 121). Compare or contrast Mithen’s view of ape communication with Savage-Rumbaugh’s.

**Q7** Discuss how Mithen uses the fossil record as well as his discussion of HmMMMM to refine the “gossip” hypothesis for language evolution. (p. 135f). Do you find his reasoning compelling? If so, why? If not, why not?

**. Last small group task: the group as a whole should ultimately formulate a question for full seminar and write it on the board before the full group session.**