

# Thinly and widely vs thickly and deeply distributed processing resource

- It's a trade off
- There is a limited resource at work
- The resource varies in quantity for lots of different reasons including visceral - feedback from experience - “gut feelings”
- The experience of pursuing one's own interests is far less draining of this resource
- If resource is kept focussed not spread thin – as I suggest happens in autism - deep stuff can happen

# NB!

This is art not science

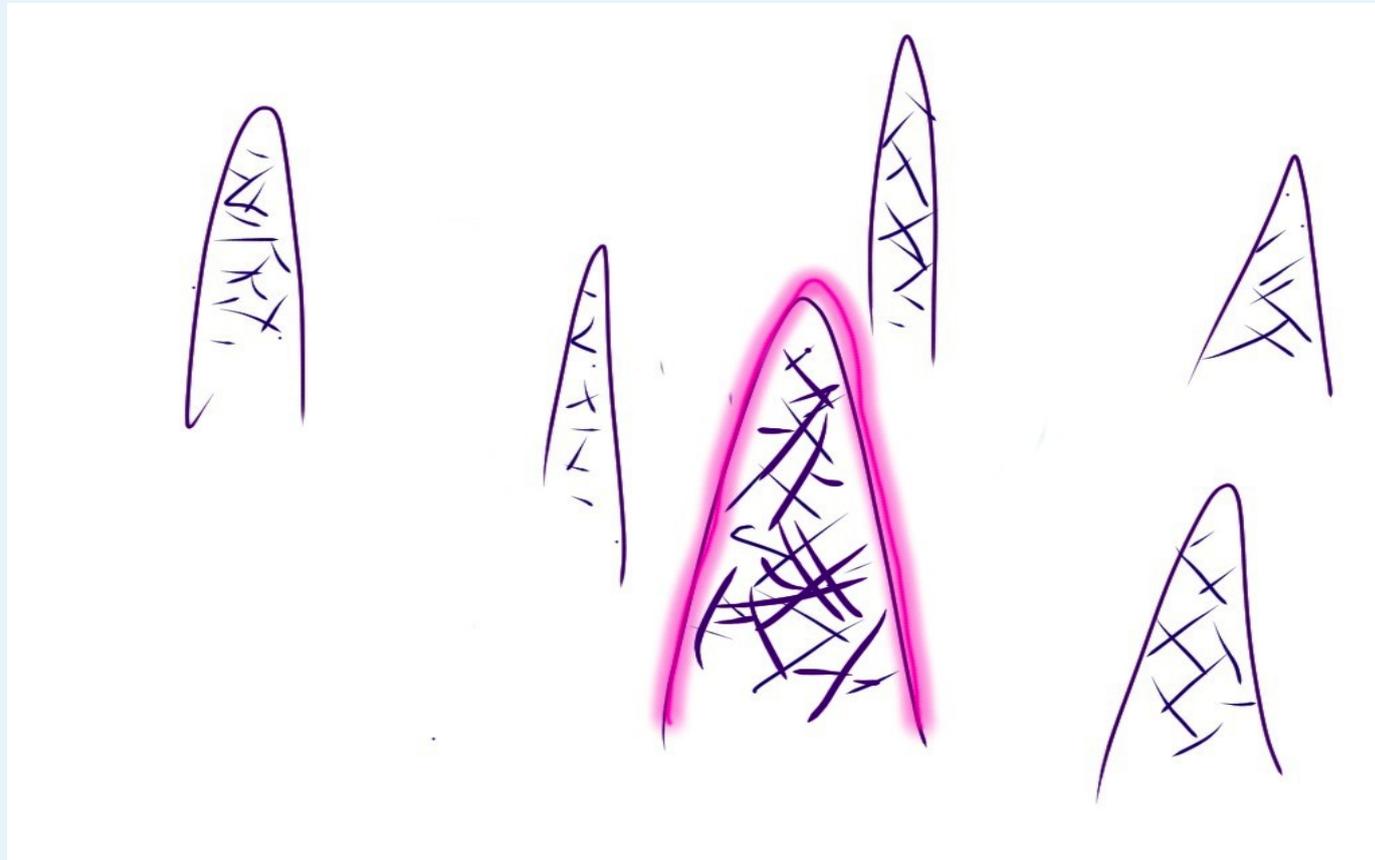
- though questions only science can answer do arise

The pictures are visualisations not representations

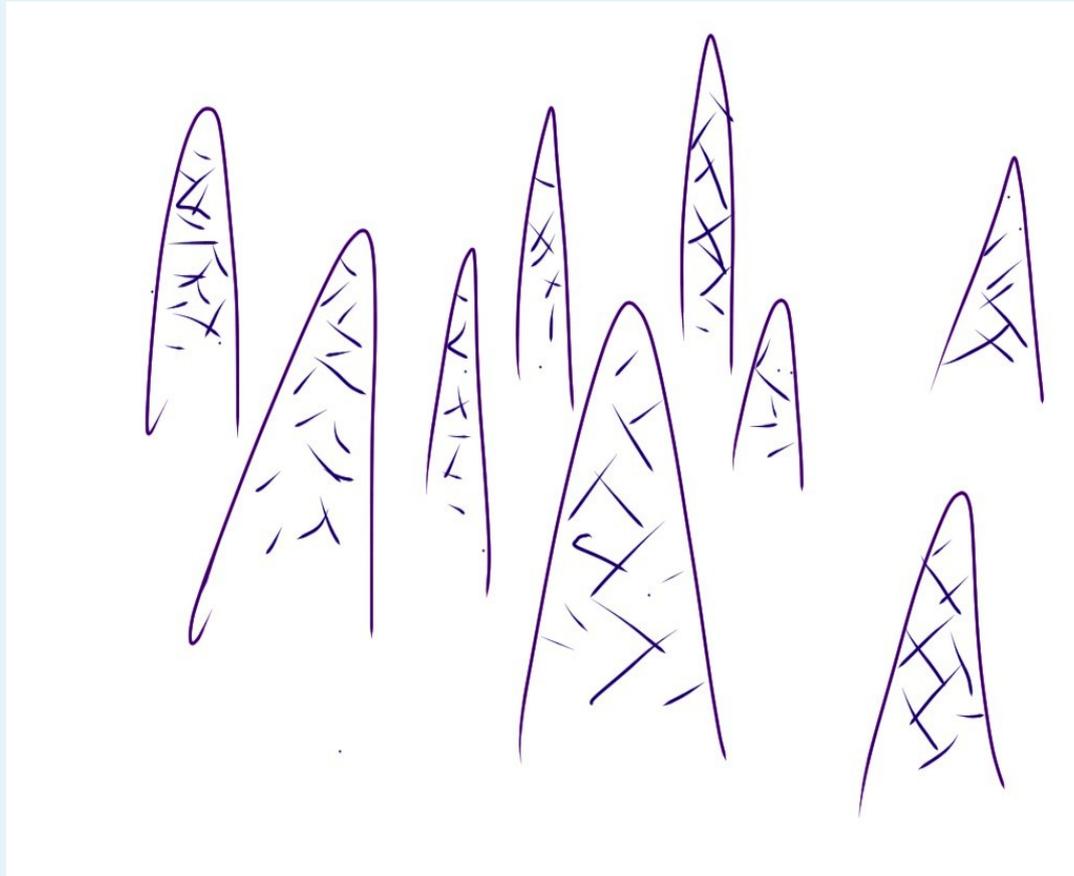
- though some science underpins them in some respects

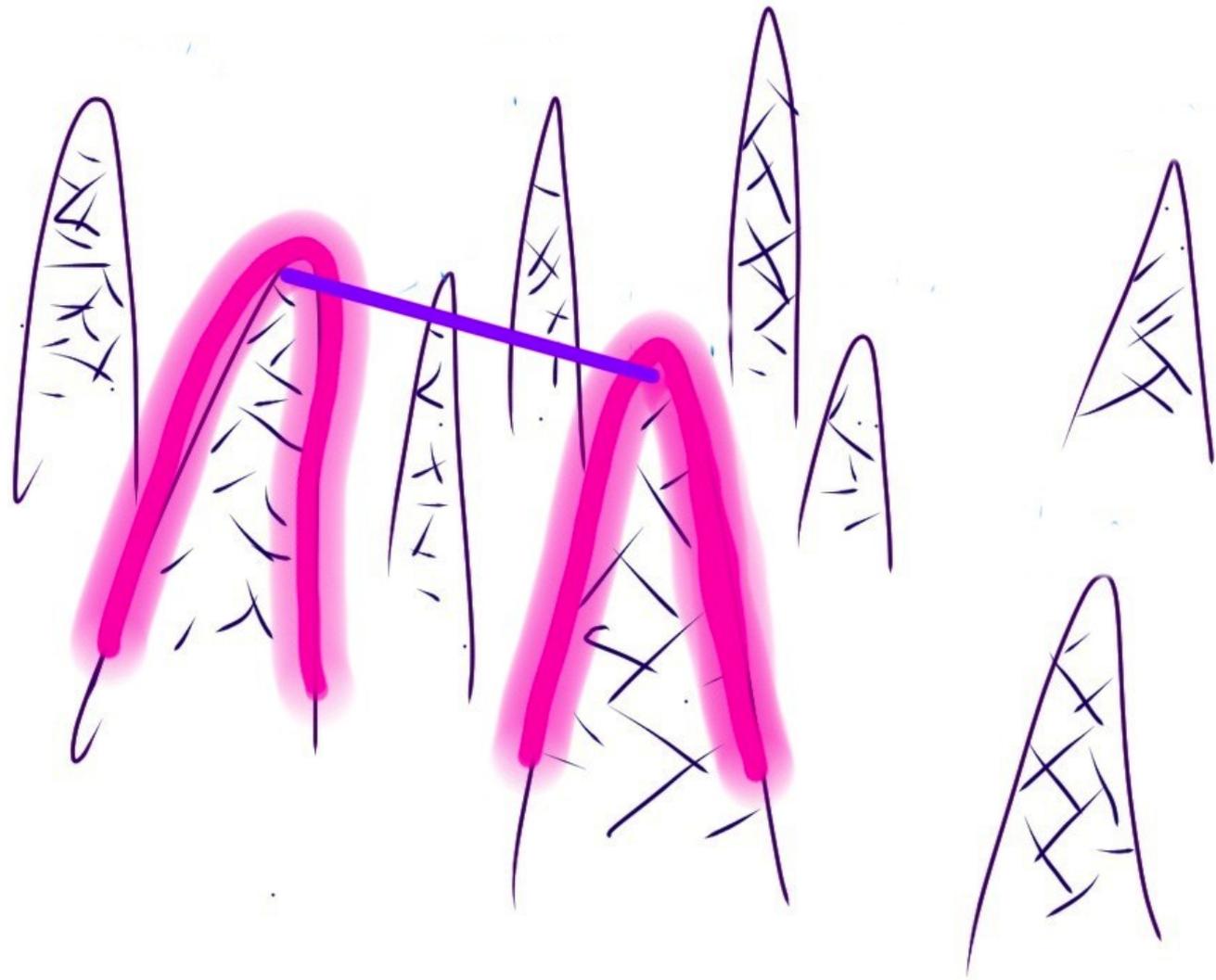
**Mono** – processing resource tends to be intensely focussed

- there are dense internal connections
- aroused interest pursues attractor (in four dimensional space) and accretes information
- an array of potential interests emerges in time

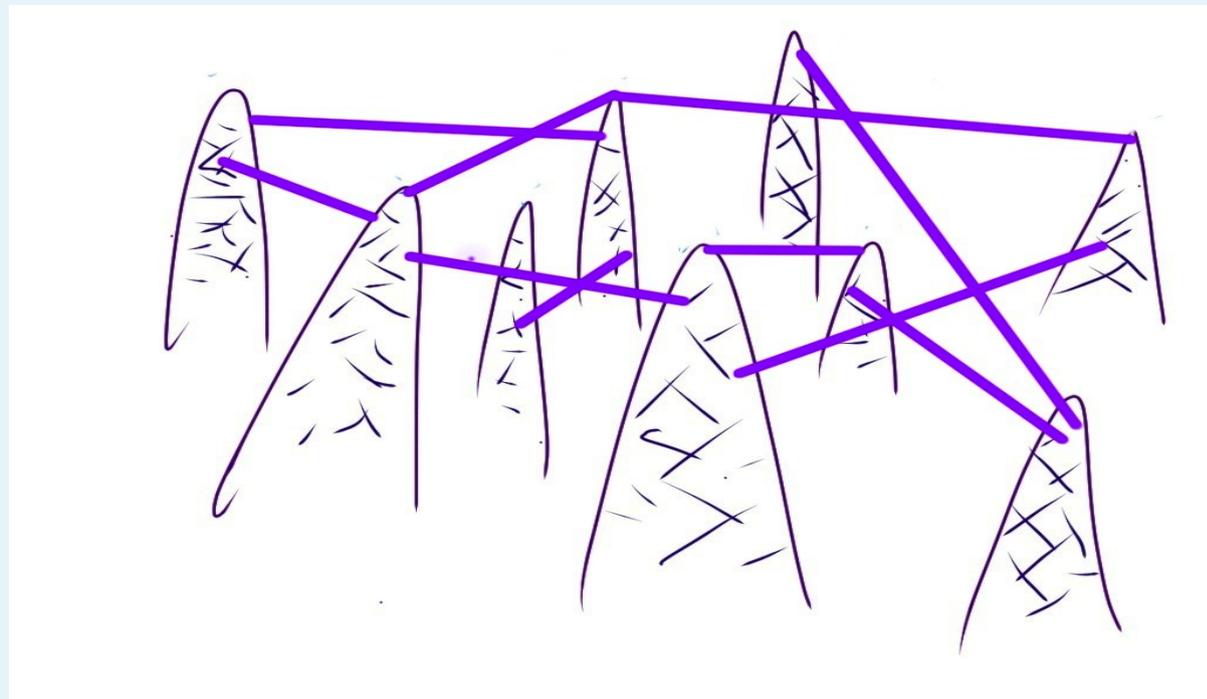


**Mono ii** – as more interests are aroused and added ...





... so more and more connections are made between them as “neurons that fire together wire together”  
the more monotropic an interest system the longer it will tend to take for connections between interests to build up



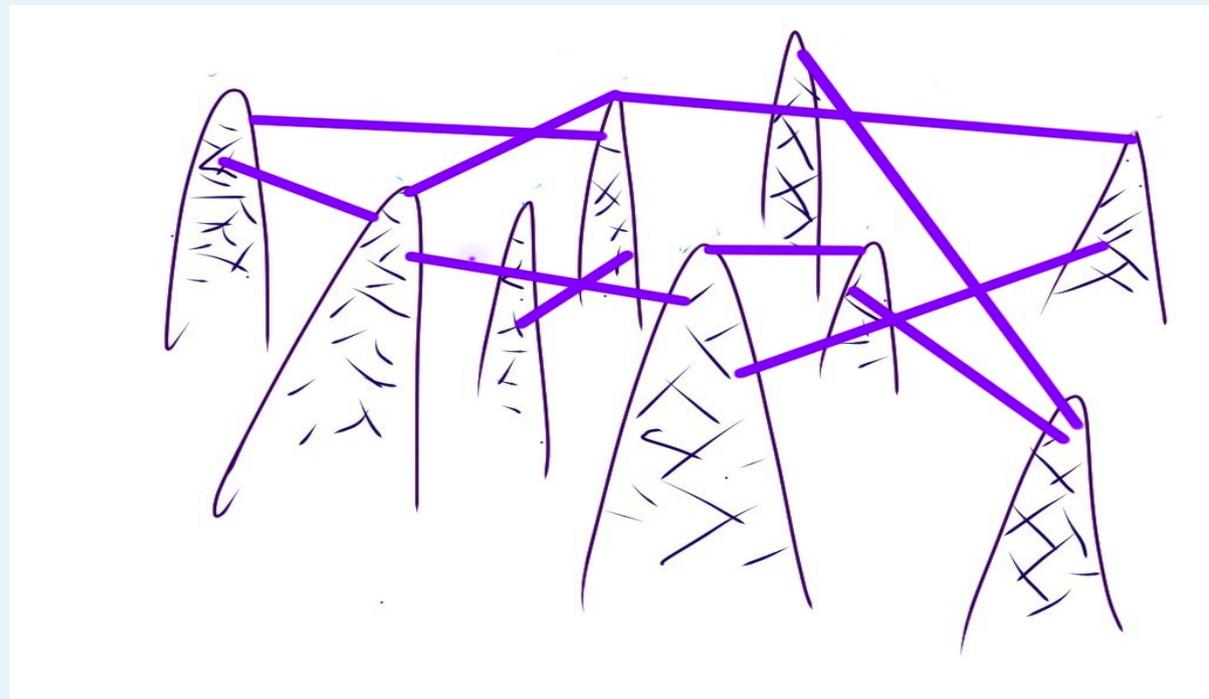
Note also that being monotropic correlates with depending on oneself in the learning process.

Certainty is a deep need for all living creatures.

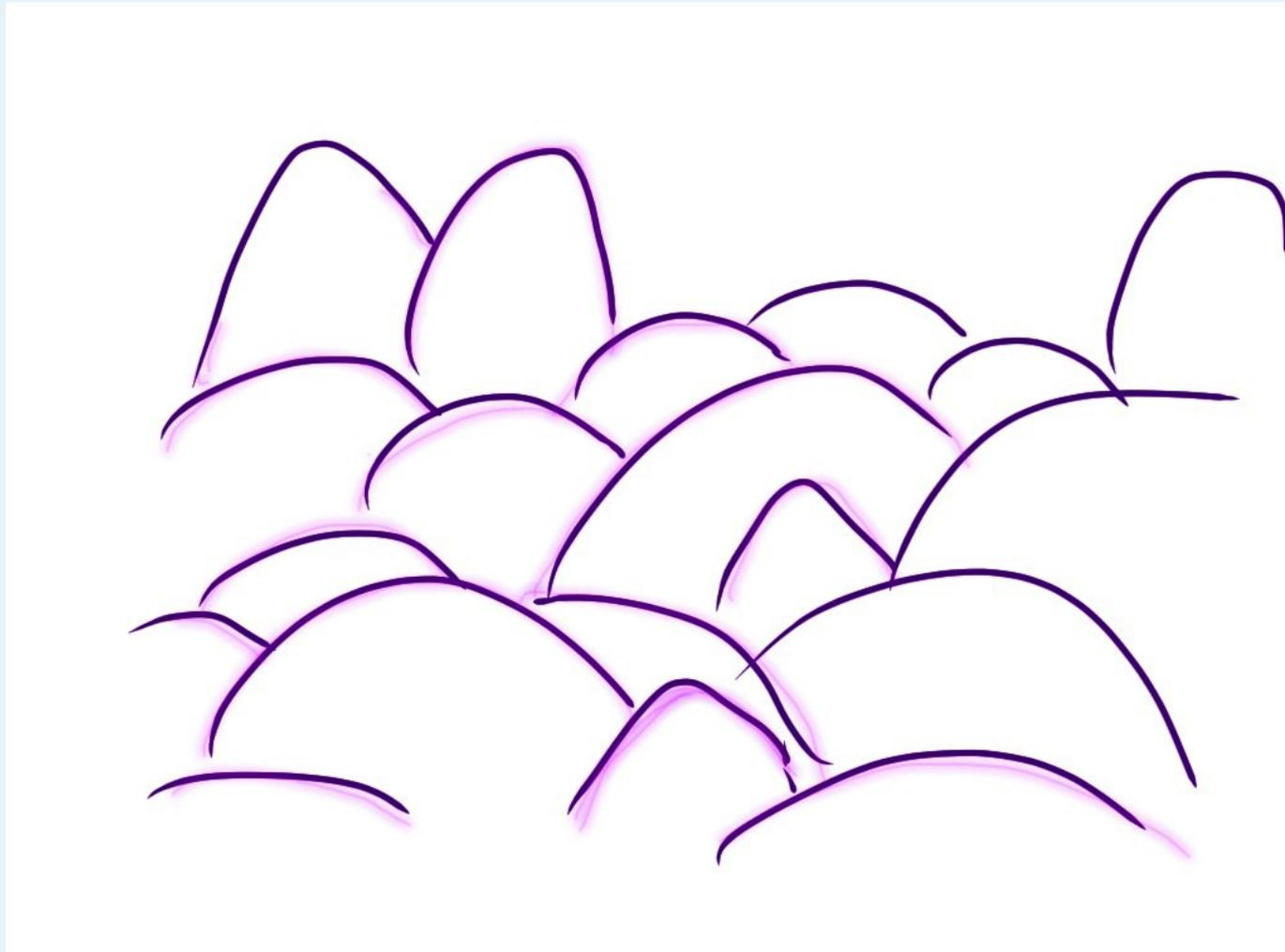
Most people are satisfied to share others' beliefs and do not need to seek further for what is dependable.

Monotropic people have to forge their own firm connections, forge their own reliable assumptions

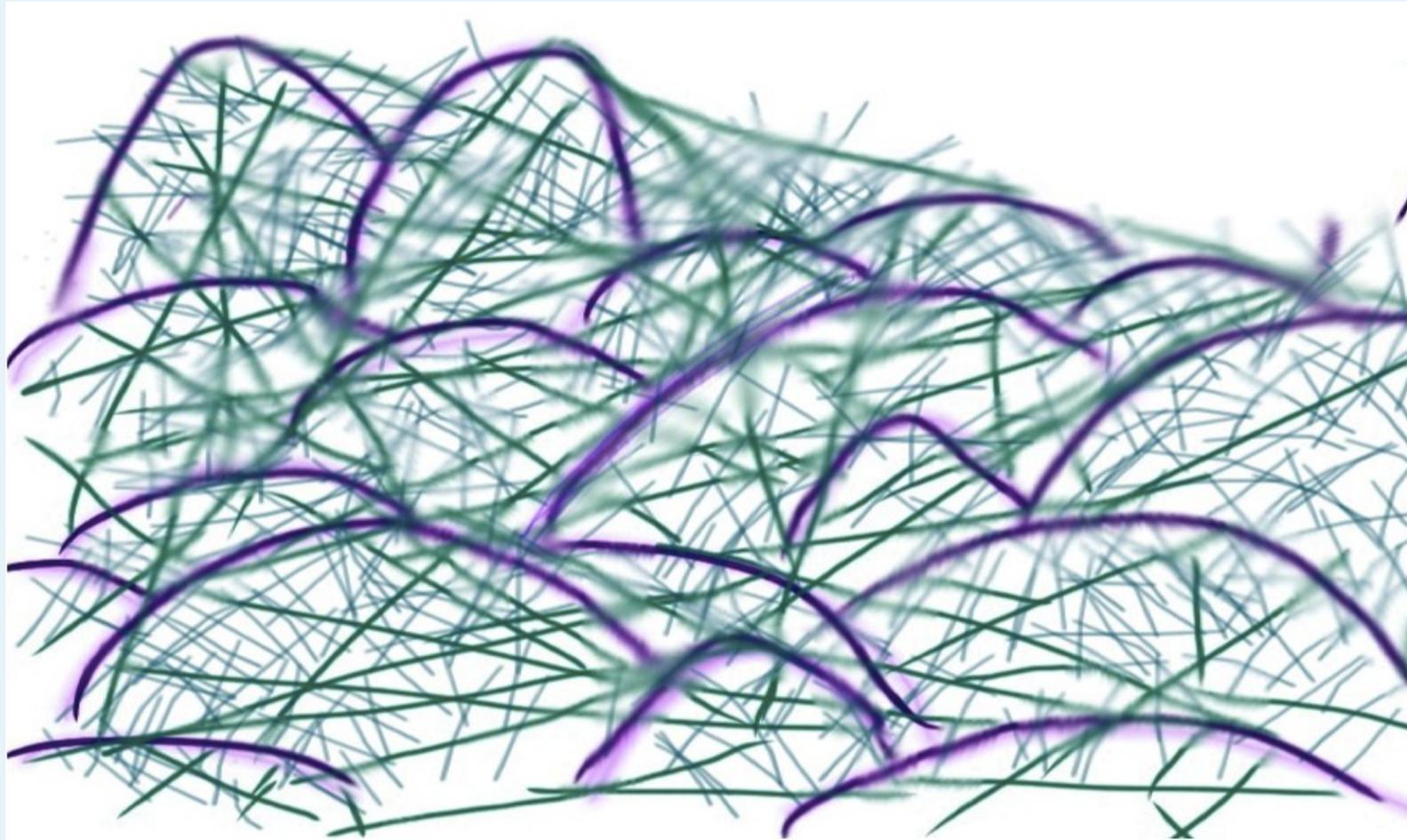
In addition I assume connections made with much energy are inherently stronger.



# Opposite extreme – polytropic



# Polytropic connectedness



# Fuzzy boundaries, massive interconnectedness



# History of relevant psychology and psychological theory

- Freud
- Dewey
- Vygotsky
- Bartlett
- Mead
- Kahnemann
- Minsky

*See also Gifts of the Crow – Marzluff & Angell 2012*

# Theories...

- “weak drive for central coherence” - Frith
- “detail focus” - Happe
- “Executive Function deficit” - Ozonoff
- “Theory of Mind” – Baron Cohen
- “under connectivity” - Minshew et al, Belmonte et al
- Synchrony – Boucher, Casanova
- Integration – Ben Shalom
- Plaisted – steep boundaries, enhanced discrimination

# Theories 2

- Enhanced perceptual processing – Mottron, Dawson
- Optional “top down processing” - Dawson
- “Spoon theory” - Miserandino
- “Single attention and associated cognition” - Lawson, expands monotropism idea

# Theory check

Does it account for

- Sensory issues?
- Enhanced processing?
- Uneven abilities including strengths?
- All or nothing feelings?
- Total absorption in current interest?
- Motor coordination problems?

Reality

**BE PROUD TO BE  
WEIRD!**

***The next two slides are the discussion  
questions for the live session***

*Apologies for their messy format  
the Open Office software has baffled me*

1. Do you sometimes get so absorbed in an interest that you notice nothing else (including eg hunger or the need to excrete, or a person speaking to you)?
2. Does that happen often enough for other people to notice or complain?
3. How easy is it for you to move on and shift focus?
  
4. Are you sometimes overwhelmed by sensory input?
5. Have you ever injured yourself without noticing?
6. Do you notice when you are becoming tired or do you tend to go f at out till you crash?
7. When you become emotional do you feel it as extreme? do other people see it as extreme?
8. When you become emotional how fast does it happen?
9. Are you able to disguise your feelings? Have you tried?

10. Do you find imposed tasks easy to do?

11. When faced with some prospect you find aversive, do you feel dread / horror? how do you cope?

12. How do you cope with uncertainty?

13. Do you sometimes stay focussed on a task that is not from your heart (such as paying attention in a lecture or sorting papers) by giving your surplus attention something to do? Eg do you doodle? Tap a pen? Put on some familiar music?

14. What age were you when you became interested in language?  
*(this question should have been omitted as it is too vague)*

15. Were you interested in speech AND the written word?

16. Are there others who share your interests? If so, do they typically have the same angle on your shared interest?

17. Are your interests widely socially acceptable?

18. Does pursuing your interests bring you personal esteem? Social esteem?