



Synapses, Circuits and the Beginning of Memory (Cognitive Neuroscience)

Gary Lynch

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Synapses, Circuits and the Beginning of Memory (Cognitive Neuroscience) Gary Lynch with commentaries by Gordon M. Shepherd, Ira B. Black, and Herbert P. Killackey

For years memory research focused on the neuron as the basic element of the brain, but developments in cognitive science now challenge the neurobiologist to understand the function of neural networks, perhaps one of the most difficult problems of the mind. This monograph articulates the ways in which neurobiologic discoveries can be interpreted in terms of psychological memory.

The brain mechanisms of learning and memory have been extensively studied by both neuroscientists and psychologists in recent years. Here Gary Lynch outlines the main issues in this dialogue: using the olfactory cortex and related hippocampus as examples, he discusses the physiological and chemical process involved in producing long-term memory and the anatomical organization of the neuronal circuitries in which they are stored. Then, combining these arguments, Lynch arrives at a series of postulates about the dynamics of the formation, association, and recall of memory representations in cortical networks. An evolutionary theme concerning the origins of the hypothesized organizations and processes runs throughout the monograph.

Commenting on some of these ideas, Gordon Shepherd (Yale University) takes up the ways particular aspects of cortical cells, the apical dendrites of pyramidal cells, can be active in storing information. Ira Black (Cornell University Medical College) discusses the biochemical mutability of individual neurons and how this must be taken into account in modeling the way neural cells support mnemonic processes. A general discussion of cortical morphology and memory is provided by Herbert Killackey (University of California, Irvine).

Gary Lynch is at the Center for the Neurobiology of Learning and Memory, University of California, Irvine. *Synapses, Circuits, and the Beginnings of Memory* inaugurates The Cognitive Science Institute Monographs Series, edited by Michael A. Gazzaniga. A Bradford Book.

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