

# The brain in silicon: history, and skepticism

Alessio Plebe  
Giorgio Grasso

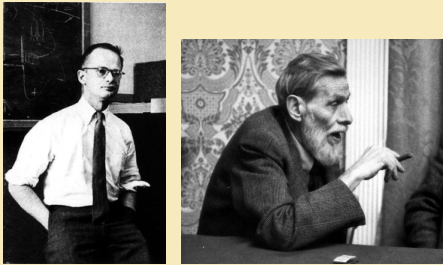
Department of Cognitive Science, University of Messina  
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# The brain as a logic system



McCulloch and Pitts: *A logical calculus of the ideas immanent in nervous activity*, 1943, Bulletin of Mathematical Biophysics

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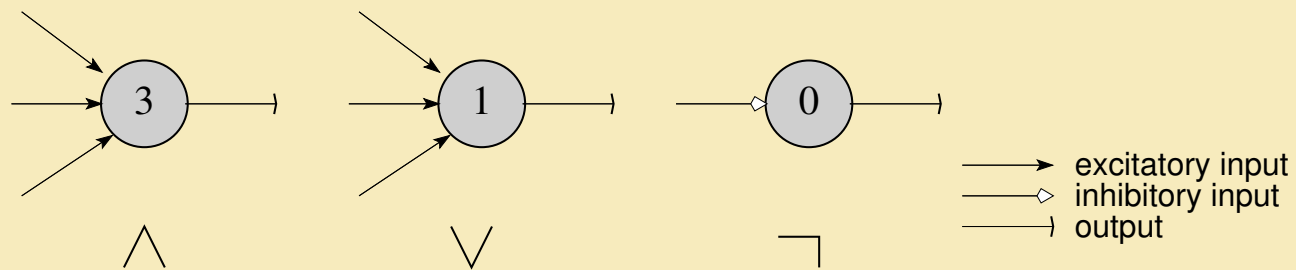
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## The intuition of Turing

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[...] analogous to the kind of process by  
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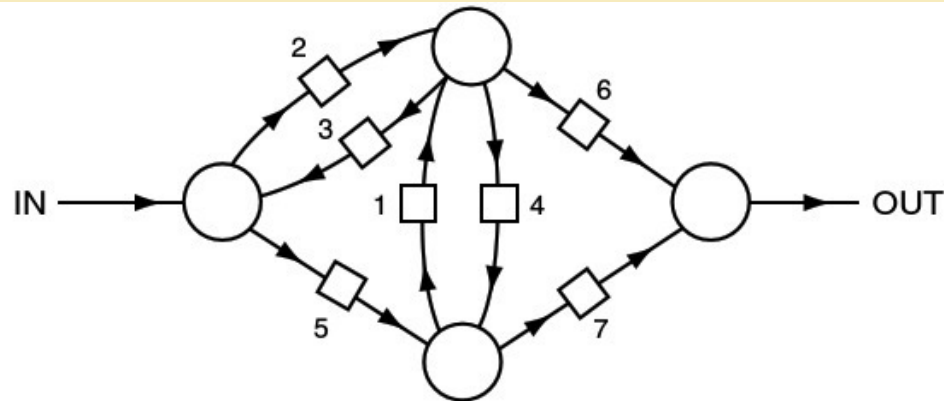


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# The first neurocomputer

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SNARC (Stochastic Neural Analog Reinforcement Computer)

## The first neurocomputer



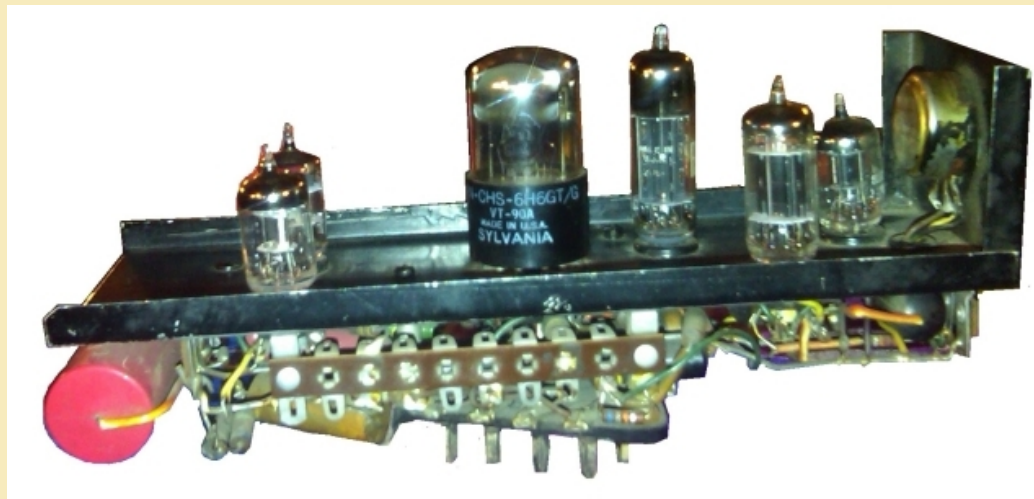
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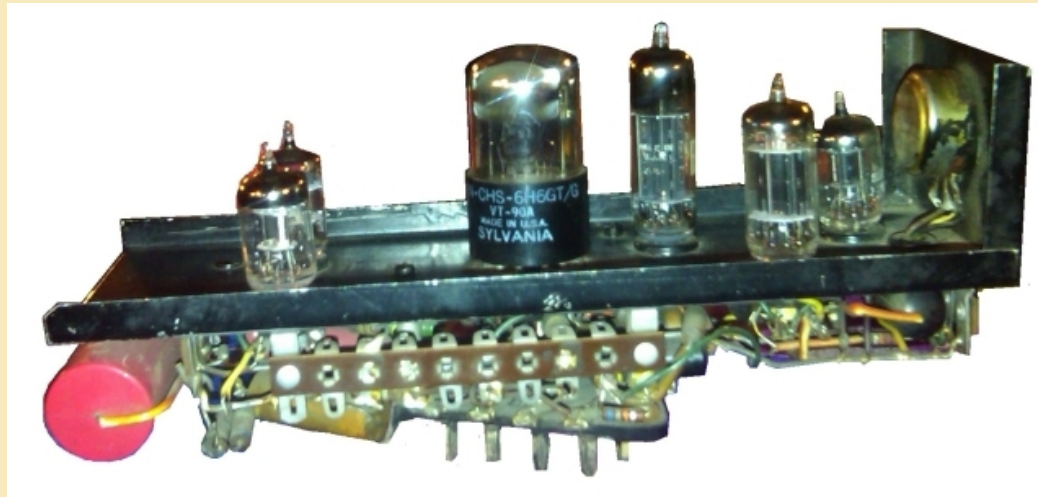


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## Disimissal of the brain as computational paradigm

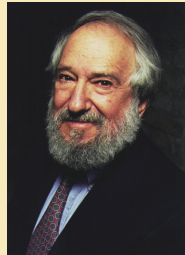
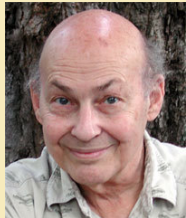
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“The perceptron has shown itself worthy of study despite (and even because of!) its severe limitations. It has many features to attract attention: its linearity; its intriguing learning theorem; its clear paradigmatic simplicity as a kind of parallel computation. There is no reason to suppose that any of these virtues carry over to the many-layered version. Nevertheless, we consider it to be an important research problem to elucidate (or reject) our intuitive judgment that the extension is sterile.” [pp.231-232]





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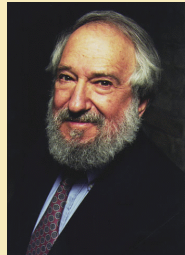
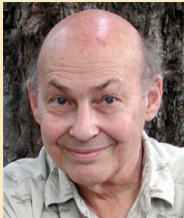


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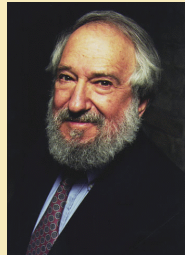


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# The brain is back, in software

1986 David Rumelhart, James McClelland *Parallel Distributed Processing: Explorations in the Microstructure of Cognition*

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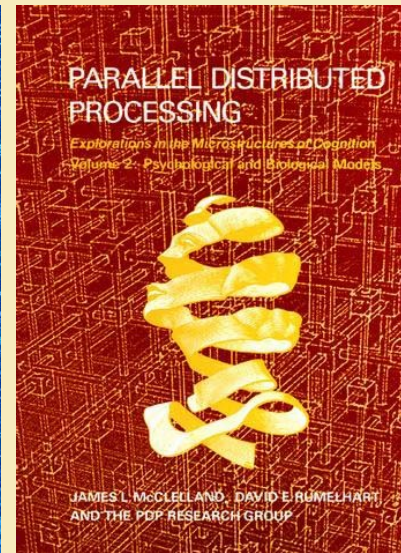
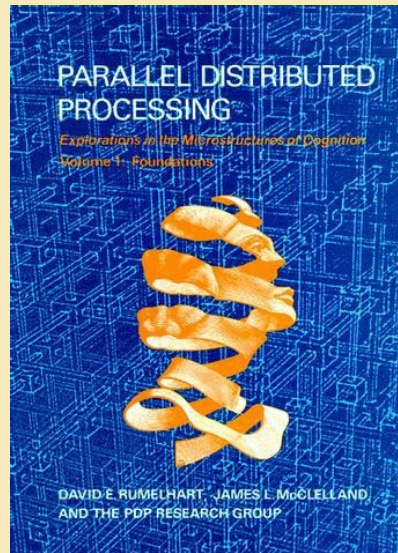


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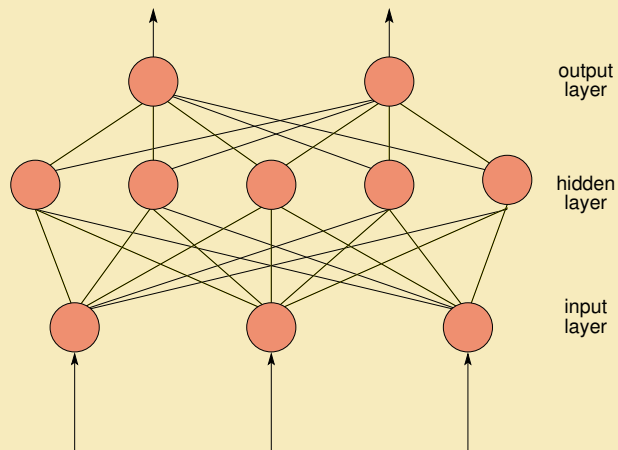
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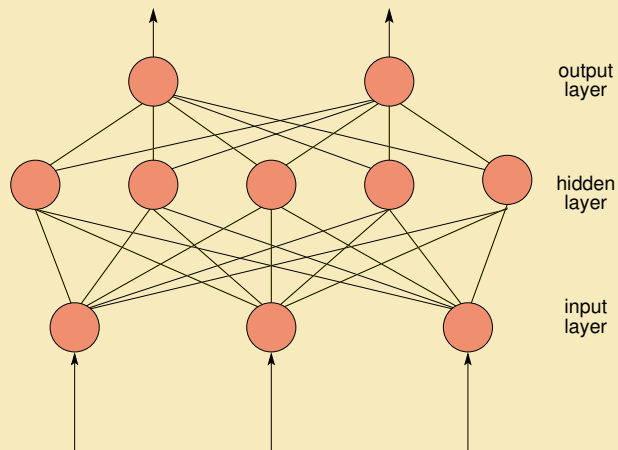
# Artificial neural network concept



$$\begin{aligned} \vec{x}_1 &= \mathbf{A}^{(1)}\vec{x} + \vec{b}^{(1)} \\ \hat{f}(\vec{x}) &= \mathbf{A}^{(0)}\vec{x}_K + \vec{b}^{(0)} \\ x_{i,k} &= h(\mathbf{w}_{k,i}\vec{x}_{k-1} - \theta_{i,k}) \quad 1 < k < K \\ h &\in \left\{ g \in C^1 : \mathbb{R}^1 \ni \lim_{x \rightarrow -\infty} g(x) \neq \lim_{x \rightarrow +\infty} g(x) \in \mathbb{R}^1 \right\} \end{aligned}$$

$$\Delta p = -\eta \frac{\partial E(T)}{\partial p}$$

# Artificial neural network concept



$$\vec{x}_1 = \mathbf{A}^{(I)} \vec{x} + \vec{b}^{(I)}$$

$$\hat{f}(\vec{x}) = \mathbf{A}^{(O)} \vec{x}_K + \vec{b}^{(O)}$$

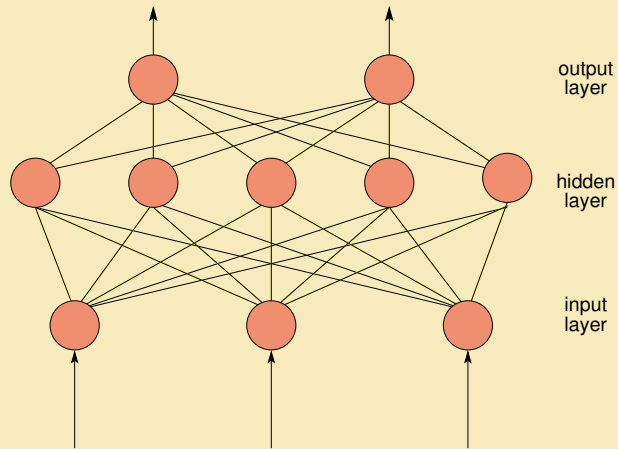
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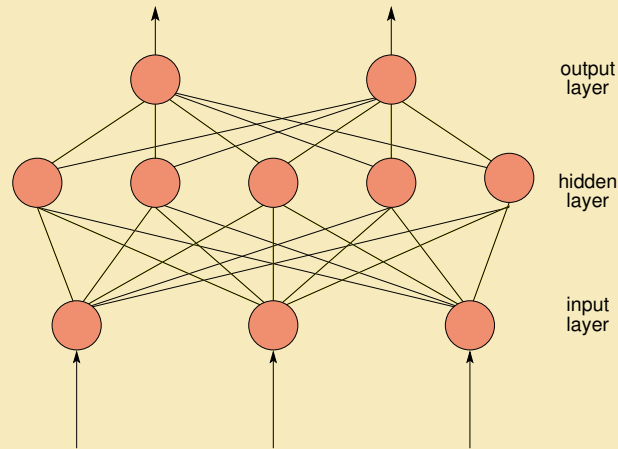
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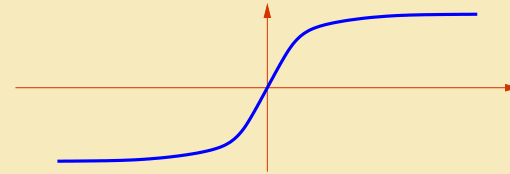


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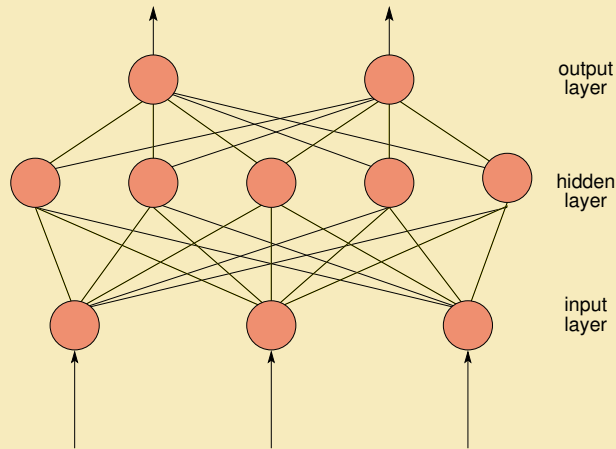
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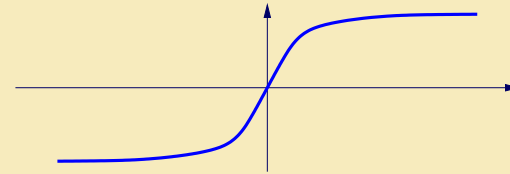


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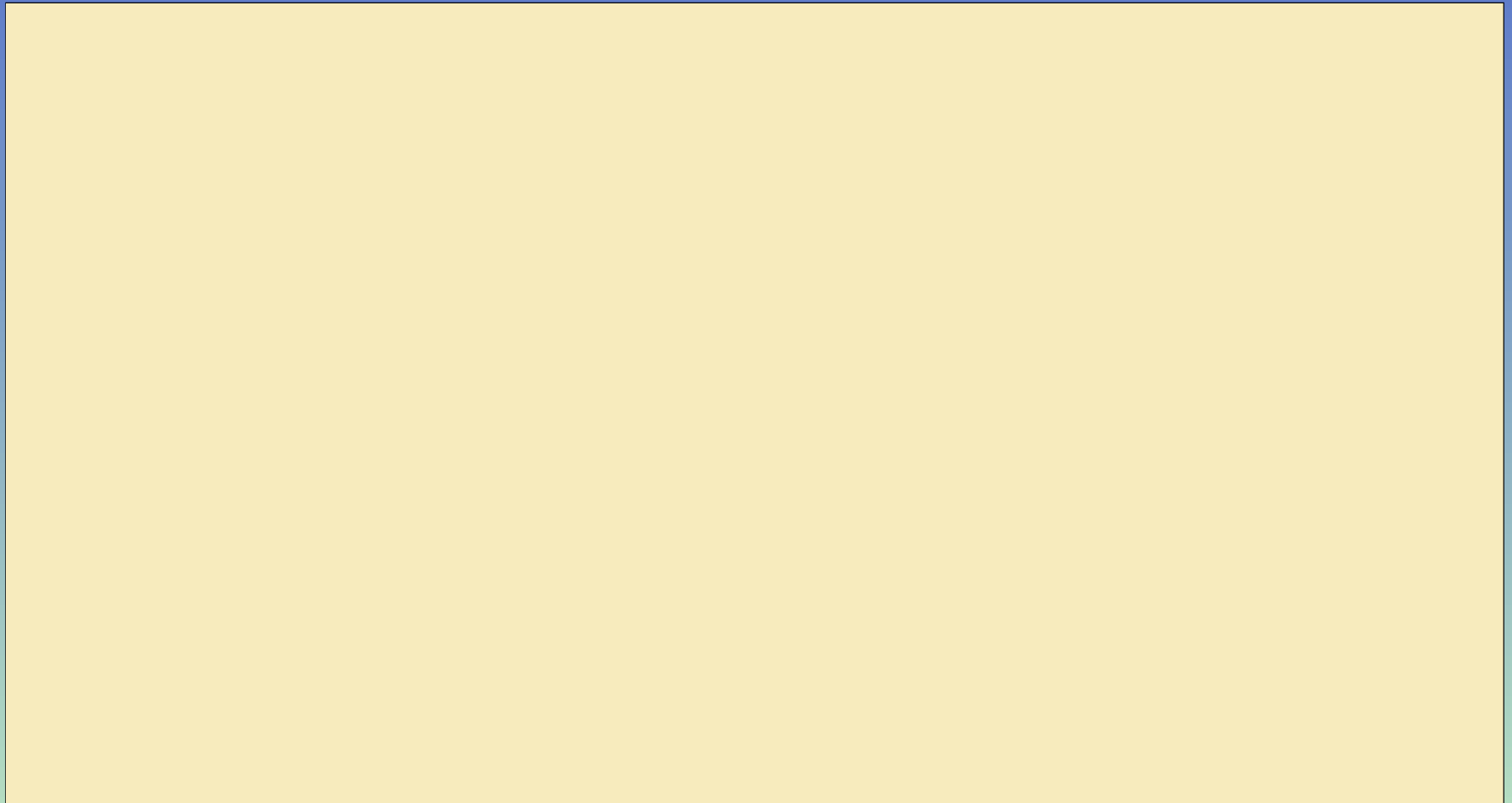
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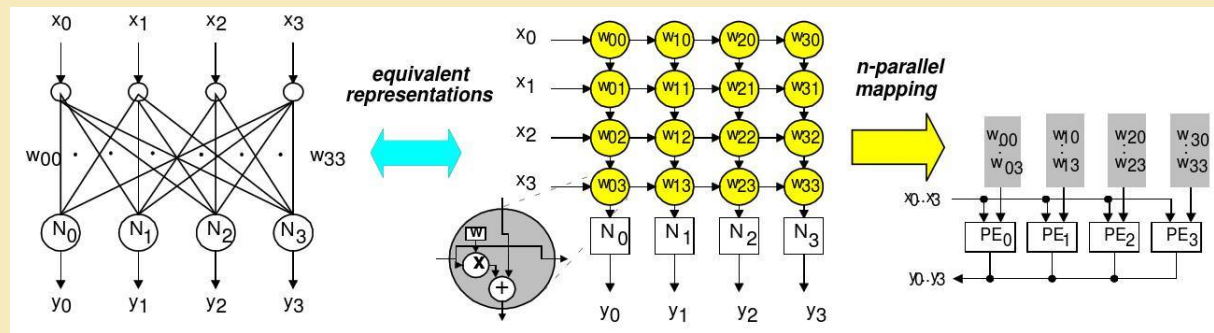
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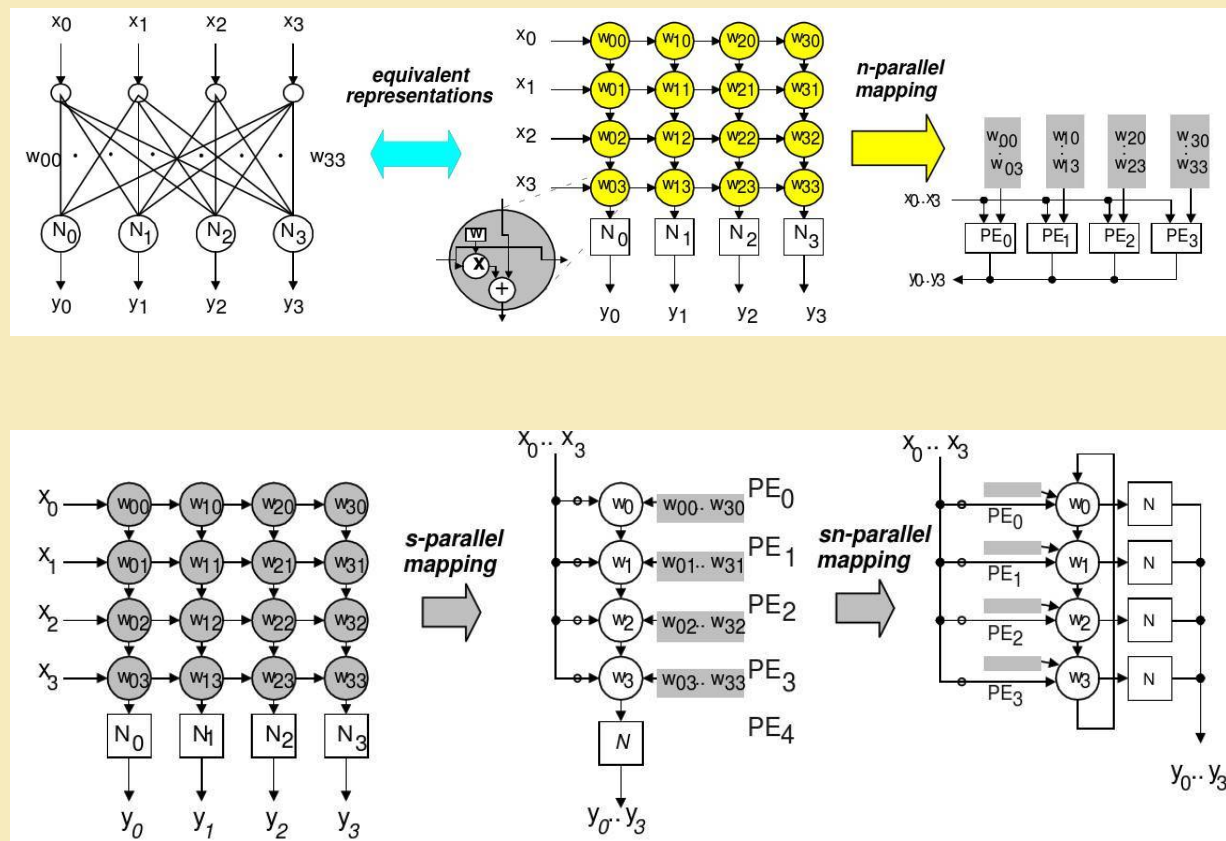
# From software to hardware



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# Neural networks in hardware

**CNAPS** *Connected  
Network of Adaptive  
Processors* Adaptive  
Solutions

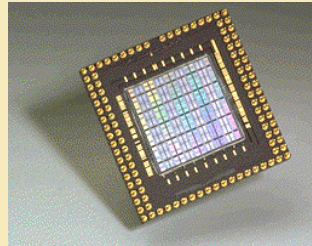
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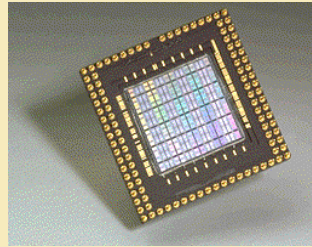
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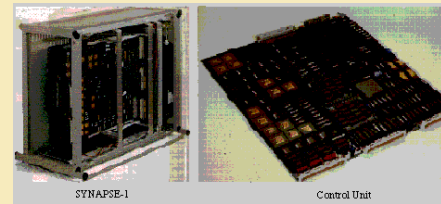
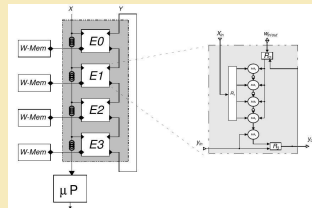


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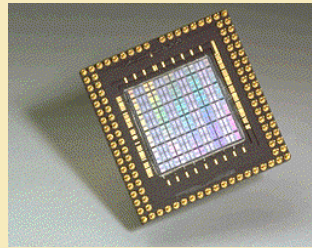


L-Neuro Philips

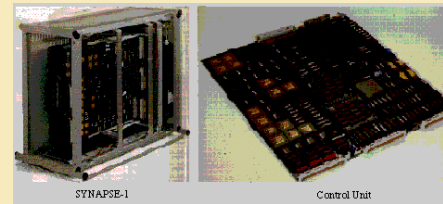
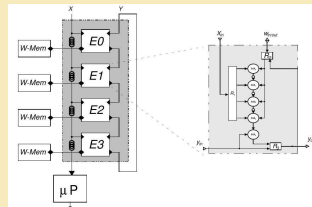
**SpiNNaker** *Spiking Neural Network Architecture* Advanced Processor Technologies

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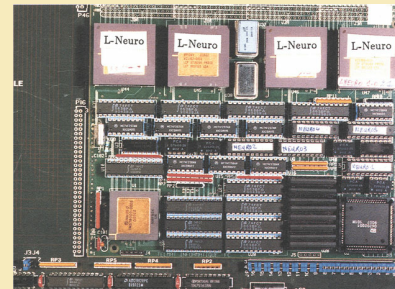
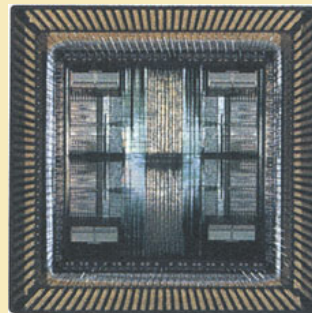
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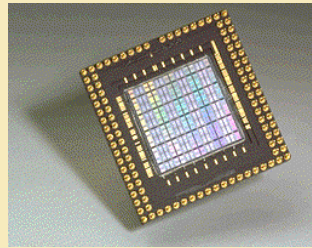
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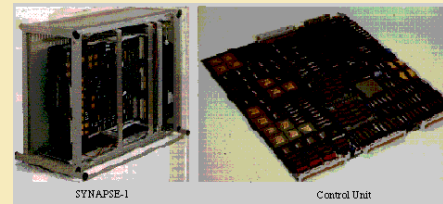
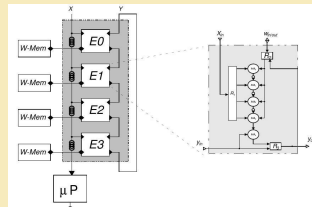
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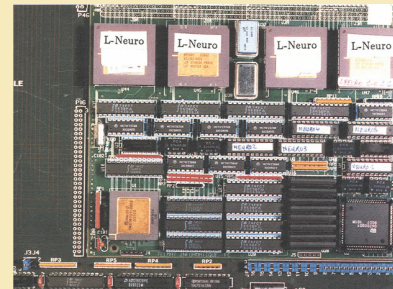
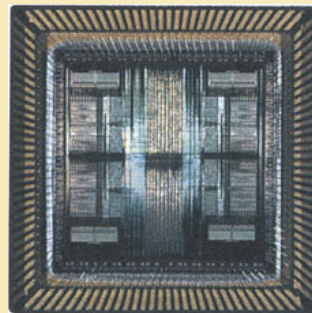
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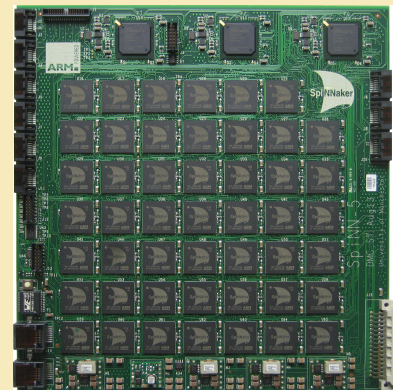
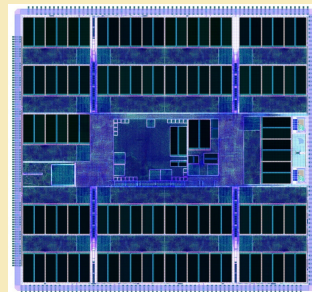
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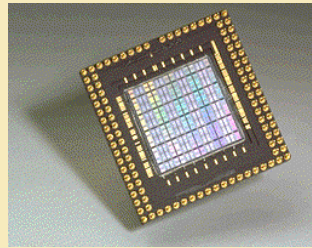
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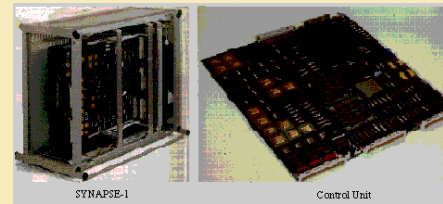
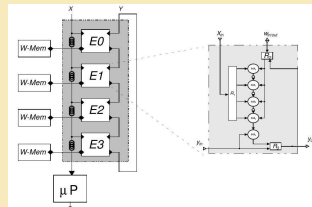


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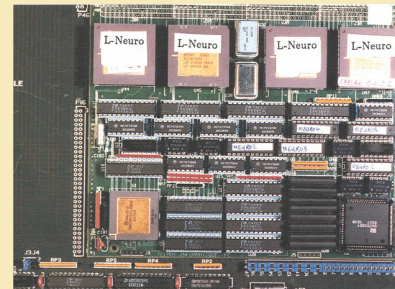
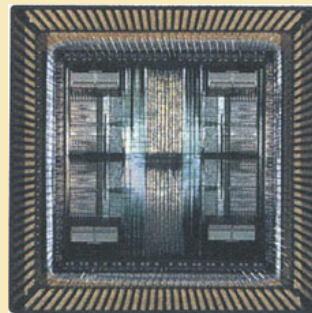
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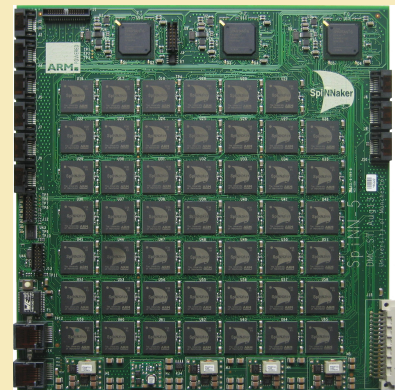
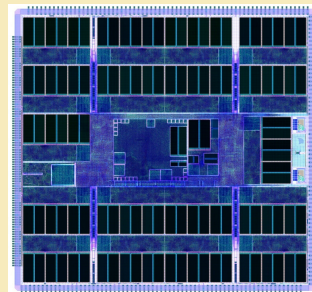
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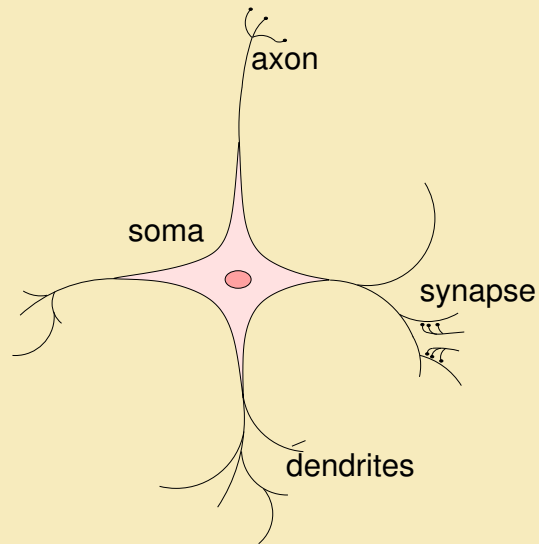


# The “real” neuron

action potential (spike)

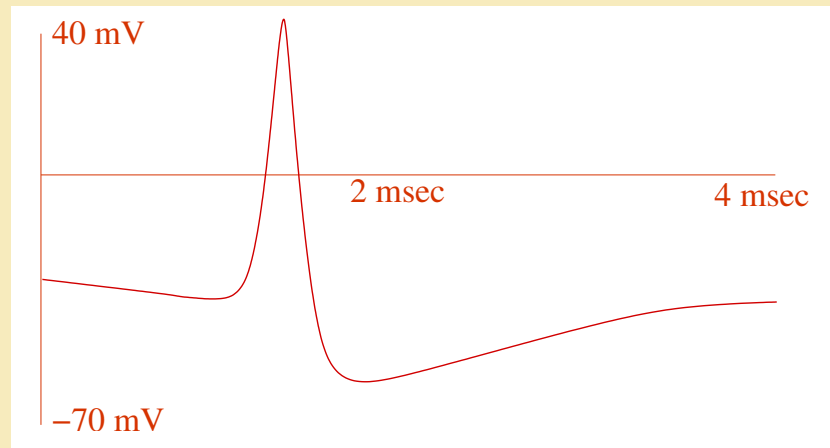
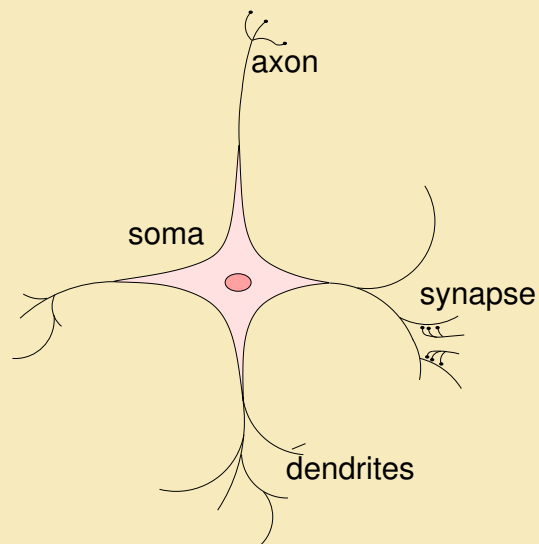
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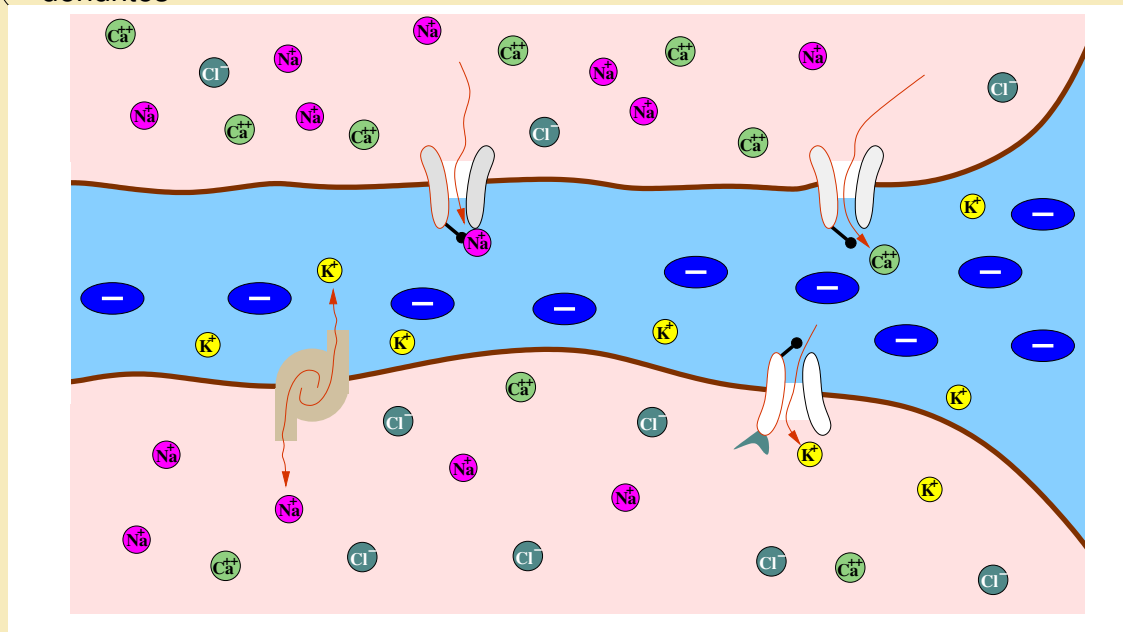
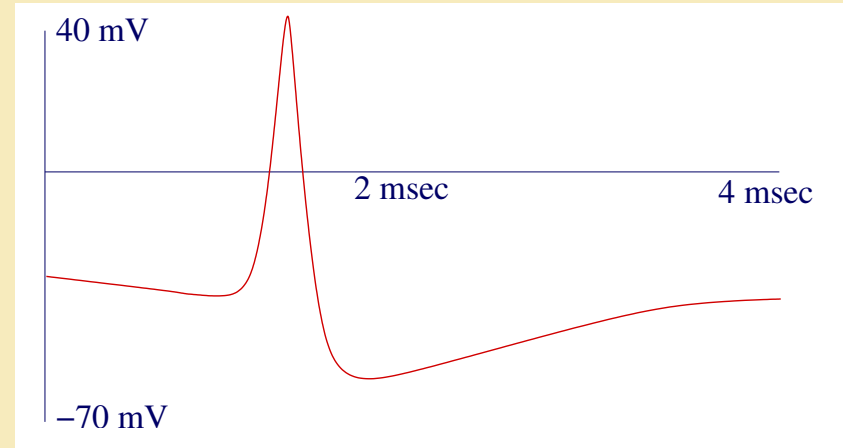
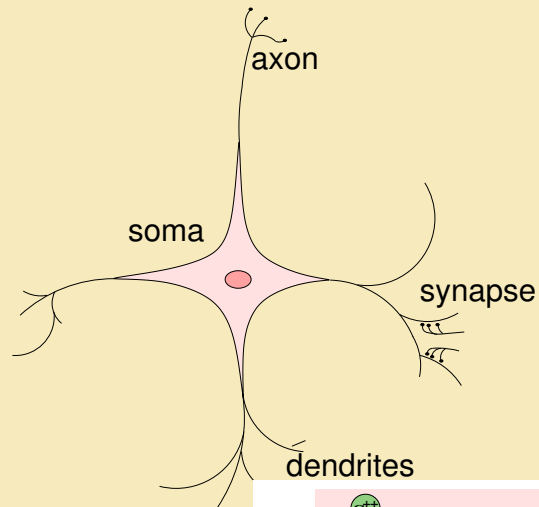
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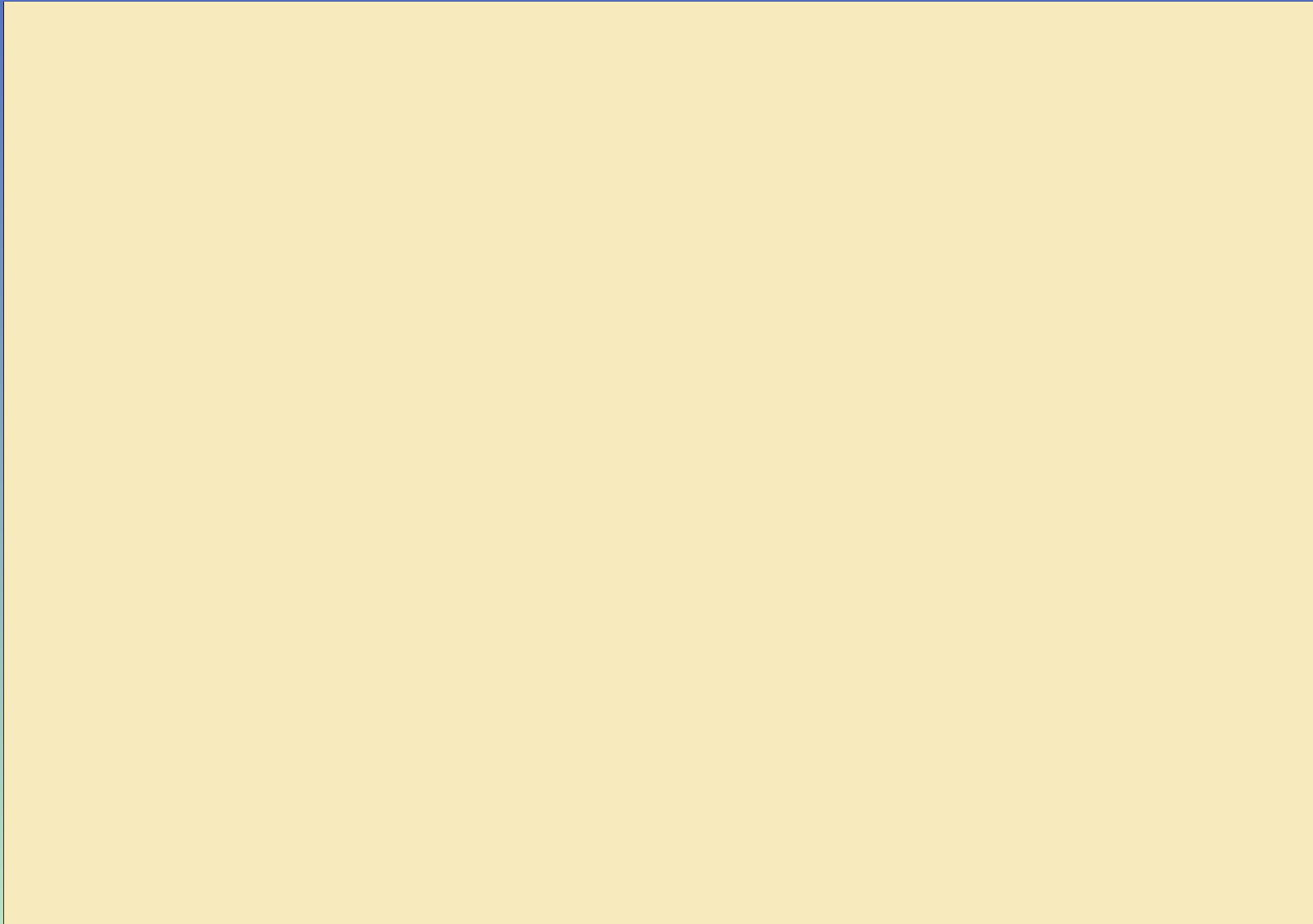
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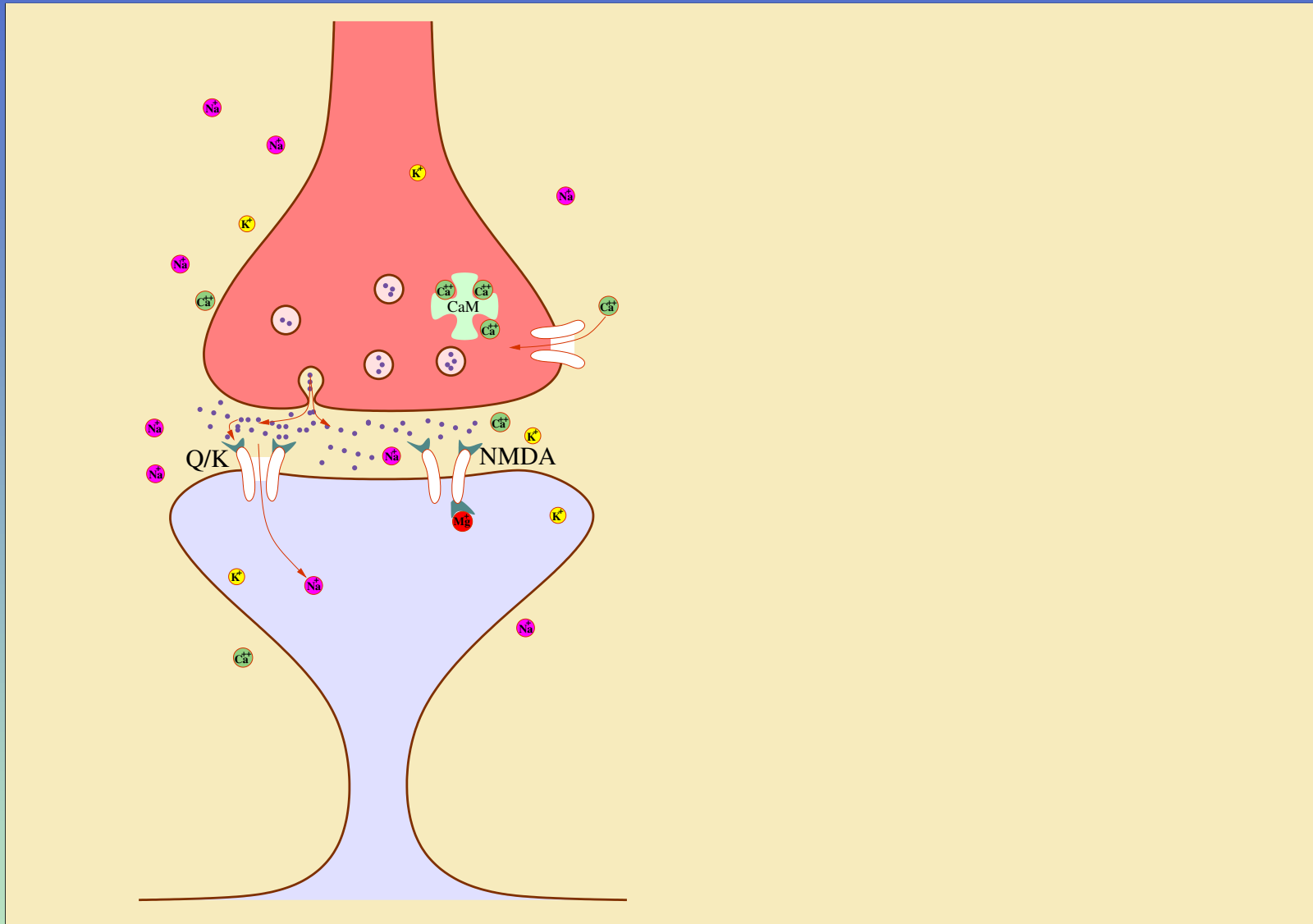




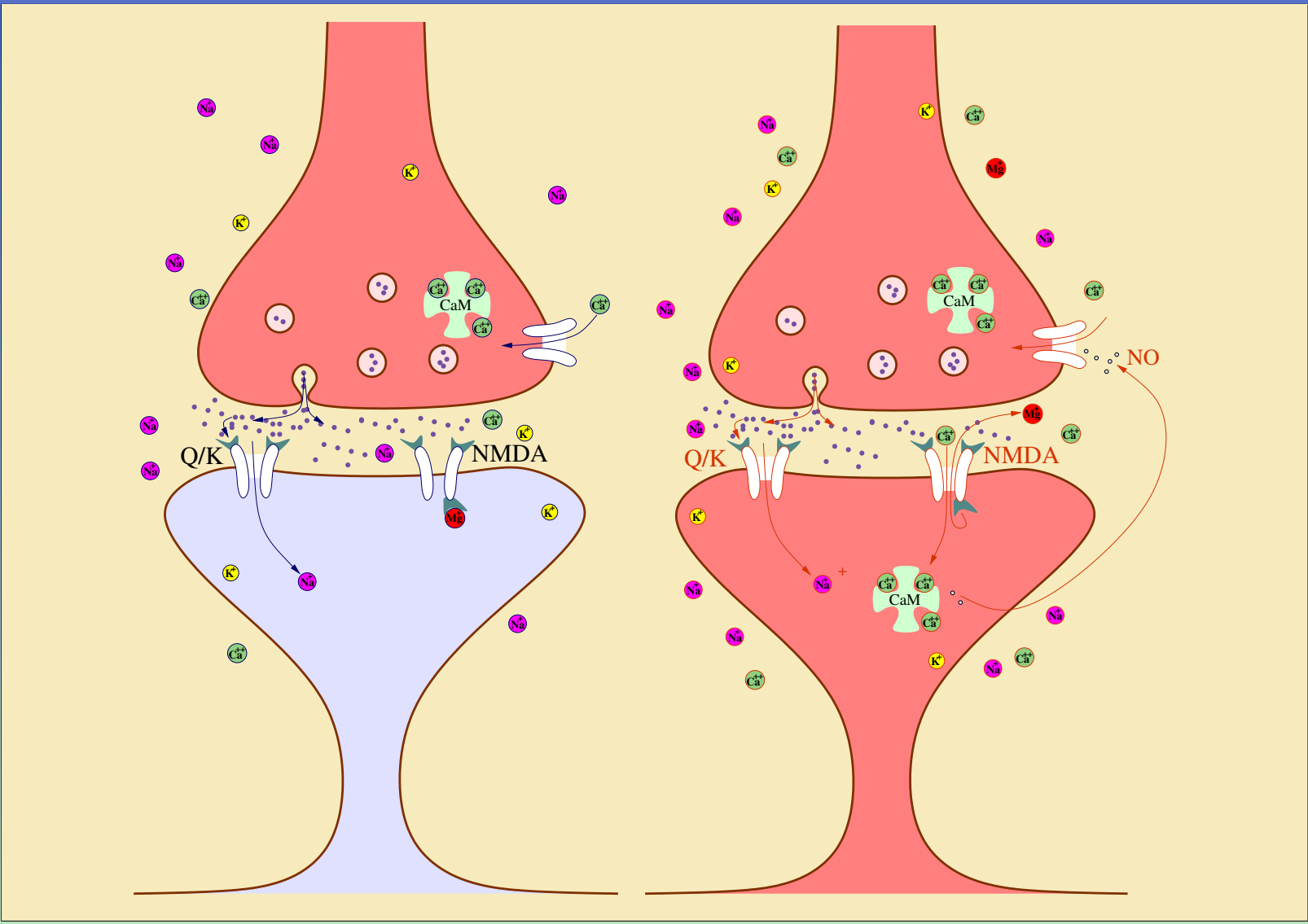
# How the neuron get tuned



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## Unsatisfying, but promising

1995 Jan  
Heemskerk

*Overview of Neural Hardware – Neurocomputers for Brain-Style Processing – Design, Implementation and Application*

“Neurocomputer building is expensive in terms of development time and resources, and little is known about the real commercial prospects for working implementations [...] Another reason for not actually building neurocomputers might lie in the fact that the number and variety of (novel) neural network paradigms is still increasing rapidly”

“If progress advances as rapidly as it has in the past, this implies that neurocomputer performances will increase by about two orders of magnitude [...]. This would offer good opportunities”

2004 Fernando  
Dias et.al

*Artificial Neural Networks: a Review of Commercial Hardware*

“A few new neurochips are reported in this survey while the information collected indicates that more neurochips are no longer available commercially. The new solutions that have appeared indicate that this field is still active, but the removal of the market of other solutions does not seem to be good news. [...] there is no clear consensus on how to exploit the currently available [...] technological capabilities for massively parallel neural network hardware implementations.”

“These might be the reasons for the slow development of the ANN hardware market in the last years, but the authors believe that this situation will change in the near future with the appearance of new hardware solutions.”

2013 Jennifer  
Hasler and  
Bo Marr

*Finding a roadmap to achieve large neuromorphic hardware systems*

“A primary goal since the early days of neuromorphic hardware research has been to build large-scale systems, although only recently have enough technological breakthroughs been made to allow such visions to be possible.”

“Neuromorphic engineering builds artificial systems utilizing basic nervous system operations implemented through bridging fundamental physics of the two mediums, enabling superior synthetic application performance [...] research in this area will accelerate by the pull of commercial ventures that can start utilizing these technologies to competitive commercial advantage.”

1998 Tor Sverre  
Lande

*Neuromorphic Systems Engineering – Neural Networks in Silicon*

“One possible answer [to CPU design problems] is to look into what life has invented along half a billion years of evolution [...] Numerous principles found in the brain can provide inspiration to circuit and system designers.”



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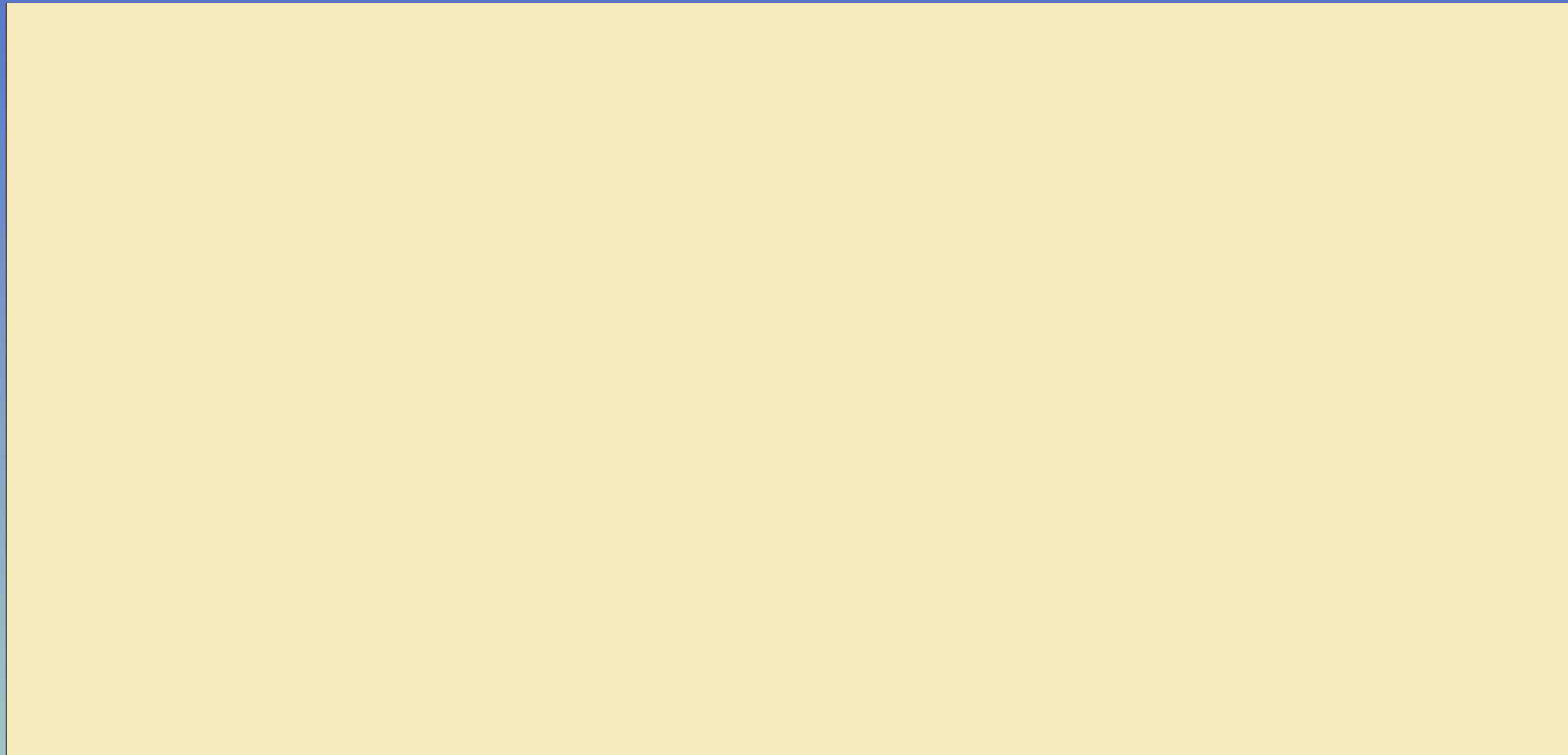
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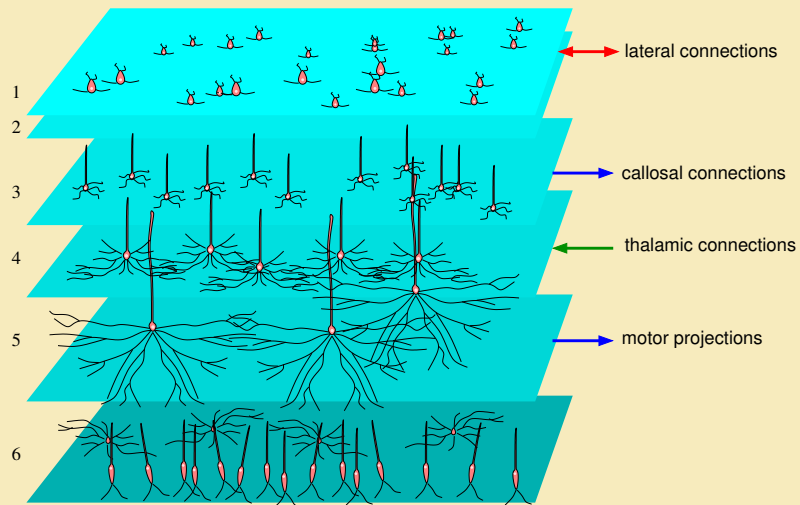
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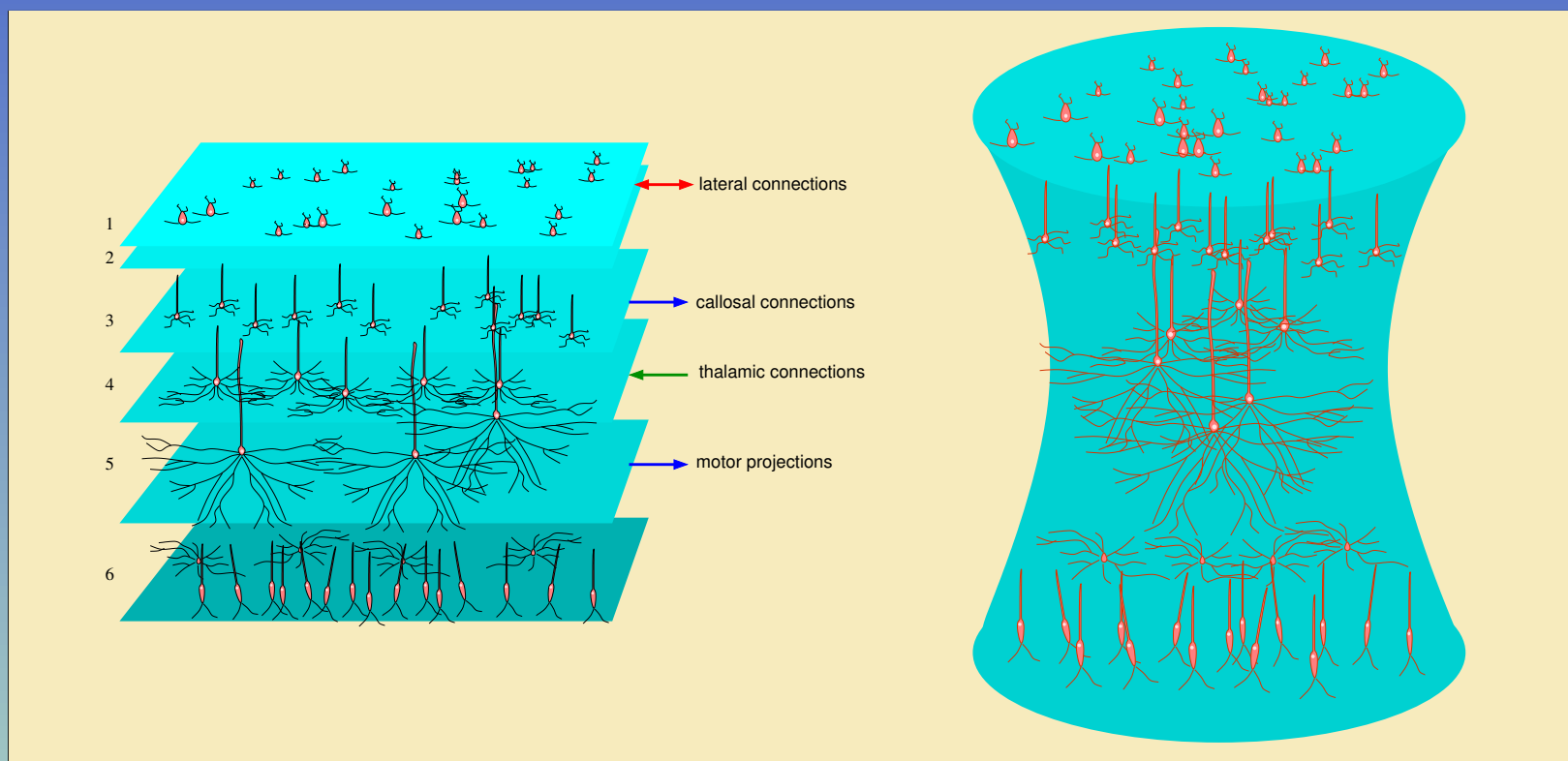
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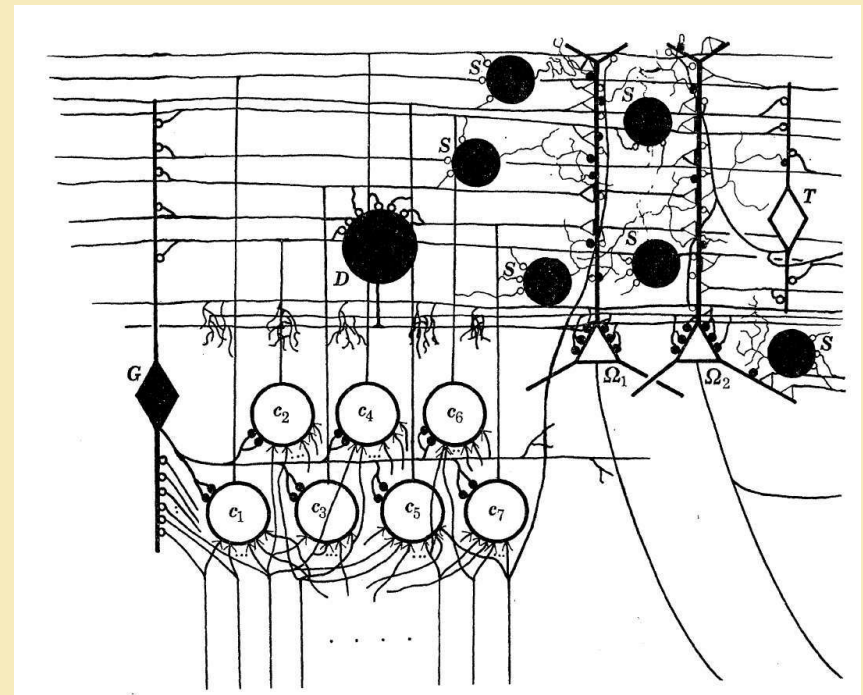
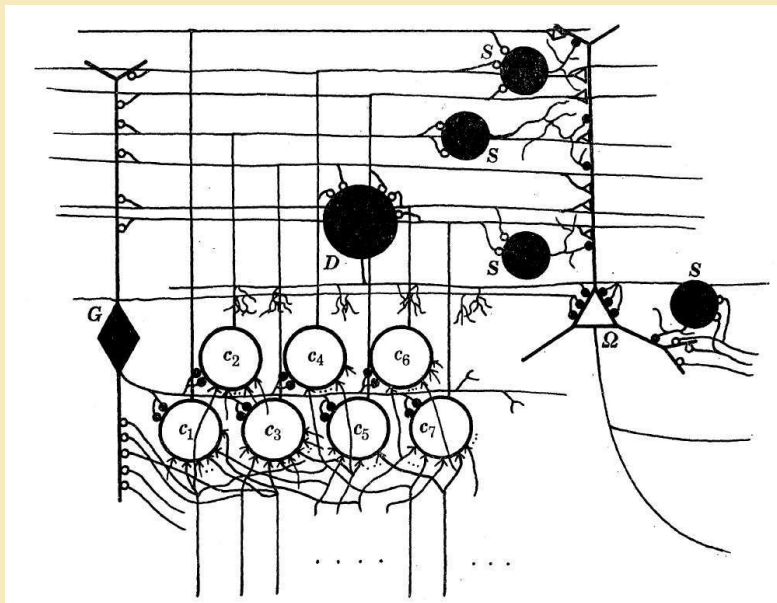


## Searching for a canonical circuit

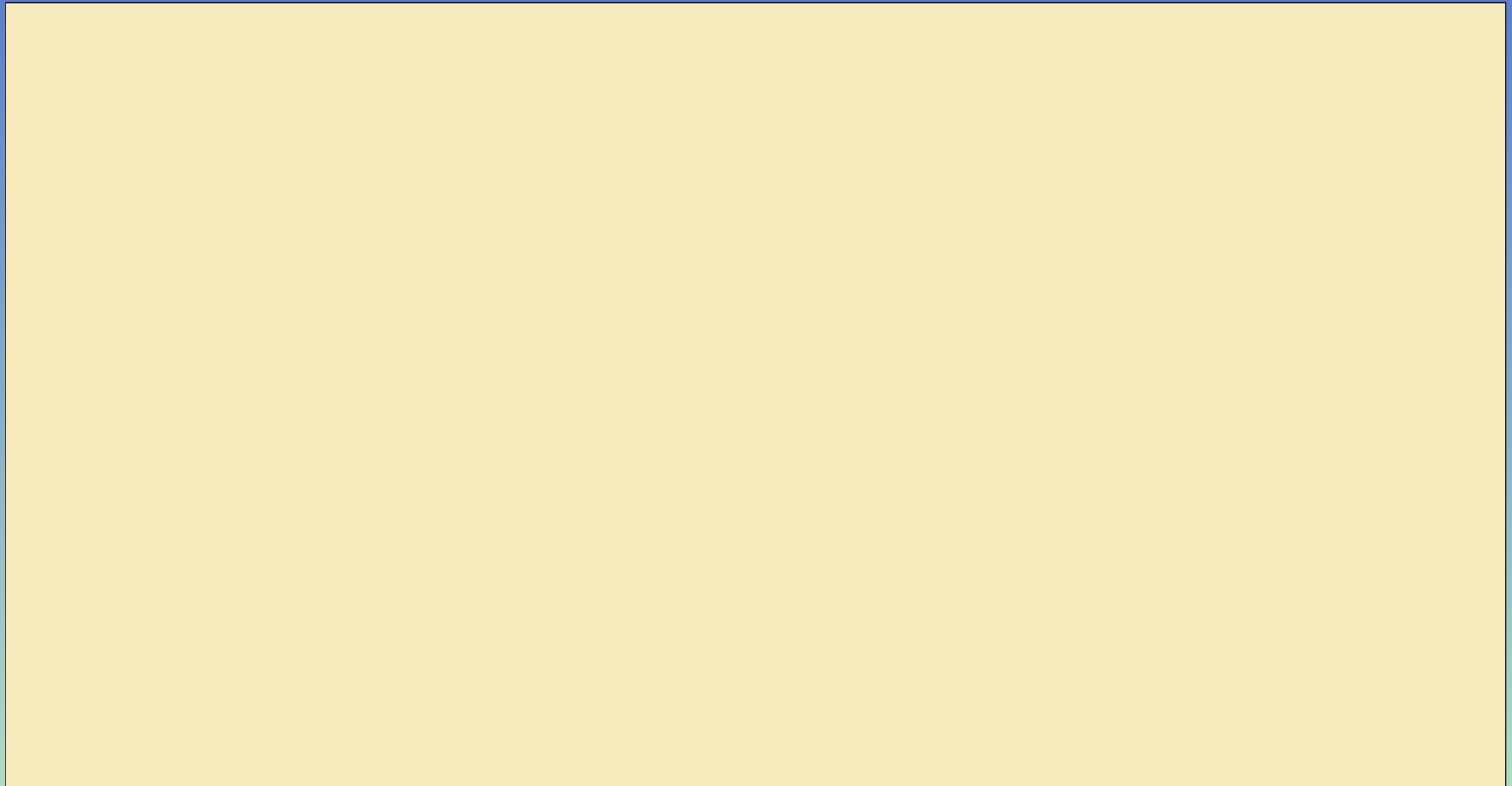
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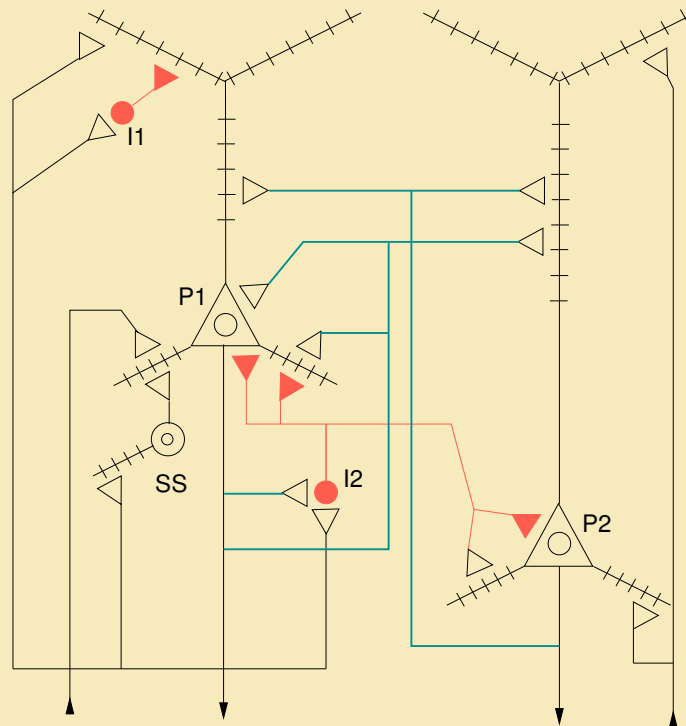


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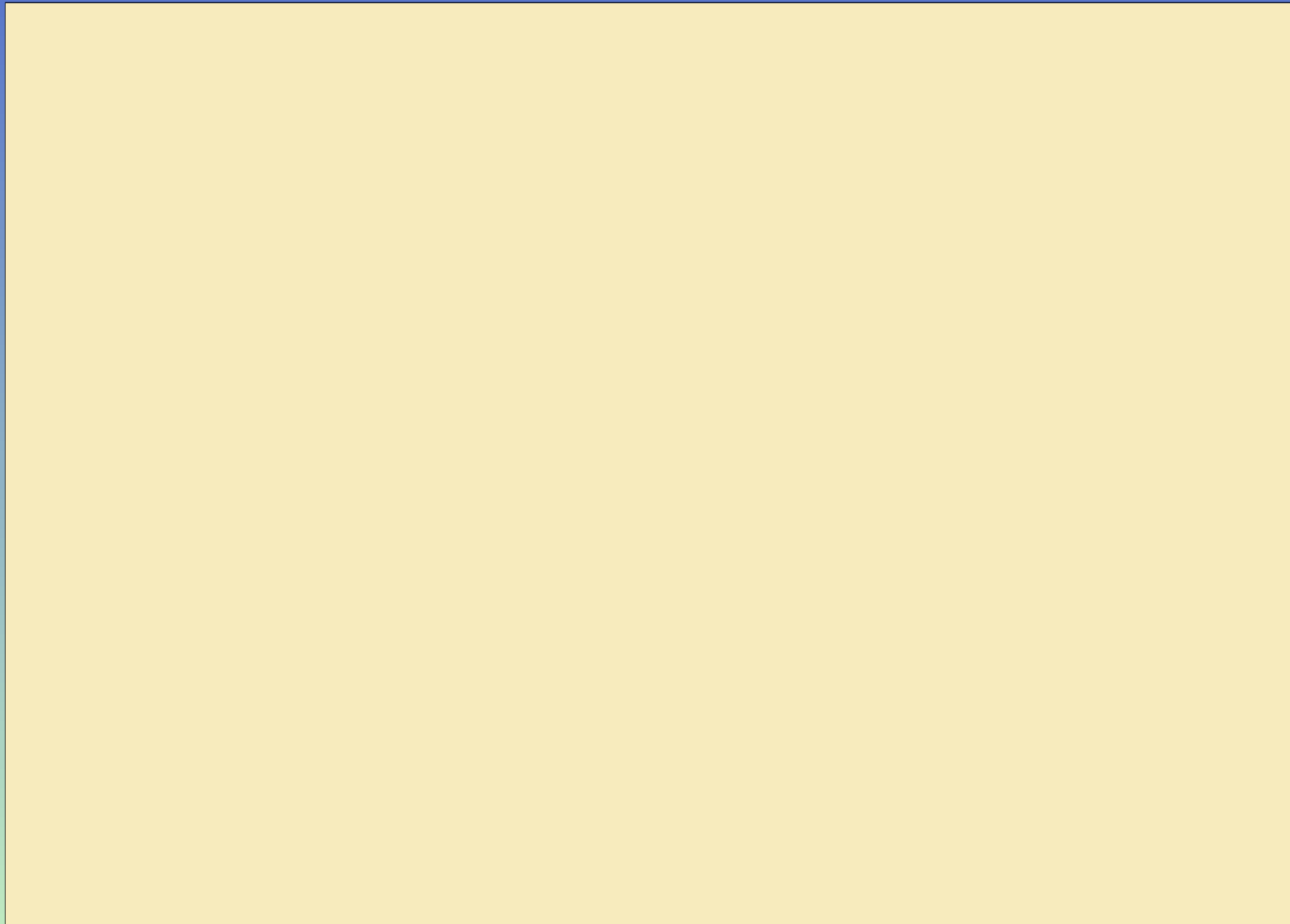
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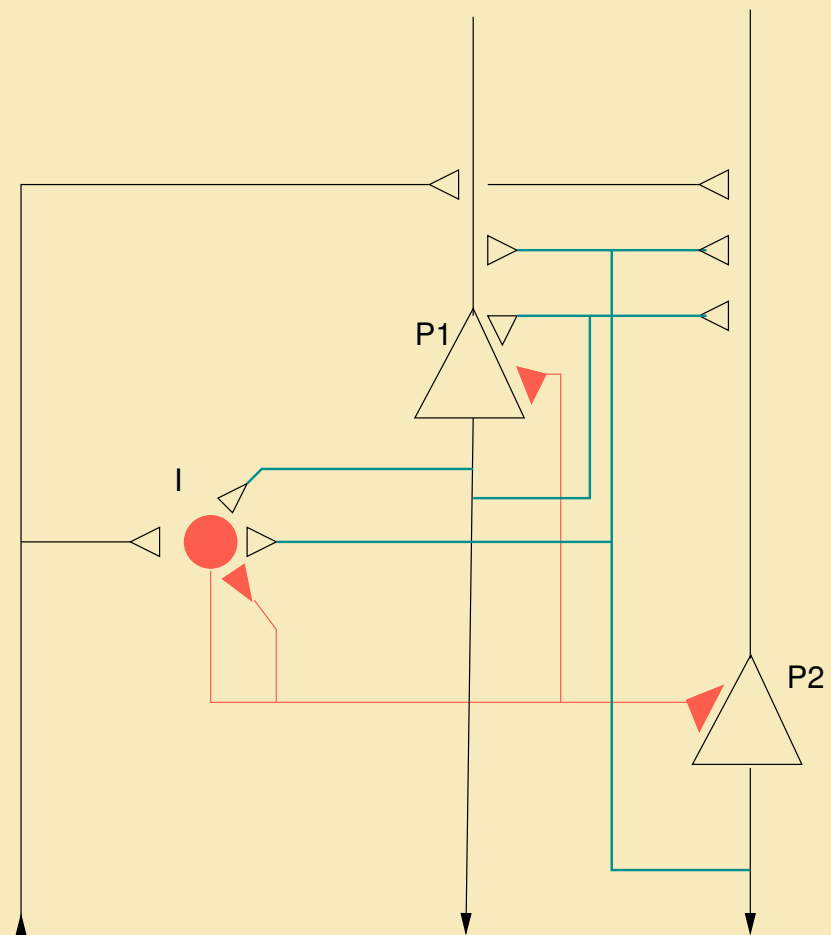


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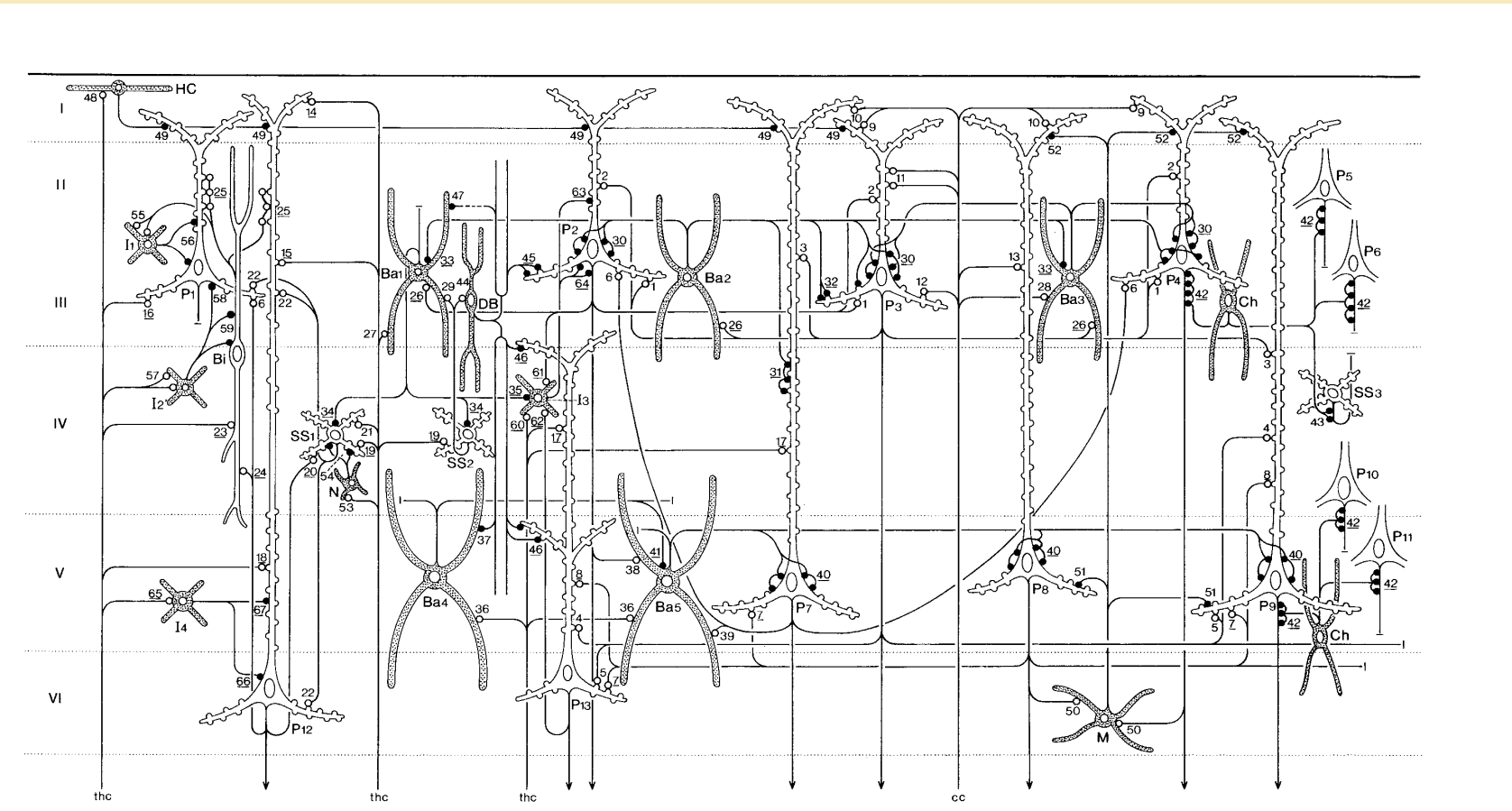






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Rudolf Nieuwenhuys, 1994, *The neocortex*



... thank you for your attention