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Maybe it's a cliché—I think I've used it myself—to say that scientists' and philosophers' explanations for how the brain works tend to metaphorically track the most advanced technology of their time. Greek writers thought brains worked like hydraulic water clocks. European writers in the Middle Ages suggested that thoughts operated through gear-like mechanisms. In the 19th century the brain was like a telegraph; a few decades later, it was more like a telephone network. Shortly after that, no surprise, people thought the brain worked like a digital computer, and that maybe they could build computers that work like the brain, or talk to it. Not easy, since, metaphors aside, nobody really *knows* how the brain works. Science can be exciting like that.

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