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Dissolving the Grounding Problem: How the Pen is Mightier than the Sword

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Abstract: The computational metaphor for mind is still the central guiding idea in cognitive science despite many insightful and well-founded rejections of it. There is good reason for its staying power: when we are at our cognitive best, we reason about our world with our concepts. But the challengers are right, I argue, in insisting that no reductive account of that capacity is forthcoming. Here I describe an externalist account that grounds representations in organism-level engagement with its environment, not in its neural activity.