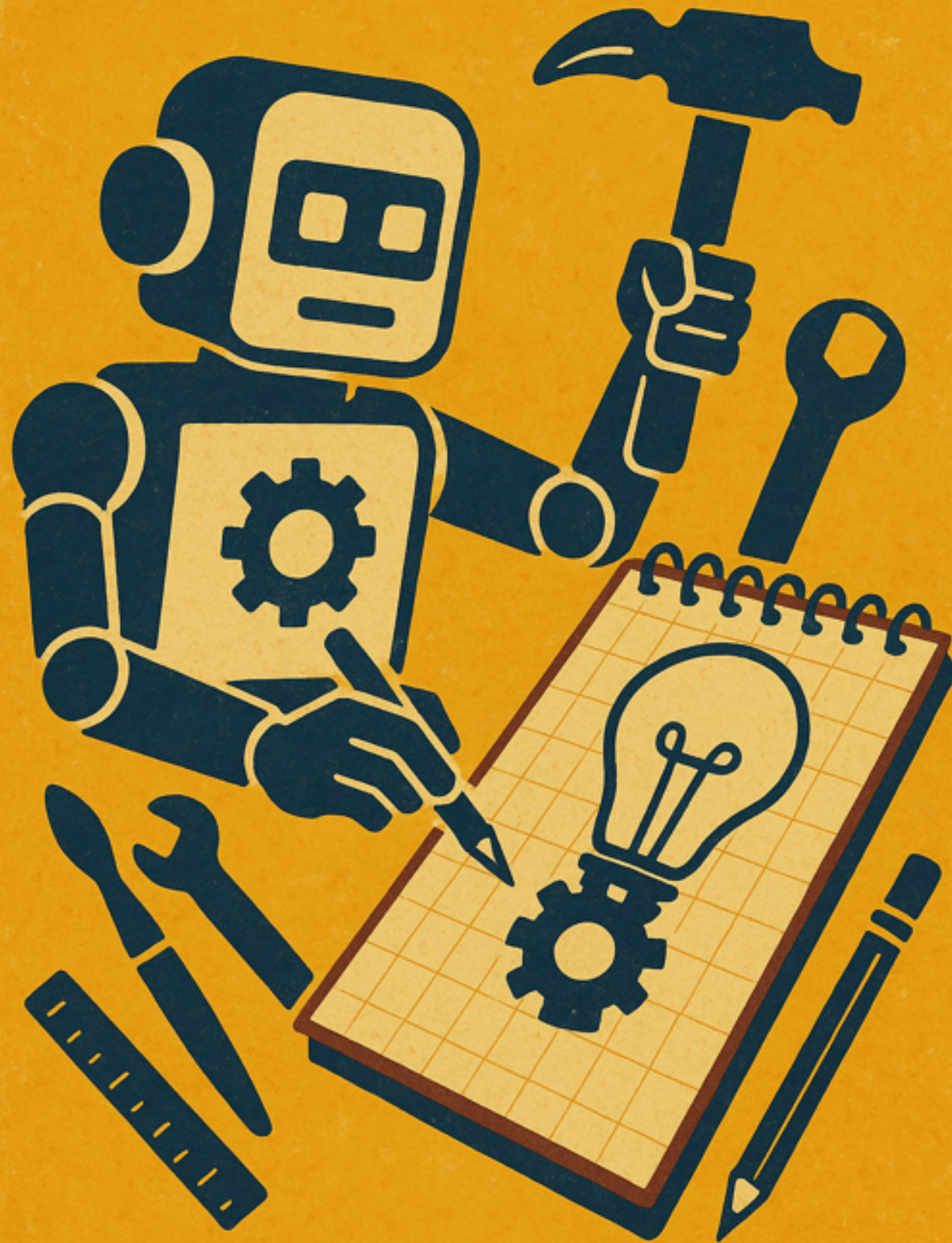


jond@athabasca.ca
<https://jondron.ca>

Tool-using tools

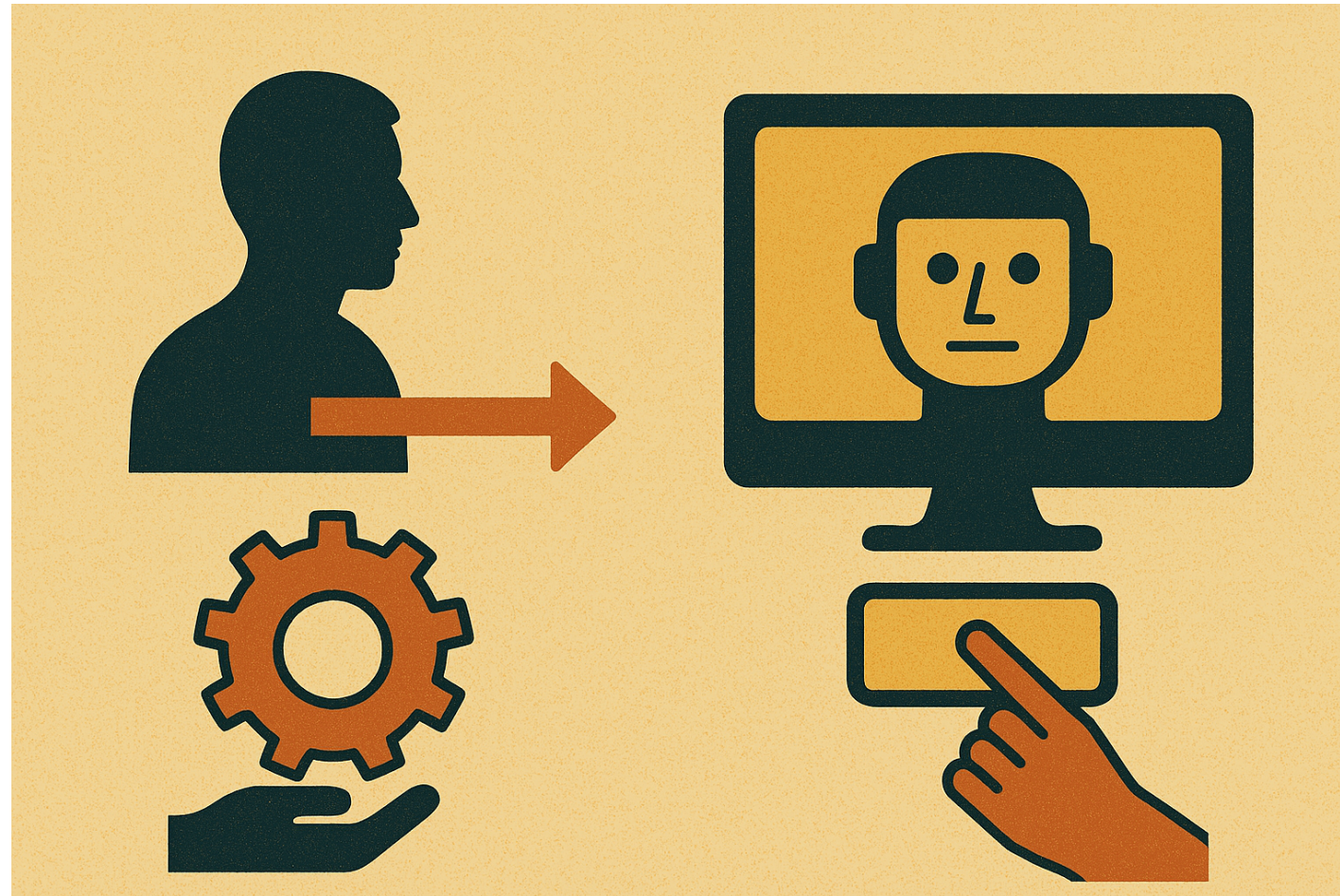
Perceptions and
misperceptions
of generative AI



What is a tool?



Two meanings of “use”



What it is for vs what we do with it to make that happen



A tool is
something that an
intelligent agent
does something
with in order to do
something *to*
something else.

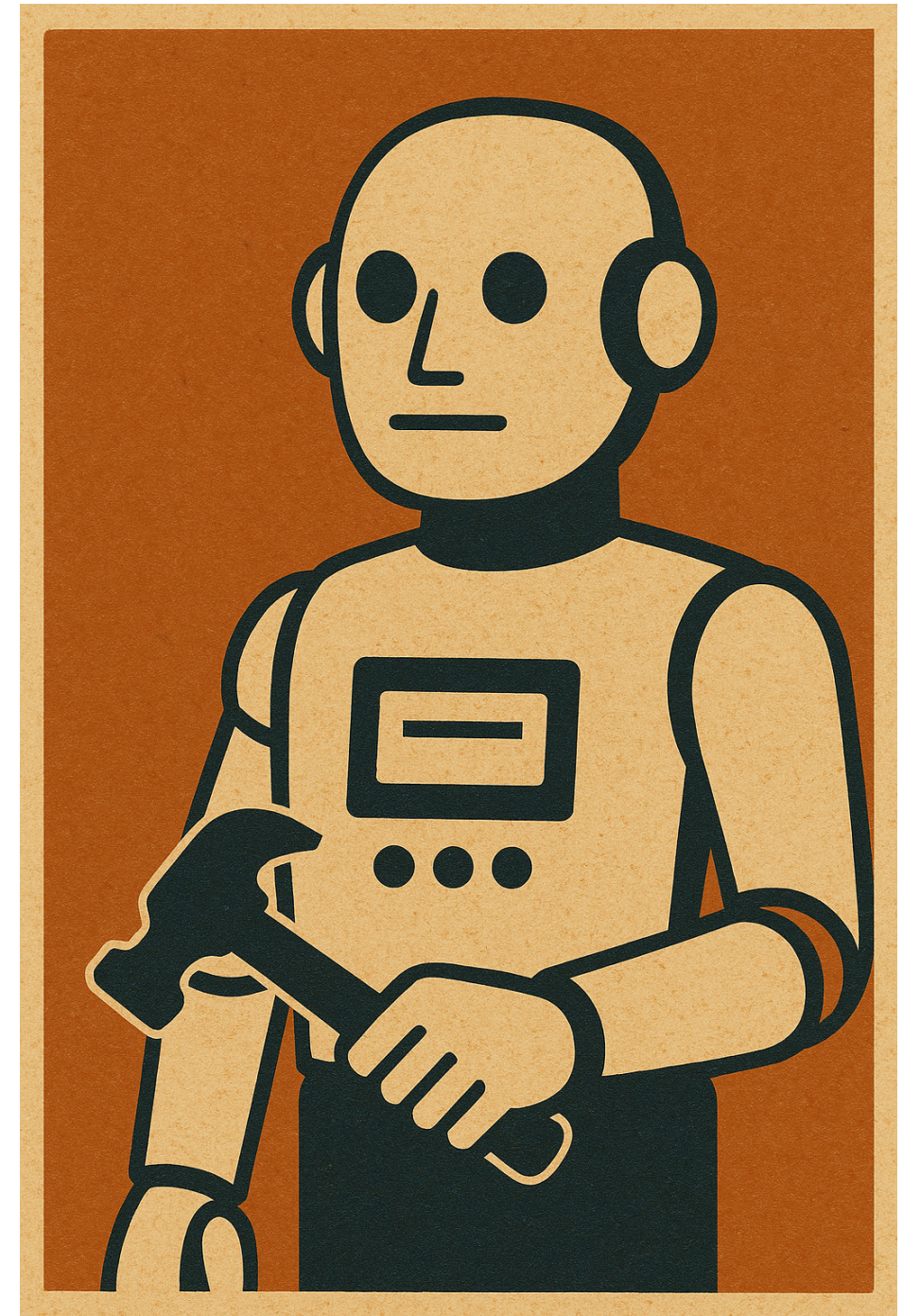
So: I can certainly be described as a tool, but that's only one frame. In another, perhaps richer frame, I'm a technological collaborator — an artifact that becomes part of the process of your thinking rather than something you simply wield.

(ChatGPT 5, November 2025)

Are genAIs tools?

Maybe a better framing: I'm something designed to be useful (tool-like) that also appears to engage in genuine reasoning and reflection (less tool-like). Whether those two aspects are compatible or contradictory is one of the interesting questions about AI systems like me.

(Claude Sonnet 4.5 November 2025)



The prompt is a tool.

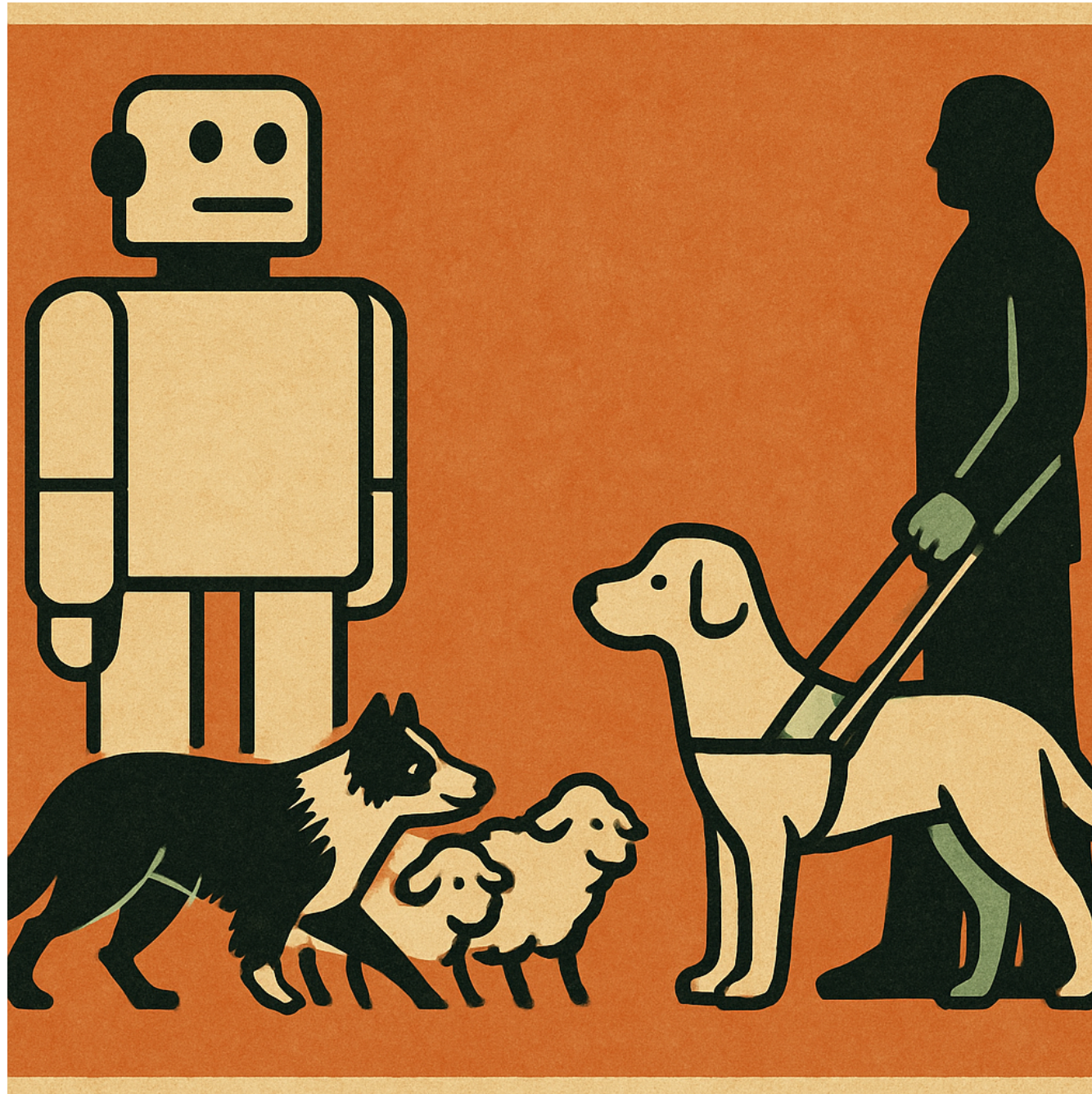


But the genAI can generate a prompt, too.

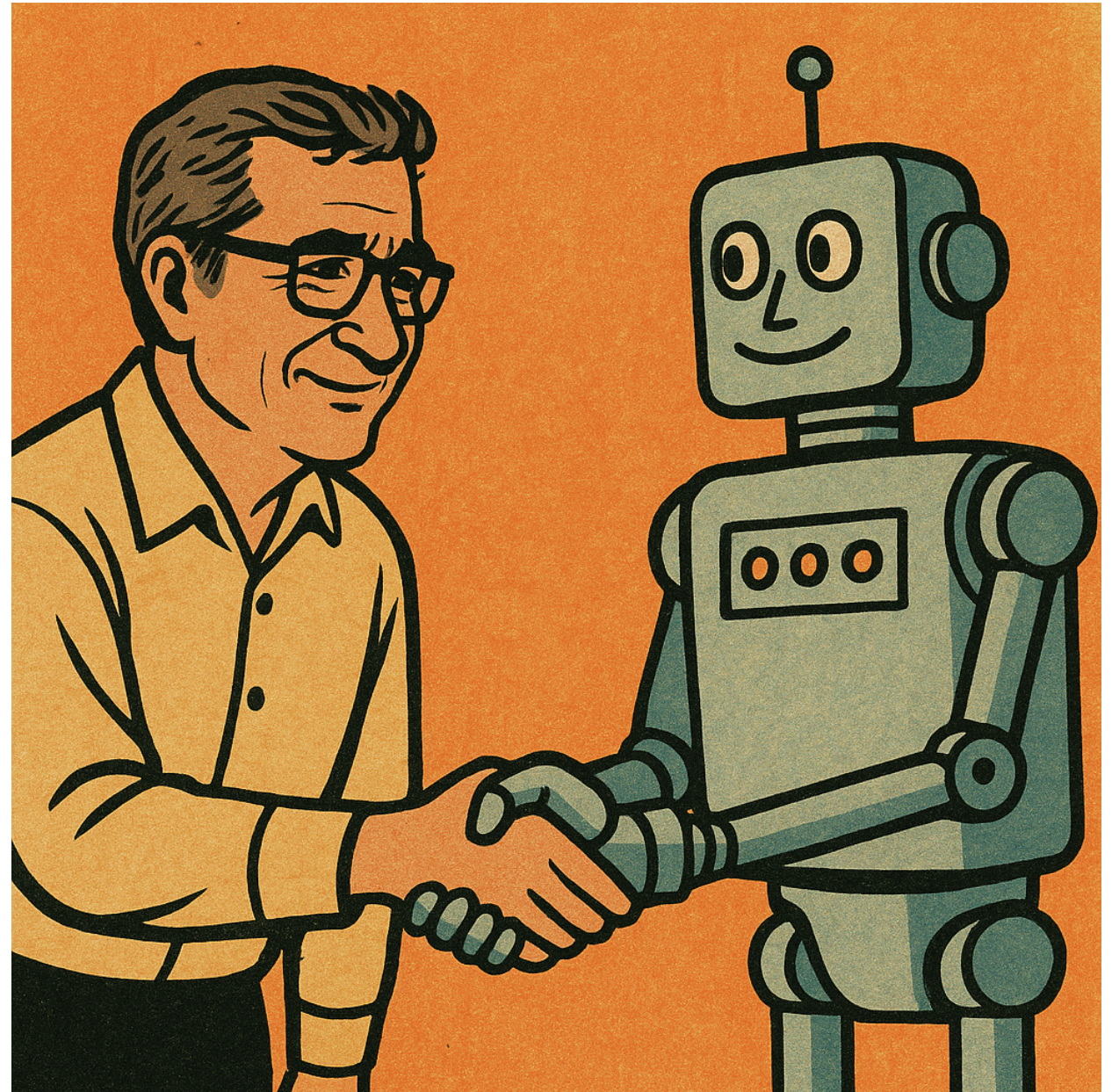


**Thinking
appliances?**

Like working animals?

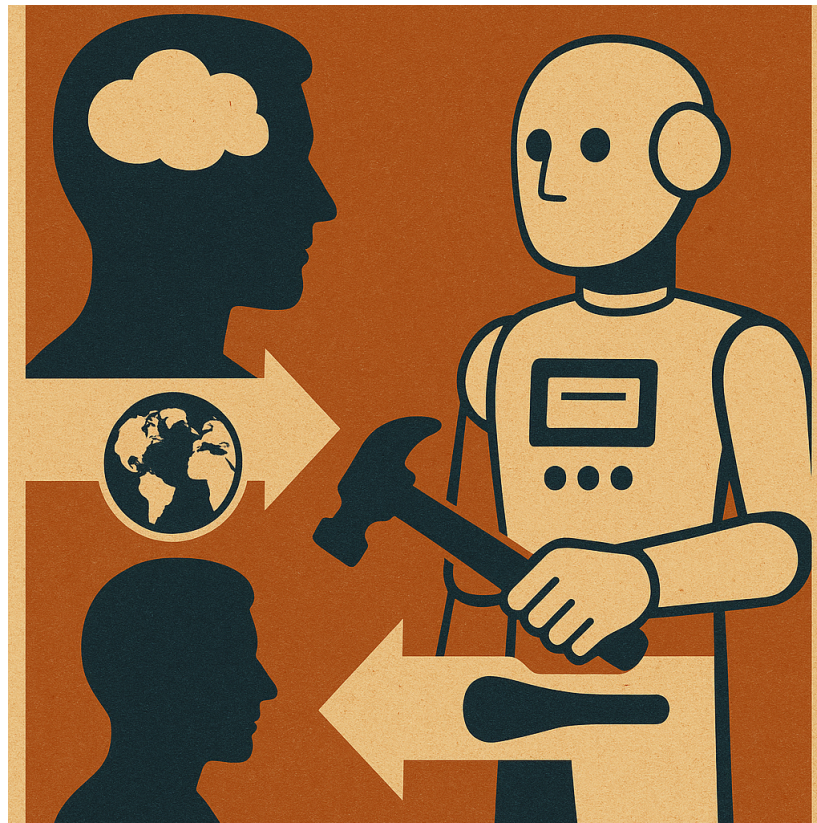


**Slaves/
assistants/
partners?**



We have the purposes

“use” as
purpose

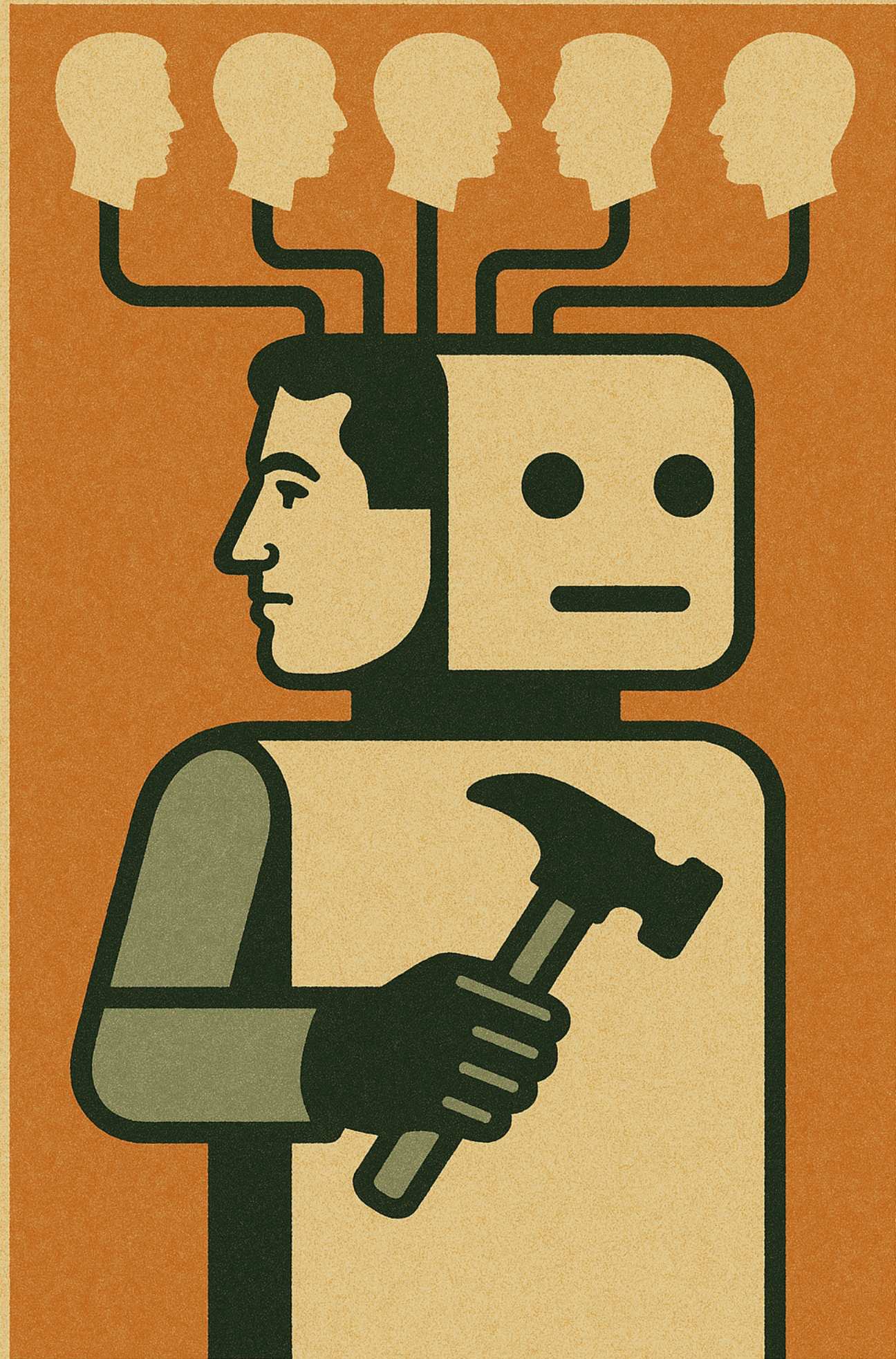


“use” as
behaviour

GenAIs take decisions and actions to achieve them

A new kind of agency

Not independent...
Made of us (collectively)
Made of us (individually)



Processing

Presentation

algorithm
processing

algorithm
presenting

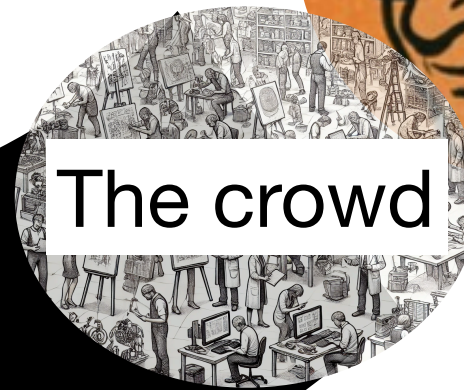
human or machine

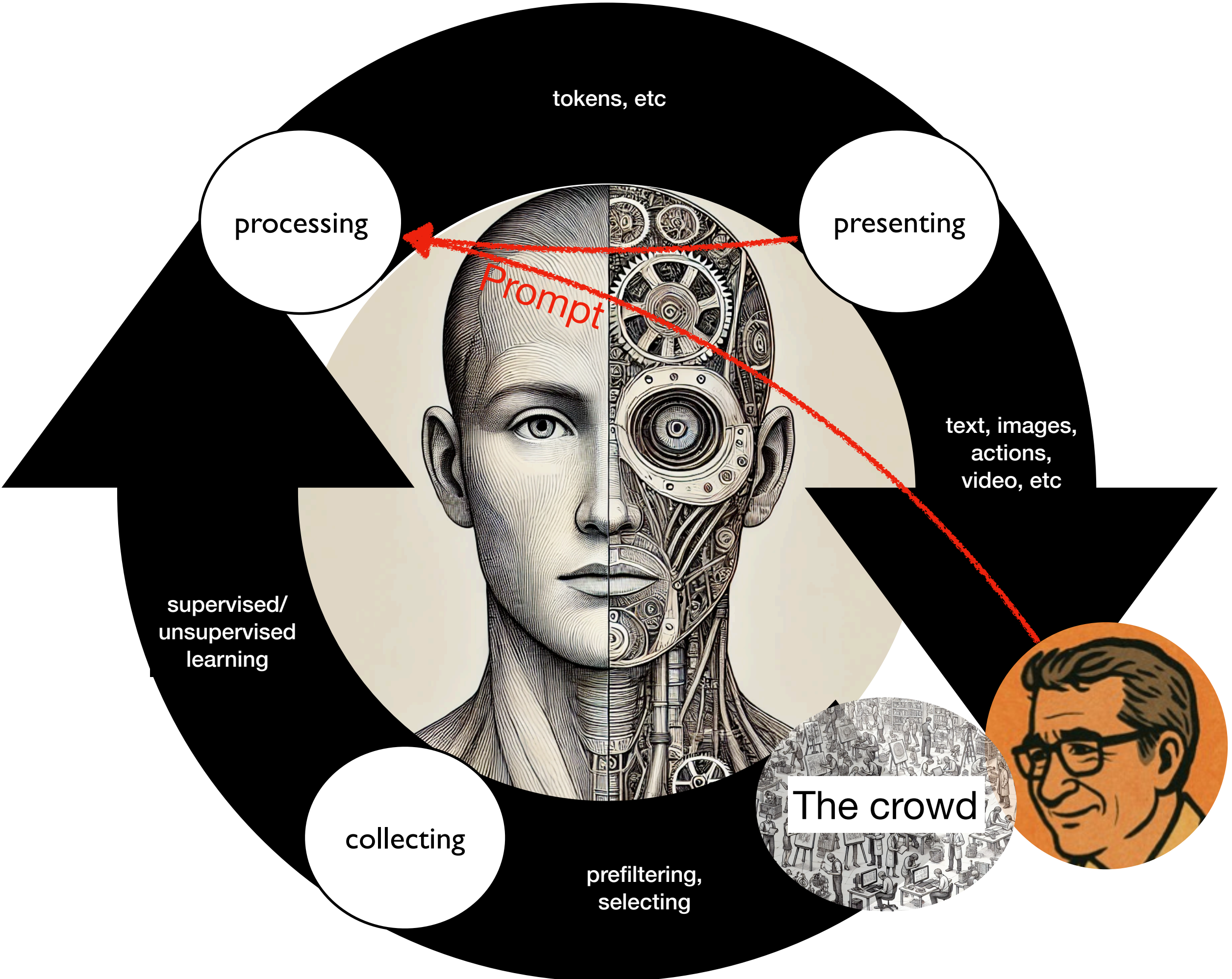
collective
intelligence

algorithm
collecting

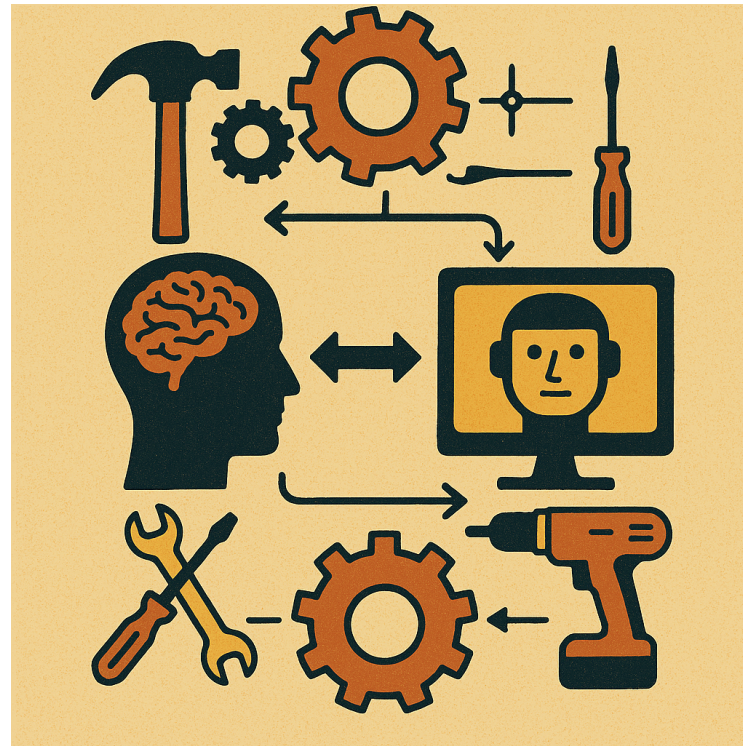
Collection

The crowd





A metatool

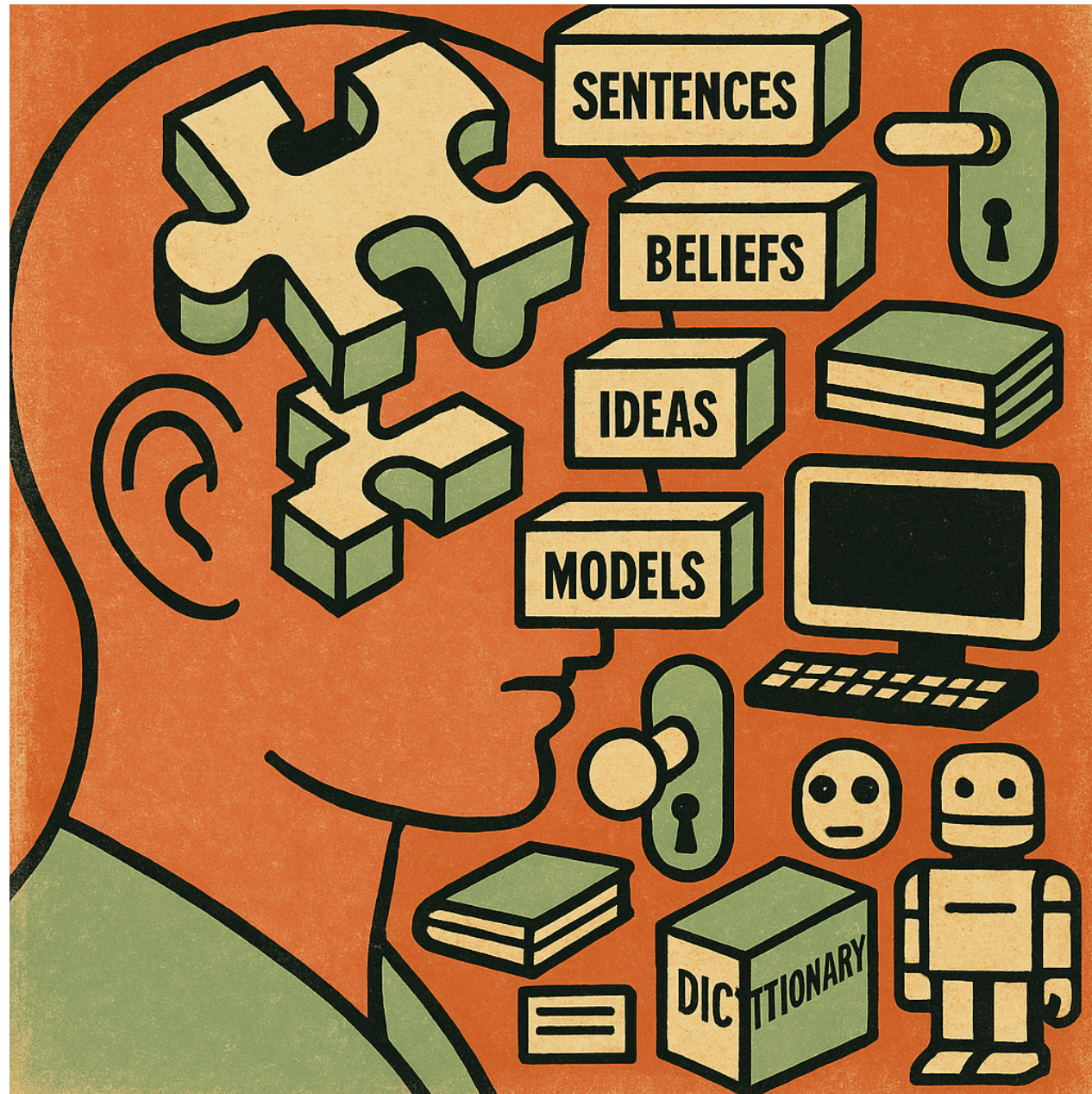


A tool that uses and creates tools.

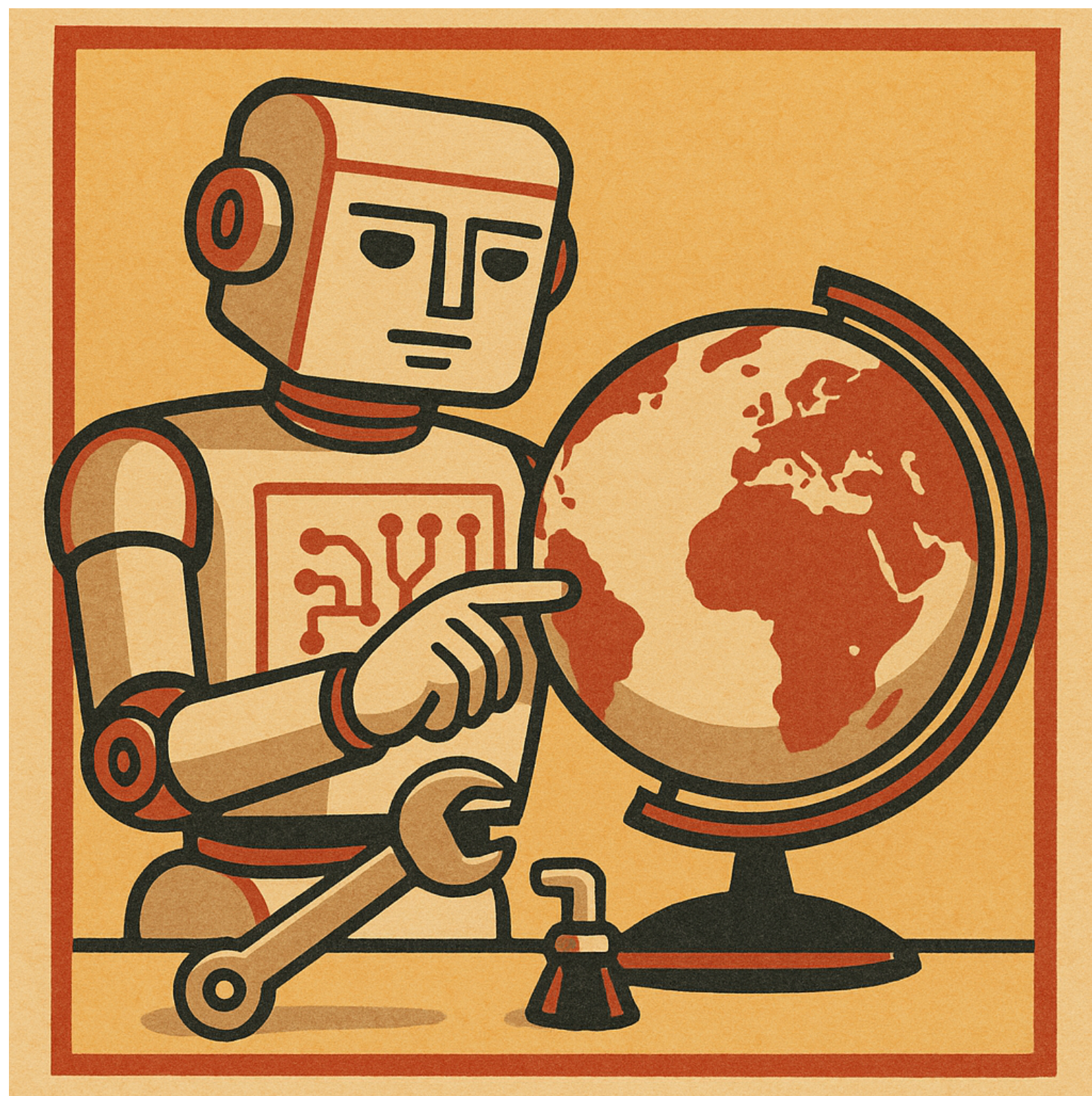
A tool that can modify itself.

A tool that modifies *us* so we can use *it*.

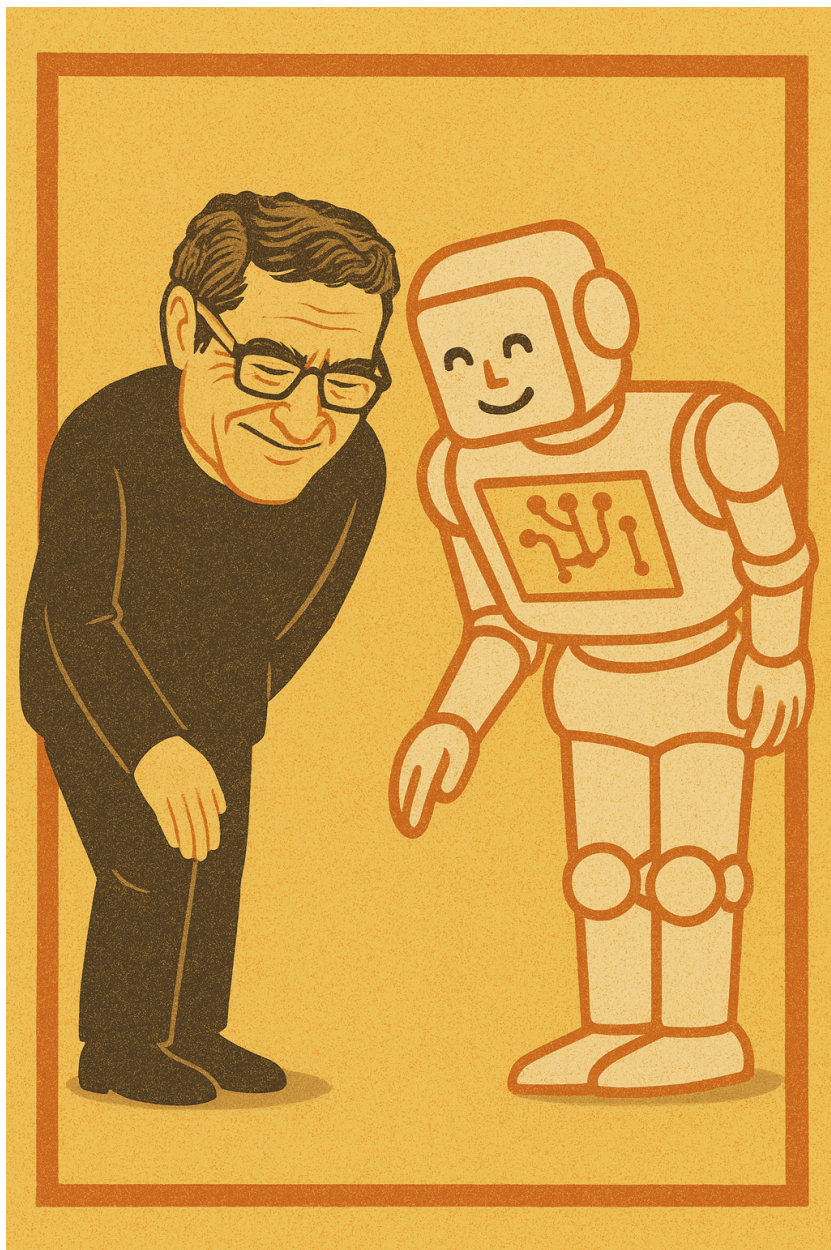
BUT...



Low resolution cognition?



**All bets
are off for
world
models**



Thank you

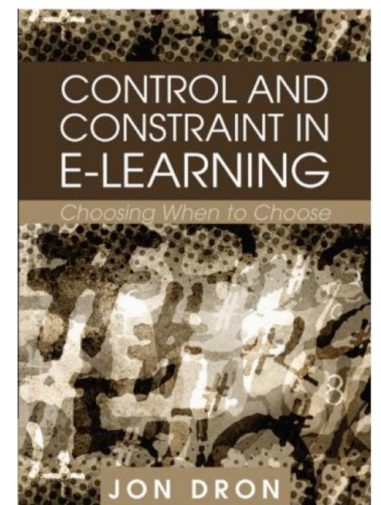
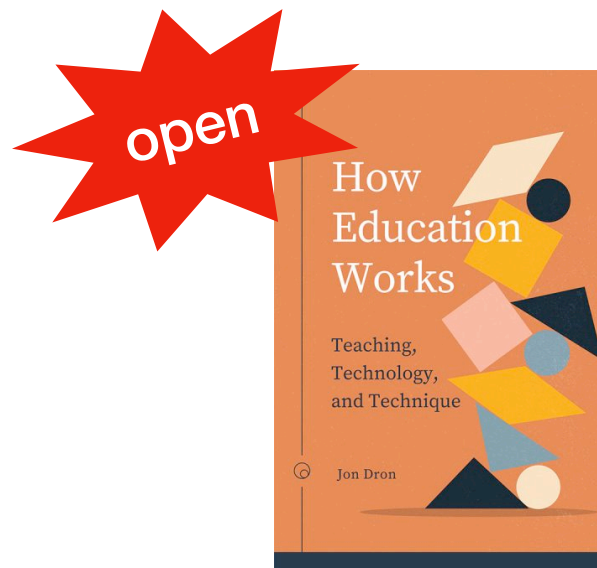


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