



Entangled Life

Merlin Sheldrake

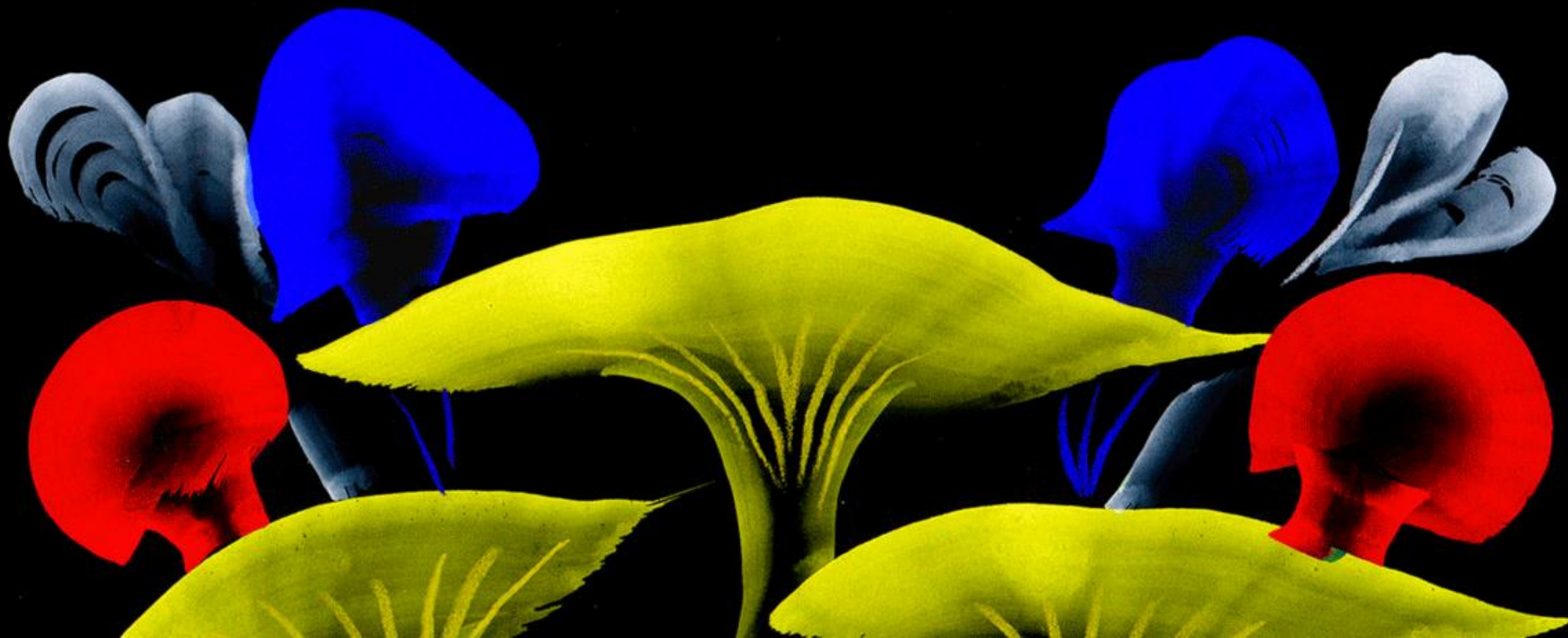
Merlin Sheldrake, 2020



What are your
opinions /
experience with
fungi?



Why this book?



“My hope is that readers will experience some of this
‘mushroom fever’ with me in the chapters to come.”

- Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the
World: On the possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*, pp. viii.

My Mushroom Fever

- ❖ My grandfather started my interest and lockdown confirmed it
- ❖ Foraging / collecting
- ❖ Growing different species of mushroom (Oysters + Shiitake)





A screenshot from
Merlin's video 'Merlin
Sheldrake eats
mushrooms sprouting
from his book,
Entangled Life' [here](#)



(How I picture the opening scene in ENTANGLED LIFE)

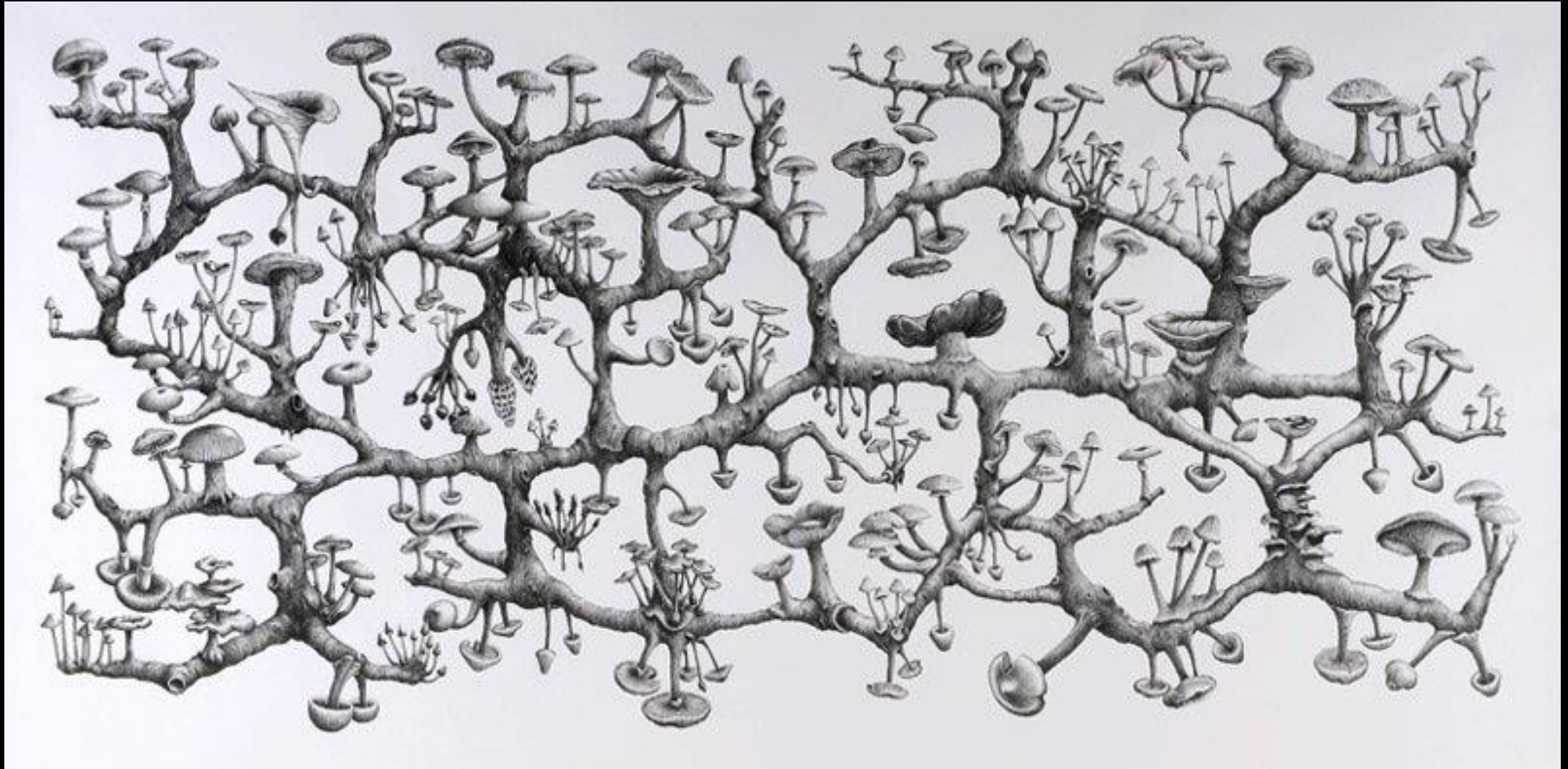
Illustration by
Wendy Xu, 2020.

- ❖ Merlin covers many topics in the book, many being purely fungal
- ❖ What I am going to be discussing is the specific relationships people have with mushrooms, or more specifically, the relationships mushrooms have with people



A bolete found by my friends mother

Themes of entanglement





Alexis Pantos, 2018, One of the fireplaces where the bread was discovered.

Longest standing relationships
are with yeasts

- They are essential in making breads and alcohol and fermented foods
- The relationship could go back more than 100,000 years



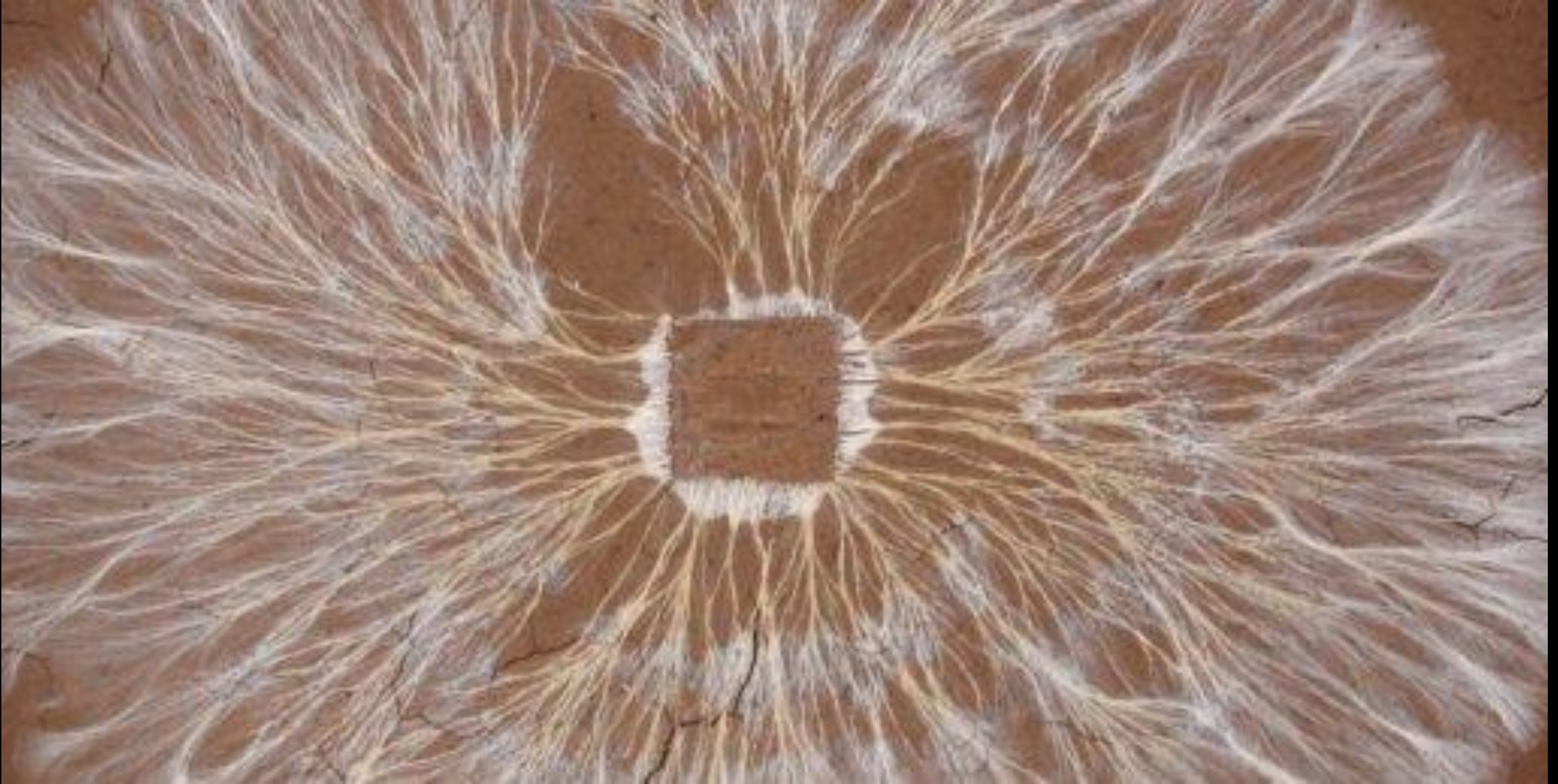
Fungi are everywhere!

Pxhere. (2020) *UK needs to scale-up agriculture innovation to reach net-zero target.*



Industrial agriculture is severing the connections that plants have with fungi

Wood Wide Webs



Ama, Mycelium growing

Mushrooms on the brain

- ❖ *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis*
- ❖ Ergot alkaloids and psilocybin
- ❖ seeing the world through the eyes of a mushroom

“An infected ant is a ‘fungus in ant’s clothing’”

- Merlin Sheldrake, *Entangled Life*, pp. 117

Gilbert Lab, 2006, Carpenter ant (genus *Camponatus*) infected with a parasitic *Cordyceps* fungus.



Fungi and gender (or lack there of)



- ❖ Fungi can have over 20,000 mating types
- ❖ The world is not binary
- ❖ “there are many ways to be a fungi”



Pink oyster -
Pleurotus djamor

Modern problems have
mycelial solutions

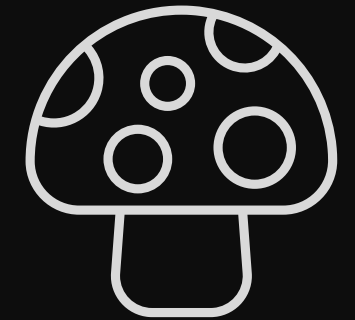
- ❖ Mushroom leather
- ❖ Living coffins
- ❖ Replace polystyrene



Stella McCartney, 2020, *Mylo*
Collection

Whether you build your home from fungi, or you start growing mushrooms in your home, fungi will catch *you* in the act. If you're alive, they already have.

- Merlin Sheldrake, *Entangled Lives*, pp. 252



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