

effects, even though he himself is so astonished by LENS that he refers to it as “weird stuff.”

Psychologist Joan Hageman provides an overview of meditation practices from traditions such as Sundo Taoism, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Indic Tantra, Sufism, and Judaism. She relates not only the differences among these schools of meditation but also their benefits and potential side effects as practices that facilitate enlightenment. The Living Deeply research of the Institute of Noetic Sciences’ Marilyn Mandala Schlitz, Cassandra Vieten, and Tina Amorok is also included in



The Dominant Animal: Human Evolution and the Environment

*by Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich
(Island Press, 2008)*

“As the dominant animal, we have so altered the environment and so damaged our life-support systems that the stresses on the living world are similar to those produced by a meteor strike,” explains Paul Ehrlich, eminent

Ontology of Consciousness: Percipient Action

*edited by Helmut Wautischer
(Bradford/MIT Press, 2008)*

However seemingly quixotic the quest, finding a place for consciousness in our evolving models of reality remains the focus of significant dialogue and debate. Some don’t believe it’s possible, some don’t think it’s appropriate, and others continue to push forward with creativity, commitment, and rigor. Those pioneering others are well represented in this scholarly

and important book. And while there is no single ontology that brings all the threads together, it's enticing to realize that the answer may be distributed across numerous cultures and fields of study. Wautischer has accommodated an impressive range of insights, from African communalism, Hindu psychology, shamanism, biophysics, modern psychiatry, and many other traditions, and across centuries of evolutionary observation. As Robert Thurman writes in the foreword, "By contextualizing core concepts from various disciplines and regions, this



collection of essays is a unique resource for those desiring to think past intellectual barriers posed by contemporary philosophy and science—barriers that have begun to threaten the future of our human species."

The Healthy Aging Brain: Sustaining Attachment, Attaining Wisdom

by Louis Cozolino
(W. W. Norton & Company, 2008)

Only recently have we discovered that the brain's ability to grow and change does not end after childhood, suggesting that the brain doesn't deteriorate as we age but may positively adapt to challenges at different stages of life. In this illuminating new book, psychologist Cozolino explores this theory. Going beyond the

findings of neuroscience, he adds the perspective of interpersonal neurobiology—the idea that our brains are closely linked to the brains of others.



Cozolino looks at the brain as a social organ and how connections between attachment, wisdom, emotion, and storytelling enhance its plasticity and affect the aging process. Weaving tales of his own psychology practice with plenty of science and specific exercises for keeping one's brain pliant, Cozolino has moved the discourse on aging several leaps forward.

Standing in the Light: My Life as a Pantheist

by Sharman Apt Russell
(Basic Books, 2008)

Pantheism literally means "God is all." Long sympathetic to this notion and facing crises of faith and existential angst, Russell decided to take a year off and immerse herself in both the philosophical roots of pantheistic thought and a lived experience of it in the high-desert beauty of New Mexico. The result is an artfully written tapestry of theory and practice. Russell's quest to understand the theory starts with the Greeks and gradually unfolds, both gracefully and fitfully,

Films Merging Art and Activism for Global Consciousness

The theme of the 11th United Nations Association Film Festival (UNAFF), held October 19–26, 2008, at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, was "Blue Planet, Green Planet." Over 440 submissions from all over the world were carefully reviewed, and 41 were selected. In years past, UNAFF has screened some of the most awarded and talked-about documentaries in the industry, including eleven that were nominated for and another five that have won Academy Awards. (www.unaff.org)

The 5th Annual Artist Film Festival, featuring films that address human rights, children's advocacy, environmental preservation, and animal advocacy,

was held October 10, 2008, in Los Angeles. This year's event screened 40 films from 40 countries, including the global premiere of *Zeitgeist Addendum*, the follow-up to the controversial *Zeitgeist: The Movie*. Among the festival winners was Mark Brecke's *They Turned Our Desert into Fire*, which tells the story of the ongoing crisis in Darfur. Brecke happens to be one of the chefs at the IONS campus! (www.artivists.org)

For a truly unique multimedia convergence of ancient wisdom and modern science, check out the 5th Annual Elevate Film Festival at www.elevateexperience.com. And coming this January is the Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival, considered the largest of its kind in the world. For more information, go to www.wildandscenicfilmfestival.org.