

**Climbing the Spiral Stairway**  
**An Interview with Eric Meyers**  
*by Kate Sholly*

Eric Meyers' book, *Elements and Evolution*, caught my eye one day last fall at the TMA office. The binding had managed to poke itself forward from a short stack of book review candidates. Before that moment, I had never heard of the writer. The title itself was intriguing: An astrology book connecting the elements and an unwieldy topic like evolution was hard to imagine, but I was game.

Normally, I try very hard not to pilfer books from the review pile, but in this case, I couldn't resist and took the book home to have a look. Two hours later, I was still reading, feasting on one new insight after another. Eric's book has a surprising freshness, depth, and level of wisdom that firmly establishes the author as an important emerging voice in the Pluto in Virgo generation of astrologers. He is not afraid to write from his heart while tackling challenging subjects like karma, soul growth, consciousness, nonduality, and free will. The book is a delightful read because Eric also uses colorful and insightful metaphors to animate complex ideas. He has the ability to breathe new life into old concepts and paradigms.

Getting to know Eric while preparing this interview and the accompanying article has been a gratifying experience. He is a truly kind human being and a tireless student of spiritual and wisdom traditions (particularly nonduality), transpersonal psychology, quantum physics, and of course, astrology. It is obvious that his desire to refresh certain aspects of our discipline is sincere and inspired, and I admire his courage and tenacity in sharing his new perspectives.

Some personal background: Eric is a counseling astrologer living in Asheville, North Carolina. He holds a master's degree in Transpersonal Counseling Psychology from Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado and is a graduate of the Steven Forrest apprenticeship program. Eric is known for his integrative and original ideas about the universe and the individual's spiritual growth within it. He also has a passion for forging connections between astrology and other systems of knowledge, as he does so well in *Elements and Evolution*. Already a seasoned writer, his previous books include *Uranus: The Constant of Change* and *Between Past & Presence: A Spiritual View of the Moon & Sun*. He is now settling into writing his next contribution to the field, tentatively titled *Transpersonal Astrology*. Eric has lectured at several astrology conferences and offers personal consultations, classes, and workshops. He is available for speaking

engagements. You can contact Eric through his Web site (www.SoulVisionConsulting.com) or via e-mail: eric@soulvisionconsulting.com

**Kate Sholly:** I enjoyed your book, *Elements & Evolution*, and have been looking forward to our interview. Thank you for being with us today.

**Eric Meyers:** I'm so glad you liked the book, and thank you for the opportunity to talk about it in the pages of *TMA*. It's quite an honor.

**KS:** You start the book by describing yourself as an evolutionary astrologer. Since so many astrologers have been using that label in the last decade, what is your particular evolutionary approach?

**EM:** The way I see it, there are two primary categories of evolutionary astrology being used today. Many people seem to equate it with the methods of Jeffrey Wolf Green and naturally assume that all evolutionary astrologers are using his system. The other category is much broader and includes any astrology that views the soul as a work in progress, that sees a human life as part of a process of soul growth over a series of past incarnations. I haven't studied with Jeffrey Wolf Green, nor do I use his method, but I consider myself an evolutionary astrologer, using the broader definition.

As for a more specific approach to astrology, my article on astrology and spiritual awakening in this issue of *TMA* is a good illustration of it. I see the Moon and Sun in the chart as indicators of the potential for human evolution, in this lifetime, from unconsciousness to greater awareness. I also look at the lunar nodes to understand the spiritual lessons, or karma, that result from navigating past lives with limited awareness. The basics of this approach are found in my book, *Between Past & Presence: A Spiritual View of the Moon & Sun*.

**KS:** Have you had any influential astrology teachers?

**EM:** Yes, I studied with Steven Forrest for five years. He's a wonderful mentor and a brilliant astrologer, and a great community has been established through his work. When I was debating about how to describe my work, Steven encouraged me to call myself an evolutionary astrologer. I would say there are a lot more evolutionary astrologers than people realize, and they have many different approaches. I believe Steven would say that evolutionary astrology is a big tent.

**KS: What has the response to your more spiritually oriented work been so far?**

**EM:** I've found that people in general, and also clients, are very open to the idea of spiritual growth and are quite excited to hear about this perspective.

**KS: I know that one of the points of debate about a karmic, or past-life, reading is whether it's ethical to tell someone a story about what you see in their chart, as if it has actually happened in some past life. There are those who think it's irresponsible and those who say the story is meant to be a metaphor for the planetary archetypes in a chart. What's your opinion on this?**

**EM:** Important question. Those who couch their readings in terms of possible past-life scenarios usually give the disclaimer that the important factor is the essence of the story, not the factual reality of a story. They feel it helps to give a sense of the soul's drama. My approach has increasingly become more focused on the *general* themes, lessons, and patterns of the soul, which can be enhanced by a particular storyline. Our souls are steeped in drama, so enlivening the symbols resonates for people. This kind of resonance is the key to effective astrology — when we make contact with clients on a soul level. To me, it matters more than any debate on technique, approach, or paradigm. It's about what actually hits home for a client.

**KS: Tell us a bit more about how you view the astrological Moon and its nodes. Because you're a Cancer, I wonder if the Moon has special significance for you.**

**EM:** I'm a Cancer with the Sun squaring Uranus. (See **Chart**.) I view the Moon as our unconscious attachment patterns, and with Uranus so prominent for me, I'm naturally interested in the process of awakening from the Moon's conditioned and unconscious responses. The nodes are where the Moon crosses the ecliptic — the apparent path of the Sun — and I believe they represent the intersection point of the spiritual lessons of the soul's consolidated past (Moon) with the present life (Sun). I realize this isn't the standard view of the nodes, but it's consonant with what is occurring astronomically. The separation of the lunar nodes from the Moon itself is something I want to help reconcile. Oftentimes, the lunar nodes are examined apart from having a connection to the Moon, and this approach helps bring

them together. When we see the Moon and Sun in terms of spiritual growth, this view makes sense, but when we approach them as merely parental influences, or as symbols for the polarity of gender, a more transpersonal view of the luminaries and the lunar nodes becomes obscured.

**KS: So, you're emphasizing a transpersonal role for the Moon and Sun, rather than limiting them to gender designations?**

**EM:** I'm suggesting that both a relative and a transpersonal view are relevant, and again, we can see this illustrated astronomically. On our Earth spaceship, we exist within both the mundane structuring of Saturn and what I call the "Uranian matrix," the intelligent, interconnected web of energy that envelops us. Ignoring the transpersonal because of its inaccessibility, or to preserve tradition, is unfortunate. I agree with Krishnamurti, who said, "Tradition becomes our security, and when the mind is secure, it is in decay." Uranus builds upon Saturn's structures, just as Aquarius follows Capricorn.

The way I see it is that life has a transpersonal dimension that simultaneously exists alongside the relative or mundane. Paradox and complexity are universal, so it's not surprising that they would show up in our astrological landscape. I actually discussed paradox at length in my book *Uranus: The Constant of Change*, if people want to do further reading. My point is that the astrological system has been primarily seen through a more immediate, mundane, relative lens. This says more about our perceptual biases than the nature of reality, which has been found to have many more dimensions than we can immediately perceive. We need to look beyond what is most obvious and embrace various angles of perception.

**KS: Before we talk about your new book, which is your fourth publication, what do you think motivates you to write?**

**EM:** I have Saturn in the 3rd house in Gemini. I've always been a word and idea guy, interested in the creative use of language, but had never written anything substantial. At my first Saturn return, I thought to heed the message of my chart, so I began to experiment with writing, just to see what would happen. The events of 9/11 hit me hard, and I was also going through a divorce while my son was only two. I was in the darkest time of my life then, and writing was an excellent outlet. My first book, *The Arrow's Ascent*, was my writing lab. It's highly experimental and unconventional, full of wonderful risks and mistakes, a painful and beautiful growth experience. The

contrast between that first book and the tight, more professional and accessible *Elements & Evolution* is striking. I've come a long way.

**KS:** I love that you write about the four elements in such a vivid way. I frequently go back to the basics of astrology to deepen my understanding, and the elements are my favorite way to do that. Your book really hit the spot for me. It's a beautiful reminder that the elements are present in all aspects of our inner and outer lives. It can be an occupational hazard of psychological astrology to forget that the elements are alive and not just abstractions that describe someone's psychological profile and temperament.

**EM:** My sense is that astrology functions on many levels of reality at once. More conventionally, it is seen as a symbolic system that corresponds to what I call the *air level*, the level of mind or intellect. But the astrological universe is alive; the Sun shines on us every single day. The four elements exist throughout the world. I see direct experience with Nature as the *water level*, which is correlated with biology and an emotional engagement with life. The *earth level* has to do with the properties within matter, and the *fire level* pertains to the soul, our energetic connection to Spirit. *Elements & Evolution* elucidates how we can understand each of the four elements at the four levels of body (earth), heart (water), mind (air), and soul (fire). I see the elements as multidimensional.

**KS:** You write about the Perennial Philosophy and how it serves as the structure for your ideas on evolution. Can you share some of that here?

**EM:** My understanding of the Perennial Philosophy is that it describes a continual breathing in and out, from energetic potential to form and back again. Oneness divides into separateness, which then evolves toward the continuous realization of the underlying Oneness. And this breathing in and out is how the soul evolves to greater consciousness. My thinking has been influenced by Ken Wilber's work. He's a transpersonal psychologist and philosopher; he's reviewed many versions of the Perennial Philosophy, from a diversity of wisdom traditions and knowledge systems, and he's found a unifying thread. His work shows that there has been a broad consensus over the centuries that life operates on four primary levels – physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual – all being held together by Oneness. The unity can be seen in spiritual terms as God, or Spirit – call it what you will. Some prefer to see it

scientifically in terms of the eternal perpetuation of a unified field of energy. Either way, Oneness appears to be irrefutable. This is a *universe*, after all.

So, Oneness is irrefutable – built into the core of reality – as are these four distinct levels. Again, we have the paradox of the transpersonal and the relative truths. I looked at these four levels and made the natural associations with the four elements: physical (earth), emotional (water), mental (air), and spiritual (fire). I've simply translated the Perennial Philosophy into a modern context for astrology, but it's certainly not a new idea. In fact, it may be one of the oldest ideas in existence. I heard Rob Hand lecture on "The Ascent and Descent of the Soul," a great talk on how this idea was formulated in the Greek tradition. Some of the significant figures that helped develop the Perennial Philosophy were Plotinus, Marsilio Ficino, Meister Eckhart, René Guénon, Sri Aurobindo, Ananda Coomaraswamy, and Helena Blavatsky. Here we have East and West, classical and modern, all pointing to the same basic theme. If ever we can achieve consensus on a core idea, this is it.

**KS: You write that there are two channels in the evolutionary process of the soul, the liberating channel and the manifesting channel.**

**EM:** Exactly. Our movement toward Oneness occurs in the liberating channel. Evolution moves from matter (earth), then incorporates life (water), then develops advanced cognition (air), and then opens to spiritual realization (fire). The manifesting channel is the reverse process: The unity of Spirit divides into countless souls (fire). For evolutionary reasons, souls choose to incarnate. Descending to the air level, they develop a specific plan from all the creative possibilities of the soul level, and the astrology chart depicts this plan. We then become physically embodied and alive at the water level – incubated in the waters of the womb. Upon birth, we take up residence on the Earth and achieve autonomy as a separate self. Then, immediately, we move into the liberating channel and back toward spiritual realization, or Oneness.

**KS: This process is described in your book as *progressive evolution*, but you also write about a process you call *cyclical evolution*. What do you mean by that?**

**EM:** Cyclical evolution describes the passion play of the zodiac, a repeatable sequence of stages and cycles that begins with the initiatory impulse of Aries and ends with the compassion and

merging in Oneness found with Pisces. This cycle can also be seen as the motion from the 1st house to the 12th house, or in the lunar cycle. All the transits are going around in cycles from one sign to the next; in other words, there is a developmental program around the zodiac through twelve stages. In my view, all of the stages in the system have relationships with all the others, to reveal a broad curriculum of evolutionary programs. For example: What's the program of Aries square Cancer? My word for that is *protection*. What's the program for Virgo trine Capricorn? *Industry*. Gemini opposite Sagittarius is *learning*, and Virgo quincunx Aquarius is *technology*. The more challenging the aspect, the more complex the evolutionary program.

**KS: So, it sounds like cyclical evolution provides the setting, or the stage, for progressive evolution. Would you say that our soul growth occurs where these two types of evolution meet?**

**EM:** Yes, that's the idea. Where we're located in the very personal process of our soul growth – you might say, our level of consciousness – determines how we'll meet the evolutionary programs in the twelve stages of the cyclical format. There's a wide spectrum of ways to navigate through these cyclical programs, from being totally unconscious to having maximal clarity and awareness. The more we evolve, the better we are able to approach the lessons skillfully.

The final chapter of the book, "The Spiral Stairway," is a synthesis of how cyclical evolution and the quality of one's consciousness interact. Ideally, as consciousness evolves, we climb the spiral stairway instead of chasing our tails. The evolution of consciousness brings us more freedom, more perspective.

**KS: So there is an overall movement toward ascending?**

**EM:** It's actually about integrating the evolution of consciousness with the mind-body system, or ego. We are *bridging worlds* – from the transpersonal realm to the everyday, or relative, world. We're not leaving. We're ascending to greater spiritual heights, but ideally with our feet firmly planted on the Earth. We become clear and effective vessels for Spirit and evolution, rather than operating solely from the dictates of our ego preferences and unconscious attachments.

To me, the Moon represents our body, our separateness, our *humanness*. And we stay human, but this integration allows our humanness to be profoundly moving and meaningful. Ideally, we can then unconditionally love ourselves, others, and all of

life. We can spread this love through our participation in the great human drama. Life becomes what Byron Katie calls *A Thousand Names for Joy*. We integrate the broader spiritual awareness of the Sun with the human consciousness of the Moon.

**KS: You also propose that we classify the four elements as left-brain and right-brain functions. How does that increase our understanding of astrology?**

**EM:** This is one of the major ideas in the book. Earth and air are classified as *neutral*, and water and fire are seen as *charged*. Neutral is paired with the left brain and has to do with content, material reality, facts – how the world is organized. Earth gives us the structure of the physical world. Air tells us how the nonphysical world is structured and includes mathematics, logic, and all concepts, like justice, peace, truth. In other words, the neutral elements set the stage for how evolution will play out. We then interact on this stage through the charged elements, fire and water, which correlate with the right brain and the very human and subjective world of emotions, intuition, opinions, and personal preferences.

To take this further, the planets, signs, and houses can also be categorized as either charged or neutral. By looking through this lens, the ramifications for reforming the system are substantial, and my book is an attempt to begin that dialogue. I see the possibility for deeper engagement and nuance and a more comprehensive understanding of the basics of the astrological system. One future direction of my work will involve the application of this system to birth charts.

**KS: Give us a quick breakdown of the planets into charged and neutral categories.**

**EM:** It actually organizes itself. The planets that rule the neutral earth and air signs – Venus, Mercury, Uranus, and Saturn – are also neutral. The other six planets, which rule the charged signs, are charged. The charged planets each rule one sign, whereas neutral Venus and Mercury both rule two signs. So, there are six charged planets and four neutral, but the way it plays out is perfectly equal, as there are six neutral and six charged signs.

Many people don't understand how Venus could be classified as neutral, and I wonder whether this blind spot explains why this division hasn't been considered before. Because of our subjective consciousness, we naturally charge everything we interact with. And just mentioning Venus, the Goddess of Love and Beauty, tends to arouse us. However, that's *our* charge, not

Venus's. A piece of art is lifeless, completely neutral, just like the materials that made it. This is the Taurean earthy side of Venus, which has to do with tangibility, the composition of objects.

The air side of Venus is Libran. We have concepts like justice and equality, aesthetics and ideals. As we bring those down from the air and interact with them, we introduce our own distortions, but in and of themselves beauty, equality, and justice transcend the human game. My sense is that these concepts would exist with or without human interaction or involvement.

**KS: They exist without human interaction? That gets my mind going. Say more about that.**

**EM:** The way I see it, Libra is part of the magnificent intelligence of Spirit, or Nature, which goes on with or without the human project. When we interact with it, we charge it, and it becomes personally relevant for our spiritual growth, but if people weren't on the planet, I feel that the concept of equality or justice would still be part of God's universe.

It comes down to the question: Did we create God, or did God create us? It would be awfully narcissistic for us to say that we've created these concepts. My view is that we're just *discovering* them within the Nature that exists around us.

**KS: Give us some examples of how the neutral and charged elements meet and interact in life. For instance: What happens when charged signs get together? What happens when neutral is paired with neutral, or neutral with charged?**

**EM:** Well, with charged meeting charged, I'll use Aries square Cancer. This is the drama of predator and prey, attack and defense. As you might imagine, it's quite the charge when you're being chased for someone's dinner! This kind of interaction builds in drama toward an eventual *climax*. The predator may nab his prey, have a nice dinner, and then go to bed. Or perhaps the prey escapes and moves on with his day. Either way, the drama eventually ends and the charges all diminish.

An example of neutral in relationship to neutral is Virgo square Gemini. Gemini involves ideas and hypotheses, while Virgo addresses analysis and research. I use the example of a funnel: The top of the funnel reaches out into the air (Gemini), while the narrower bottom empties out on the earth (Virgo) by sifting through all the data. My word for the Virgo-Gemini square is *science*. The neutrality of this pair is glimpsed through the calls for objectivity in the scientific world, where researchers

are told not to allow their own biases or agendas to interfere with their findings. But, because we all have a subjective human filter, objectivity is something we can only strive for; it doesn't exist experientially, it's only theoretical.

There is a fascinating dynamic in the situation of charged versus neutral. The neutral elements set the status quo, which the charged elements play off of. One of three things can happen: First, the neutral status quo is acceptable, and the charge does not increase in intensity and more or less goes along; second, the neutral status quo is unacceptable, and an intense charge passes a threshold point and catalyzes dramatic change; and third, the charge rises and meets the neutral status quo on *equal* terms, cooperating with it.

Let's use the Taurus-Leo square as an example. Among other things, the Taurus-Leo program has to do with how we spend our money. Let's say you have \$500 in your bank account – that's Taurus's neutral status quo. Then there's Leo, which is about what rouses our joy. According to the first dynamic mentioned above, someone may see a \$700 sofa and choose not to purchase it, in compliance with the reality of the bank account. The second scenario unfolds when the perceived joy of buying the sofa overrides the financial reality – you just gotta have it! When we get really charged, we fittingly take out our charge cards. The third possibility is the forging of balance, when we are able to have what we love and love what we have – joyful living within our means.

**KS: You've written quite a bit about consciousness being the most important variable in how we understand astrology. Please encapsulate that for our readers.**

**EM:** According to the developmental view, we grow from infants to adolescents to adults. Most people would agree that, as we age, there is more awareness of ourselves and the world. We accrue experience and wisdom, and our consciousness dynamically changes and grows. The modern mind might see this as basic and obvious, but this understanding is relatively new. It was only 150 years ago that Darwin put forth the theory of evolution; it was highly controversial and is still resisted by many. The field of psychology is even more recent. Within it, there are countless models of how consciousness develops, from Erik Erikson to Freud to Abraham Maslow, and many others. So, it's understandable that the important variable of evolving consciousness has not been fully incorporated into astrology.

But we're now at a crossroads: Do we continue to perpetuate the non-evolving approach, or reform the system to incorporate evolution? The locus of control for the non-evolving approach is

external: We are bound by our charts, and planetary placements become determining factors – this is either a “good” or a “bad” placement. With an evolutionary approach, the locus of control is more internal, where our level of consciousness determines the chart’s expression, not the chart itself. My view is that the development of awareness enables us to manifest our charts most effectively and to realize the purpose in them, while remaining unconscious will encourage the same configurations to play out in problematic ways.

Almost everyone is going to have a planet or aspect that more conventional astrology might call “bad.” And all things being equal, that might be true. But all things aren’t equal. I have no qualms saying that the Dalai Lama is more conscious than Charles Manson. The recognition that consciousness matures is the important variable for how we understand the field of astrology. I suspect that the Uranus-Pluto square we’re quickly approaching is bringing this issue up for us to address. We’re in a season of reform, just like we were in the 1960s, at the Uranus-Pluto conjunction.

**KS: What changes would you like to see in our approach to astrology in the coming years?**

**EM:** I’d like to see the transpersonal view further developed, and that’s what I’ll be focusing on. At the egoic levels, we develop our personal preferences, and most of us want to increase pleasure and minimize pain. But sometimes we need to enter a more challenging and less ego-friendly terrain, because that’s where the learning is. If we’re continually strategizing to have favorable experiences, we miss out on a *tremendous* amount of growth. Furthermore, we actually perpetuate, and often deepen, our issues by ignoring them. It’s the premier strategy for not growing, and it needs to change.

So, I’d like to see astrology more explicitly promote healthy spiritual growth rather than cater to ego preferences. We need to change our language and labels to extend beyond our overly dualistic focus. Saturn tends to be malefic to *the ego* but indispensable for spiritual growth. As discussed earlier, the Moon represents the feminine at one level, but is far broader than that at another level. My fear is that astrology unwittingly traps us in our personal stories, our own narcissistic narratives. When we get over ourselves, we’ll be more able to connect with everything and better able to sustain life on this planet, instead of just worrying about ourselves.

One of the arguments I’ve heard against evolutionary astrology is that Spirit is perfection, and that there is no need for it to evolve. From an absolute view, I agree

wholeheartedly with this. However, at the relative level of separation, we're unfinished souls who are growing into reunion with this perfection.

**KS: You're delivering quite the message of awakening. Do you feel qualified to represent it?**

**EM:** Well, we teach what we're learning. I'm a fellow traveler on the path, just another seeker. It's because I know I have so far to go that I can empathize with my clients, students, and readers. I don't see myself as any sort of spiritual guru and have no desire for that. I'm the guy on the side of the road holding a map, a counselor of sorts.

Spiritual awakening is a universal evolutionary process, the birthright of everyone, and not reserved for the elite. And being quite ordinary in that I spend more time procrastinating than meditating, I may be perfect to play a part in this shift. There's one thing I'm sure of, though – my heart's in the right place.

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