

[The Write Place At the Write Time](#)

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Announcements](#)

[Interviews](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Poetry](#)

["Our Stories" non-fiction](#)

[Writers' Craft Box](#)

[Writers' Contest!](#)

[Book Reviews](#)

[Exploration of Theme](#)

[Archives](#)

[Submission Guidelines](#)

[Feedback & Questions](#)

Come in...and be captivated...



"And then there was..." by Jan Collins Selman; www.jancollinselman.com

In the midst of a wintry wonderland, we have the extraordinary good fortune of speaking with one of the most innovative minds in mythic fantasy literature. We see, through the course of the interview, how archetypes, psychology and primal symbolism affect our day to day modern lives and the way we think with the wisdom and whimsy of author and editor, Terri Windling.

During the course of Ms. Windling's odyssey, she helped establish the Ace Fantasy imprint in the early 1980s, worked as consulting editor for Putnam/Berkley and Tor, which continues to publish her series of "Fairy Tales" revamped versions of classic stories and "Borderlands" young adult anthologies and contributed to *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*. Her many anthologies include sixteen volumes of The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror with Ellen Datlow, and her fiction works which include the novel *The Wood Wife*, which received the Mythopoeic Award. Her art graces galleries and museums both domestically and internationally. Ms. Windling founded The Endicott Studio, an organization dedicated to charitable endeavors and the field of "mythic arts" which exists largely due to her innovative efforts. Windling has won nine World Fantasy Awards, the Bram Stoker Award, and her collection *The Armless Maiden* appeared on the short-list for the James Tiptree, Jr Award. As one of the founders of the urban fantasy genre, she has paved the way for many authors whose works blend and broaden the established genres making for groundbreaking literature. Ms. Windling sits on the board of the Mythic Imagination Institute and her essays and philosophies on myth, folklore, magical literature and art are instrumental in defining and preserving the ancient art of storytelling. We are "enchanted" to have her with us as we explore the realms of fantasy together.

1) In many interviews, the first question begins with the concept of origins; the origins of the individual, their craft, the birth of a business, etc... In this question, we will be exploring origins, but not those of the usual kind. Here we're discussing those symbolic truths that reflect human nature through allegory and archetypes- fairy tales. Carl Jung theorized that because the human mind is relatively young in comparison to the earth, that the subconscious hasn't evolved significantly enough to erase those primal memories of our earliest beginnings. Over the millennia, these memories and feelings morphed into symbols, myths, archetypes and folklore to explain our existence. The theory suggested that the birth of these tales that have over time become our rich heritage, have a basis in truth, keeping ancient mysteries of history alive through

storytelling. Another similar school of thought was described in E. L. Doctorow's *Reporting the Universe*:

"I have held to an idea ever since I heard it posited by one of my professors at Kenyon College in the Fifties- that there was an ancient time when no distinction was possible between fact and fiction, between religious perception and scientific discourse, between utilitarian communication and poetry-- when all these functions of language... were indivisible."

The idea compared this notion to a star where the points were the modern divisions of language and the core was the center that our minds, even when we now are seemingly ruled by facts and science, return to as they are inherently "structured for storytelling". In your incredibly in-depth study of folklore, myths and fairy tales, what is your opinion on the origins of fairy tales in a nature vs nurture context?

While my own approach to myth and folklore isn't a strictly Jungian one, I've found much of interest in Jung's ideas regarding the potency of mythic archetypes and the universality of certain story themes and patterns. Folklore scholars have long debated the origins of classic stories like "Cinderella" (for example), found in variant forms in cultures the world over: was the story born in a specific time and place and then disseminated around the globe, or is its theme so universal that similar stories emerged spontaneously in many places at once? As a creative artist rather than a scholar, I'm personally less concerned with determining a given tale's precise origins than with following its winding trail as it passes through the centuries. Looking at the ways "Cinderella" was re-told and re-shaped by storytellers of each successive generation tells us much about the belief systems and values of the cultures the tale passed through, which in turn gives us greater insight into our own.

I agree with the notion that the human mind is "structured for storytelling" -- and, likewise, for perceiving the world around us as a sequence of unfolding stories. We even live our lives as a kind of story, selecting and crafting our memories to give our past a plot structure, narrative cohesion, and some semblance of meaning -- and as we do, we're influenced, naturally, by all of the stories around us: by our favorite tales from childhood, by the well-known stories of our sacred texts, by the clamor of the stories churned out each day by

television, newspapers, the internet; by the stories that we – as a culture or country -- collectively agree to believe in. Advertising is based on selling us stories about who we are and what we need; history itself is a story told and re-told, constantly reassessed and revised. Stories not only reflect the way we see the world, they also help to shape the way we see the world – which was something understood by older societies in which the storyteller's role was a magical and sacred one.

In such societies, the line between “fact” and “fiction” was less rigidly defined than it is today, and less relevant to the point of telling stories. Joseph Campbell once wrote that we no longer know how to hear a myth or folk tale properly; we no longer understand these stories as our ancestors did -- for we've all but lost the knack for understanding the metaphoric language of myth. In modern culture, our thinking tends toward the reductive and literal, not the metaphoric and poetic. We read old tales about Coyote the Trickster, for example, and say: “Well that’s not true. Coyotes can’t walk in human shape, they can’t fling stars into the sky, they can’t have conversations with their own turds. It’s not literally true and therefore it’s ridiculous, meaningless, primitive, false.” But when we approach such stories metaphorically, poetically, we get to the very heart of truth, finding subtle teachings and sophisticated wisdom encoded in seemingly simple tales. Coyote tales tend to be funny, yes, but under their humorous or ribald surface they have very serious things to say about right and wrong and, most importantly, about that vast gray area between the two.

I think some of the problems we face today come from people reading stories – especially those in sacred texts – just too darn literally, missing the metaphors within. You can’t “prove” the truth of a myth or a sacred tale with reductive thinking or the scientific method. We need to learn to listen to stories properly again, and stop asking: “But is it literally true?” Literally? No, probably not. But metaphorically, symbolically, spiritually, such stories contain profound truths that speak directly to the soul. As metaphorical tales, they enlarge our capacity to wonder, to question, to think, to experience – whereas reading myths, folk tales, or sacred texts in a literal, reductive fashion tends to close our thinking down.

2) In a former interview, you introduce the theme of 'border crossing' between genres of writing and mediums of artistic expression. The figure of the Trickster figure, the Coyote, is described as "dashing from the wilderness world of magic to the human world... dancing on borders, ignoring the rules as many of our innovative artists do". What do you find are the most important aspects of crossing either self or society-imposed borders, distinctions and restrictions in the art field and upon the page? What do you think about the development of characters and archetypes that share traits, becoming not only villains and not only heroes, but vulnerable individuals inclined toward good or ill? You also spoke of the moment when "two worlds meet and energize each other".

I love the complexity of Trickster myths, for Trickster characters in their various incarnations (Coyote, Loki, Hermes, Anansi, Uncle Tompa, etc.) are neither wholly good nor wholly evil but an interesting mixture of the two; they are Culture Heroes one moment, World Destroyers the next, and equally sacred in both these guises. In real life, of course, people are never purely "good" or "bad," we are all exasperating mixtures of the two, and the Trickster archetype reminds us of the fallacy of simplistic, black-and-white thinking. Trickster tales show us what can happen when rules or beliefs or values are transgressed... and yet even this is rendered in shades of gray, turning our usual assumptions upside down, for some acts of destruction can turn out to be necessary and beneficial, while some acts of creation come only at a terrible price.

In his fascinating book Trickster Makes This World, Lewis Hyde makes the case for viewing the creative artist as a Trickster figure. The art-making process, at its most innovative, is an act of simultaneous destruction and creation: the artist tears down old ideas and orthodoxies in order to give birth to something new. Some of our most ground-breaking artists (Pablo Picasso, John Cage, and Allen Ginsberg are three of the examples he gives) have been complex, mischievous figures with "good" traits and "bad" in equal measure; they subvert the rules, create chaos and magic, and give Trickster a good run for his money.

As for me, I'm much too quiet a soul to embody the Trickster archetype myself, but I feel his presence hovering around my work whenever I'm at my most experimental...or simply trying to break out of some box or pigeon hole that I've been slotted into. When I first began working in Fantasy, for example, back in the 1980s, the genre was much more narrowly defined than it is today; and a writer or book editor (if she wanted to make a living) was expected to conform to its conventions and expectations. There were, of course, rule-breakers even then: Trickster figures like M. John Harrison or John Crowley whose sly, subversive books took readers well beyond the "fields they knew" -- luring them out into the strange and fertile space between established genres of fiction. Today, when the Fantasy field is a wide, diverse, and multi-faceted thing, it seems obvious, in retrospect, that Harrison, Crowley, Neil Gaiman, Charles de Lint and Susanna Clarke (to name just a few) were wise to develop their own unique styles rather than restrict themselves to writing about dragons, unicorns, or barbarian swordsmen...but first these writers (and many others like them) had to break down the barriers of what publishers and critics believed Fantasy to be. There's a bit of Trickster in every writer whose work confounds expectations and gives birth to something new.

In your personal life you moved both East and West, living out in a fairy tale setting of lush England and also a home in the serene desert lands of Arizona. How has that meeting of those two worlds enriched your work?

Both in folklore and in Fantasy one finds many tales that revolve around the act of crossing from one world into another, which is a theme I've always found fascinating. I had a rather unsettled childhood, crossing back-and-forth between two states (Pennsylvania and New Jersey) and two ways of life (working class and middle class) as I was bounced between various relatives, and I suppose that constant border-crossing shaped my psyche and my view of the world. I'm particularly fascinated by the ways we're shaped by our environments—not only our families and our communities, but by the very land under our feet—and how, in turn, this shapes our art, our stories, and our myths.

When I grew up, I was still most comfortable in motion, and I developed a rather migratory way of life: dividing my time between New York City and Boston when I was in my twenties, and then traveling between homes in Devon, England and Tucson, Arizona all through my thirties and forties. That's all changing now, however. I married an Englishman last year and suddenly find myself very settled down for the first in my life -- rooted by a house, a dog, a garden, a stepdaughter and extended family. It was the last thing I expected at this point in my life. My husband says he's curious to see how this change will be reflected in my art and stories.

3) From a passion to study folklore to the great achievements where you've "spun those coats made of words to the air" to set others free through the spirit of your work as in the reference to the healing tale of "The Wild Swans", you've forever changed the definitions of the mythic arts field and opened so many doors. What does it feel like to have reached the ultimate goal of any passion which is to effect far-reaching positive change? How did your dreams and concepts for the mythic arts field develop along your creative pilgrimage particularly for your notable influence and inventiveness in the establishing of the Ace Fantasy imprint as well as Tor?

I've always loved Fantasy fiction, but this love is part of a wider interest in all forms of non-realist writing -- from surrealism to magical realism -- and in all forms of art that are influenced by myth and folklore in some way. Some years ago, Charles de Lint and I coined the terms "mythic fiction" and "mythic arts" to describe this kind of work, because although one finds it in the Fantasy field it is also produced in other areas as well: in "mainstream" fiction by the likes of Angela Carter, A.S. Byatt, Gregory Maguire and Alice Hoffman; in "fine art" by the likes of Paula Rego, Lori Field, Fay Ku and Kiki Smith; in "children's fiction" by Donna Jo Napoli, Jane Yolen, Peter Dickinson... and so on. Although genre designations can be useful things, pointing readers and viewers to the specific types of work they seek, these designations can also create artistic ghettos with boundary walls so high that artists in different fields can't lean over them for a good conversation. It's been my goal, over the last thirty years, to dismantle some of these walls, brick by brick -- if not to tear them down entirely, then at least to make them lower and more easily crossed.

For example: In the annual Year's Best Fantasy & Horror volumes from St. Martin's Press (which I co-edited with Ellen Datlow for sixteen years) I had a venue for bringing many different kinds of stories and writers together, sourcing material from publications that ranged all the way from Realms of Fantasy and Weird Tales to The New Yorker and Paris Review, ending up with volumes in which stories by Ursula Le Guin and Gabriel Garcia Marquez could sit side by side. Likewise, the online Journal of Mythic Arts (which Midori Snyder and I co-edited for many years) featured mythic works by writers, artists and scholars from a wide variety of fields.

I realize that this no longer seems particularly radical... which is a satisfying change. There are many younger writers who work across genres now -- and who take it entirely for granted that there is an audience for such tales. I'd like to think I've helped bring this change about in some small way.

4) In terms of your phrase, "morally responsible fiction", applying to fiction that guides the young toward the comfort of finding like-minded individuals and cultivating their creative abilities, what is in your opinion, the needed curative qualities of fantasy literature where belief in surreal words and manifestation are possible? How can writers who work in such areas be mindful of these beneficial qualities and continue to best guide and comfort young generations?

As with myths and folk tales, a good Fantasy novel is literally spell-binding, using language to conjure up whole new worlds, or to invest our own with magic. The particular power of the Fantasy novel comes from its link with the world's most ancient stories -- and from the author's careful manipulation of mythic archetypes, story patterns, and symbols. A skillful writer of Fantasy knows he or she must tell two stories at once: the surface tale, and a deeper story encoded within the tale's symbolic language. Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone (for example) is, on one level, simply an English boarding school novel with a bit of magic thrown in; but below that surface is a classic narrative of the Orphaned Hero [link? <http://www.endicott-studio.com/rdrm/rrOrphans.html>] archetype. This second, metaphorical story is the one that makes the novel's appeal so universal, speaking to all children (orphaned or not) who navigate the treacherous passage that lies between childhood and adulthood. I don't mean that children's Fantasy should aim to be didactic, with a subtext intended to inculcate moral lessons -- heaven forbid. But the magical tropes of Fantasy, rooted as they are in world mythology, come freighted with meaning on a metaphoric level. A responsible writer

works with these symbols consciously and pays attention to both aspects of the story.

Jane Yolen once said, "Just as a child is born with a literal hole in his head, where the bones slowly close underneath the fragile shield of skin, so the child is born with a figurative hole in his heart. What slips in before it anneals shapes the man or woman into which that child will grow. Story is one of the most serious intruders into the heart." (The quote comes from Touch Magic: Fantasy, Faerie & Folklore in the Literature of Childhood.) I believe that those of us who write stories for children or young adults should remember how powerful stories can be -- and take responsibility for the moral tenor of whatever dreams or nightmares we're letting loose into the world. This is particularly true in Fantasy, where the tools of our trade include the language, symbolism and archetypal energies of myth. These are ancient, subtle, potent things, and they work in mysterious ways.

If you could say anything to a child undergoing a difficult passage who was an ardent fan of imaginative fiction and took solace in books, what would your guidance be to them?

I'd say: Don't despair, you're not alone, many of us turn to books for strength and solace -- including, very often, the people who write them. Stories, after all, have been used to heal and teach and inspire since storytelling began. You won't be in this dark wood forever, and when you emerge from the trees at last you'll be like the hero of an old folk tale, carrying treasures as precious as they are hard won: wisdom, strength, courage, compassion . . . and a story to tell.

5) Please discuss with us the Endicott Studio- how it came about, the philosophy of the Mythic Imagination Institute, the Journal of Mythic Arts and its subsequent effects, charitable endeavors...

The Endicott Studio for Mythic Arts is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the support of literary, visual and performance arts inspired by myth, folklore, and fairy tales. I started the studio on Endicott Street in Boston in 1987, and it moved to offices in Tucson, Arizona and Devon, England in 1990. For the last five years, I've co-directed the organization with Midori Snyder, who is based in Tucson. The writers and artists who contribute to Endicott projects are located all over the U.S. and the U.K., as well as in several other countries.

The studio has sponsored a variety of mythic projects, events, art exhibitions and publications over the last 22 years -- while at the same time raising money for charities assisting homeless, abused, and at-risk children. Our award-winning webzine, The Journal of Mythic Arts, appeared online from 1997 to 2008, promoting contemporary mythic arts and providing resources and information for mythic artists, students, and scholars. Publication of JoMA ended with the Summer 2008 issue in order to free us up for new endeavors, but we continue to maintain 10+ years of JoMA material online, keeping this mythic information freely available to readers both new and old.

We have a new online project in the works, which will debut in the Spring of 2010. It's a collaborative venture created with talented folk behind the Goblin Fruit webzine...but more than that I can't reveal! Watch out for it in early April.

6) The longevity of creative genres: What are your future projections for mythic arts, fantasy, folk lore and fairy tales? What are the timeless aspects that will continue to guide and have appeal through the ages?

Oh, I'd love to have a crystal ball that could tell us what the future of Fantasy and mythic arts will be -- and I'm sure every publisher in New York City and London would like one too! It's hard to even make an educated guess, for technology is changing so rapidly and the state of book publishing itself is in great upheaval. Art forms that play an important role today -- web-based magazines and blogs -- didn't even exist when I was starting out. Heck, the whole Internet didn't yet exist. Things are changing too fast these days for an old-school book editor like me to make an accurate prediction.

But I think it's safe to say that art rooted in myth and folklore will continue to be with us, in some form, because it's always been with us. Each generation re-fashions the old tales anew, and creates the new ones that it most needs.

7) Can you share with us some of the fascinating historical aspects of the works of Anderson, and the purpose of the conte de fées told in the French salons more

for the purposes of adults to comment satirically or symbolically on the time...

Today most people think of fairy tales as sugar-sweet, simplistic stories in which beautiful little girls grow up to marry their rich Prince Charmings. This view of fairy tales is largely due to the pervasiveness of Disney films, which transformed dark and complex stories into “wholesome” family entertainment. Those of use who grew up on pre-Disney versions of the stories remember fairy tales rather differently, however. There were no singing bluebirds and dancing dwarves. Happy endings were never guaranteed. These were tales in which magics both dark and bright were woven ineluctably together -- stories that were wondrous and enchanting, but also terrifying. Yes, there were girls who became princesses and boys who won treasure-houses full of gold, but there were also murderous mothers, lecherous fathers, treacherous siblings and cannibal in-laws. There were castles in which the heads of previous wives were artfully displayed in secret chambers; where delicious stews were made from the hearts and tongues of unwanted children; where dainty red shoes forced girls to dance until skin was flayed from bone. The old tales contained both wonders and horrors; and heroes and heroines of all stripes: courageous and foolish, reluctant and determined, insouciant and desperate.

*The idea that fairy tales are for Children Only is a relatively modern one. In the oral tradition, such tales were told to audiences young and old alike, and the earliest print editions of fairy tales were published for adult readers. In Europe, the earliest known fairy tales collections come from 15th and 16th century Italy (Giovan Francesco Straparola's *The Delectable Nights* and Giambattista Basile's *The Tale of Tales*); these stories were sensual, bawdy, unflinchingly violent, and morally complex. In the tale of *Sleeping Beauty*, for instance, the princess is awakened not by a chaste kiss, but by the birth of twins after the prince has come, fornicated with her sleeping body, and left again. In older versions of *Snow White's* tale, a passing prince claims the girl's dead body and locks himself away with it, pronouncing himself in love with his beautiful “doll,” who he intends to wed. His mother, complaining of the dead girl's smell, is greatly relieved when *Snow White* returns to life. In older versions of the *Bluebeard* narrative, the heroine does not sit trembling while waiting for her brothers to rescue her – she outwits her captor, kills him, and restores the lives of*

her murdered predecessors. Cinderella doesn't sit weeping in the cinders while talking bluebirds flutter around her; she is a clever, angry, feisty girl who seeks her own salvation – with the help of advice from her dead mother's ghost, not the twinkle of fairy magic.

At the end of the 17th century, a vogue for adult fairy tales swept through the literary salons of Paris and caused a publishing sensation. Charles Perrault is the salon writer whose works are best known to us today, but there were numerous other popular fairy tale writers, the majority of them women. Though barred from formal education because of their sex, the women of the fairy tale salons were widely-read, intelligent, and enjoyed an unusual degree of social independence. Today their tales can seem quaintly old-fashioned, dripping with too many pearls and jewels, but to 17th century audiences the rich rococo language of the tales was deliciously subversive – in deliberate contrast with the mannered restraint of works approved by the all-male bastion of the French Academy. The rococo language of the fairy tales also served another important function – disguising the stories' sly subtext in order to slide them past the Sun King's censors. Critiques of court life, and even of the king, were embedded in flowery utopian tales and in dark, sharply dystopian ones. Not surprisingly, French fairy tales by women authors often featured young (but clever!) aristocratic girls whose lives were controlled by the arbitrary whims of fathers, kings, and elderly wicked fairies – as well as tales in which groups of wise fairies stepped in and put all to rights. Fairies were central to these stories, and it was here that the name contes des fées (fairy tales) was coined – a term now used to describe a large, international body of magical stories.

Readers who'd like to know more about the salon tales might be interested in the following article, from the archives of the Journal of Mythic Arts: "Les Conte de Fées: The Literary Fairy Tales of France" [<http://www.endicott-studio.com/rdrm/forconte.html>].

As for Hans Christian Andersen, he was a fascinating, troubling, complex

man – and his fairy tales reflect it. He's probably the most autobiographical of fairy tale writers, in a twisty kind of way, creating tales that reflected the pains and slights and heartbreaks of his own life. Again, it's easiest to refer interested readers to an online article found in the JoMA archives: "Hans Christian Andersen: Father of the Modern Fairy Tale" [http://www.endicott-studio.com/jMA03Summer/hans.html].

8) In the spirit of creativity, if there was one particular fantasy element from a myth or fairy tale of your choosing that could be made real to help the world in some way today, what would it be?

There are a number of tales world-wide in which animals and human beings once had the power to understand each other's speech... and then lost the ability, for one reason or another. I'd like to get those powers back. We have a great deal to learn from the other creatures with whom we share our world... though I reckon they're likely to have a few hard things to say about our stewardship of the planet.

Melding the human aspect of business with the art of writing and promotion, we get an insider's look at the literary market from Jeff Herman of The Jeff Herman Agency. His revolutionary writers' resource, *The Jeff Herman Guide to Book Publishers, Editors, and Literary Agents* as well his illuminating, *Write the Perfect Book Proposal: 10 Proposals That Sold and Why!* change the way that writers perceive the business aspect of their creative profession. Herman is the co-founder of his own indie house, Three Dog Press and travels across the nation to talk about all aspects of publishing and having a successful, well-managed career as an author. Written about in periodicals such as *Success*, *Entrepreneur*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Forbes*, *Associated Press*, and *The New Yorker*, he lends his philosophies to the public and puts an innovative twist on the industry. We also get a spiritual perspective on the writers' process from Deborah Levine Herman, fellow agent and co-founder of Three Dog Press.

1) Your natural evolution from publicist, working in PR and marketing arenas to becoming an agent: what brought about this career move adding

needed skill sets that you possessed to your creative mindset to create a unique brand of agenting?

It was a fire in my belly rather than a conscious thought. I desired more freedom and followed my inclinations by the passion I felt for the endeavor rather than seeing it only on an intellectual level. It was a process in my twenties that I could accomplish free of fear and constraints, bypassing the limitations of what those feelings can create. Instead of reading books on business plans or overwhelming myself with research on the field, I felt uninhibited, learning through experience in a hands-on environment. There is no advice that can be offered which will tell someone ahead of time all the variables and unseen disadvantages of such a venture.

It was a pathology. I did PR working for agencies, publishers, and authors of business books and promotion. I was essentially pitching a story to the media. Realizing that I enjoyed this more, I separated from PR and went into business for myself in 1987, representing authors. I came across a book in Barnes and Noble- How to Negotiate a Book Contract and it was reverse engineered to make it more geared toward the writer's interests. It was the exact book that I needed at the exact moment that I needed it. I transitioned and brought innovative marketing strategies with me.

How is the role of an agent maintained day to day (without becoming jaded to one degree or another)?

It is a daily challenge. Sometimes it's easy to go into auto-pilot by the knowledge gained through past experiences and the core skill sets acquired over time and knowing that if certain things worked once, then the probability is that they'll work again. Yet staying in set patterns can become rigid and boring. It's important to be open to what lights a fire in you- what excites you and grabs your attention. That's where the passion comes in. Find an exciting chapter in each day and you'll be consciously happier.

How do you look upon and define the role of a writer?

There are many different kinds of writers. There are writers who are purely artistic and expressive individuals. It is the hope that they find time and generate revenue to justify having that freedom which nurtures the creative mind. Business writers are often people with other jobs that are writing for the purpose of their business, using the writing medium as a creative outlet. Primarily, it's practical because it draws in potential clients. It is a creative way to express their expertise and philosophies. Once the creative hunger is lost, businesses go backwards.

2) Attacking query myths- the veritable mine field! Some writer resources say market research is necessary for fiction or non-fiction. Other resources go a step further to say that a knowledge of book sales (as accessible to the public) is professional while opponents of that opinion maintain that offering such is pretentious. The warring myths can be daunting for writers. In your personal opinion, please lend us your insider's view on the following topics:

DO's or DONT's of Query Letters

- comparing your novel/book to prominent existing works ('this is the next [insert best-seller here]')
- mentioning writing credentials that are in different mediums than the pitched work (journalistic, business credentials included for a fiction pitch or fiction credentials included for a non-fiction/business proposal)
- length (the religious one page rule)
- genre classification (specify whether it transcends one genre)
- self-published credentials (hurtful or helpful?)

Never put all your eggs in one basket or one method. With human beings there are no hard and fast rules- publishing is a human process. There are ratios of things to do and not do. Embrace and channel your creativity so that you discover a way that works for you. One of the biggest failings of query letters is negativity; don't convey frustration with the publication process or involve personal issues. Cater the letter to the person receiving it- go with their specific views on the factors above. Make your letter

attractive- make it “pretty” which means a clear typed letter neatly delivered on fine quality paper- it says that you took the extra care to make it personal and professional. Knowledge of your market and audience is important. Don’t be overly concerned with book sales and research which is largely inaccessible to the general public. As to self-publishing, you want to establish that you can write quality material that can be sold; display a savvy platform and mention various distribution channels. Each day is a new opportunity to succeed or fail. Go with your gut.

Which old time classics do you think would’ve been rejected had they been facing current literary market conditions and so forth?

There’s an interesting story I came across. An author who had won a Pulitzer for his work ten years before, conducted an experiment. He submitted the manuscript to the same publisher ten years later under a different author name and title. It was unceremoniously rejected with various comments why it wouldn’t work.

3) How do you determine questions for your incredibly in-depth resource for writers, *Jeff Herman’s Guide to Publishers, Editors and Literary Agents*?

We change the questions every year to gauge different personal aspects of the agents, their preferences, and their interests. Business has a human face- each agent is a separate entity and we want to get them thinking outside their agent box. That is what the questions are meant to do.

How do agents feel about the book which gives unprecedented glimpses of the business to the writers?

Agents are in fact the biggest fans of the book (aside from the writers). They are glad to display accurate and up to date information as well as giving a perspective of who they are and what they do so that submissions

are catered to their specific needs and wants. It saves both them and the writers a good deal of time and effort.

4) What do you like and dislike about your chosen career path ?

I love when everything is flowing: the idea-the concept- hardcopy- pitch-publishing contract- published book/fulfillment of practical tasks which I apply myself to.

It is frustrating when you believe in a project and it isn't getting published due to one obstacle or another. Yet all published authors were once rejected.

There is also a disappearance of independent publishing- micro publishers can come and go in 48 hours. Originally many publishing houses were mom and pop businesses with heart where it was more about passion than numbers. It seems now that everyone is answering to invisible masters, shareholders of corporations. Editors still have the passion but are sometimes constrained. Eighty-percent of conglomerates own book publishing which is only 1 or 2% of their bottom line.

5) What do you read to relax and rejuvenate?

My pleasure reading consists of The New York Times (skipping the harsh stories), magazines, The New Yorker, and non-fiction books.

Addressing the more spiritual side of writing and publishing, we had a chance to speak with Deborah Herman- the intuitive side of the Jeff Herman Agency.

In a recent speech, Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat, Pray, Love* discussed the origins of creativity and the weight writers bear when looking to expectations and managing their gifts. What are your feelings concerning

inspiration and the writer's spiritual/creative state? What are some of your perspectives on the publishing side and your role guiding writers through it?

I feel it is a blessing to work with writers, bringing concepts of spirituality to the public- tapping into higher consciousness (divine inner voice); all human beings have a piece of the divine. In my seven lessons on Soul Odyssey, the spiritual journey and the writers' journey are linked. There is the process of writing which is a spiritual one and then there is the publishing aspect.

My advice on the publishing side- present your premise in a grounded way. Don't begin your query letter by saying , 'God told me to write this...' Though there is truth to divine inspiration, keep the spiritual side to your personal process and well-being.

*There is day to day living upon spiritual paths. When writers become "God intoxicated" , they have to write their books, being filled with inspiration, truth and divine essence. Socrates said, "The more I know, the more I know nothing." Ego is separated from the process so that the creativity flows smoothly. We co-create, using our skills and gifts to communicate to each other. We say what we have to say and we say it in our voice. I love writers willing to do this and fully put themselves into their work. In order to be a true messenger (vibration to vibration) there are seven lessons to protect writers from negative self-talk that might impede their work. They are courage, tolerance, self-protection, self-love, ego (do you want to be the message or the messenger), love of humanity and God love- an enigmatic phrase addressing faith... and sacred trust. Writers have to **'chillax'** ! Relax and chill. Let go and let the process come naturally.*

*Here we would like to thank featured past and present authors for permitting us to interview them. It was an honor to be able to discuss the craft of writing with them.

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[Announcements](#)

[Interviews](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Poetry](#)

["Our Stories" non-fiction](#)

[Writers' Craft Box](#)

[Writers' Contest!](#)

[Book Reviews](#)

[Exploration of Theme](#)

[Archives](#)

[Submission Guidelines](#)

[Feedback & Questions](#)

Come in...and be captivated...



"And then there was..." by Jan Collins Selman; www.jancollinselman.com

In the midst of a wintry wonderland, we have the extraordinary good fortune of speaking with one of the most innovative minds in mythic fantasy literature. We see, through the course of the interview, how archetypes, psychology and primal symbolism affect our day to day modern lives and the way we think with the wisdom and whimsy of author and editor, Terri Windling.

During the course of Ms. Windling's odyssey, she helped establish the Ace Fantasy imprint in the early 1980s, worked as consulting editor for Putnam/Berkley and Tor, which continues to publish her series of "Fairy Tales" revamped versions of classic stories and "Borderlands" young adult anthologies and contributed to *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*. Her many anthologies include sixteen volumes of The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror with Ellen Datlow, and her fiction works which include the novel *The Wood Wife*, which received the Mythopoeic Award. Her art graces galleries and museums both domestically and internationally. Ms. Windling founded The Endicott Studio, an organization dedicated to charitable endeavors and the field of "mythic arts" which exists largely due to her innovative efforts. Windling has won nine World Fantasy Awards, the Bram Stoker Award, and her collection *The Armless Maiden* appeared on the short-list for the James Tiptree, Jr Award. As one of the founders of the urban fantasy genre, she has paved the way for many authors whose works blend and broaden the established genres making for groundbreaking literature. Ms. Windling sits on the board of the Mythic Imagination Institute and her essays and philosophies on myth, folklore, magical literature and art are instrumental in defining and preserving the ancient art of storytelling. We are "enchanted" to have her with us as we explore the realms of fantasy together.

1) In many interviews, the first question begins with the concept of origins; the origins of the individual, their craft, the birth of a business, etc... In this question, we will be exploring origins, but not those of the usual kind. Here we're discussing those symbolic truths that reflect human nature through allegory and archetypes- fairy tales. Carl Jung theorized that because the human mind is relatively young in comparison to the earth, that the subconscious hasn't evolved significantly enough to erase those primal memories of our earliest beginnings. Over the millennia, these memories and feelings morphed into symbols, myths, archetypes and folklore to explain our existence. The theory suggested that the birth of these tales that have over time become our rich heritage, have a basis in truth, keeping ancient mysteries of history alive through

storytelling. Another similar school of thought was described in E. L. Doctorow's *Reporting the Universe*:

"I have held to an idea ever since I heard it posited by one of my professors at Kenyon College in the Fifties- that there was an ancient time when no distinction was possible between fact and fiction, between religious perception and scientific discourse, between utilitarian communication and poetry-- when all these functions of language... were indivisible."

The idea compared this notion to a star where the points were the modern divisions of language and the core was the center that our minds, even when we now are seemingly ruled by facts and science, return to as they are inherently "structured for storytelling". In your incredibly in-depth study of folklore, myths and fairy tales, what is your opinion on the origins of fairy tales in a nature vs nurture context?

While my own approach to myth and folklore isn't a strictly Jungian one, I've found much of interest in Jung's ideas regarding the potency of mythic archetypes and the universality of certain story themes and patterns. Folklore scholars have long debated the origins of classic stories like "Cinderella" (for example), found in variant forms in cultures the world over: was the story born in a specific time and place and then disseminated around the globe, or is its theme so universal that similar stories emerged spontaneously in many places at once? As a creative artist rather than a scholar, I'm personally less concerned with determining a given tale's precise origins than with following its winding trail as it passes through the centuries. Looking at the ways "Cinderella" was re-told and re-shaped by storytellers of each successive generation tells us much about the belief systems and values of the cultures the tale passed through, which in turn gives us greater insight into our own.

I agree with the notion that the human mind is "structured for storytelling" -- and, likewise, for perceiving the world around us as a sequence of unfolding stories. We even live our lives as a kind of story, selecting and crafting our memories to give our past a plot structure, narrative cohesion, and some semblance of meaning -- and as we do, we're influenced, naturally, by all of the stories around us: by our favorite tales from childhood, by the well-known stories of our sacred texts, by the clamor of the stories churned out each day by

television, newspapers, the internet; by the stories that we – as a culture or country -- collectively agree to believe in. Advertising is based on selling us stories about who we are and what we need; history itself is a story told and re-told, constantly reassessed and revised. Stories not only reflect the way we see the world, they also help to shape the way we see the world – which was something understood by older societies in which the storyteller's role was a magical and sacred one.

In such societies, the line between “fact” and “fiction” was less rigidly defined than it is today, and less relevant to the point of telling stories. Joseph Campbell once wrote that we no longer know how to hear a myth or folk tale properly; we no longer understand these stories as our ancestors did -- for we've all but lost the knack for understanding the metaphoric language of myth. In modern culture, our thinking tends toward the reductive and literal, not the metaphoric and poetic. We read old tales about Coyote the Trickster, for example, and say: “Well that’s not true. Coyotes can’t walk in human shape, they can’t fling stars into the sky, they can’t have conversations with their own turds. It’s not literally true and therefore it’s ridiculous, meaningless, primitive, false.” But when we approach such stories metaphorically, poetically, we get to the very heart of truth, finding subtle teachings and sophisticated wisdom encoded in seemingly simple tales. Coyote tales tend to be funny, yes, but under their humorous or ribald surface they have very serious things to say about right and wrong and, most importantly, about that vast gray area between the two.

I think some of the problems we face today come from people reading stories – especially those in sacred texts – just too darn literally, missing the metaphors within. You can’t “prove” the truth of a myth or a sacred tale with reductive thinking or the scientific method. We need to learn to listen to stories properly again, and stop asking: “But is it literally true?” Literally? No, probably not. But metaphorically, symbolically, spiritually, such stories contain profound truths that speak directly to the soul. As metaphorical tales, they enlarge our capacity to wonder, to question, to think, to experience – whereas reading myths, folk tales, or sacred texts in a literal, reductive fashion tends to close our thinking down.

2) In a former interview, you introduce the theme of 'border crossing' between genres of writing and mediums of artistic expression. The figure of the Trickster figure, the Coyote, is described as "dashing from the wilderness world of magic to the human world... dancing on borders, ignoring the rules as many of our innovative artists do". What do you find are the most important aspects of crossing either self or society-imposed borders, distinctions and restrictions in the art field and upon the page? What do you think about the development of characters and archetypes that share traits, becoming not only villains and not only heroes, but vulnerable individuals inclined toward good or ill? You also spoke of the moment when "two worlds meet and energize each other".

I love the complexity of Trickster myths, for Trickster characters in their various incarnations (Coyote, Loki, Hermes, Anansi, Uncle Tompa, etc.) are neither wholly good nor wholly evil but an interesting mixture of the two; they are Culture Heroes one moment, World Destroyers the next, and equally sacred in both these guises. In real life, of course, people are never purely "good" or "bad," we are all exasperating mixtures of the two, and the Trickster archetype reminds us of the fallacy of simplistic, black-and-white thinking. Trickster tales show us what can happen when rules or beliefs or values are transgressed... and yet even this is rendered in shades of gray, turning our usual assumptions upside down, for some acts of destruction can turn out to be necessary and beneficial, while some acts of creation come only at a terrible price.

In his fascinating book Trickster Makes This World, Lewis Hyde makes the case for viewing the creative artist as a Trickster figure. The art-making process, at its most innovative, is an act of simultaneous destruction and creation: the artist tears down old ideas and orthodoxies in order to give birth to something new. Some of our most ground-breaking artists (Pablo Picasso, John Cage, and Allen Ginsberg are three of the examples he gives) have been complex, mischievous figures with "good" traits and "bad" in equal measure; they subvert the rules, create chaos and magic, and give Trickster a good run for his money.

As for me, I'm much too quiet a soul to embody the Trickster archetype myself, but I feel his presence hovering around my work whenever I'm at my most experimental...or simply trying to break out of some box or pigeon hole that I've been slotted into. When I first began working in Fantasy, for example, back in the 1980s, the genre was much more narrowly defined than it is today; and a writer or book editor (if she wanted to make a living) was expected to conform to its conventions and expectations. There were, of course, rule-breakers even then: Trickster figures like M. John Harrison or John Crowley whose sly, subversive books took readers well beyond the "fields they knew" -- luring them out into the strange and fertile space between established genres of fiction. Today, when the Fantasy field is a wide, diverse, and multi-faceted thing, it seems obvious, in retrospect, that Harrison, Crowley, Neil Gaiman, Charles de Lint and Susanna Clarke (to name just a few) were wise to develop their own unique styles rather than restrict themselves to writing about dragons, unicorns, or barbarian swordsmen...but first these writers (and many others like them) had to break down the barriers of what publishers and critics believed Fantasy to be. There's a bit of Trickster in every writer whose work confounds expectations and gives birth to something new.

In your personal life you moved both East and West, living out in a fairy tale setting of lush England and also a home in the serene desert lands of Arizona. How has that meeting of those two worlds enriched your work?

Both in folklore and in Fantasy one finds many tales that revolve around the act of crossing from one world into another, which is a theme I've always found fascinating. I had a rather unsettled childhood, crossing back-and-forth between two states (Pennsylvania and New Jersey) and two ways of life (working class and middle class) as I was bounced between various relatives, and I suppose that constant border-crossing shaped my psyche and my view of the world. I'm particularly fascinated by the ways we're shaped by our environments—not only our families and our communities, but by the very land under our feet—and how, in turn, this shapes our art, our stories, and our myths.

When I grew up, I was still most comfortable in motion, and I developed a rather migratory way of life: dividing my time between New York City and Boston when I was in my twenties, and then traveling between homes in Devon, England and Tucson, Arizona all through my thirties and forties. That's all changing now, however. I married an Englishman last year and suddenly find myself very settled down for the first in my life -- rooted by a house, a dog, a garden, a stepdaughter and extended family. It was the last thing I expected at this point in my life. My husband says he's curious to see how this change will be reflected in my art and stories.

3) From a passion to study folklore to the great achievements where you've "spun those coats made of words to the air" to set others free through the spirit of your work as in the reference to the healing tale of "The Wild Swans", you've forever changed the definitions of the mythic arts field and opened so many doors. What does it feel like to have reached the ultimate goal of any passion which is to effect far-reaching positive change? How did your dreams and concepts for the mythic arts field develop along your creative pilgrimage particularly for your notable influence and inventiveness in the establishing of the Ace Fantasy imprint as well as Tor?

I've always loved Fantasy fiction, but this love is part of a wider interest in all forms of non-realist writing -- from surrealism to magical realism -- and in all forms of art that are influenced by myth and folklore in some way. Some years ago, Charles de Lint and I coined the terms "mythic fiction" and "mythic arts" to describe this kind of work, because although one finds it in the Fantasy field it is also produced in other areas as well: in "mainstream" fiction by the likes of Angela Carter, A.S. Byatt, Gregory Maguire and Alice Hoffman; in "fine art" by the likes of Paula Rego, Lori Field, Fay Ku and Kiki Smith; in "children's fiction" by Donna Jo Napoli, Jane Yolen, Peter Dickinson... and so on. Although genre designations can be useful things, pointing readers and viewers to the specific types of work they seek, these designations can also create artistic ghettos with boundary walls so high that artists in different fields can't lean over them for a good conversation. It's been my goal, over the last thirty years, to dismantle some of these walls, brick by brick -- if not to tear them down entirely, then at least to make them lower and more easily crossed.

For example: In the annual Year's Best Fantasy & Horror volumes from St. Martin's Press (which I co-edited with Ellen Datlow for sixteen years) I had a venue for bringing many different kinds of stories and writers together, sourcing material from publications that ranged all the way from Realms of Fantasy and Weird Tales to The New Yorker and Paris Review, ending up with volumes in which stories by Ursula Le Guin and Gabriel Garcia Marquez could sit side by side. Likewise, the online Journal of Mythic Arts (which Midori Snyder and I co-edited for many years) featured mythic works by writers, artists and scholars from a wide variety of fields.

I realize that this no longer seems particularly radical... which is a satisfying change. There are many younger writers who work across genres now -- and who take it entirely for granted that there is an audience for such tales. I'd like to think I've helped bring this change about in some small way.

4) In terms of your phrase, "morally responsible fiction", applying to fiction that guides the young toward the comfort of finding like-minded individuals and cultivating their creative abilities, what is in your opinion, the needed curative qualities of fantasy literature where belief in surreal words and manifestation are possible? How can writers who work in such areas be mindful of these beneficial qualities and continue to best guide and comfort young generations?

As with myths and folk tales, a good Fantasy novel is literally spell-binding, using language to conjure up whole new worlds, or to invest our own with magic. The particular power of the Fantasy novel comes from its link with the world's most ancient stories -- and from the author's careful manipulation of mythic archetypes, story patterns, and symbols. A skillful writer of Fantasy knows he or she must tell two stories at once: the surface tale, and a deeper story encoded within the tale's symbolic language. Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone (for example) is, on one level, simply an English boarding school novel with a bit of magic thrown in; but below that surface is a classic narrative of the Orphaned Hero [link? <http://www.endicott-studio.com/rdrm/rrOrphans.html>] archetype. This second, metaphorical story is the one that makes the novel's appeal so universal, speaking to all children (orphaned or not) who navigate the treacherous passage that lies between childhood and adulthood. I don't mean that children's Fantasy should aim to be didactic, with a subtext intended to inculcate moral lessons -- heaven forbid. But the magical tropes of Fantasy, rooted as they are in world mythology, come freighted with meaning on a metaphoric level. A responsible writer

works with these symbols consciously and pays attention to both aspects of the story.

Jane Yolen once said, "Just as a child is born with a literal hole in his head, where the bones slowly close underneath the fragile shield of skin, so the child is born with a figurative hole in his heart. What slips in before it anneals shapes the man or woman into which that child will grow. Story is one of the most serious intruders into the heart." (The quote comes from Touch Magic: Fantasy, Faerie & Folklore in the Literature of Childhood.) I believe that those of us who write stories for children or young adults should remember how powerful stories can be -- and take responsibility for the moral tenor of whatever dreams or nightmares we're letting loose into the world. This is particularly true in Fantasy, where the tools of our trade include the language, symbolism and archetypal energies of myth. These are ancient, subtle, potent things, and they work in mysterious ways.

If you could say anything to a child undergoing a difficult passage who was an ardent fan of imaginative fiction and took solace in books, what would your guidance be to them?

I'd say: Don't despair, you're not alone, many of us turn to books for strength and solace -- including, very often, the people who write them. Stories, after all, have been used to heal and teach and inspire since storytelling began. You won't be in this dark wood forever, and when you emerge from the trees at last you'll be like the hero of an old folk tale, carrying treasures as precious as they are hard won: wisdom, strength, courage, compassion . . . and a story to tell.

5) Please discuss with us the Endicott Studio- how it came about, the philosophy of the Mythic Imagination Institute, the Journal of Mythic Arts and its subsequent effects, charitable endeavors...

The Endicott Studio for Mythic Arts is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the support of literary, visual and performance arts inspired by myth, folklore, and fairy tales. I started the studio on Endicott Street in Boston in 1987, and it moved to offices in Tucson, Arizona and Devon, England in 1990. For the last five years, I've co-directed the organization with Midori Snyder, who is based in Tucson. The writers and artists who contribute to Endicott projects are located all over the U.S. and the U.K., as well as in several other countries.

The studio has sponsored a variety of mythic projects, events, art exhibitions and publications over the last 22 years -- while at the same time raising money for charities assisting homeless, abused, and at-risk children. Our award-winning webzine, The Journal of Mythic Arts, appeared online from 1997 to 2008, promoting contemporary mythic arts and providing resources and information for mythic artists, students, and scholars. Publication of JoMA ended with the Summer 2008 issue in order to free us up for new endeavors, but we continue to maintain 10+ years of JoMA material online, keeping this mythic information freely available to readers both new and old.

We have a new online project in the works, which will debut in the Spring of 2010. It's a collaborative venture created with talented folk behind the Goblin Fruit webzine...but more than that I can't reveal! Watch out for it in early April.

6) The longevity of creative genres: What are your future projections for mythic arts, fantasy, folk lore and fairy tales? What are the timeless aspects that will continue to guide and have appeal through the ages?

Oh, I'd love to have a crystal ball that could tell us what the future of Fantasy and mythic arts will be -- and I'm sure every publisher in New York City and London would like one too! It's hard to even make an educated guess, for technology is changing so rapidly and the state of book publishing itself is in great upheaval. Art forms that play an important role today -- web-based magazines and blogs -- didn't even exist when I was starting out. Heck, the whole Internet didn't yet exist. Things are changing too fast these days for an old-school book editor like me to make an accurate prediction.

But I think it's safe to say that art rooted in myth and folklore will continue to be with us, in some form, because it's always been with us. Each generation re-fashions the old tales anew, and creates the new ones that it most needs.

7) Can you share with us some of the fascinating historical aspects of the works of Anderson, and the purpose of the conte de fées told in the French salons more

for the purposes of adults to comment satirically or symbolically on the time...

Today most people think of fairy tales as sugar-sweet, simplistic stories in which beautiful little girls grow up to marry their rich Prince Charmings. This view of fairy tales is largely due to the pervasiveness of Disney films, which transformed dark and complex stories into “wholesome” family entertainment. Those of use who grew up on pre-Disney versions of the stories remember fairy tales rather differently, however. There were no singing bluebirds and dancing dwarves. Happy endings were never guaranteed. These were tales in which magics both dark and bright were woven ineluctably together -- stories that were wondrous and enchanting, but also terrifying. Yes, there were girls who became princesses and boys who won treasure-houses full of gold, but there were also murderous mothers, lecherous fathers, treacherous siblings and cannibal in-laws. There were castles in which the heads of previous wives were artfully displayed in secret chambers; where delicious stews were made from the hearts and tongues of unwanted children; where dainty red shoes forced girls to dance until skin was flayed from bone. The old tales contained both wonders and horrors; and heroes and heroines of all stripes: courageous and foolish, reluctant and determined, insouciant and desperate.

*The idea that fairy tales are for Children Only is a relatively modern one. In the oral tradition, such tales were told to audiences young and old alike, and the earliest print editions of fairy tales were published for adult readers. In Europe, the earliest known fairy tales collections come from 15th and 16th century Italy (Giovan Francesco Straparola's *The Delectable Nights* and Giambattista Basile's *The Tale of Tales*); these stories were sensual, bawdy, unflinchingly violent, and morally complex. In the tale of *Sleeping Beauty*, for instance, the princess is awakened not by a chaste kiss, but by the birth of twins after the prince has come, fornicated with her sleeping body, and left again. In older versions of *Snow White's* tale, a passing prince claims the girl's dead body and locks himself away with it, pronouncing himself in love with his beautiful “doll,” who he intends to wed. His mother, complaining of the dead girl's smell, is greatly relieved when *Snow White* returns to life. In older versions of the *Bluebeard* narrative, the heroine does not sit trembling while waiting for her brothers to rescue her – she outwits her captor, kills him, and restores the lives of*

her murdered predecessors. Cinderella doesn't sit weeping in the cinders while talking bluebirds flutter around her; she is a clever, angry, feisty girl who seeks her own salvation – with the help of advice from her dead mother's ghost, not the twinkle of fairy magic.

At the end of the 17th century, a vogue for adult fairy tales swept through the literary salons of Paris and caused a publishing sensation. Charles Perrault is the salon writer whose works are best known to us today, but there were numerous other popular fairy tale writers, the majority of them women. Though barred from formal education because of their sex, the women of the fairy tale salons were widely-read, intelligent, and enjoyed an unusual degree of social independence. Today their tales can seem quaintly old-fashioned, dripping with too many pearls and jewels, but to 17th century audiences the rich rococo language of the tales was deliciously subversive – in deliberate contrast with the mannered restraint of works approved by the all-male bastion of the French Academy. The rococo language of the fairy tales also served another important function – disguising the stories' sly subtext in order to slide them past the Sun King's censors. Critiques of court life, and even of the king, were embedded in flowery utopian tales and in dark, sharply dystopian ones. Not surprisingly, French fairy tales by women authors often featured young (but clever!) aristocratic girls whose lives were controlled by the arbitrary whims of fathers, kings, and elderly wicked fairies – as well as tales in which groups of wise fairies stepped in and put all to rights. Fairies were central to these stories, and it was here that the name contes des fées (fairy tales) was coined – a term now used to describe a large, international body of magical stories.

Readers who'd like to know more about the salon tales might be interested in the following article, from the archives of the Journal of Mythic Arts: [“Les Conte de Fées: The Literary Fairy Tales of France”](http://www.endicott-studio.com/rdrm/forconte.html) [<http://www.endicott-studio.com/rdrm/forconte.html>].

As for Hans Christian Andersen, he was a fascinating, troubling, complex

man – and his fairy tales reflect it. He's probably the most autobiographical of fairy tale writers, in a twisty kind of way, creating tales that reflected the pains and slights and heartbreaks of his own life. Again, it's easiest to refer interested readers to an online article found in the JoMA archives: "Hans Christian Andersen: Father of the Modern Fairy Tale" [http://www.endicott-studio.com/jMA03Summer/hans.html].

8) In the spirit of creativity, if there was one particular fantasy element from a myth or fairy tale of your choosing that could be made real to help the world in some way today, what would it be?

There are a number of tales world-wide in which animals and human beings once had the power to understand each other's speech... and then lost the ability, for one reason or another. I'd like to get those powers back. We have a great deal to learn from the other creatures with whom we share our world... though I reckon they're likely to have a few hard things to say about our stewardship of the planet.

Melding the human aspect of business with the art of writing and promotion, we get an insider's look at the literary market from Jeff Herman of The Jeff Herman Agency. His revolutionary writers' resource, *The Jeff Herman Guide to Book Publishers, Editors, and Literary Agents* as well his illuminating, *Write the Perfect Book Proposal: 10 Proposals That Sold and Why!* change the way that writers perceive the business aspect of their creative profession. Herman is the co-founder of his own indie house, Three Dog Press and travels across the nation to talk about all aspects of publishing and having a successful, well-managed career as an author. Written about in periodicals such as *Success*, *Entrepreneur*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Forbes*, *Associated Press*, and *The New Yorker*, he lends his philosophies to the public and puts an innovative twist on the industry. We also get a spiritual perspective on the writers' process from Deborah Levine Herman, fellow agent and co-founder of Three Dog Press.

1) Your natural evolution from publicist, working in PR and marketing arenas to becoming an agent: what brought about this career move adding

needed skill sets that you possessed to your creative mindset to create a unique brand of agenting?

It was a fire in my belly rather than a conscious thought. I desired more freedom and followed my inclinations by the passion I felt for the endeavor rather than seeing it only on an intellectual level. It was a process in my twenties that I could accomplish free of fear and constraints, bypassing the limitations of what those feelings can create. Instead of reading books on business plans or overwhelming myself with research on the field, I felt uninhibited, learning through experience in a hands-on environment. There is no advice that can be offered which will tell someone ahead of time all the variables and unseen disadvantages of such a venture.

It was a pathology. I did PR working for agencies, publishers, and authors of business books and promotion. I was essentially pitching a story to the media. Realizing that I enjoyed this more, I separated from PR and went into business for myself in 1987, representing authors. I came across a book in Barnes and Noble- How to Negotiate a Book Contract and it was reverse engineered to make it more geared toward the writer's interests. It was the exact book that I needed at the exact moment that I needed it. I transitioned and brought innovative marketing strategies with me.

How is the role of an agent maintained day to day (without becoming jaded to one degree or another)?

It is a daily challenge. Sometimes it's easy to go into auto-pilot by the knowledge gained through past experiences and the core skill sets acquired over time and knowing that if certain things worked once, then the probability is that they'll work again. Yet staying in set patterns can become rigid and boring. It's important to be open to what lights a fire in you- what excites you and grabs your attention. That's where the passion comes in. Find an exciting chapter in each day and you'll be consciously happier.

How do you look upon and define the role of a writer?

There are many different kinds of writers. There are writers who are purely artistic and expressive individuals. It is the hope that they find time and generate revenue to justify having that freedom which nurtures the creative mind. Business writers are often people with other jobs that are writing for the purpose of their business, using the writing medium as a creative outlet. Primarily, it's practical because it draws in potential clients. It is a creative way to express their expertise and philosophies. Once the creative hunger is lost, businesses go backwards.

2) Attacking query myths- the veritable mine field! Some writer resources say market research is necessary for fiction or non-fiction. Other resources go a step further to say that a knowledge of book sales (as accessible to the public) is professional while opponents of that opinion maintain that offering such is pretentious. The warring myths can be daunting for writers. In your personal opinion, please lend us your insider's view on the following topics:

DO's or DONT's of Query Letters

- comparing your novel/book to prominent existing works ('this is the next [insert best-seller here]')
- mentioning writing credentials that are in different mediums than the pitched work (journalistic, business credentials included for a fiction pitch or fiction credentials included for a non-fiction/business proposal)
- length (the religious one page rule)
- genre classification (specify whether it transcends one genre)
- self-published credentials (hurtful or helpful?)

Never put all your eggs in one basket or one method. With human beings there are no hard and fast rules- publishing is a human process. There are ratios of things to do and not do. Embrace and channel your creativity so that you discover a way that works for you. One of the biggest failings of query letters is negativity; don't convey frustration with the publication process or involve personal issues. Cater the letter to the person receiving it- go with their specific views on the factors above. Make your letter

attractive- make it “pretty” which means a clear typed letter neatly delivered on fine quality paper- it says that you took the extra care to make it personal and professional. Knowledge of your market and audience is important. Don’t be overly concerned with book sales and research which is largely inaccessible to the general public. As to self-publishing, you want to establish that you can write quality material that can be sold; display a savvy platform and mention various distribution channels. Each day is a new opportunity to succeed or fail. Go with your gut.

Which old time classics do you think would’ve been rejected had they been facing current literary market conditions and so forth?

There’s an interesting story I came across. An author who had won a Pulitzer for his work ten years before, conducted an experiment. He submitted the manuscript to the same publisher ten years later under a different author name and title. It was unceremoniously rejected with various comments why it wouldn’t work.

3) How do you determine questions for your incredibly in-depth resource for writers, *Jeff Herman’s Guide to Publishers, Editors and Literary Agents*?

We change the questions every year to gauge different personal aspects of the agents, their preferences, and their interests. Business has a human face- each agent is a separate entity and we want to get them thinking outside their agent box. That is what the questions are meant to do.

How do agents feel about the book which gives unprecedented glimpses of the business to the writers?

Agents are in fact the biggest fans of the book (aside from the writers). They are glad to display accurate and up to date information as well as giving a perspective of who they are and what they do so that submissions

are catered to their specific needs and wants. It saves both them and the writers a good deal of time and effort.

4) What do you like and dislike about your chosen career path ?

I love when everything is flowing: the idea-the concept- hardcopy- pitch-publishing contract- published book/fulfillment of practical tasks which I apply myself to.

It is frustrating when you believe in a project and it isn't getting published due to one obstacle or another. Yet all published authors were once rejected.

There is also a disappearance of independent publishing- micro publishers can come and go in 48 hours. Originally many publishing houses were mom and pop businesses with heart where it was more about passion than numbers. It seems now that everyone is answering to invisible masters, shareholders of corporations. Editors still have the passion but are sometimes constrained. Eighty-percent of conglomerates own book publishing which is only 1 or 2% of their bottom line.

5) What do you read to relax and rejuvenate?

My pleasure reading consists of The New York Times (skipping the harsh stories), magazines, The New Yorker, and non-fiction books.

Addressing the more spiritual side of writing and publishing, we had a chance to speak with Deborah Herman- the intuitive side of the Jeff Herman Agency.

In a recent speech, Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat, Pray, Love* discussed the origins of creativity and the weight writers bear when looking to expectations and managing their gifts. What are your feelings concerning

inspiration and the writer's spiritual/creative state? What are some of your perspectives on the publishing side and your role guiding writers through it?

I feel it is a blessing to work with writers, bringing concepts of spirituality to the public- tapping into higher consciousness (divine inner voice); all human beings have a piece of the divine. In my seven lessons on Soul Odyssey, the spiritual journey and the writers' journey are linked. There is the process of writing which is a spiritual one and then there is the publishing aspect.

My advice on the publishing side- present your premise in a grounded way. Don't begin your query letter by saying , 'God told me to write this...' Though there is truth to divine inspiration, keep the spiritual side to your personal process and well-being.

*There is day to day living upon spiritual paths. When writers become "God intoxicated" , they have to write their books, being filled with inspiration, truth and divine essence. Socrates said, "The more I know, the more I know nothing." Ego is separated from the process so that the creativity flows smoothly. We co-create, using our skills and gifts to communicate to each other. We say what we have to say and we say it in our voice. I love writers willing to do this and fully put themselves into their work. In order to be a true messenger (vibration to vibration) there are seven lessons to protect writers from negative self-talk that might impede their work. They are courage, tolerance, self-protection, self-love, ego (do you want to be the message or the messenger), love of humanity and God love- an enigmatic phrase addressing faith... and sacred trust. Writers have to **'chillax'** ! Relax and chill. Let go and let the process come naturally.*

*Here we would like to thank featured past and present authors for permitting us to interview them. It was an honor to be able to discuss the craft of writing with them.

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