

Professional Editors' Group Conference, Franschhoek

13 and 14 May 2010

Of interest to the publishing industry in South Africa – and particularly to publishers and current and potential editors of fiction and narrative non-fiction – is the forthcoming conference on

'Editing works of fiction and narrative non-fiction'

being held in Franschhoek in May 2010 to coincide with the Franschhoek Literary Festival.

Ironically, the healthy state of South African publishing has led to the realisation that capable editors in the areas of fiction and narrative non-fiction are in short supply in the country. Little has been done recently to encourage or enable experienced editors who have worked in other areas of the industry to enter these areas of publishing; or to develop the skills of new editors on a sustainable basis in these genres. Gone are the days of solid in-house training under the guidance of seasoned colleagues; and, with very few exceptions, editors are now expected to be 'naturally talented' at the job and/or to conduct their own training.

The resultant serious lack of competent editorial expertise in these genres was highlighted during a panel discussion held at the 2009 Cape Town Book Fair – one of several triggers that inspired the Professional Editors' Group (PEG) to take the lead in addressing, in a practical way, both the shortage of editors in these genres and the difficulty editors have in gaining entry to the world of fiction and narrative non-fiction editing. PEG is a national association of copy-editors, subeditors, proofreaders and allied language practitioners, and is now in its 16th year of existence. The conference it is hosting will certainly be of interest to publishers of the two genres, to their editorial and commissioning staff, to freelancers with a yen to move into new editing realms, and to authors wishing to interrogate and reflect on the nature of the editorial process.

Some of the fundamental questions to which this conference will be seeking answers are:

- How do language practitioners enter the world of fiction and narrative non-fiction editing? What distinct approaches and skills are needed?
- What are some of the typical challenges and pitfalls of editing in specific genres such as child and adult fiction, and also narrative non-fiction?
- How do editors nurture positive, creative relationships with authors despite their interventions.

Overview of the conference programme

The conference will be combining presentations and panel discussions with hands-on workshops by acknowledged experts and seasoned practitioners in the field. The wealth of topics to be covered includes:

- Do you have what it takes? Publishers' views on what is required of editors in the two genres.
- An in-depth exploration of the author–editor(–publisher) relationship and tasks, in parallel sessions dealing with literature in Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa
- Book reviewers' views on the quality of editing in locally published literature
- Romantic novels (a growing sector presenting new opportunities)
- The conventions of narrative non-fiction
- Afrikaans fiction for young children.

Adding lustre to the proceedings will be a *display of book illustrators' work*, giving illustrators exposure to conference-goers and to visitors to the Franschhoek Literary Festival.

Keynote speakers, presenters and facilitators

Two prominent South African writers will be presenting keynote addresses at the conference, based on their experiences of working with copy-editors. They are *Sindiwe Magona* (author of ***Beauty's Gift***) and *Mandla Langa* (winner of the Africa section of the Commonwealth Writer's Prize in 2009, with ***The Lost Colours of the Chameleon***). Other presenters include:

- *Dr Helen Moffett*, a specialist training consultant, author and editor who will run the workshop for editors of English titles, while author and editor *Izak de Vries* will be responsible for the workshop on editing Afrikaans fiction. *Sindiwe Magona* will be spearheading the editing workshop aimed at editors and authors of isiXhosa titles.
- *Nelleke de Jager* of Kwela Books' new Sapphire Press imprint and *Moky Makura* of Nollybooks will open up the world of romance writing for the African market.

- *Editor Maire Fisher* and her author, *Tracy Farren*, will share their progress through a chapter from Tracy's book, ***Whiplash***). First-time published author, *Sharon Sorour-Morris* (Something on My Mind) and her editor, *Lynda Gilfillan*, and *Martha Evans* and her award-winning author, *Andrew Brown* (winner of the 2006 Sunday Times Fiction Prize for Coldsleep Lullaby), will talk to delegates about their fruitful collaborations.
- Seasoned editors such as *Danie Botha*, *Etienne Bloemhof*, *Elsa Silke*, *Louise Steyn* and *Nicola Rijsdijk* will share their expertise as Afrikaans editors with conference-goers.
- *Carina Diedericks-Hugo* will share her experiences and expertise in the genre of Afrikaans children's literature.
- *Ivan Vladislavic* will chat about what he's learnt from intervening in texts while they are still work in progress.
- *Arja Salafranca* and a team of panellists are going to be sharing their thoughts about narrative/creative non-fiction.
- *Elsibe Loubser-McGuffog* and *Liliane Top* will run a 'Creative Express Mini-bar', a creative writing session for would-be writers and editors.
- Panels of publishers and reviewers will share their views on the state of fiction/non-fiction editing in South Africa, and what it takes to be an accomplished editor of fiction and narrative non-fiction.

Conference venue and times

Where: Theatre complex at Bridge House School, set in idyllic surroundings in the Franschhoek valley, on the Paarl side of the town.

When: The first day's programme (Thursday, 13 May) runs from 09h00 to 17h00, the second day's programme (Friday, 14 May) from 10h30 to 17h15.

Programme: A full conference programme will be issued by early April.

Fees: R1 200,00 (with an early bird discount of 10% until 16 April).

Paid-up PEG members R900,00 (with an early-bird discount of 10% until 16 April).

Bona fide students R400,00 (no further discount available).

Extending your stay in Franschhoek: Why not plan to stay and indulge yourself in the feast of literary discourse at the Franschhoek Literary Festival itself, during the weekend following the conference? Should you want to stay in Franschhoek itself to make the most of both experiences, approach the Franschhoek Wine Valley and Tourist Association for suggestions regarding accommodation (www.Franschhoek.org.za).

Information: For information about the conference visit www.editors.org.za or [Facebook](#); to register, email the conference administrator at ellynbarry@telkomsa.net.