

Late copywriter's book *The Hidden Star* now available in isiXhosa

Copywriter and novelist K. Sello Duiker's well-known book *The Hidden Star* is now available in isiXhosa.



K. Sello Duiker died in 2005. Source: Supplied.

Dr Xolisa Guzula, who translated the book, describes it as a form of repatriation. "Writing in English is both a choice and at most times the only option for black authors because of the poor publishing of writing in African languages," she says.

Transformative project

For Guzula, this means bringing back what should have been written in African languages in the first place.

She credits the idea of translating the book to Carole Bloch and Arabella Koopman, both from the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa, PRAESA. As part of the Culture of Reading Project, books were created for isiXhosa readers via translation since publishers were still hesitant about publishing original literature. Added to that, original writing of isiXhosa children's literature was still in its infancy and there was a shortage of isiXhosa reading books. While the translation of *The Hidden Star* is the continuation of that work, it also focuses on translating a black South African author.



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“I see this not only as a transformative project, but also the development we have been wishing to see growth of South African black authors writing for children in any language.”

Duiker’s use of folklore really excites Guzula: “The folklore which Duiker weaves into the book is an example of presenting African stories in one book in a contemporary format detailing urban life in a shanty town in Soweto. Even so, as a translator, it was easy for me to predict what is going to happen next in certain parts of the book because I could recognise the rich folklore of African stories told to me as a child.”

Promising career

At the time of his untimely death in January 2005, K. Sello Duiker had published various short stories and two novels: *thirteen cents*, which was awarded the Commonwealth Prize for a first novel (Africa Region), and *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*, which won the Herman Charles Bosman Prize for English Literature.

For many aspiring South African writers, he served as a role model, someone who fearlessly tackled unconventional themes and explored new terrain. For an older generation of writers his work epitomised the best of post-1994 South African black writing.

He spent a large part of his childhood in Soweto, where he was born on 13 April 1974. Further education followed in England when his father took up a position with an international company. After obtaining a degree in journalism at Rhodes University, he worked as a copywriter

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