## Black journalists embracing SA's Culture of celebrating is normance

Not Yet Born, which Beautyful Ones Are when he wrote The nied by readiness Kwei Armah did AT THE heart of Steve Biko's politiblack self-critique. always be accompasupremacy critique of white cal philosophy is that a sustained a sustained is what Ayi



XOLELA

than journalists. sionals more sensi-

hanging Africa's dirty linen in public. rulers and writers because he was made him unpopular among Africa's that we would rather not talk about. fairly commonplace double standard out criticism on a daily basis. It is a even as they dish They take everypersonally

It was prophetic, as country after

and still be proud of it." know where people can be ignorant noted: "SA is about the only country I elsewhere than in his home country, African intellectual known better Human Sciences Research Council Keorapetse Kgositsile, the great South (HSRC) public lecture last week, Speaking shortly after Armah's

dinner for Armah at Cape Town's Jordan echoed the sentiment at a Arts and Culture Minister Pallo

itself, I use it to provoke society to is I'm actually not in love with writing think about things they would rather

writing powerful: "You see, the secret Armah let me in on what makes his Wole Soyinka and Ngugi wa Thiong'o. canonical figures: Chinua Achebe, weight of corrupt leaders. It secured country stumbled under the dead his place among African literature's

As we drove around SA recently,

palatable questions to raise some un-Now it is my turn Centre for the Book. "The fact that there have been no ripples in the about our continent." shows the extent of our ignorance media about Ayi Kwei Armah's visit

not think about."

questions being fuly aware that there is nalism. I raise the Pretoria, later dropped the story from her news staff to interview Armah in Corporation (SABC), who, having sent Renelle van Zyl, English news editor at I can perhaps understand why African Broadcasting

no group of profes-

running the story on the weekend was not an option. This was not an bulletin because of the cricket. Even it up with whoever. important story, and I was free to take Van Zyl told me she had a short

across the continent. broadcasting a piece to 44 countries countries, and Carte Blanche will be broadcasting the visit to other All the while SABC Africa was

single black journalist has written a people for not valuing African history story about Armah culture. I still cannot believe that not a and madequacies of black journalistic and not looking at vanities, inanities Here I go again blaming white

> the next Oscar or next cricket game. journalistic culture. It is a culture that mere appendage of the broader white ity of black journalistic culture as a hrives on thrills such as who will win If anything, this reflects the banal-

no place in the vulgar competition for of a vibrant intellectual culture have headlines and ratings. Culture, history and development

know so little and put such little value very people who run our newspapers shall hold up that mirror when the on that history, especially as it is carto itself, a mirror to society. But who great newspaper is a nation speaking playwright, Arthur Miller, who said a It was the great novelist and

were the greatest writers of the 1950s, Alf Khumalo for his opinion on who and without blinking an eye he said "Es'kia Mphahlele and Can Themba." ried through the vehicle of literature? I once asked veteran photographer

being nostalgic about an African and women of letters, or am I merely of letters. Would it not be nice if black editors and journalists were also men As it turns out, they were both men

> counsels patience. people do not read anymore. Armah thing. Perhaps we live in an age when Perhaps this is a generational

children, then you would not have to Armah says. It would happen naturally to them,' be the least bothered by the lack of attention. "You must educate the worry about convincing other people. past three decades, Armah could not Having lived in seclusion for the

serious that people have to protect change when conditions become so themselves from banality. But who will educate the children? He reassures me that things will

course, be required reading for such a of Armah's canon. renaissance. And so would be the rest Ones Are Not Yet Born, would, of we turn to our literature and our history. Armah's book, The Beautyful Perhaps then, and only then, will

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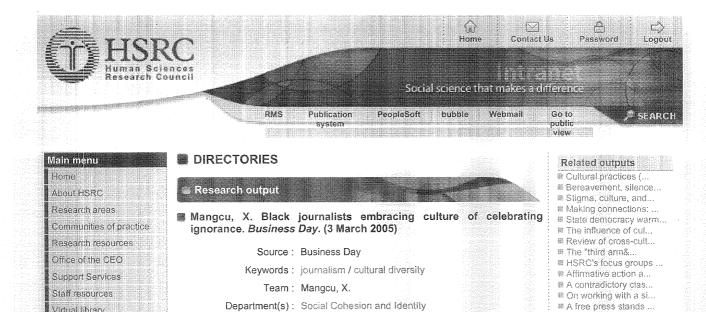
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