

Odious Terre'Blanche is a cartoonist's dream

EUGENE Terre'Blanche is a cartoonist's dream. Not only is he physically easy to caricature but the things that made him infamous were richly satiric.

But for the fact that he is so odious, and at one stage plainly threatening to this country's future stability, he is a delightful character. Very few will forget his shenanigans with one Jani Allan and the story about his colourful tattered underpants. How many can forget his extraordinary antics, like falling off his horse; and the height of tragi-comedy was the attempt by his organisation to stage a military coup in Bophuthatswana.

I am in the process of sampling books written by Afrikaners which are superb artistically but deeply unhappy and as tragic as Terre'Blanche.

I read JM Coetzee's book, *Disgrace*, some time ago and while its

artistry is good enough to win the Booker Prize, its substance is that of a typically disgruntled Afrikaner.

The story of the fading grey university lecturer sleeping with his student and satisfying an unusual – for his age – sexual appetite is thoroughly convincing.

It is the end of *Disgrace* that gives me serious problems. In sum the story of black men raping a white woman, who accepts this serious abuse as something like a badge of courage, is in my view quite offensive.

At the political level it depicts a white male fear about black male sexual potency and the black males' inability to deal with power.

It is also a gloomy and most unhappy book that makes me think this is the self revelation of an author who is extremely good, completely unapproachable, taciturn, grave and

totally cynical.

The other book I am in the process of struggling through is by Andre Brink, called *Devil's Valley*. This appears to be a parody of places like Orania – an all white colony of white misfits who indulge in the most extraordinary acts of banality and sexual perversity.

If Professor Coetzee is gloomy, the darkness in Brink's story is suffocating.

It is not a happy book at all, and one enjoys it because the author is a good writer. But I find all the four-letter words throughout the book totally unacceptable. I try to imagine, unsuccessfully, their artistic impact.

How I yearn for the wonderful freedom in Herman Charles Bosman!

In my father's day the talk about Western civilisation was linked to all the good things in our societies. Our



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parents believed to be Christian and "civilised" in the Western way was so progressive that they ditched their roots and tried to be like whites.

Black civilisation is not vindictive. There is very little bitterness against the likes of Eugene Terre'Blanche. But Eugene going to prison avenges and vindicates many helpless victims.

My dad thought there would be peace in South Africa if blacks behaved like whites. He died disillusioned by the ways of white people in the early 1970s.

Today we know there is no civilisation that is superior to another. Cir-

cumstances make people act in noble or ignoble ways. The Nazis who came from the very seat of Western civilisation did things that were worse than Idi Amin and the worst African dictators.

Finally, we did not wish to revenge ourselves against people like Terre'Blanche, since we have "Ubuntu", which is better than many things in Western civilisation.

I am not saying we are angels because those who "necklace" their kith and kin are just as dreadful as Terre'Blanche.

I am saying that by and large we have the largeness of spirit that is able to forgive the worst.