

The Star ****

1st Article:

Marlene van Niekerk's book *Triomf* may not have been Michael Raeburn's personal story, but he leapt at the chance to film it, because it deals with his favourite topic, people on the edge.

"People on the edge of madness, isolated and feeling 'them versus us'.

"People in extreme poverty create extreme emotions and the characters in the book are strong. In the film that's who they are and that's what happens," said Raeburn.

While the story and characters are very South African it also has a very universal appeal through the concept of minority, insulated communities looking inward when they feel threatened.

The Zimbabwean-born filmmaker has been faced with the criticism that he shouldn't show South Africans like this - at their incestuous, violent and nasty best, just like they are in the book. A similar criticism faced by Gavin Hood when he did *Tsotsi*, because some people felt he was portraying black people in a very bad light and that it was wrong to do so. Raeburn puts it down to insecurity and ignores it.

2nd Article:

"Shocking and cruel, the tragi-comedy *Triomf* is not for the faint-hearted. It is a brutally honest look at that unfortunate South African phenomenon of *skurwe hakke*, railway whites who lurk on the edges of society, reminding us that ethnic supremacy is a fallacy of epic proportion.

The destructive power of lies and secrets and the evils of marginalising a people along ethnic or economic lines are thrown into stark relief as director Raeburn shows what happens when poverty and a lack of education merge with a sense of entitlement in a community which feels mightily put-upon.

The existential dread and ever-growing tension is leavened somewhat by some surreal comedy - especially when the family takes a trip to the local Spur, completely with windmill-miming waitron and Irish coffees all round.

... Lionel Newton is anger inchoate as the obstreperous Treppie who sets up his violent, fit-prone nephew Lambert (Van Jaarsveldt) with prostitute Cleo (Andrews in a surprisingly understated performance) as a 21st birthday present. Parents, oomph-less pensioner Pop (Luckhoff) and emotionally spent Mol (Cooke), can only look on as events conspire to spill old family secrets.

[Theresa Smith, The Star](#)