



## A movie review by Mike Nichols – July 2011

Racial conflicts, prejudices and the scars of war come under examination in **Tracker** [2010]. Set in 1903, Tracker is a tense hunt/chase story in which Arjan [Ray Winstone], a guerrilla survivor of the South African Boer War, comes to colonial New Zealand apparently to “get away” from loss of his family at the hands of the British. While in New Zealand he encounters some of the British officers and soldiers he fought against in South Africa. Because Arjan is a renowned tracker, one of the British officers, possibly out of a guilty conscience for atrocities in the Boer war, promises Arjan a huge bounty to capture Kereama [Temuera Morrison], a Maori seafarer accused of killing a British soldier. Kereama’s father and grandfather were hung by the British mostly for just being Maori. Master tracker Arjan and “gifted-in-the-bush” Kereama have a mutual hatred of the British. During an on-the-edge game of cat and mouse with repeated escapes and apprehensions they find that they have more in common than hatred for

the British. Not only do they quote the Bible to the other for different reasons but they gradually tell their stories of personal loss and develop a respect for each other. Both men are in their own way seeking forgiveness for the not being able to save their families in the midst of war and racial “cleansing”. How this quest for forgiveness plays out is what make the movie worth watching. The new Zealand scenery is spectacular but it is the high risk showdown at the end of the movie that shows how forgiveness is much more real [and costly] than just a inward personal/spiritual experience. There are not many movies from 2010/11 beyond True Grit that I’ve found worth watching or discussing, but this one certainly is.