

DEEPER THAN COLOUR

by James Clelland
(Jacana, R145)

WHAT is the difference between arrogance and self-awareness? Would you say the two reflect on each other as confidence does on perceived truth?

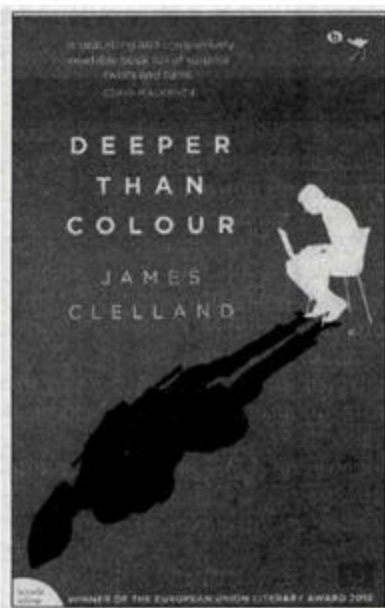
In the end, what you absorb, and convey, is subject to interpretation that is intensely personal, based on how you feel and think.

So the question develops: is it possible to find common ground of understanding with someone, minus personal prejudice?

For this complex question, Clelland delivers a seemingly simple, but powerful, answer in *Deeper than colour*.

Because he is a local author, I made the mistake of taking the title literally, thinking the book would be about race, apartheid or something related to that.

I was surprised to find that race lies on the surface of this very



deep story, or conquest rather, that uncovers the nature of troubled Angus Smith.

A middle-aged, married and significantly bored man, Angus is thoroughly fed up with life.

He is tired of the degradation of common sense that besets the world with conflicts. He is tired of the indifference shown to him by his spouse of over 10 years.

The images of scenes seen on borders of African countries while fighting a war he did not support will not fade from his mind.

He is tired of his past not wanting to stay behind him. Most of all, he is tired of being tired.

In a spontaneous, and maybe desperate, effort to find value in existence, Angus buys a batch of expensive video equipment and begins filming every second of his life. In the book, various people who are close to Angus, his wife included, speak to a psychiatrist (talking directly to the reader) about what makes Angus such a grouch.

An equal and slightly opposing perspective is presented as the reader is enlightened by Angus' thoughts and the process of watching him watching himself, watching himself watching him.

Clelland, through Angus's story, breaks down to bits the answer to the question of finding common ground which hits the targeted conceptual bull's eye, proving that there is much more to a person than what is seen on the outside. – **Tshepo Tshabalala**