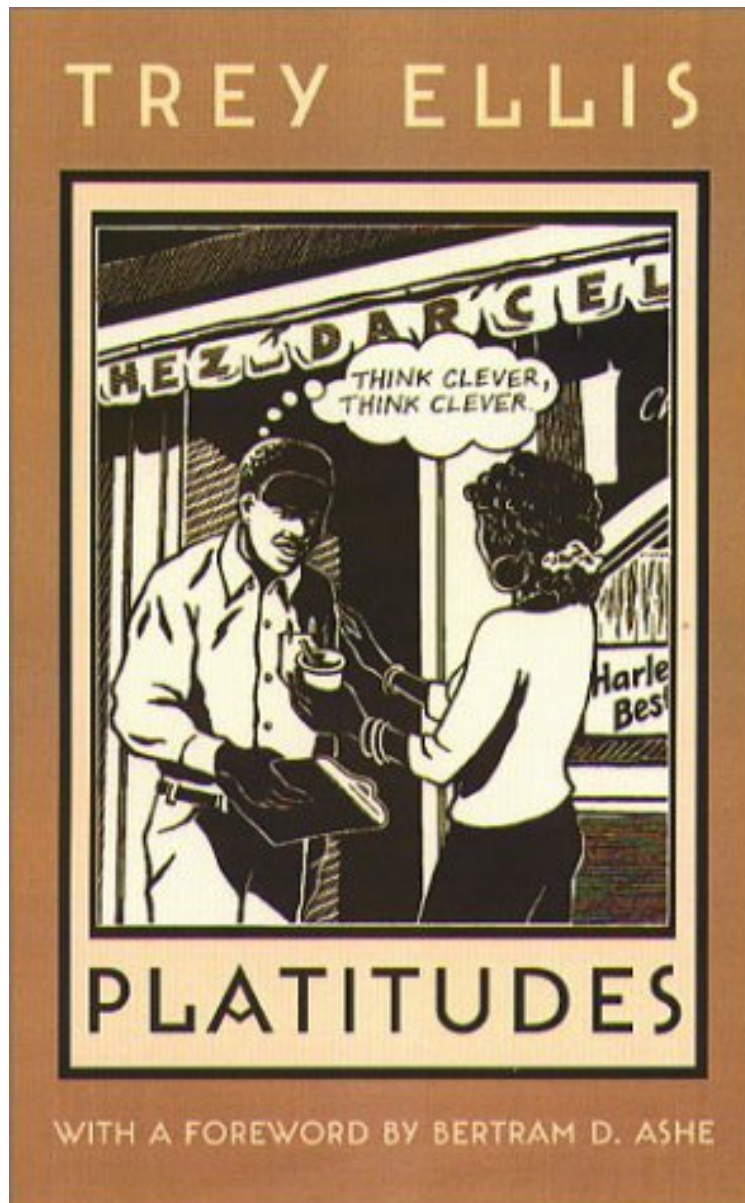


[E-BOOK] Platitudes (Northeastern Library of Black Literature)

Platitudes (Northeastern Library of Black Literature)

Trey Ellis

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Trey Ellis : Platitudes (Northeastern Library of Black Literature) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Platitudes (Northeastern Library of Black Literature):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Changed my life ...By Elle BelleI first stumbled across this book when I was in the seventh grade and only 13 years old. It was around this time I started giving up my high school

clique, junior high school girl books and decided to start reading black fiction. This was one of the first books I read and at the time it blew my mind. As a youngster, I was very much about "coloring within the lines." I only thought books were supposed to be written one way, but when I read Ellis's playful, inventive and mysterious prose it sent a shock through my system. Multiple points of view, words you have to read out loud to get the full affect of them, sexual humor ... all things foreign to me at 13. Needless to say, after reading it I decided I was going to be an author. The book still has a powerful affect on my writing today as I truly enjoyed what I thought then was a unique and experimental style. I went on to read Ellis' "Home Repairs" but by then I'd grown disinterested in Ellis' style. While *Platitudes* was fresh, the same tricks used in "Home Repairs" seemed gimmicky and by then, I'd moved on to other forms of black fiction. Now as an adult I see *Platitudes* is a good, but uneven book. But I give credit where credit is due. Ellis helped me develop my own style and that has to mean something. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Ken M. Scibelligreat1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Whatever happened to trey ellis? By Customer When I first read *Platitudes* it knocked me out. Here was fabulously fresh take on the black novel and it the first novel by a very young man. Ellis mocks the usual platitudes of the black novel. He refused to try to outdo Alice Walker and he didn't come up with a urban street yarn either. The book pulls off one of the hardest literary tricks in the world : it feature not just one but two stories within a story. His hero, DeWayne Ellington is writing a book about Earle and Dorothy, two middle class kids in Harlem and Ishee, a caricature of Toni Morrison, Alice Walker and all the other dreary glory tale writers tries to get him to tell a more "relevant" story casting Earle and Dorothy as brave strivers in the 1930s segregated South. Witty arguments and eventually even love ensues. Trey Ellis poked fun at a lot of tired old literary conventions and managed to write a cute, clever little novel. Hopefully one day, Ellis will come back at us with another piece of brilliance.

Trey Ellis's uproariously funny debut novel *Platitudes*, first published in 1988, takes on conflicts within the African American literary community. Dewayne Wellington, a failing black experimental novelist, and Isshee Ayam, a radical feminist author, collaborate on Dewayne's latest sexist comedy. Alternately telling the story about the coming of age of Earle and Dorothy—two black middle-class teenagers, sex-starved in New York City—the battling writers sneak ever, and dangerously, closer to reconciling their literary disputes. This edition of *Platitudes* also includes "The New Black Aesthetic," a groundbreaking essay by Ellis that appeared in the journal *Callaloo*.

From Publishers Weekly Earle Tyner, 16-year-old black bourgeois in contemporary New York City, falls in love with Dorothy LaMont, a young waitress at her mother's down-home Harlem diner. As Earle plots encounters with Dorothy, taking an after-school job near the restaurant, the teenagers' friendship weathers upsets but eventually deepens and strengthens. Earle and Dorothy are characters in a novel-within-a-novel here, ostensibly creations of newly divorced, depressed black writer Dewayne Wellington. Dewayne appears mainly in his letters to Isshee Ayam, successful black feminist author and critic of Dewayne's work-in-progress called "*Platitudes*." Isshee, whose own novels bear such titles as *Chillun' o' de Lawd* and *My Big O' Feets Gonna Stomp Dat Evil Down*, offers in letters to Dewayne her revisions of "*Platitudes*," with Earle and Dorothy cast as poor schoolchildren in 1930s rural Georgia. As the writers reconcile their differences over Dewayne's rapidly developing story, the two relationships that of Dewayne and Isshee and that of the doubly fictional Earle and Dorothy parallel each other, both closing with pat endings. Ellis demonstrates an ear for adolescent lingo and a sharp grasp of teenage pursuits and pleasures; at its best, his book is entertaining and the young protagonists sweetly appealing. But too often, *Platitudes* degenerates into tedious attempts at wit and humor, as in Isshee's plodding literary contributions or Ellis's version of Earle's PSAT exam, an annoying joke. This aptly named first novel is, finally, predictable and self-indulgent. Illustrations not seen by PW. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. "A stunning first novel. Blending the genres of the epistolary and satire, Ellis has produced a novel at once socially engaged and artistically fresh, hilariously funny and intellectually compelling. His is a major talent and this is a wonderful read." -- Henry Louis Gates, Jr. "A stunning first novel. Blending the genres of the epistolary and satire, Ellis has produced a novel at once socially engaged and artistically fresh, hilariously funny and intellectually compelling. His is a major talent and this is a wonderful read." (Henry Louis Gates, Jr.) "This novel takes off like love at first sight. In its wonderfully comic atmosphere, it is smart and sassy, sensitive and intelligent. The author understands and cherishes his literary ancestors, and manages, at the same time, to be absolutely himself in his own voice and of his generation." (Clarence Major)