Author Biography

Ta-Nehisi Paul Coates, born on September 30, 1975 in Baltimore, Maryland, is an American journalist, blogger, and writer. Coates’ mother was a teacher, and his father was a librarian, an entrepreneur, and the founder of Black Classic Press, which was a publisher that reissued forgotten works by African Americans. Coates was exposed to books at a young age; his exposure to books led him to pursue a literary career. Coates started writing poetry when he was 17. In 1993, Coates enrolled at Howard University to study journalism. However, Coates left Howard in five years without a degree.

From 2000 to 2007, Coates wrote for a variety of periodicals including *Washington Monthly*, *Philadelphia Weekly*, *Mother Jones*, *The Village Voice*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Time*, and *Oprah Magazine*. Writing in a measured and humble style, Coates addressed complex social issues related to racial identity, racism, and urban policing. Coates’ career blossomed in 2008 as he became a blogger for *The Atlantic* magazine. Meanwhile, Coates’ *Time* article titled “Obama and the Myth of the Black Messiah” reminded society that the election of Barack Obama as the nation’s first black president was not the cure to all poverty and discrimination. In 2013, Coates’ *Atlantic* essay “Fear of a Black President” was awarded National Magazine Award. In 2014, Coates discussed about the rationalizations for slavery and their persistence in 20th century policies in a series of blogs. In the following year, Coates was named a MacArthur fellow, which is awarded to individuals who have shown “extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits and marked capacity for self-direction” (“MacArthur Fellows”).

Coates published his first book *The Beautiful Struggle* in 2008. This memoir is a reflection on race, class, and masculinity. In 2015, Coates published *Between the World and Me*. The book was written in the form of a letter from Coates to his son, and it received National Book Award and Kirkus Prize for Nonfiction. Throughout *Between the World and Me*, Coates recounts his experience as an African American and articulates his fear of violence and death. Coates “subtly embeds the present—in the form of anecdotes about himself or others—into historical analysis” (“Ta-Nehisi Coates” 2015) to illustrate how implications of the past are still experienced by people in contemporary society.

As a journalist, blogger, and writer, Ta-Nehisi Coates explores contemporarily contested issues in America. Additionally, Coates’ articles and books have left a profound impact on the discussion of race and racism in his country.

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