

*Contemporary
Authors*

volume 168

Contemporary Authors®

A Bio-Bibliographical Guide to
Current Writers in Fiction, General Nonfiction,
Poetry, Journalism, Drama, Motion Pictures,
Television, and Other Fields

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Editor

volume 168



DETROIT • LONDON

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Contemporary Authors[®]

Preface

Contemporary Authors (CA) provides information on approximately 100,000 writers in a wide range of media, including:

- Current writers of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama whose works have been issued by commercial publishers, risk publishers, or university presses (authors whose books have been published only by known vanity or author-subsidized firms are ordinarily not included)
- Prominent print and broadcast journalists, editors, photojournalists, syndicated cartoonists, graphic novelists, screenwriters, television scriptwriters, and other media people
- Authors who write in languages other than English, provided their works have been published in the United States or translated into English
- Literary greats of the early twentieth century whose works are popular in today's high school and college curriculums and continue to elicit critical attention

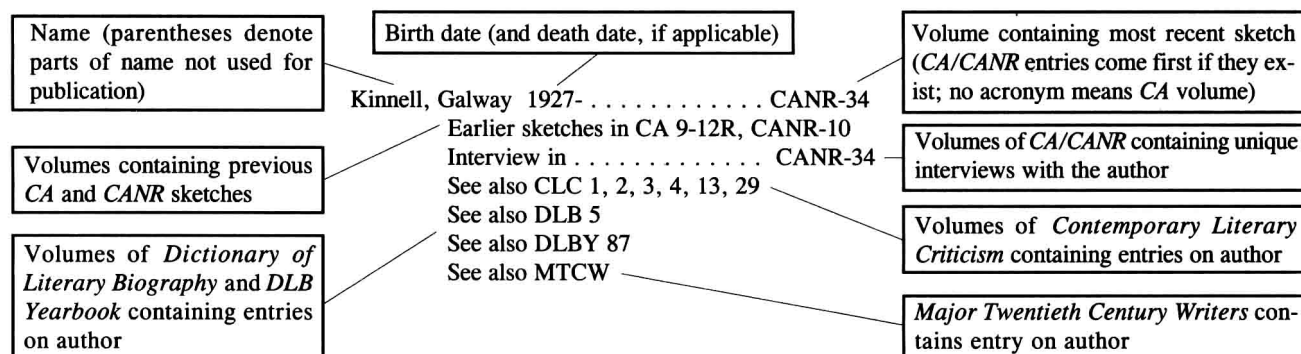
A CA listing entails no charge or obligation. Authors are included on the basis of the above criteria and their interest to CA users. Sources of potential listees include trade periodicals, publishers' catalogs, librarians, and other users.

How to Get the Most out of CA: Use the Index

The key to locating an author's most recent entry is the CA cumulative index, which is published separately and distributed with even-numbered original volumes and odd-numbered revision volumes. It provides access to *all* entries in CA and *Contemporary Authors New Revision Series* (CANR). Always consult the latest index to find an author's most recent entry.

For the convenience of users, the CA cumulative index also includes references to all entries in these Gale literary series: *Authors and Artists for Young Adults*, *Authors in the News*, *Bestsellers*, *Black Literature Criticism*, *Black Writers*, *Children's Literature Review*, *Concise Dictionary of American Literary Biography*, *Concise Dictionary of British Literary Biography*, *Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series*, *Contemporary Authors Bibliographical Series*, *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography Documentary Series*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography Yearbook*, *DIScovering Authors*, *DIScovering Authors: British*, *DIScovering Authors: Canadian*, *DIScovering Authors: Modules* (including modules for Dramatists, Most-Studied Authors, Multicultural Authors, Novelists, Poets, and Popular/Genre Authors), *Drama Criticism*, *Hispanic Literature Criticism*, *Hispanic Writers*, *Junior DIScovering Authors*, *Major Authors and Illustrators for Children and Young Adults*, *Major 20th-Century Writers*, *Native North American Literature*, *Poetry Criticism*, *Short Story Criticism*, *Something about the Author*, *Something about the Author Autobiography Series*, *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, *World Literature Criticism*, *World Literature Criticism Supplement*, and *Yesterday's Authors of Books for Children*.

A Sample Index Entry:



How Are Entries Compiled?

The editors make every effort to secure new information directly from the authors; listees' responses to our questionnaires and query letters provide most of the information featured in *CA*. For deceased writers, or those who fail to reply to requests for data, we consult other reliable biographical sources, such as those indexed in Gale's *Biography and Genealogy Master Index*, and bibliographical sources, including *National Union Catalog*, *LC MARC*, and *British National Bibliography*. Further details come from published interviews, feature stories, and book reviews, as well as information supplied by the authors' publishers and agents.

An asterisk () at the end of a sketch indicates that the listing has been compiled from secondary sources believed to be reliable but has not been personally verified for this edition by the author sketched.*

What Kinds of Information Does an Entry Provide?

Sketches in *CA* contain the following biographical and bibliographical information:

- **Entry heading:** the most complete form of author's name, plus any pseudonyms or name variations used for writing
- **Personal information:** author's date and place of birth, family data, ethnicity, educational background, political and religious affiliations, and hobbies and leisure interests
- **Addresses:** author's home, office, or agent's addresses, plus e-mail and fax numbers, as available
- **Career summary:** name of employer, position, and dates held for each career post; resume of other vocational achievements; military service
- **Membership information:** professional, civic, and other association memberships and any official posts held
- **Awards and honors:** military and civic citations, major prizes and nominations, fellowships, grants, and honorary degrees
- **Writings:** a comprehensive, chronological list of titles, publishers, dates of original publication and revised editions, and production information for plays, television scripts, and screenplays
- **Adaptations:** a list of films, plays, and other media which have been adapted from the author's work
- **Work in progress:** current or planned projects, with dates of completion and/or publication, and expected publisher, when known
- **Sidelights:** a biographical portrait of the author's development; information about the critical reception of the author's works; revealing comments, often by the author, on personal interests, aspirations, motivations, and thoughts on writing
- **Biographical and critical sources:** a list of books and periodicals in which additional information on an author's life and/or writings appears

Obituary Notices in *CA* provide date and place of birth as well as death information about authors whose full-length sketches appeared in the series before their deaths. These entries also summarize the authors' careers and writings and list other sources of biographical and death information.

Related Titles in the *CA* Series

Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series complements *CA* original and revised volumes with specially commissioned autobiographical essays by important current authors, illustrated with personal photographs they provide. Common topics include their motivations for writing, the people and experiences that shaped their careers, the rewards they derive from their work, and their impressions of the current literary scene.

Contemporary Authors Bibliographical Series surveys writings by and about important American authors since World War II. Each volume concentrates on a specific genre and features approximately ten writers; entries list works written by and about the author and contain a bibliographical essay discussing the merits and deficiencies of major critical and scholarly studies in detail.

Available in Electronic Formats

CD-ROM. Full-text bio-bibliographic entries from the entire *CA* series, covering approximately 100,000 writers, are available on CD-ROM through lease and purchase plans. The disc combines entries from the *CA*, *CANR*, and *Contemporary Authors Permanent Series (CAP)* print series to provide the most recent author listing. The *CA CD-ROM* is searchable by name, title, subject/genre, nationality/ethnicity, and personal data, as well as by using Boolean logic. The disc is updated every six months. For more information, call 1-248-699-4253.

Contemporary Authors is also available on CD-ROM from SilverPlatter Information, Inc.

Online. The *Contemporary Authors* database is made available online to libraries and their patrons through online public access catalog (OPAC) vendors. Currently, *CA* is offered through Ameritech Library Services' Vista Online (formerly Dynix).

GaleNet. *CA* is available on a subscription basis through GaleNet, an online information resource that features an easy-to-use end-user interface, the powerful search capabilities of the BRS/Search retrieval software, and ease of access through the World-Wide Web. For more information, call 1-248-699-4253.

Magnetic Tape. *CA* is available for licensing on magnetic tape in a fielded format. The database is available for internal data processing and nonpublishing purposes only. For more information, call 1-248-699-4253.

Suggestions Are Welcome

The editors welcome comments and suggestions from users on any aspects of the *CA* series. If readers would like to recommend authors for inclusion in future volumes of the series, they are cordially invited to write the Editors; or call at 1-248-699-4253; or fax at 1-248-699-8054.

CA Numbering System and Volume Update Chart

Occasionally questions arise about the *CA* numbering system and which volumes, if any, can be discarded. Despite numbers like “29-32R,” “97-100” and “167,” the entire *CA* print series consists of only 167 physical volumes with the publication of *CA* Volume 168. The following charts note changes in the numbering system and cover design, and indicate which volumes are essential for the most complete, up-to-date coverage.

CA First Revision

- 1-4R through 41-44R (11 books)

Cover: Brown with black and gold trim.

There will be no further First Revision volumes because revised entries are now being handled exclusively through the more efficient *New Revision Series* mentioned below.

CA Original Volumes

- 45-48 through 97-100 (14 books)

Cover: Brown with black and gold trim.

- 101 through 168 (68 books)

Cover: Blue and black with orange bands.

The same as previous *CA* original volumes but with a new, simplified numbering system and new cover design.

CA Permanent Series

- *CAP*-1 and *CAP*-2 (2 books)

Cover: Brown with red and gold trim.

There will be no further *Permanent Series* volumes because revised entries are now being handled exclusively through the more efficient *New Revision Series* mentioned below.

CA New Revision Series

- *CANR*-1 through *CANR*-72 (72 books)

Cover: Blue and black with green bands.

Includes only sketches requiring significant changes; **sketches are taken from any previously published *CA*, *CAP*, or *CANR* volume.**

If You Have:

You May Discard:

CA First Revision Volumes 1-4R through 41-44R and CA Permanent Series Volumes 1 and 2	CA Original Volumes 1, 2, 3, 4 Volumes 5-6 through 41-44
CA Original Volumes 45-48 through 97-100 and 101 through 168	NONE: These volumes will not be superseded by corresponding revised volumes. Individual entries from these and all other volumes appearing in the left column of this chart may be revised and included in the various volumes of the <i>New Revision Series</i> .
CA New Revision Series Volumes CANR-1 through CANR-72	NONE: The <i>New Revision Series</i> does not replace any single volume of <i>CA</i> . Instead, volumes of <i>CANR</i> include entries from many previous <i>CA</i> series volumes. All <i>New Revision Series</i> volumes must be retained for full coverage.

A Sampling of Authors and Media People Featured in This Volume

David Belasco

Among the most creative figures of the late nineteenth-century stage, Belasco wrote his first play, *Jim Black; or The Regulator's Revenge*, when he was twelve years old. He is the author of the dramas *The Heart of Maryland* and *Madame Butterfly*.

Julie Dash

Dash, an African American screenwriter and director, received critical acclaim as well as many awards and honors for her first feature length film, 1992's *Daughters of the Dust*.

Gloria Gaynor

Singer Gaynor performed the 1979 disco hit "I Will Survive." She has written an autobiography, aptly titled *I Will Survive*, which describes her abuse of alcohol and drugs and her subsequent conversion to Christianity.

Tobias Hill

British writer Hill's first volume of poetry, *Year of the Dog*, was published while he was still in his twenties. Hill is also the author of the short story collection *Skin*, and the novel *Underground*.

Robert Kuttner

Kuttner, founder and editor of the journal *American Prospect: A Journal for the Liberal Imagination*, is also the author of several books, including *Revolt of the Haves*, *The End of Laissez Faire*, and *Everything for Sale*.

Steven Landsburg

Economist Landsburg has written several books that make economic issues accessible to a general audience, including 1997's *Fair Play: What Your Child Can Teach You about Economics, Values, and the Meaning of Life*.

Lenin

Author and political ideologue Lenin was one of the driving forces behind the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917. Lenin wrote hundreds of articles and books, including his interpretation of Marxism titled *The State of Revolution*.

Legs McNeil

Journalist McNeil was a co-founder of *Punk* magazine in the late 1970s. With Gillian McCain, McNeil wrote *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*, which traces punk music's early days in the United States during the late 1960s.

Gillian Mears

Mears, an Australian writer known for her unflinching portrayals of women and small-town life in Australia, is the author of the short story collection *Ride a Cock Horse* and the 1995 novel *The Grass Sister*.

Van Morrison

Irish musician and songwriter Morrison is well known for his blend of rock, jazz, blues, classical, and traditional Irish music. Over forty Morrison albums have been released since the 1960s, including *Astral Weeks*, *Moondance*, and 1998's *The Philosopher's Stone*.

Charles Mungoshi

Mungoshi, a Zimbabwean author who writes in both English and his native language, received critical attention for *The Setting Sun and the Rolling World*, a collection of short stories.

Jacob Riis

Riis was a muckraking journalist and photographer active in turn-of-the-century New York City. His observations of tenement life, found in such volumes as *How the Other Half Lives*, influenced the enactment of vital housing and school reforms.

Antonin Scalia

Appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1986, Scalia has been persuasive in steering the court toward the practice of "textualism" in the interpretation of law. His views are expressed in *A Matter of Interpretation*.

Susan Stewart

Stewart has written extensively on literary subjects, examining such topics as clandestine forms of writing. She is also a poet whose works can be found in the volumes *Yellow Stars and Ice* and *The Hive*.

Billy Bob Thornton

An actor, director, and writer, Thornton came to prominence in the film industry following release of his Academy Award-winning *Sling Blade*. Thornton has also scripted *One False Move* and *All the Pretty Horses*, the latter adapted from the novel by Cormac McCarthy.

Carl Van Doren

Van Doren, author of *The American Novel* and other works of literary criticism, was among the first scholars to recognize American fiction as a distinct movement in its own right.

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Indexing note: All *Contemporary Authors* entries are indexed in the *Contemporary Authors* cumulative index, which is published separately and distributed with even-numbered *Contemporary Authors* original volumes and odd-numbered *Contemporary Authors New Revision Series* volumes.

As always, the most recent *Contemporary Authors* cumulative index continues to be the user's guide to the location of an individual author's listing.

A

**Indicates that a listing has been compiled from secondary sources believed to be reliable, but has not been personally verified for this edition by the author sketched.*

ADAMS, Scott 1957-

PERSONAL: Born June 8, 1957, in Windham, NY; son of Paul (a postal clerk) and Virginia (a home-maker) Adams. **Education:** Hartwick College (Oneonta, NY), B.A. (economics), 1979; University of California at Berkeley, M.B.A., 1986; Clement School of Hypnosis (San Francisco, CA), certified hypnotist, 1981.

ADDRESSES: *Home*—Near San Francisco, CA. *Agent*—United Media, 200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016-3905. *E-mail*—ScottAdams@aol.com.

CAREER: Crocker National Bank, San Francisco, CA, worked as a bank teller, computer programmer, financial analyst, product manager, and commercial lender, 1979-86; Pacific Bell, San Ramon, CA, worked in various positions, 1986-95; creator and author of *Dilbert* comic strip, distributed by United Feature Syndicate, 1989—. Speaker at company meetings and conventions.

AWARDS, HONORS: Reuben Awards for Outstanding Cartoonist of the Year and Best Newspaper Comic Strip, National Cartoonists Society, both 1997, both for *Dilbert*.

WRITINGS:

HUMOR

The Dilbert Principle: A Cubicle-Eye View of Bosses, Meetings, Management Fads, and Other Workplace Afflictions, HarperBusiness (New York City), 1996.

Dogbert's Top Secret Management Handbook, Harper Business, 1996.

The Dilbert Future: Thriving on Stupidity in the Twenty-First Century, HarperBusiness (New York City), 1997.

The Joy of Work, HarperCollins (New York City), 1998.

"DILBERT" COMIC STRIP COLLECTIONS

Dogbert's Clues for the Clueless: All-New Original Cartoons Featuring Dogbert from the Nationally Syndicated Dilbert Strip, Andrews & McMeel, 1993.

Always Postpone Meetings with Time-Wasting Morons, Andrews & McMeel, 1994.

Build a Better Life by Stealing Office Supplies, Andrews & McMeel, 1994.

Shave the Whales, Andrews & McMeel, 1994.

It's Obvious You Won't Survive by Your Wits Alone, Andrews & McMeel, 1995.

Bring Me the Head of Willie the Mailboy, Andrews & McMeel, 1995.

Conversations with Dogbert, Andrews & McMeel, 1996.

You Don't Need Experience If You've Got Attitude, Andrews & McMeel, 1996.

Access Denied: Dilbert's Quest for Love in the Nineties, Andrews & McMeel, 1996.

Fugitive from the Cubicle Police, Andrews & McMeel, 1996.

Still Pumped from Using the Mouse, Andrews & McMeel, 1996.

Casual Day Has Gone Too Far, Andrews & McMeel, 1997.

The Boss: Nameless, Blameless & Shameless, Andrews & McMeel, 1997.

The Dilbert Bunch, Andrews & McMeel, 1997.

Work Is a Contact Sport, Andrews & McMeel, 1997.
Don't Feed the Egos, Andrews & McMeel, 1997.
You'd Better Watch Out, Andrews & McMeel, 1997.
Seven Years of Highly Defective People: The Origins and Evolutions of Dilbert, Andrews & McMeel, 1997.
I'm Not Anti-Business, I'm Anti-Idiot, Andrews & McMeel, 1998.

OTHER

(Author of foreword) Guy Kawasaki, *How to Drive Your Competition Crazy: Creating Disruption for Fun and Profit*, Hyperion, 1996.
Telling It like It Isn't: A Tiptoe Approach to Communications—A Dilbert Little Book, Andrews & McMeel, 1996.
Dilbert Postcard Book, Andrews & McMeel, 1997.

ADAPTATIONS: A *Dilbert* audio collection was recorded in 1997; a television sitcom based on the comic strip was scheduled to debut on the UPN network in the fall of 1998.

SIDELIGHTS: For anyone who has gone on a job interview not knowing how to tell whether or not their potential place of employment is a good company for which to work, there is good news. A highly reliable test to measure employee disgruntlement appeared in the 1990s: the *Dilbert* comic strip. All one needs to do is take a peek at the cubicles of the company's staff. If the employees have posted *Dilbert* strips on their walls, computer screens, cabinets, or anything else, it is a good sign that they have some sort of grudge against the management of the company. The more *Dilbert* strips posted, the quantitatively higher the degree of disgruntlement. And if an entire wall or bulletin board has been covered with *Dilbert*, it is advisable to flee for one's life.

Who is "Dilbert"? He is the meek engineer cartoon character created by Scott Adams, and he is the hero of all those who have ever worked in or near an office cubicle. The strip chronicles the misadventures of the odd-looking, mouthless engineer who works at a nameless company designing products that are equally anonymous. Dilbert struggles to maintain his sanity while managers thwart him at every turn with lunatic policies, pointless meetings, and a morass of meaningless corporate rhetoric involving terms such as "employee empowerment" and "right-sizing."

Adams himself worked in a cubicle for over fifteen years, performing a variety of jobs for Crocker Na-

tional Bank and, later, Pacific Bell. But he had always wanted to be a comic strip writer. One of three children, Adams was born in a ski resort town in New York's Catskill Mountains. When he was just eleven years old he entered the mail-order "Famous Artists School" drawing competition, but was rejected because the minimum age to enter was twelve. Despite the early rejection, Adams nurtured the dream of being the next Charles Schulz, the creator of *Peanuts*. In the meantime, he was practical and studied hard in school. He graduated valedictorian from his high school and went on to get a bachelor's degree in economics. Having always hated the cold weather of New York, he left soon after earning his degree—and after getting trapped in his car during a blizzard—for the warmer climes of California. He chose San Francisco over the balmy Los Angeles, however, and found a job as a bank teller. It was not a very enjoyable job, as Adams suffered the frightening experience of seeing a gun pointed at him during armed robberies on two separate occasions.

Though Adams moved up the corporate ladder, earning an M.B.A. by taking night classes and eventually reaching a position with a seventy thousand-dollar annual salary, he was not content. "I hated my work," he told Andy Meisler in the *New York Times*. "It never seemed to me to be what I should be doing." Actually, before attempting to become a professional cartoonist, he tried his hand at invention. He worked on creating computer games and even a perpetual motion machine, but he also kept drawing. Adams doodled a lot at work, and gradually the character of Dilbert began to emerge in those drawings. Adams used Dilbert to illustrate points during meeting presentations, gaining his first fans among the co-workers that were his inspiration.

"Dilbert is a composite of my co-workers over the years," Adams explained in an online biography. "He emerged over time as the main character of my doodles.... A co-worker suggested the name. Dogbert was created later just so Dilbert would have someone to talk to." Dogbert is Dilbert's diminutive but cynical pet dog who likes to plot corporate buy-outs and other money-making schemes. The "-bert" suffix later attached itself to other character names, including Ratbert and Catbert.

By the time Adams approached the age of thirty, he was itching for cartoon success. But he was never much of an artist, and rejection letters from the *New Yorker* and other periodicals began rolling in. Adams, however, received encouragement from Jack Cassady,

who was the host of a television show about cartooning and to whom Adams had written asking for help. Cassady sent Adams letters urging him to keep trying and suggested he use a book on artists' markets. This Adams did, and he was able to catch the eye of an editor at United Feature Syndicate. Adams signed a contract with the syndicate in 1988, and *Dilbert* began to make its way into newspapers around the country in 1989. At first, the strip was about the middle-class life of the unmarried, unremarkable engineer who keeps pens in his short-sleeved shirt pocket and wears a tie that is always pointing upwards like a fish hook. While Dilbert's office life was often strange, there was also more about his home life, where the reader met odd characters like Bob the Dinosaur, who likes to give people wedgies. It was not long, however, before Adams realized that the strips poking fun at the ridiculousness of the modern corporate environment were the most popular with his readers.

In 1994, reported Tia O'Brien in the *San Jose Mercury News*, "*Dilbert's* fate was uncertain. Only about one hundred newspapers had picked up the strip. . . . About eighty percent of the cartoon was generic humor, only about twenty percent about the idiosyncrasies—or idiocies—of corporate life. All that changed when Adams implanted his e-mail address in the strip, a first for a cartoonist." Adams got so many responses to his strips about the workplace that he refocused the strip. "I heard from all these people who thought that they were the only ones, that they were in this unique, absurd situation," Adams told Meisler. "That they couldn't talk about their situation because no one would believe it. Basically, there are twenty-five million people out there, living in cardboard boxes indoors, and there was no voice for them. So there was this pent-up demand."

Quickly earning a loyal following, Adams's strip appeared in more and more newspapers until *Dilbert* began to earn him more money than his desk job. (The comic strip now appears in over 1,900 newspapers and more than fifty countries.) But Adams kept working at Pacific Bell for several years before finally quitting in 1995. One of the main reasons for this was that it was a terrific place to get new material for his cartoons. Now that Adams no longer works in an office, he still gets his ideas from the workplace—primarily from people who write to him via the cartoonist's e-mail address. Some of the messages he has received are published in his 1996 book, *The Dilbert Principle*, in which he mocks the idiocy of the modern business mentality. One section of the book, with the help of fan mail, pokes fun at actual

memos distributed by various bosses. Phrases such as "utilize issue clarification processes" and "validate the supporting activities and remaining gaps" are such excellent examples of muddy thinking that they parody themselves.

The title of the book refers to Adams's theory that in the business world "the most ineffective workers are systematically moved to the place where they can do the least damage: management." But the book not only casts aspersions at corporate management, it also offers tips to average employees so that they can survive an environment where nothing really makes sense. Adams writes entire chapters on "Employee Strategies," "Pretending to Work," and "How to Get Your Way." Adams suggests that, since today's businesses prevent employees from working productively by bogging them down in bureaucracy, the best strategy for workers to survive is to simply play along. For example, in offering the useful formula "Real Work + Appearance of Work = Total Work," Adams says, "You can be a participant in nature's grand plan by actively pursuing the activities that create equilibrium. Try to keep your *Total Work* at a constant level without increasing your *Real Work*. Do that by beefing up your *Appearance of Work* using any of the following activities: Internet surfing; personal e-mail; attending meetings; talking to your boss; conventions; upgrading your computer; testing new software; waiting for answers from co-workers; project consulting; hiding behind voice mail."

The Dilbert Principle sold extremely well, appearing on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and received many positive reviews. "This cynical, satirical, all-too-familiar glimpse of corporate life is unabashed management bashing and is very funny," wrote Alan Farber in *Library Journal*. And a *Booklist* reviewer asserted that Adams's book "is on target and deliciously sardonic!" But while most satirical books do no more than criticize their subjects, Adams goes one step further by actually offering some solutions to business ills. His solution to cutting through all the corporate strategies du jour is summarized in a single sentence: "Companies with effective employees and good products usually do well." Anything that interferes or delays the ability of the employees to do their job—such as attending endless meetings and writing status reports—is counterproductive and should be avoided as much as possible. Some of the specific tasks that Adams labels "not fundamental" include process improvement teams, reorganizations, writing vision and mission statements, and forming recognition committees.

Adams has, however, devoted most of his efforts to pointing out stupidity. He runs his own Web site, *The Dilbert Zone*, which logs over one million page views a day, and puts out a newsletter to anyone who joins "Dogbert's New Ruling Class." To join the DNRC, one simply has to send an e-mail request to Adams. This is the wise course of action to select, since anyone who isn't a DNRC member will become one of Dogbert's slaves when the scheming little puppy takes over the world. Everyone else is labeled an "induhvidual," with emphasis on the "duh." These are the dull-witted people in the world who go through life without a clue. Adams's newsletter publishes examples of induhvidual activity, such as the induhvidual who was convinced by a friend that he had to get up at two o'clock in the morning to change his clocks for daylight savings time because "it was the law," or the tire dealer who created the slogan "if it's in stock, we've got it!"

So, actually, Adams isn't so much against the modern business culture as he is against the stupidity that thrives within it. In Meisler's article, in fact, he commented that "stuff like 'total quality' and 'worker empowerment' are things that make a lot of sense. . . . But then the theory becomes a religion. People try to implement it everywhere because, well, you gotta get on board. So it gets misapplied. Secondly, there aren't that many smart people . . . [and] there's no idea that's so good you can't ruin it with a few well-placed idiots."

A few critics take issue with Adams's theme, however. One writer, Norman Solomon, interprets *Dilbert* as a scheme by the cartoonist to appear sympathetic to the plight of office workers while actually playing them for fools and taking their money. In his *The Trouble with Dilbert: How Corporate Culture Gets the Last Laugh* Solomon accuses the cartoonist of being a "fraud," because Adams has profited so much from his cartoon and the merchandise that goes along with it, thus making him a corporate co-conspirator. Adams is the "loyal subject" who serves "the royal highness in a land where cash is king."

Adams further addresses business culture in his 1997 book, *The Dilbert Future: Thriving on Stupidity in the Twenty-First Century*. While there is the usual business humor in this work, Adams makes numerous tongue-in-cheek predictions based on his premise that there are too many idiots in the world (and he modestly includes himself among the ranks) for us to have a very bright future. In fact, Adams defines the three

"Immutable Laws of Human Nature" as "Stupidity, Selfishness, Horniness." The other half of the problem, though, is that our world is becoming too complicated for ordinary people. This, according to Adams, causes "the incompetence line" to rise. "Every year," the cartoonist declares in his book, "it takes more brains to navigate this complicated world." Adams goes on to say that he recently fell below this line when he could no longer keep track of all the deals that airline companies were sending him. "I believe I have millions of dollars worth of unclaimed prizes now, if only I could figure out where they are and how to claim them." The book is also interspersed with a wide variety of predictions, such as "Democracy and capitalism will continue to give the shaft to lazy and stupid people. Neither group will complain," and "In the future, more people will actively ignore the news because it is irrelevant."

Another prediction, which has been made by other pundits, is that as more people get "downsized" there will be more people working out of their homes. This is actually not such a bad thing, as Adams himself can testify. Working from six in the morning until midnight, Adams admits he has had to "build fun" into the job, but he told an interviewer in *Business Ethics*, "There's nothing I do that is terribly unpleasant." He later added, "Based on my interviews with people who had been downsized, most are much happier afterward. Because if you were at a company that was downsizing, you probably weren't a happy camper for a long time before it happened. . . . And even people making less money seem happier."

Adams, of course, is not suffering from any economic hardships. "I am as surprised as anybody that [*Dilbert*] succeeded in the exact way that it has succeeded," he said in a *Time* article. "But still, the irrationally optimistic answer is that I always expect everything I do to change the world, not just because there's something special about me but because everything in the world was changed by one person." Whether this prediction will come true or not remains to be seen. What is certain is that the world will be seeing a lot more of Dilbert in the future. "Is this nebbishy comic-strip hero worth all the adulation: Frankly, yes," says *Entertainment Weekly* writer Lisa Schwarzbaum. "In nailing the Kafkaesque world of office existence . . . Adams captures the lunacy of our little lives just as surely as *Pogo* or *Peanuts* or *Doonesbury* did in their primes." As long as there are throngs of suffering cubicle dwellers in the world, the continued success of Adams's strip is assured.

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- United Media*, <http://www.comiczone.com>.

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AFFLECK, Ben(jamin G.) 1972-

PERSONAL: Born August 15, 1972, in Berkeley, CA; son of an actor and counselor and a schoolteacher. **Education:** Attended the University of Vermont, Burlington and Occidental College, Eagle Rock, CA.

ADDRESSES: Agent—c/o Creative Artists Agency, 9380 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90212.

CAREER: Actor, director, and writer. Actor in films, including *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*, Twentieth Century-Fox, 1992; *School Ties*, Malofilm, 1992; *Dazed*

and *Confused*, Universal, 1993; *Mallrats*, Universal, 1995; *Chasing Amy*, Miramax, 1997; *Glory Daze* (also known as *Last Call*), Seventh Art Releasing, 1997; *Going All the Way*, Gramercy, 1997; *Good Will Hunting*, Miramax, 1997; *Office Killer*, Miramax, 1997; *Armageddon*, Touchstone, 1998; *Dogma*, Miramax, 1998; *Phantoms*, Miramax, 1998; *Shakespeare in Love*, Miramax, 1998; *Daddy and Them*, Miramax, 1999; *Forces of Nature*, DreamWorks SKG, 1999; and *Two Hundred Cigarettes* (also known as *The Islander*), 1999. Actor in television series, including *The Voyage of the Mimi*, PBS, 1984; and *Against the Grain*, NBC, 1993-94. Actor in television specials, including "Body to Die For: The Aaron Henry Story," *Lifestories: Families in Crisis*, HBO, 1994; and *Wanted: The Perfect Guy*. Actor in television miniseries, including *Hands of a Stranger*, NBC, 1987, and *Daddy* (also known as *Danielle Steel's "Daddy"*, NBC, 1991. Actor in television episodes, including "Is That All There?," *Almost Home*, NBC, 1993. Director of short films, including *I Murdered My Lesbian Wife*, *Hung Her on a Meat Hook* and *Now I've Got a Three-Picture Deal with Disney*, Heroica Films, 1996.

AWARDS, HONORS: (With Matt Damon) Golden Globe Award, best screenplay—motion picture, Hollywood Foreign Press Association, National Board of Review Award, special achievement in filmmaking, National Board of Review, and Boston Society of Film Critics Award—third place, best screenplay, Boston Society of Film Critics, all 1997, and Academy Award, best screenplay written directly for the screen, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 1998, Broadcast Film Critics Association Award, best original screenplay, Broadcast Film Critics Association, Florida Film Critics Circle Award, newcomers of the year, Florida Film Critics Circle, Golden Satellite Award, best motion picture screenplay—original, Writers Guild of America Screen Award nomination, best screenplay written directly for the screen, Writers Guild of America, and MTV Movie Award nomination, best onscreen duo, all 1998, all for *Good Will Hunting*; Academy Award nomination, best supporting actor, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 1998, for *Good Will Hunting*.

WRITINGS:

(With Matt Damon) *Good Will Hunting* (screenplay), Miramax Books (New York City), 1997.

SIDELIGHTS: Ben Affleck was born in California but grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Matt Damon,

his good friend and the co-writer of *Good Will Hunting*, lived just two blocks away. They first met when Affleck was eight and Damon, ten. They attended the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, a secondary school, and both were active in drama. "Matt and I had identical interests, so whether we ended up successful or making hot dogs at Dodgers games, we knew we'd end up doing the same sort of thing," Affleck told Ingrid Sischy in *Interview* magazine. "I think our parents were concerned because everybody knows that acting is a difficult career. I don't think they were that happy with the prospect of their kids facing a lifetime of rejection and scraping by for a sandwich and hoping we'd get free refills at the age of forty-five."

Affleck attended both the University of Vermont and Occidental College in California while working in television and movies. He had a part in *School Ties* with Damon and played a high school athlete in *Dazed and Confused*, which spans an eighteen-hour period in May, 1976, on the day before summer vacation. Affleck's first major role came in *Chasing Amy*, directed by Kevin Smith, also known for directing *Clerks*. Affleck plays Holden, a cartoonist who falls for Alyssa (Joey Lauren Adams), a lesbian. In another film, *Going All the Way*, Affleck plays Gunner, a Korean War soldier returning home to Indianapolis with his friend Sonny (Jeremy Davies). *New Republic* contributor Stanley Kauffmann called Affleck "the only tolerable member of the cast" of *Going All the Way*.

Affleck wrote the Academy Award-winning *Good Will Hunting* screenplay with Matt Damon from a story Damon had developed while a student at Harvard University. The pair starred in the film, and Affleck's younger brother Casey also had a role. They wrote it in part because they were not getting the roles they wanted at the time. "If no one else was going to give us the chance to do the kind of acting we thought we could do, we decided we'd just make this movie ourselves—however we could do it, low-budget, whatever," said Affleck in *Interview*. "The whole idea was to have a videotape on the shelf at the end of the day and be able to say, 'We made this.'"

The film was originally more action-oriented but was rewritten as a character study on the advice of actor and director Rob Reiner, who had purchased the screenplay on behalf of Castle Rock studios. After a year of rewrites, executives at Castle Rock found the script acceptable, but because of a disagreement over

the selection of a director, they gave it back to Affleck and Damon with an ultimatum: the two had thirty days to find another studio to buy the script and reimburse Castle Rock, or the film would remain at Castle Rock. Miramax picked the script up for a million dollars, and actor Mel Gibson agreed to direct. Because Gibson's schedule would have held up production for one year, the project was offered to Gus Van Sant, director of such films as *Drugstore Cowboy* and *My Own Private Idaho*. Van Sant agreed to direct the film.

Years before, Affleck and Damon had decided that Affleck would play the supporting role of Chuckie to Damon's title character, Will Hunting. Will and Chuckie are "Southies," Boston residents living in the working-class neighborhoods of South Boston. Will is an unschooled math genius who works as a janitor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and solves difficult problems written on blackboards. The school's Professor Lambeau (Stellan Skarsgard) sees his potential and takes Will under his wing. He convinces Will to undergo therapy with Sean McGuire (Robin Williams). Will resists the attempts of Lambeau, McGuire, and girlfriend Skylar (Minnie Driver) to rise above his troubled past. Ingrid Sischy said that "the film is about the dilemmas of choice and responsibility, and the burdens of belonging." Writing in *New York* about Affleck and Damon, David Denby said that the two "seem to walk together in mutual rhythm; they share such an easy, slangy rapport onscreen that they can slip sideways into conversation, speaking in fragments—a helter-skelter grace."

Affleck followed the successful *Good Will Hunting* with several films, including *Phantoms*, *Armageddon*, and *Dogma*. *Phantoms* is a horror film based on Dean Koontz's novel and stars Affleck and Peter O'Toole. In the film, the population of a Colorado resort disappears, and Timothy Flyte (O'Toole) is flown in by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to solve the mystery, which involves an evil force called the Ancient Enemy. Affleck plays the local sheriff. In the *New York Times*, Stephen Holden wondered how "actors of the stature of Peter O'Toole and Ben Affleck" were "bamboozled into lending their talents to a junky little horror film like *Phantoms*." In *Armageddon*, Affleck plays A. J. Frost, one of the oil rigger crewmen of Harry S. Stamper (Bruce Willis). Stamper, Frost, and the other crew go into space to drill a hole in and plant a nuclear bomb within a Texas-sized asteroid heading toward Earth. Affleck and Damon were reunited as costars in the film *Dogma*.

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Mr. Showbiz Movie Guide: Armageddon, <http://www.mrshowbiz.com/reviews/moviereviews/movies/65788.html> (July 18, 1998).*

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AGNEW, Eleanor 1948-

PERSONAL: Born September 17, 1948, in Plattsburgh, NY; daughter of Paul (a psychiatrist) and Jessica (a homemaker) Agnew; married Liberto Chacon (a civil engineer), 1985; children: Derek Thurston, Shawn Thurston, Paul Chacon-Agnew. **Education:** University

of Vermont, B.A., 1970; University of Maine at Orono, M.A., 1981; Louisiana State University, Ph.D., 1991. **Politics:** "I look at each issue individually." **Religion:** Protestant. **Avocational interests:** Travel, movies, music, raising goldfish.

ADDRESSES: *Home*—4 Windjammer Way, Savannah, GA 31419. *Office*—P.O. Box 8026, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA 30460; fax 912-927-8523. *E-mail*—[eagnew@gsvms2.cc.gasou.edu](mailto: eagnew@gsvms2.cc.gasou.edu). *Agent*—John A. Ware, John A. Ware Literary Agency, 392 Central Park W., New York, NY 10025.

CAREER: Worked as feature writer, columnist, and reporter for newspapers *Berkshire Sampler* and *Worcester Telegram and Gazette*, Worcester, MA, 1970-75; Francis Marion University, Florence, SC, instructor, 1986-89; Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, associate professor of writing, 1989—.

MEMBER: National Council of Teachers of English.

WRITINGS:

(Contributor) L. Bryant, M. Hourigan, and L. Allison, editors, *Grading in the Post-Process Classroom*, Heinemann-Boynton/Cook, 1997.
 (With Sharon Robideaux) *My Mama's Waltz*, Pocket Books (New York City), 1998.

Contributor to periodicals, including *Assessing Writing*. Associate editor, *Farmstead*, 1976-79.

WORK IN PROGRESS: A work of fiction, *Final Notice*; an academic monograph.

SIDELIGHTS: Eleanor Agnew told *CA*: "As a college professor, I have burned up several computers and more than a few summers writing scholarly articles which never will see the light of day outside the university community. Academic writing requires months or years of time and research and, of course, the pay is purely psychic. But I have enjoyed doing it because I have always written about educational issues that stir genuine passion in me.

"*My Mama's Waltz* was my first venture into non-academic writing since I left the Real World in 1979 to go to graduate school. I loved every minute of it! Just as with my academic writing, the topic (daughters of alcoholic mothers) was so meaningful to me that I happily burned up the keyboard from sunrise till bedtime every day for a whole summer. On the other hand, the experience was refreshingly different from