

Graphic Novel Review — The Adventures of Johnny Bunko: *The Last Career Guide You'll Ever Need*

Pink, Daniel H., and Rob Ten Pas. *The Adventures of Johnny Bunko: The Last Career Guide You'll Ever Need*. New York: Penguin, 2008. Print.

Robert G. Weiner
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, Texas, USA
rob.weiner@ttu.edu

In the world of higher education, the last 10 years have seen an explosion in the scholarly study of sequential art, sometimes dubbed comics studies. The present number of courses related to comics is probably triple what it was 20 years ago: courses from the freshman to the graduate level, courses in departments as varied as History, Sociology, Film, Gender and Race Studies, Communication, Art, Electronic Media, and Philosophy. The study of comics is where the study of films was 30 years ago. The rise in scholarly monographs has exploded, and there are numerous academic journals devoted to the subject with more popping up all the time. Comic studies, currently, is a popular topic for academics to discuss, teach, and write about.

Graphic novel textbooks are a unique way of presenting subject specific content. In our world of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, texting, gaming and on demand video, professors struggle to keep the attention of the millennial generation, who are used to being entertained and stimulated all the time. By creating a business management textbook in the sequential art format, University of Oklahoma professor, Jeremy Short, learned first-hand that graphic novel textbooks can convey information without dumbing down the content. His pioneering work, the *Atlas Black* series, has met with great success (Short, 2010). He found the use of graphic novels to teach specific content has been overwhelming positive: using them provided an alternative to the often dry and tedious world of traditional textbooks. Students in his courses learned more and found Short's courses enriching (Short, 2013 a&b).

Daniel Pink's *The Adventures of Johnny Bunko: The Last Career Guide You'll Ever Need* is one of those graphic novels that could very well be used like a traditional textbook. Pink is a famous business guru and author of *New York Times* bestsellers *To Sell is Human: The Surprising Truth about Moving Others* (2012) and *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* (2009). Pink's reputation as a business motivational leader continues to rise; he has been named one of the top fifteen business thinkers in the world (Thinkers 50). Working with artist Rob Ten Pas, Pink wrote the very first American business book done in the style of Japanese manga (*Johnny Bunko*) and the first graphic novel ever to be on *Business Week*'s bestsellers, according to his website – <http://www.danpink.com/about/>.

The main character, Johnny Bunko, is an overstressed, overworked, and unhappy worker in the accounting department for a large business firm. While eating at a sushi restaurant, he picks up several pairs of magical chopsticks, which when snapped together summon Diana, an elfish business sprite. Whenever Johnny or his colleagues are in trouble, Diana appears with sage business principles. Diana imparts the six major ideas, briefly summarized here, to Johnny and his co-workers:

1. There is no plan. No matter how much one plans for the future, the world of work is continually evolving with certain industries dying and new ones being born all the time. One has to be adaptable.
2. Think strengths not weaknesses! Focus on what you do well and don't let your shortcomings get in the way of doing the best job you can.
3. It's not about you! In the working world you are more successful by thinking of others first. In this way, you will also advance your career.
4. Persistence trumps talent! It's important to continually practice and hone your skills. Get good at something by doing it.
5. Make excellent mistakes! It's ok to make a mistake as no one is ever perfect, but use those mistakes to your advantage.
6. Leave an imprint! You can make a positive difference in the world and leave a legacy in whatever you do.

Johnny Bunko is a graphic novel that can be enjoyed by all ages. Its ideas are timeless for those just starting out in the working world or those who have been out there for years. The *Johnny Bunko* characters are amusing and fun, and the artwork by Pas is delightful. Pink writes in a crisp style that delivers sound content. This graphic novel would be an excellent choice as a textbook for various freshman classes including business, seminars, education, management, or even communications courses. It is the type of graphic novel that could convey more through the sequential art format than many traditional textbooks. For college freshman who often feel lost when first entering college and who really have no clue as to what they want to do with their lives, *Johnny Bunko* provides a useful career tool in a form that should keep their interest. Academic libraries of all types should consider this volume for purchases. Pink and Pas have created a work which is a useful pedagogical instrument for professors and teaching assistants everywhere.

Works Cited

Pink, Daniel H. "About Daniel Pink." *Danpink.com*. 2013. Web 16 December 2013. <http://www.danpink.com/about/>

Pink, Daniel H. *To Sell is Human: The Surprising Truth about Moving Others*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2012. Print.

Pink, Daniel H. *Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2009. Print.

Short, Jeremy, Talya Bauer, and David J. Ketchen. *Atlas Black: Managing to Succeed*. Nyack, New York: Flat World Knowledge, Inc., 2010. Print.

Short, Jeremy, David Ketchen and Jeff Shelstad. "Graphic N-extbooks: A Journey Beyond Traditional Textbooks." *Graphic Novels and Comics in the Classroom: Essays on the Educational Power of Sequential Art*. Eds. Carrye Kay Syma and Robert G. Weiner. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2013a. 200-218. Print.

Short, Jeremy, Brandon Randolph-Seng, and Aaron F. McKinney. "Graphic presentation: An empirical examination of the graphic novel approach to communicate business concepts" *Business Communication Quarterly* 76:3 (2013b): 273-303. Print.

Thinkers 50. "The Thinkers50 Ranking 2013" *Thinkers50.com*. 2013. Web 7 February 2014.

Author Bio:

Robert G. Weiner is Associate Humanities Librarian at Texas Tech University. His most recent co-edited book is *Graphic Novels and Comics in the Classroom: Essays on the Educational Power of Sequential Art*.

Reference Citation:

MLA:
Weiner, R. Rev. of *The Adventures of Johnny Bunko: The Last Career Guide You'll Ever Need*, by Pink, Daniel H. & Pas, Rob Ten. *Dialogue: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Popular Culture and Pedagogy*. 1.1 (2014). Graphic novel.

APA:
Weiner, R. (2014). Review of the graphic novel, *The Adventures of Johnny Bunko: The Last Career Guide You'll Ever Need, 2008*, by Pink, Daniel H. & Pas, Rob Ten. *Dialogue: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Popular Culture and Pedagogy*. 1(1). <http://journaldialogue.org/issues/issue-1/graphic-novel-review-the-adventures-of-johnny-bunko-the-last-career-guide-youll-ever-need/>

Volume 1, Issue 1: Classics and Contemporary Popular Culture

Table of Contents

Editorial

**Moving Popular Culture Studies
Scholarship into the Future**
Lynnea Chapman King and
Anna CohenMiller

Guest Editorial

"καλὸν ἀνθρώπινου βίου κάτοπτρον":
**Popular Culture as a Pedagogical Lens
on Greco-Roman Antiquity**
Kirsten Day and Benjamin Haller

Part I: Epic Reconsiderations

**Wounds That Will Not Heal: Heroism and
Innocence in *Shane* and the *Iliad***
Carl A. Rubino

**O Homer, Where Art Thou?: Teaching the
Iliad and the *Odyssey* through Popular
Culture**
Mallory Young

**The *Odyssey* and its *Odyssey* in
Contemporary Texts: Re-visions in *Star
Trek*, *The Time Traveler's Wife*, and *The
Penelopiad***
Mary Economou Bailey Green

Part II: Reception and Re-narrations

**Theseus Loses his Way: Viktor Pelevin's
Helmet of Horror and the Old Labyrinth
for the New World**
Alison Traweek

**300 and *Fellini-Satyricon*: Film Theory in
the Tertiary Classroom**
Leanne Glass

Part III: Gender in Cinematic Narratives

**The Labyrinth of Memory: Iphigeneia,
Simonides, and Classical Models of
Architecture as Mind in Chris Nolan's
Inception (2010)**
Benjamin Haller

**Ovid and Mel Gibson: Power,
Vulnerability, and *What Women Want***
Geoff Bakewell

**Experiments in Love: Longus' *Daphnis
and Chloe* and Henry de Vere
Stacpoole's *The Blue Lagoon***
Kirsten Day

Part IV: Reviews

**Graphic Novel Review — The Adventures
of Johnny Bunko: *The Last Career Guide
You'll Ever Need***
Robert G. Weiner

**Video Game Review — *Final Fantasy XIV:
Level Up Forever***
Brian Cowlishaw

Issues

Volume 9, Issue 1 & 2 — Teaching and Learning with the Grateful Dead

Volume 8, Issue 3 — Traversing Borders, Transgressing Boundaries in Popular Culture and Pedagogy

Volume 8, Issue 2 — Infusing Pedagogy with Empathy, Social Action and Value through Popular Culture

Volume 8, Issue 1 — Evolving Awareness in Popular Culture and Pedagogy

Volume 7, Issue 3 — (Un)conscious Representation: Race, Gender, Ideology

Volume 7, Issue 2 — Engaged Popular Culture and Pedagogy: Awareness, Understanding and Social Justice

Special Series: Pedagogy During COVID-19

Volume 7, Issue 1 — Bodies in Motion: Challenging Imagery, Tradition, and Teaching

Volume 6, Issue 3 — *Otherness*, Survival and Hope: Pedagogies in Popular Media

Volume 6, Issue 2 — Criminals as Heroes: Problems and Pedagogy in Popular Culture

Volume 6, Issue 1 — Reinterpretation: Situating Culture from Pedagogy to Politics

Volume 5, Issue 3 — Behind the Scenes: Uncovering Violence, Gender, and Powerful Pedagogy

Volume 5, Issue 2 — Reading into Creativity: New Approaches in Concept and Practice

Volume 5, Issue 1 — Visualizing Popular Culture: From Theater to the Graphic Novel

Volume 4, Issue 1 — Intersections: Belief, Pedagogy, and Politics

Volume 3, Issue 2 — Adapting Our Approaches: (In)Formal Learning, Stereotypes, and Traumas

Volume 3, Issue 1 — Popular Culture Pedagogy: Theory and Application in Academia

Volume 2, Issue 1 — Traversing Realities: Genres, Histories, and Politics in Popular Culture

Volume 1, Issue 1 — Classics in Contemporary Culture

Dialogue is indexed by Google Scholar

Call for Submissions

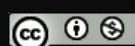
Visit our [Call for Papers](#) page for details.

Connect with Dialogue

Dialogue: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Popular Culture and Pedagogy is the official journal of the Southwest Popular/American Culture Association | www.southwestpca.org

Contact Us

[Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Academia.edu](#)



All papers in Dialogue: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Popular Culture and Pedagogy are published under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share-Alike License. For details please go to: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/us/>.