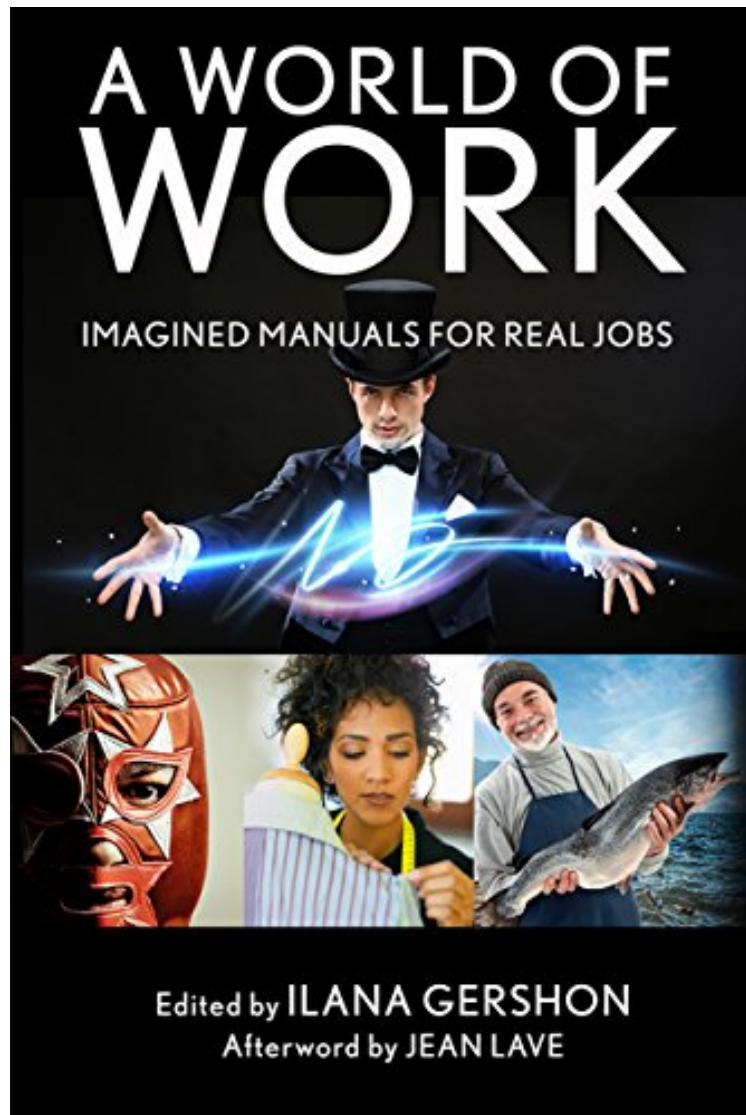


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A World of Work: Imagined Manuals for Real Jobs

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From ILR Press : A World of Work: Imagined Manuals for Real Jobs before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A World of Work: Imagined Manuals for Real Jobs:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Surprisingly good!By DarrenIngram_dot_comThis is a quite strange book, filled with humour and quite intriguing, interesting text that looks at the world of work by creating instruction manuals for many different jobs. It is a lot better than you first may fear.Do you fancy learning how to play a piano without a piano in Bolivia? How about being a magician in Paris? A ballerina in London? All this and more ndash; a total of 14 different jobs ndash; await. The book's publicity material has some highbrow explanation for it: "The value of this book is twofold: For young people or middle-aged people who are undecided about their

career paths and feel constrained in their choices, (the book) offers an expansive vision. For ethnographers, this book offers an excellent example of using the practical details of everyday life to shed light on larger structural issues. The TL:DR version: Interesting, obscure, fascinating read about stuff you might never have thought you wanted to know about. There is the serious side to the book, such as it conveying jobs in culturally specific ways through a range of voices and perspectives, as in an older sister counselling her brother on how to be a doctor in Malawi. The less-serious side is the promise of a humorous, informative and credible read. The astute reader may also take away many interesting points that could possibly be shoehorned into other situations. As the book notes: "Think about the work you have done. You generally need a complicated mix of skills to do any of it well. You often have to learn some tacit knowledge and have some direct training, you need to show social competence and master some physical skills -- all specific to that particular occupation. To be a magician in Paris, you need to know how to perform tricks without much room to manoeuvre because you might have to do it in a restaurant. But you also need to know how to negotiate with a French government bureaucrat so that you can get a government stipend for being a creative artist. Some of what you need to know can be taught through books, some you can learn only after observing and practicing on the job itself, and some you learn from your mentors and co-workers." When this reviewer first saw this book he expected to hate it or, at the very best, believe it would be so-so with the occasional bit of humour and interest. Yet it turned out to be a lot, lot better than that. A splendid curiosity that may appeal to the discerning reader.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I found this book to be a fun and engaging read - not your typical career search or advice book

By Chantal Bechervaise I found this book to be a fun and engaging read. I didn't want to put the book down. It was fun to read about and gain insights into so many other careers and 'quirky' jobs that I don't come across on a day to day basis. Not your typical job search or advice book, but it doesn't help expand the imagination on careers that are out there.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Waste of time

By Mitchell Meyer Why would someone write about a job from a standpoint of "what it might be like"? Premise of the book is to share experiences of what it might be like to be a particular occupation. E.g. cell phone repair person. But the narrative that describes what it would be like is fiction- told from the point of view of an imagined perspective.

Ever wondered what it would be like to be a street magician in Paris? A fish farmer in Norway? A costume designer in Bollywood? This playful and accessible look at different types of work around the world delivers a wealth of information and advice about a wide array of jobs and professions. The value of this book is twofold: For young people or middle-aged people who are undecided about their career paths and feel constrained in their choices, *A World of Work* offers an expansive vision. For ethnographers, this book offers an excellent example of using the practical details of everyday life to shed light on larger structural issues. Each chapter in this collection of ethnographic fiction could be considered a job manual. Yet not any typical job manual— to do justice to the ways details about jobs are conveyed in culturally specific ways, the authors adopt a range of voices and perspectives. One chapter is written as though it was a letter from an older sister counseling her brother on how to be a doctor in Malawi. Another is framed as a eulogy for a well-loved village magistrate in Papua New Guinea who may have been killed by sorcery. Beneath the novelty of the examples are some serious messages that Ilana Gershon highlights in her introduction. These ethnographies reveal the connection between work and culture, the impact of societal values on the conditions of employment. Readers will be surprised at how much they can learn about an entire culture by being given the chance to understand just one occupation.

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"I read with real pleasure and enjoyment this imaginative collection of essays produced mostly by established anthropologists, and a few others who are practitioners of their crafts, on a quirky diversity of jobs. Charmingly, Ilana Gershon offers this collection as 'a graduation gift to my students, a bouquet of possibilities so that you can start thinking in concrete detail about what you need to know to do many different kinds of unusual jobs.' A very valuable gift indeed for the sorts of job markets that a highly cosmopolitan and ethnically diverse college student body faces today. I was charmed by its imaginative and readable format, and *A World of Work* is also quite a deep collection on the nature of work in a number of specializations. It is for anyone who enjoys the drama, humor, and achievement of applying learned skills in everyday life." George E. Marcus, Director of the Center for Ethnography, University of California, Irvine, coauthor of *Designs for an Anthropology of the Contemporary* "This delightful book takes the

reader into the everyday work lives of people all over the world. What is it like to be doctor in Malawi, a magician in Paris, a crime scene investigator in Sweden? Each chapter is unexpected and engaging. You'll discover your own work and cultural underpinnings by experiencing how different life is for others. This is the most interesting and entertaining job-oriented book I've read in a long time."Nicholas Lore, bestselling author of *The Pathfinder: How to Choose or Change Your Career for a Lifetime of Satisfaction and Success*About the Author Ilana Gershon is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Indiana University. She is the author of *The Breakup 2.0: Disconnecting over New Media* and *No Family Is an Island: Cultural Expertise among Samoans in Diaspora* and editor of *A World of Work: Imagined Manuals for Real Jobs*, all from Cornell.Jean Lave is Professor of Education and Geography at the University of California, Berkeley. She is the author of *Cognition in Practice*, coauthor of *Understanding Practice and Situated Learning*, and coeditor of *History in Person*.