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Résumé de l'article

Ce document se base sur des entrevues de l'histoire du travail avec un groupe de neufs travailleurs de théâtre à Toronto, qui ont eu lieu dans une période de trois ans. Pendant les entrevues, les participants n'ont pas mentionné spontanément 13,1 pour cent de leurs postes dans le secteur culturel créatif. Comme les travaux oubliés ne parviennent pas à s'inscrire dans les sondages visant à évaluer les contributions économiques des travailleurs culturels ou à améliorer les conditions précaires dans leurs milieux de travail, il est important d'évaluer pourquoi et comment les travaux en question pourraient passer sans être déclarés. On associe l'oublie des postes au secteur culturel avec les nombreuses complexitées et stresses quant aux horaires irréguliers, et à un discours opposant le dévouement à l'art à la poursuite de l'argent. De plus, nous explorons le raisonnement des participants de prendre en compte l'importance de leurs postes de plus courtes durées, afin de ne pas nuire à l'allure d'un résumé cohérant centré seulement sur les objectifs ambitieux. En dernier lieu, on déduit que la propensité étonnante d'oublier également leurs postes de plus longs termes est dû au modèle de « travail à la pièce » et à un manque de stratégies socialement soutenus de mémoire. Avec ces résultats, nous recommandons des améliorations aux modèles de sondages sur l'historique de travail dans le secteur culturel.

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RESEARCH NOTE / NOTE DE RECHERCHE

The Forgotten Work of Cultural Workers

Katherine Bischoping and Adam D. K. King

In recent years, efforts have been made to amass reliable statistics about cultural workers' hours, pay rates, and other working conditions, both in order to understand the precariousness of cultural work and to demonstrate the magnitude of cultural workers' contributions to the economy.[1] We do not fault this endeavour or the desire to use a brief, accessible instrument to collect cultural-work data. Nor do we doubt the necessity of having reliable quantitative data about the material conditions of the creative cultural industries, particularly when such information could aid in the crafting of social policy to address widespread precariousness.[2] However, our intervention into this method of understanding cultural work is to argue that concentrating on waged or otherwise income-earning work overlooks much of the diversity of what people do as they develop and create cultural products.

This article was occasioned by Katherine Bischoping's 2008 collaboration with a group of cultural workers on a theatre production, and her intimate and continued relationship with these cultural workers in the subsequent three years. When Bischoping returned to the group in 2011 to conduct career-history research, one of the unexpected findings was the tremendous diversity of these workers' involvement in the cultural sector.[3] Of the six cultural work "domains" and two intersecting "transversal domains" defined by the

1. Ben Beaumont-Thomas, "Major Survey on UK Arts Diversity Launched," *Guardian*, 21 September 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/sep/21/panic-survey-diversity-uk-arts-institutions; Cultural Human Resources Council, *Cultural HR Study 2010* (Ottawa: Cultural Human Resources Council, 2010).

2. David Hesmondhalgh & Sarah Baker, "'A Very Complicated Version of Freedom': Conditions and Experiences of Creative Labour in Three Cultural Industries," *Poetics* 38, 1 (2010): 4–20.

3. Katherine Bischoping & Elizabeth Quinlan, "Health and Safety Issues in Precarious Cultural Work," *E-Journal of International and Comparative Labour Studies* 2, 2 (2013): 97–115.

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Government of Canada for the purposes of statistically measuring the cultural sector, the participants – though focusing their work in the domain of "live performance" – had also been involved in nearly all of the other seven domains.[4] Another discovery was of the remarkable volume of work that these workers had been doing in that time: the nine research participants collectively reported 313 jobs, most of which were poorly paid, short term, and unstable.

In this article, we take up a lingering puzzle that began to emerge as the qualitative interviews for the project were conducted: the disjuncture between, on the one hand, what the participants themselves spontaneously reported and, on the other, what we knew about their working lives and therefore could probe during the interviews. The results were sometimes startling. The data serendipitously permit us to investigate why cultural workers may omit substantial portions of their work, as well as other activities that make their cultural work possible, from career-history data collection.

These reasons matter because of the systematic impacts that such omissions could have on the production of knowledge by academic and policy researchers about cultural work, its diversity, and its precarities. Moreover, these reasons speak to how cultural workers' ongoing constructions of their working lives and histories are socially shaped. That is, as we will show, cultural workers are influenced by discourses that pit creativity against money, work against leisure or education/training, and unplanned or unproductive exploration against the middle-class expectation that work be productive and careers coherent.[5] Our title's use of the label "forgotten" for what participants did not spontaneously mention during data collection is not meant to suggest that the participants sleepwalk through their creative lives. Rather, it is a provocation, intended to draw attention to how the precarious conditions of cultural work, and the discourses about what constitutes "work," may foreclose the possibility of remembering these activities when a career history is being taken. As contemporary memory studies in the social sciences and

4. See Statistics Canada, "Defining the Culture Sector," *Conceptual Frameworks for Culture Statistics 2011*, 87-542-X no. 1, 29 November 2011, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/87-542-x/2011001/section/s6-eng.htm. Statistics Canada's cultural domains include heritage and museums, live performance, visual and applied arts, written and published works, audio-visual and interactive media, and sound recording. The agency tracks two "transversal domains," which are treated as supporting and enabling the culture sector – these are (1) culture-related education and training, and (2) governance, funding and professional support.

5. Angela McRobbie, *British Fashion Design: Rag Trade or Image Industry?* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Leslie Regan Shade & Jenna Jacobson, "Hungry for the Job: Gender, Unpaid Internships, and the Creative Industries," *Sociological Review* 63, 1 (2015): 188–205; Ranji Devadason, "Constructing Coherence? Young Adults' Pursuit of Meaning through Multiple Transitions between Work, Education and Unemployment," *Journal of Youth Studies* 10, 2 (2007): 203–221; Charlotte Linde, *Life Stories: The Creation of Coherence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

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humanities emphasize, remembering and forgetting, though seemingly individual, are also fundamentally social in nature.[6]

Interpreting the participants' narratives in relation to memory research and studies of the particularities of cultural work alike, our analysis explores three main avenues to understanding cultural workers' memory omissions.[7] First, although no one's memory of their career details could be expected to be perfect, there is reason to believe that the sheer volume of cultural workers' jobs and the stresses of overwork could exacerbate memory loss. Second, although one might hypothesize that cultural work with better pay should be more memorable to those who do it, we find this not to be the case. We situate this finding within a discourse in which cultural work is understood as a "labour of love" and therefore not pursued for financial reward.[8] Last, we profile two distinct types of forgotten jobs that emerged in our data and show how cultural workers' memory strategies, the elusive definition of work, and the social character of remembering contributed to their omissions.[9] We conclude by recommending ways to improve surveys of cultural workers so as to encourage more accurate representation of cultural forms of work and working conditions.

Method

In 2008, Bischoping was the playwright for an independent theatre production in Toronto. In total, eleven people worked on that production. All of these workers were white, eight were women and three were men, and with the exception of Bischoping (then in her 40s), all were in their 20s or early 30s. Among them they had earned ten fine or performing arts university degrees (eight bachelor's and two master's degrees) and three college diplomas and

6. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: SUNY Press); Joan Sangster, "Telling Our Stories: Feminist Debates in the Use of Oral History," *Women's History Review* 3, 1 (1994): 5–28.

7. Emily Keightley, "Remembering Research: Memory and Methodology in the Social Sciences," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 13, 1 (2010): 55–70; Graham Murdock, "Back to Work: Cultural Labor in Altered Times," in Andrew Beck, ed., *Cultural Work: Understanding the Cultural Industries* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 15–36.

8. Luc Boltanski & Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2005); Rosalind Gill, "Cool, Creative and Egalitarian? Exploring Gender in Project-Based New Media Work in Europe," *Information, Communication & Society* 5, 1 (2005): 70–89; Rosalind Gill & Andy Pratt, "In the Social Factory? Immaterial Labour, Precariousness and Cultural Work," *Theory, Culture & Society* 25, 7/8 (2008): 1–30; Stephanie Taylor & Karen Littleton, "Art Work or Money: Conflicts in the Construction of a Creative Identity," *Sociological Review* 56, 2 (2008): 275–292.

9. Chris Provis, "On the Definition of Work," *Labour & Industry* 20, 2 (2009): 123–137; Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*.

had two additional higher-education qualifications underway. None had yet qualified to become a member of a theatre or other arts-related union. Thus, in the common terminology used in the Canadian theatre community, all eleven would be considered "emerging" rather than "established" artists.

In 2011 and 2012, Bischoping and another colleague gathered data from Bischoping herself and eight of her ten co-workers in order to study how the ongoing Canadian recession had affected their careers in the creative cultural sector. The data for nine of the participants were collected in semistructured qualitative interviews, lasting two to six hours, in which work histories were taken via questions about job-finding, pay, employment relations, time commitment and duration of jobs, and satisfaction with jobs. The topics of cultural-work training, job-seeking strategies, "best" and "worst" job experiences, career aspirations, and the support of family and friends were also discussed. For the remaining participant, instead of a qualitative interview, an abbreviated questionnaire was administered by email.[10]

The participants spontaneously mentioned 313 creative cultural-sector jobs that they had done in the three-year period in question. However, Bischoping's ongoing acquaintance with the eight other participants – whether in arts collaborations, through social media, at the occasional birthday party or a venture out to a burlesque club – meant that she was aware of an additional 42 creative cultural jobs that they had not spontaneously mentioned when interviewed. In almost all instances, she sought details of these jobs in the interviews. Further, when Bischoping combed through her own arts-related email and records from between 2008 and 2011 to conduct what Peter Miller and other survey researchers refer to as a "record check study,"[11] she identified and collected data about an additional 5 jobs that she herself had not spontaneously mentioned when being interviewed.[12] Table 1 summarizes these methods.

Our inquiry concentrates on the sum of 47 jobs that the participants had *not* themselves spontaneously mentioned during the data collection, comprising a small but sturdy proportion (13.1 per cent) of the total of 360 creative cultural jobs for which data were collected. Our sample of participants is indeed small and non-representative; however, it is difficult for us to conceive of an alternate research design, short of an expensive and participant-burdening diary study, that would permit us access to the participants' forgotten jobs.[13] Specifically, a cultural-work survey conducted with a large and more robustly

10. Bischoping & Quinlan, "Health and Safety Issues," 99–100.

11. Peter Miller, "Record Check," in Paul J. Lavrakas, ed., *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2008), 698–700.

12. The exceptions occurred when four participants who had held identical contracts to act in a short film, co-produced by Bischoping, each forgot to include it in their job history. Only one of the four was asked for the details.

13. Parvati Krishnamurty, "Diary," in Lavrakas, ed., *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods*, 198–199.

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Table 1: Summary of Participants, Data Collection Methods, and Numbers of Remembered and Omitted Jobs

Co-workers in 2008 theatre production	Participants in 2011 research on cultural work	Method of collecting work history	Number of jobs participant(s) spontaneously remembered	Method of identifying forgotten jobs
Bischoping	Bischoping	Interviewed qualitatively by Elizabeth Quinlan	7 jobs	Bischoping found 5 forgotten jobs in her cultural work–related email and other records
10 others	8 others	7 interviewed qualitatively by Bischoping, 1 completed questionnaire	306 jobs	Bischoping remembered and asked participants about 42 other cultural-sector jobs that they had done

representative sample of cultural workers, and supplemented by a tax-record check and résumé comparison, would likely miss many of the same jobs. The participants themselves, as we will discuss, did not conceive of certain substantial engagements with cultural work as "work" in the first place. Moreover, their own records were typically reduced by the cultural work–sector habit of abbreviating résumés to a single page of career highlights plus a headshot and likely also by the fact that unpaid labour leaves no trace in tax records.[14]

Only through Bischoping's familiarity with certain aspects of the other participants' working lives and positionality as simultaneously a cultural worker and a sociologist were we afforded a fortuitous opportunity to understand how cultural workers interpret their work and represent it in in-depth interviews. Our method, in this sense, is more akin to that of the cognitive interview method used to revise survey questionnaires.[15] In this method, small samples

14. On record check studies and their limitations, see W. Sherman Edwards, "Record-Check Studies," in Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Alan Bryman & Tim Futing Liao, eds., *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2004), 932.

15. Paul C. Beatty & Gordon B. Willis, "Research Synthesis: The Practice of Cognitive Interviewing," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 71, 2 (2007): 287–311; Pamela Campanelli, "Testing Survey Questions: New Directions in Cognitive Interviewing," *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology/Bulletin de Methodologie Sociologique* 55, 1 (1997): 5–17; Debbie Collins, "Pretesting Survey Instruments: An Overview of Cognitive Methods," *Quality of Life Research* 12, 3 (2003): 229–238; Gordon B. Willis, *Cognitive Interviewing: A Tool for Improving Questionnaire Design* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2004); Gordon B. Willis & Susan Schechter, "Evaluation of Cognitive Interviewing Techniques: Do the Results Generalize to the Field?," *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology/Bulletin de Méthodologie Sociologique* 55, 1 (1997): 40–66; Seymour Sudman, Norman M. Bradburn & Nobert Schwarz, *Thinking about Answers: The*

of participants are intensively interviewed, facilitating a greater depth of inquiry and understanding than larger-scale quantitative studies permit. This, in turn, allows us to hypothesize about why certain work comes to be forgotten and to offer suggestions about how to capture these data in future research.

Results

Creative cultural work is characterized by precariousness and insecurity.[16] This often means having many low-paid, short-term projects, juggling schedules, and working long hours. Such conditions indeed formed the backdrop against which our participants' forgetting occurred. The median number of creative cultural-sector jobs that they had held in the three years studied was fourteen. Their working lives in this period were additionally complicated by holding many jobs outside the cultural sector or jobs in the cultural sector that were non-creative (e.g., theatre ticket salesperson). Take, for example, Cynthia,[17] a participant with a comparatively simple schedule. In the three years in question, she worked as an assistant director on six productions, an administrative assistant for a theatre conference, a playwright, a clothing salesperson, an English tutor, a bookstore salesperson, a Census enumerator, and a decorator of Santa Claus parade floats for a pizza company. For Cynthia and the other participants, this volume of jobs came with what Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt have termed "bulimic" work hours.[18] Periods of usually ill-paying or unpaid creative cultural work were accompanied by overwork; Cynthia was not alone in reporting sustained periods of working over 80 hours per week.[19] Moreover, periods without cultural work were sources of deep anxiety. As one person recalled, "What I find hardest about the profession is … believing [that] when you're not acting, you're still an actor."[20]

Memories cannot be expected to be perfect.[21] However, research on cognition and memory suggests that the sheer volume and disparate character of jobs that the participants held could go far to help answer the question of why

Application of Cognitive Processes to Survey Methodology (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996).

16. Gill & Pratt, "In the Social Factory," 2–3; Laikwan Pang, "The Labor Factor in the Creative Economy: A Marxist Reading," *Social Text* 27, 2 (99) (2009): 55–76.

17. To protect confidentiality and anonymity, the names of all research participants are pseudonyms.

18. Gill & Pratt, "In the Social Factory," 14.

19. Bischoping & Quinlan, "Health and Safety Issues."

20. Molly, interview by Katherine Bischoping, 16 April 2011.

21. Elizabeth Ligon Bjork & Robert A. Bjork, eds., *Memory: Handbook of Perception and Cognition* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1996); Daniel Schacter, *The Seven Sins of Memory: How the Mind Forgets and Remembers* (Wilmington: Mariner Books, 1992).

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several jobs were not spontaneously mentioned.[22] Overwork, and concomitant sleep deprivation, likely exacerbated forgetfulness in the interviews; studies have identified how these factors can cause attention and memory to suffer.[23] Finally, the participants' fatigue and the intricacies of the work histories that they were required to spell out in lengthy interviews also made the data collection more burdensome for respondents, potentially reducing not only their effort to remember but also the quality of the resulting data.[24]

Against this backdrop, which makes *random* acts of forgetfulness even more understandable for our participants than for people in many other lines of work, our exploration now aims to identify characteristics of creative cultural jobs that might *systematically* contribute to their being left out of work histories.[25] The overall complexity of our samples' work lives and the nonstandard nature of most cultural workers' jobs partly explain their lapses in recall. Cultural work's lack of uniformity, particularly in its preparatory stages, makes the remembering resources used by many other workers less available to our sample. The blurred boundaries between work and leisure, the isolation of some forms of creative work, and the ambiguous nature of what constitutes a "job" leaves cultural workers without tools for remembering and narrative organizing. Yet, because cultural work often defies demarcations between work and non-work, we also explore how factors relating to the preparation and production of cultural products influence what workers remember and omit in career-history interviews. Consequently, below we explore the discourses and factors that shape what is presented and what goes unreported in workers' job histories.

This brings us to a crucial methodological point. Most participants in our study remembered individual, distinct jobs, such as the puppet show that Molly had mounted as part of a cancer fundraiser. However, participants who had larger numbers of jobs in the three-year period tended to rely on the

22. Anna Manzoni, Jeroen K. Vermunt, Ruud Luijkx & Ruud Muffels, "Memory Bias in Retrospectively Collected Employment Careers: A Model-Based Approach to Correct for Measurement Error," *Sociological Methodology* 40, 1 (2010): 39–73.

23. DeWitt C. Baldwin Jr. & Steven R. Daugherty, "Sleep Deprivation and Fatigue in Residency Training: Results of a National Survey of First- and Second-Year Residents," *Sleep* 27, 2 (2004): 217–223; Jan Born, Björn Rasch & Steffen Gais, "Sleep to Remember," *Neuroscientist* 12, 5 (2006): 410–424; Kathleen K. Ohlmann, Mary I. O'Sullivan, Phyllis Berryman & Eileen Lukes, "The Costs of Short Sleep," *Workplace Health & Safety* 57, 9 (2009): 381–385.

24. Ingrid Graf, "Respondent Burden," in Lavrakas, ed., *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods*, 740.

25. Our analysis focuses on factors that we could consistently compare across the 106 clusters of remembered and omitted *jobs* in our sample, such as duration or pay. The interviews did not consistently collect data on what participants retrospectively perceived to make one job more memorable than other. To study possible memory predictors such as age – which would have involved differentiating among the ten *individuals* in the study – would have made for quite unreliable results.

heuristic of "chunking."[26] That is, each of them clustered together similar jobs, such as twelve nights of singing in pubs, seventeen engagements as a sideshow freak, and 180 headshot photography jobs. With this in mind, and to avoid having these sizable numbers of essentially similar jobs skew our analyses, henceforth we will not be analyzing the number of *jobs* participants omitted or included, but rather the numbers of job *clusters*. Participant Althea's 180 photography contracts constitute one cluster, as does participant Molly's lone engagement as a puppeteer. In all, there were 106 clusters of jobs, of which 24 were not spontaneously mentioned.

The Irrelevance of Pay

Among researchers studying cultural work, its low pay is often its most salient characteristic.[27] The participants in our study told many stories confirming the low pay of cultural work. An actor described a role in an independent film in which he spent two days "underdressed, covered in stage blood, and standing in the snow for eight hours" for no pay.[28] Another participant worked "two weeks, eight hours a day, one day off a week" as an assistant director for a play, earning, in total, a $100 honorarium that put her hourly pay above the median for all job clusters.[29] The participants were also concerned that their families and those of their cultural worker friends had to provide funds for groceries or rent. Charles spoke of how a grandmother who had lived through the Great Depression would look at his career and ask, "'Where's the nest egg?' Part of her thought process is, 'Is he gonna be able to retire or is he gonna have to do this until he's dead?'"[30] In light of such narratives – and of a participant's claim that "I don't tend to remember the unpaid [jobs]"[31] – we expected that jobs with worse remuneration would make for greater forgetting.

In Table 2, we assess whether rates of pay and the process of "forgetting" are connected.[32] To our initial astonishment, pay and memory bore no clear or

26. Gerd Gigerenzer, "Why Heuristics Work," *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 3, 1 (2008): 20–29; Fernand Gobet, Peter C. R. Lane, Steve Croker, Peter C.-H. Cheng, Gary Jones, Iain Oliver & Julian M. Pine, "Chunking Mechanisms in Human Learning," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 5, 6 (2001): 236–243.

27. Mark Banks & David Hesmondhalgh, "Looking for Work in Creative Industries Policy," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 15, 4 (2009): 415–430; Gina Neff, Elizabeth Wissinger & Sharon Zukin, "Entrepreneurial Labor among Cultural Producers: 'Cool' Jobs in 'Hot' Industries," *Social Semiotics* 15, 3 (2005): 307–334; Taylor & Littleton, "Art Work or Money."

28. Leonard, interview by Katherine Bischoping, 22 and 24 March 2011.

29. Cynthia, interview by Katherine Bischoping, 16 February 2012.

30. Charles, interview by Katherine Bischoping, 18 April 2011.

31. James, interview by Katherine Bischoping, 2 April 2011.

32. The work histories provided by participants were often more narrative in character than quantitative. While the total pay statistics we report are based directly on participants'

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Table 2: Whether Job Clusters Were Omitted or Spontaneously Included, by Hourly Pay

Number of job clusters	Hourly pay for typical job in a cluster			
	At a loss	$0	Up to minimum wage	Above minimum wage
Omitted	3 (37.5%)	11 (26.2%)	4 (15.4%)	6 (24.0%)
Spontaneously included	5 (62.5%)	31 (73.8%)	22 (84.6%)	19 (76.0%)
Total (N=101)	8 (100.0%)	42 (100.0%)	26 (100.0%)	25 (100.0%)

Note: Pay data are missing for five job clusters.

consistent relation. Participants' better-paid jobs, for which they had received minimum wage ($10.25 per hour in 2010) or more, appeared no more likely to be mentioned spontaneously than jobs for which they had received an hourly wage of $0. To understand this in hindsight, we draw on examples of jobs that participants remembered fondly, even though they were unpaid or done at a loss. Nicole considered her first project in lighting design significant because it underscored the motto "Don't say no." She did not seem troubled to have done the work at a loss, calling it a "love project."[33] Such examples resonate with Stephanie Taylor and Karen Littleton's discussion of the ambiguous meaning of money to cultural workers.[34]

Although at times these workers might use earnings as an indicator of success, in other instances they discursively pit the pursuit of money against an ideal in which creating art is an act of love and dedication that transcends monetary considerations.[35] In the latter juxtaposition, remunerated "standard" work implies some degree of alienation, whereas creative work embodies levels of autonomy and self-actualization that are not profaned by economization.[36] Consider, for example, Molly's statement about the difficulty of combining her well-paying job as a secondary school teacher with poorly compensated acting work: "I was doing a disservice to both, not fully immersed in acting

recollections, the hourly pay statistics are frequently estimates based on the participants' narratives and on our personal familiarity with typical rehearsal schedules in the theatre (Bischoping) and for musicians and bands (King).

33. Nicole, interview by Katherine Bischoping, 11 April 2011.

34. Taylor & Littleton, "Art Work or Money."

35. Taylor & Littleton, "Art Work or Money," 280–281; see also Chris Gibson, "Cultures at Work: Why 'Culture' Matters in Research on the 'Cultural' Industries," *Social & Cultural Geography* 4, 2 (2003): 201–215.

36. Boltanski & Chiapello, *New Spirit of Capitalism*; Neff, Wissinger & Zukin, "Entrepreneurial Labor," 328–329.

or in being there for the kids."[37] The word "disservice" here positions art as an ideal to be served. Having chosen acting as her vocation, Molly continued to distinguish well-paid jobs from those involving her heart and soul: "Things that are sometimes brief and require less of me as an artist pay more than the soul-searching gut-wrenching that pays nothing. I won't refuse a project I love because it doesn't pay, but it's funny to me that a commercial that's arguably about what you look like, not your talent: that pays thousands."[38]

Thus, narratives of financial and family pressures were also narratives that typically culminated in choices valorously made for the sake of the arts. These choices could also find endorsement among family members. For instance, although Leonard's father occasionally hinted that Leonard should have become an X-ray technician, he was largely sympathetic to Leonard's creative aspirations, having himself abandoned a career in aerospace engineering to become a painter. The participants' enmeshment in social networks composed largely of other creative cultural workers meant that such stories were hailed as validating, while stories about choosing to leave cultural work were discomfiting and comparatively rare. Molly, for instance, told a story about how a friend who had decided to give up acting to become an art therapist felt "so torn, so guilty leaving, feeling they've been a failure." It is important to note how morally laden the language is here. In our interviews, stories of cultural workers who had gladly left the arts behind were rare. Telling the lone story of this genre, Molly described how an "always dark and grumpy" musician became "downright effervescent" once he left music to study computer science instead. "There's nothing wrong with not becoming an artist if it's not right for you," Molly concluded, in a sentence whose unwieldy string of negatives suggests how discursively challenging it is for cultural workers to formulate this conclusion.[39]

The Role of Job Duration

We move now to consider the relationship between job duration and workers' mentions or omissions of their work. Given the enormous complexity of cultural workers' career histories, we expected workers to be likelier to forget their shortest-term jobs and to best remember those of longer duration. Instead, in Table 3, we see that the jobs our respondents did not spontaneously mention as part of their career histories over the three-year period clump at both ends of the spectrum. That is, the respondents were indeed likely to forget their shortest jobs (those that lasted between one day and one week), but at the other end, respondents also did not spontaneously mention 40 per cent of jobs done for six months to one year and 50 per cent of jobs that lasted over a year. In

37. Molly, interview.

38. Molly, interview.

39. Molly, interview.

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Table 3: Number of Job Clusters Remembered or Omitted, by Job Duration

	Duration of jobs in a cluster					
	1 day to 1 week	1 week to 1 month	1–3 months	3–6 months	6 months to 1 year	Over 1 year
Clusters of jobs omitted	8 (37.5%)	2 (12.5%)	2 (12.5%)	1 (5.0%)	4 (40.0%)	7 (50.0%)
Clusters spontaneously remembered	24 (75.0%)	14 (87.5%)	14 (87.5%)	17 (95.0%)	6 (60.0%)	7 (50.0%)
Total (*N*=106)	32 (100.0%)	16 (100.0%)	16 (100.0%)	18 (100.0%)	10 (100.0%)	14 (100.0%)

total, these shortest and longest jobs account for 19 of the 24 forgotten job clusters (79.25 per cent), suggesting that duration is indeed an important part of the puzzle of forgotten work. As the reasons appeared quite different for short-term and long-term work, we explore each separately in the following sections.

Short, Forgettable Jobs

That short-term job clusters have a briefer time to register in participants' memories does not seem to explain why they were omitted. An example is Molly's two days of work at the behest of a friend, as an extra on the shooting of a television pilot. Because this opportunity arose suddenly, Molly had to reschedule her research interview, delaying it by about a week. She did not mention the job spontaneously in the interview; however, when probed about it, she easily remembered vivid details including her precise hours for each day of the shoot and her single line: "Halibut. It's a type of fish." Reading the transcript of Molly's interview in relation to the others in which short-term jobs were forgotten, we concluded that she might have omitted the job in part because she categorized it not as work so much as helping behaviour: "I like to help where I can and I had a weekend free. And, I get it. As hard as it is to get money for theatre, I don't know how anyone gets a film made."[40] When Molly and other participants characterized their activities as altruism, education, or the pursuit of hobbies, the corollary was that they sometimes ruled these activities out of the category of "work."

The participants' decisions about which activities to recognize as "work" often appeared to be consistent with psychological research showing that when we remember, it is the most typical information that most readily comes to mind, as well as with oral historians' arguments that remembering is not simply a task of archival retrieval but an imaginative reconstruction of the

40. Molly, interview.

past that fits it to present-day needs and longings.[41] Molly defined herself as a stage actor and throughout the interview repeatedly expressed a preference for theatre work over film and television. Her film weekend was decidedly atypical and unrelated to her primary aims.

What complicates this is that the ongoing process of generating oneself as a cultural worker in some ways involves what Charlotte Linde describes as creating "coherence."[42] In normative conceptions of how agentic subjects pursue careers, one's past is to be narratively integrated with both the present and one's projected future in a coherent, understandable fashion.[43] Had Molly spontaneously included her weekend of film work in the interview, her choices might have seemed incoherent. That these expectations are held by employers and concretized in the format of résumés also appears to condition how cultural workers understand and remember their work. Actors use a standard résumé format that packages training, jobs, and distinctive skills on a single page that is submitted with a headshot; jobs are selected to be omitted as work experience grows. Other theatre workers, who may use longer résumés, still select and organize what is most pertinent to a potential employer and can remember accordingly. When asked why she had forgotten a short-term stage management job at an independent theatre, Jen – whose career had advanced to the point that she held a long-term contract to do development work for a prestigious theatre company – replied,

> I suppose that since my role was rather small and because I didn't spend much time working on it, I don't consider it work experience. As I mentioned above, it's not even listed on my résumé or volunteer experience. […] [It] was also not something I would refer to in interviews as an example of my work.[44]

Although Jen's responses are aligned with expectations that good employees are those who purposefully establish coherent trajectories, several participants were ambivalent about whether planning and coherence were genuinely their aims or an externally imposed form of regulation. For instance, when Charles – who had worked as an actor, director, playwright, and film editor – explained why he called himself "a musician first," his vocabulary simultaneously drew upon and mocked the managerial tenor of a career coherence discourse: "So, [in music] I have a high-level mission statement and career

41. Amos Tversky & Daniel Kahneman, "Availability: A Heuristic for Judging Frequency and Probability," *Cognitive Psychology* 5, 2 (1973): 207–232; Jens Brockmeier, "After the Archive: Remapping Memory," *Culture & Psychology* 16, 1 (2010): 5–35; Portelli, *Death of Luigi Trastulli*.

42. Linde, *Life Stories*, 4.

43. Devadason, "Constructing Coherence," 207–208; Manzoni, Vermunt, Luijkx & Muffels, "Memory Bias," 40–41.

44. Jen, survey response, 18 February 2013.

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objectives and yadda yadda, and in other mediums, it's, 'I like this, it's fun,' or, 'I have no idea.'"[45]

Other participants passionately defended the values of pleasure, exploration, and uncertainty that Charles had referenced. One even refused to answer a question about her future career plans, explaining, "It makes me unhappy because I'm always wrong. […] Things don't happen as you expect them to and I want to embrace whatever happens. Being an artist is too disappointing in too many ways to be that inflexible, to have a three-year plan."[46] Another expressed a similar reluctance to discuss his rapper persona (for anonymity's sake, we use the pseudonym KoalEss): "I think you want me to talk about KoalEss. I don't think I want to because it's not fair. Everyone has a hobby. There's a possibility it may become a job […] as soon as six months from now but […] I have only started to think about it as a job since about two weeks ago."[47]

To streamline one's work history is not unusual.[48] But in these statements we can read the possibility that through using labels such as "hobby,"[49] "training," or "altruism," and avoiding the label "work," cultural workers can undertake short-term explorations throughout the cultural sector while mitigating the emotional challenges of the sector's precariousness. KoalEss can take to the stage, and Molly can observe of her television pilot experience, "I don't loathe it. I could actually have fun doing film work," without the stakes being as high as they would be for activities identified as "jobs." If successful, these activities may, in hindsight, come to be re-labelled. However, when recording work histories and collecting data on cultural work, we might miss much of the effort and labour that contribute to what eventually "counts" as work without attention to the ways in which these activities get filtered out of workers' responses.

The Puzzling Omission of Long-Term Jobs

A MORE PUZZLING QUESTION is that of why jobs of substantial duration, and especially those lasting longer than one year, should be the most forgotten by these workers. To solve it we looked for factors that these jobs have

45. Charles, interview.

46. Althea, interview by Katherine Bischoping, 9 April 2011.

47. Leonard, interview.

48. Manzoni, Vermunt, Luijkx & Muffels, "Memory Bias," 41.

49. Interestingly, "hobby" is as laden and elusive a term as "work." Gelber traces this term's rise to the Great Depression, when "hobby" was applied to forms of leisure considered to be worthwhile rather than morally threatening. According to Gelber, "by making leisure work-like, hobbies affirmed the centrality of work in the American ideology" and thus were part of the social reproduction of values beneficial to employers. Steven M. Gelber, "A Job You Can't Lose: Work and Hobbies in the Great Depression," *Journal of Social History* 24, 4 (1991): 742. In this light, cultural workers' use of the term "hobby" shows them to be caught up in a discourse of conventional work values, even as they sometimes criticize these values.

in common. Most strikingly, nearly all of them involve writing, whether of music other than for theatre productions (Charles), comic books (Leonard), short stories (Molly), or plays (Charles, Cynthia). That such work should be forgotten is in a way remarkable because of its salience to how the participants define themselves as artists and because of the considerable time commitment involved. For instance, Charles said that he had been writing music for one or two hours daily since the age of thirteen, while Leonard explained that writing his comic book involved "working on it always for about two years, even when I was sleeping or working on something else. That's how I work, my mind has to just always be there."[50]

Participants were reluctant to claim their writing projects as "work" in part because such activities fall into the overlap between creative cultural work and leisure/hobby activities that we have already seen in short-term omitted jobs. How Cynthia spoke of her playwriting at the end of her job history helps us to understand a further reason:

Bischoping:	And then what [did you do]?
Cynthia:	And then that's it.
Bischoping:	Well, you have been mentioning [that you're a] playwright though.
Cynthia:	Yeah, oh sorry, I did the – it was called [Event name] at the Gladstone Hotel where I read a selection of my plays. That was for free, that was going out as part of a playwriting group, an informal group where we'd meet up once a month and read our pieces. I also applied to a bunch of the Theatre Creator Reserve grants. And I've been sending out scripts to different theatre companies. I also do a workshop in [date], script choosing, the Fringe Creation LabSpace. It's a reasonably – like, I invited all of these people that I worked for, yeah. […]
Bischoping:	So how many hours are you spending on playwriting?
Cynthia:	It depends how much I have to work during the week, because again, I need to work … but usually about 20 to 25 hours. I have like these two days where I sit down and I just treat it like a job. Like I work 9 to 5 during the day on theatre projects.

Note Cynthia's ambivalence – or rather, the profound lack of a discourse through which she can definitively name her writing as work. In this passage, she alternates among three definitions of "work":

1. When Cynthia says that the time she spends on playwriting is contingent upon "how much I have to work," she defines "work" as a money-generating activity that is a precondition of fulfilling one's needs. When she says that she treats playwriting "*like* a job [emphasis ours]," she indicates that, by this definition, it does not fully qualify.

2. Cynthia calls her theatre writing "work[ing] 9 to 5," a definition in which the essence of "work" is that it is an effortful, structured activity that need

50. Leonard, interview.

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not generate money. That her hours are "9 to 5" – that is, the normative hours for many white-collar jobs – may be further legitimating her use of "work." In this case, Cynthia allows for the possibility that her recognition of an activity as "work" suffices for it to be called "work," a possibility analogous to saying that a tree that falls in the forest makes a sound if the tree itself hears it. This distinguishes Cynthia's second definition from the next one.

3. At the outset of this passage, Cynthia's immediate response to the possibility that playwriting be counted as a job is to warrant it by giving a list of activities in which her efforts become cultural products for an audience to consume, or are adjudicated as potential cultural products by a gatekeeping institution, such as a theatre or a granting agency. (This definition of "work" is akin to saying that a tree that falls in a forest makes a sound only if an audience is present or if the potential of an audience is being assessed.) Yet such activities are far from constituting the full 20 to 25 hours per week that Cynthia spends on her writing.

Generally, participants tend to forget work that they had done without some definite plan to bring it to an audience. As Leonard put it in explaining why he had not spontaneously mentioned his comic book writing, "I've always done writing, I've never been asked to do any writing, and I've never been paid for any writing, so I hadn't been thinking of it as a job." Nine out of 15 job clusters (60 per cent) undertaken without such a plan were forgotten, compared to 15 of the 91 job clusters (16.5 per cent) in which cultural workers either began their projects with definite plans or formalized a plan once their project was underway. Writing, like painting, is a form of creative work that is compensated largely according to a "piecework" model, with fierce competition for the rare grants that support artists while their creations are in process. Thus, time spent developing projects is easily excluded from the category of work, even though this is often retrospectively rendered necessary labour time by virtue of cultural products being exchanged or otherwise generating money. Moreover, although we have seen that creative careers necessarily involve generating, exploring, and rejecting possibilities, projects that might be considered missteps on the path to coherence may be among the most easily forgotten. An example would be Bischoping's building of a miniature planet for a video project that never took flight. The planet now lurks in a storage locker, and she did not mention the work of building it in her interview.

As we plumbed the characteristics of the forgotten long-term writing jobs further, we observed that they were largely done alone, the exception being one of Leonard's comic books, which had a co-author. When we examined whether jobs were forgotten or remembered in relation to whether they were done solo (entirely, mostly, some of the time, or not at all), we found that the cultural workers forgot to mention all five job clusters that were done entirely alone. Our data showed a similar result in relation to the extent to which a job

was done at home: five of the six job clusters done entirely at home were forgotten. These variables expand the scope of our conclusion that audiences and institutional scrutiny make cultural work more memorable: more generally speaking, social reference points are aids to memory.[51] We should also remember, as Neilson and Rossiter put it, that "the precondition of surplus-value is cooperation."[52] Thus, labour that is performed alone, or undertaken without plans to bring its product to market, tends to become memorable when it is commodified and exchanged, i.e., when the value such labour creates is put into the circulation of commodities, whether by the person who created it or by someone else intent on extracting surplus-value.

Indeed, a solid body of research on remembering and its relation to the construction of the self through narrative points to the fundamentally social character of these acts.[53] We saw numerous instances of this in the interviews. For example, Althea's memory of the list of tasks that being a theatre production assistant entails is jogged by Bischoping's memory of seeing Althea design the program:

Bischoping:	What were the assigned tasks?
Althea:	[…] I wasn't at rehearsals. I did marketing, media.
Bischoping:	I remember you did up the programs.
Althea:	The rehearsal schedule, the programs, yeah, the contact list, I organized the auditions, I think.
Bischoping:	I remember being asked to be a door person [who ensures that auditioners enter on schedule].[54]

This reconstruction, in which we see Bischoping corroborating Althea's memory of her audition-organizing work, is very much like the everyday reminiscing people do about a past shared activity. For work undertaken purely alone, rather than in what David Boje terms "the story-telling organization," the opportunities for aid in reminiscing are slighter and individual memory is less supported by social memory.[55]

In a theatre community as large as Toronto's, the chances of memory-sustaining continuities through social contact are reduced; one can easily go from

51. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*.

52. Brett Neilson & Ned Rossiter, "From Precarity to Precariousness and Back Again: Labour, Life and Unstable Networks," *Fibreculture Journal* 5 (2005), http://five.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-022-from-precarity-to-precariousness-and-back-again-labour-life-and-unstable-networks/.

53. Peter L. Berger & Hansfried Kellner, "Marriage and the Construction of Reality," *Diogenes* 12, 46 (1964): 1–23; Kenneth J. Gergen, "Mind, Text, and Society: Self-Memory in Social Context," in Ulric Neisser & Robyn Fivush, eds., *The Remembering Self: Construction and Accuracy in the Self-Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 78–104.

54. Althea, interview.

55. David M. Boje, "The Storytelling Organization: A Study of Story Performance in an Office-Supply Firm," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 36, 1 (1991): 106–126.

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project to project without seeing a familiar face. Our final observation is that such continuity could paradoxically contribute to forgetting. Our example comes from a project that four of the actor participants all forgot: the filming of a scene from the play in which these four originally met. The film version had a different director, fifth actor, crewmember, employer, location, season, hours, pay rate, and type of acting (i.e., film vs. stage). Molly explained her forgetting by saying, "It feels like part of that process, because it was a filming of a scene that we'd already done."[56] Her explanation underscores two continuities: that of the scene and that of a "we" who were involved. In this instance, the process of remembering in social terms contributed to the project's being forgotten.

Conclusion

Our study has revealed that a solid proportion of the creative cultural labours of our sample of nine emerging Toronto theatre artists would easily have been overlooked in an ordinary work-history study. Indeed, as our identification of forgotten jobs is constrained by Bischoping's knowledge of the participants and ability to check her own records, we suspect that our statistic of 13.1 per cent of jobs being omitted by this sample is an underestimate.

Against the backdrop of a field typified by precariousness and insecurity, in which participants often juggle work schedules of cultural and non-cultural work, the sheer volume of their jobs was likely a factor in forgetting. But their omissions were also bound up with discourses that render cultural work an elusive, contested, or societally forgotten category. That "creative" and "work" are understood at times to be compatible and at times to repel like magnets because they are equated with, respectively, love of art vs. love of money may explain why better-paid jobs were no more likely to be spontaneously mentioned. The propensity for the shortest-term jobs to be omitted we understand in relation to how cultural workers manage normative expectations that work histories display coherence. By labelling short-term jobs "hobbies," "helping behaviour," or "training," cultural workers are able to more freely explore new possibilities, deferring the decision about whether to hold their activities to the standards that surround the category of "work." The propensity for the longer-term jobs to be omitted we understand in terms of the "piecework" model of cultural work, in which only work on projects successful enough to find an audience (or projected to be on that path by gatekeepers) is counted as work and only at the moment of this recognition by others. Moreover, because our participants' longer-term work tended to be done in solitude and at home, the remembering of it lacked the social support that many other workplaces would provide.

56. Molly, interview.

A pair of categories – the shortest-term jobs, lasting up to one week; and the longer-term jobs, of six months' or greater duration – account for 19 of 24 of the participants' forgotten job clusters (79.5 per cent) and 43 of 47 of their forgotten jobs (91.5 per cent). These categories would impact the conclusions of cultural-work surveys in distinct ways. For our participants, the omission of short-term jobs would have comparatively little impact on estimates of the *total* hours of their cultural labour but a greater effect on their grasp of the *complexity* and sometimes-sudden stresses of their schedules. The omission of longer-term jobs would lead to substantial underestimates of the participants' total hours of cultural labour, though statements about working around the clock, even while sleeping or doing other work, certainly pose challenges to ordinary conceptions of how to arrive at such estimates.

When examined more closely, cultural-work statistics are readily seen to be discursive constructs, much as statistics about women's work have historically been shaped by discourses about work inside the home, or as statistics about mental health have been shaped by what Dorothy Smith names "the conceptual practices of power."[57] That said, we appreciate that the precariousness, overwork, and health and safety consequences that cultural workers face are concrete realities.[58] In the present policy climate, these are likelier to be mitigated if statistics about cultural work can be made more complete.

With that in mind, we have four recommendations informed by how survey researchers use in-depth interviewing to improve their data collection instruments.[59] The first is to use interview probes that target the kinds of work that cultural workers may be likeliest to forget or leave out of their work-history reconstructions. Such probes could include the following questions: Were there any other jobs you did that were completed in a day? Are there any jobs you're doing just on your own? Are you writing anything? Are you doing anything that you think of as a hobby but that might be thought of as a job?

Our second suggestion is to borrow from focus group researchers' insights about the value of ascertaining participants' discipline-specific vocabularies in order to pose questions about their experiences more effectively.[60] For instance, James, an actor in our sample, explained, "Real jobs are jobs that I don't necessarily care I have. I'm just doing them 'cause I need the money,

57. Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007); Marjorie Griffin Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); Nancy Fraser, "Behind Marx's Hidden Abode," *New Left Review* 86 (March/April 2014): 55–72; Dorothy E. Smith, *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

58. Bischoping & Quinlan, "Health and Safety Issues."

59. Sudman, Bradburn & Schwarz, *Thinking about Answers*.

60. Jenny Kitzinger, "Qualitative Research: Introducing Focus Groups," *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 311, 7000 (1995): 299.

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whereas if I got paid similar money to do performance or comedy, I don't consider that a real job. I count that as a gig."[61] In our reading of this explanation, James is asserting his autonomy from the authority structures commonly associated with standard work arrangements by using the term "gig." Asking "Have you had any other gigs you haven't mentioned?" could be a useful way of asking cultural workers about their work without implicitly siding with authority structures. This point must be given further nuance by considering how vocabularies shift within the diverse terrain of cultural occupations; to James, an actor, "gig" distinguishes cultural work from a "real job," whereas to Charles, a musician, "gig" is code for "there's no money in this."[62] Both of the above recommendations also highlight the unavoidably messy category of "work" in the cultural field. Designing survey and interview instruments that are cognizant of the many ways in which labour (paid and unpaid), as well as time and effort, can remain unrecognized will go far in capturing these activities as data in studies of cultural work and workers.

Our third recommendation is to design research that takes into account the cognitive burden of participation. Asking questions about cultural work proved unexpectedly complex and time consuming. An interview guide that we expected to take one hour to complete ended up taking two to six hours of the participants' already arduous work schedules. Attention sometimes wandered. Compensating respondents and conducting the interviews in multiple sessions would likely have improved the data quality and made it more possible for participants with extraordinarily convoluted work histories to represent those histories fully.[63]

Finally, the emotional burden of participating in a work history in which conventional definitions of work crash up against participants' values and experiences cannot be overlooked. We witnessed a participant quite saddened when, at the end of her narrative about assistant directing for an acclaimed production with prominent actors, she had to state that her work was unpaid. Another participant, at the end of the interview, called the process of detailing his work history "really really weird":

> It's just. I don't know. Summing up my career in the space of four hours like this. All of my accomplishments and all of my feelings about it. […] Trying to turn all of these things into a narrative [*makes a chest pain gesture*]. Nostalgic, that's the word, that bittersweet kind of, "oh, I guess I have done a lot. Oh, remember when I was…," uh – sad and romantic at the same time. And because I'm intentionally not a very hopeful person, like identifying those things that I do still want is weird.[64]

61. James, interview.

62. Charles, interview.

63. Diane K. Willimack, Howard Schuman, Beth Ellen Pennell & James M. Lepkowski, "Effects of a Prepaid Nonmonetary Incentive on Response Rates and Response Quality in a Face-to-Face Survey," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 59, 1 (1995): 78–92.

64. Leonard, interview.

Questions about income are generally understood to be sensitive ones in surveys, but they come with particular sensitivities for cultural workers. Questions about long-term career plans or projects that participants have come to regard as failures may similarly evoke feelings of regret or echo painful discussions about career choices with family members. Ethics procedures should include acknowledgement of these non-trivial risks, and – if compensation or incentives are to be offered – a discussion of how issues of informed consent will be addressed. Finally, it would be helpful to participants to explicitly acknowledge that a survey can reproduce discourses about cultural work, even as it attempts to ameliorate this work's precariousness.

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