

Publics and professionals in the laboratory

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Introduction

Professions	Publics
In-depth interviews with Named Veterinary Surgeons (33)	Analysis of MOP Directive on Animal Research (159 responses)
International conference on Veterinary Expertise (July 2022)	Workshop on the use of MOA in academic research (June 2019)
Public and stakeholder engagement on labelling medicines (2019 x2 , 2020, 2021)	



Professionals

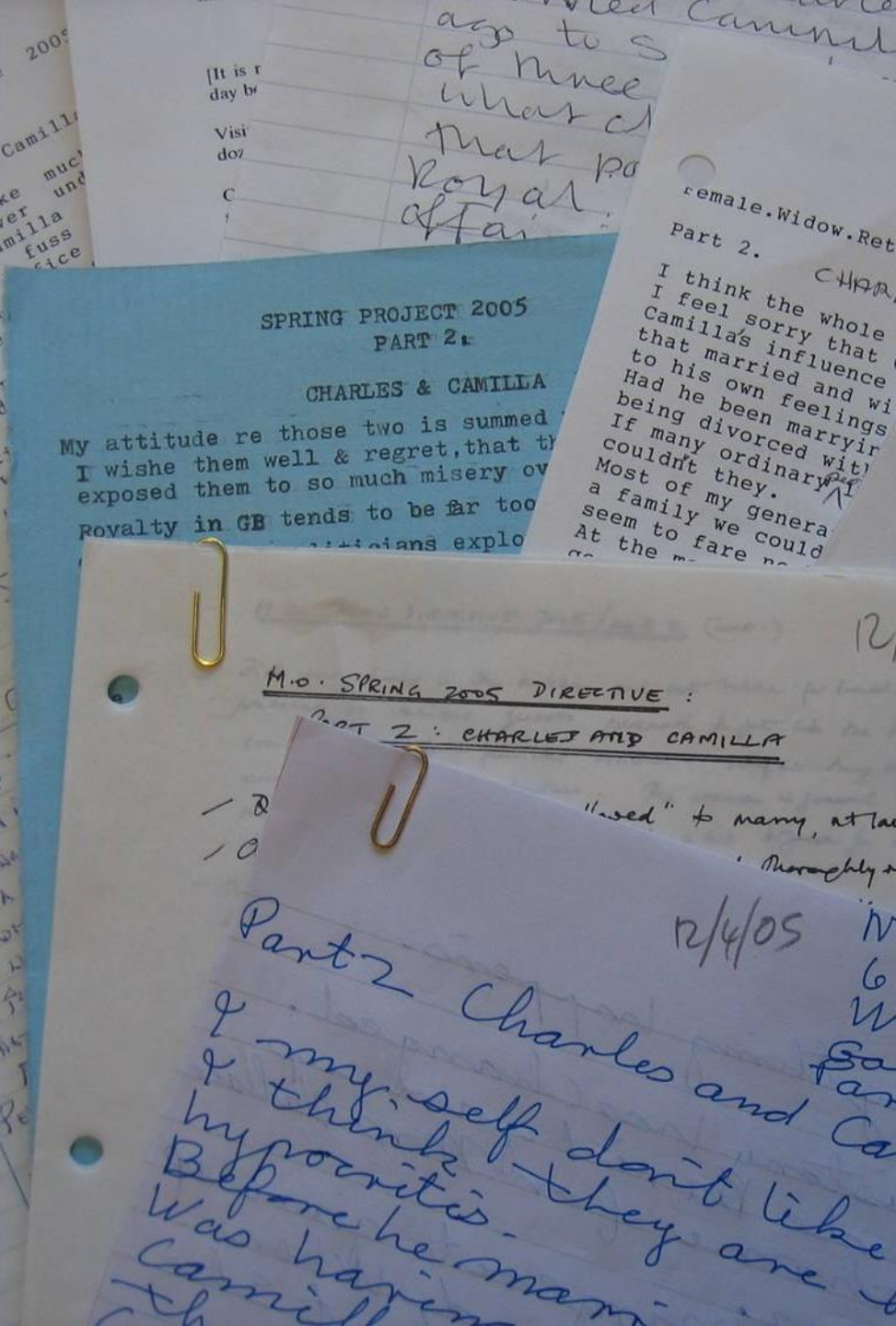
- To understand animal research, we need to understand (more) about the role of the veterinary surgeon. But, to understand the NVS, we need to understand their role *as a professional* (with the norms, laws, identities and ethical conflicts inherent in that role).
- Veterinarians can be 'refugees' from clinical practice (Anderson and Hobson-West 2022a), and construct the laboratory space as having 'more' ethical dimensions (Anderson and Hobson-West 2022b). They also perform 'advocacy' (McGlacken et al, 2023), and openness agendas (McGlacken and Hobson-West, under review) in complex ways.



Professionals

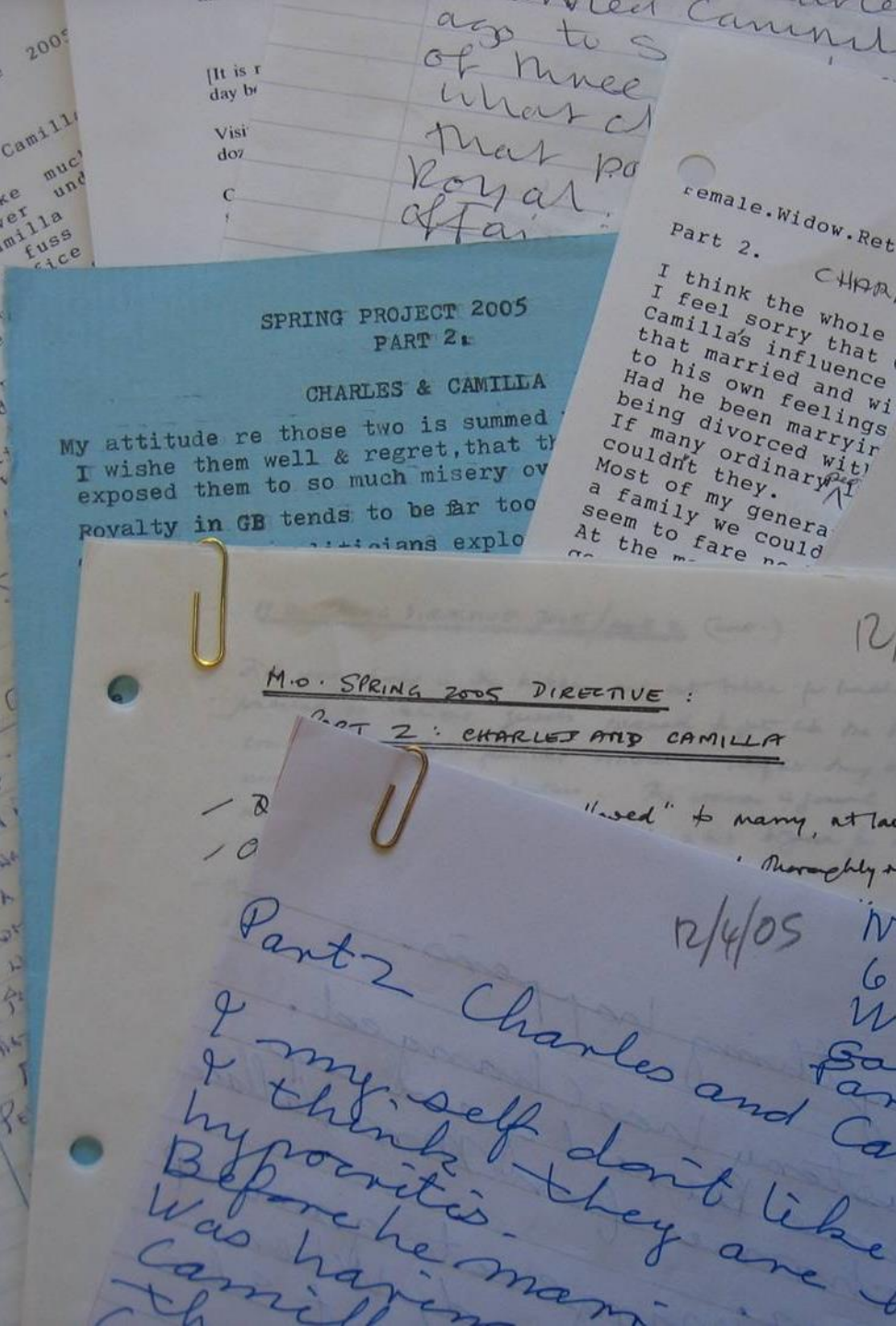
‘I was then looking for something else, something different, **something that meant more**, and I saw an advert for XXX in the Vet Record for maternity cover and I thought ‘let's give that a try’. I realised I knew absolutely nothing about laboratory animal medicine or what happened in that world because nobody talks about it of course, **in our world**, in the **outside world**.’

(‘Melody’, cited in Anderson and Hobson-West, 2022a)



Publics

- Instead of (just) asking what publics think /feel/ know about animal research, we can ask how publics are represented in discussions about animal research, or how they reflect on those representations.
- Alternative research methods suggest publics are not un- or mis-informed, not a homogenous group, nor hold fixed or extractable views. Rather, they are reflexive about animal research, their multiple identities, and change over time (McGlacken and Hobson-West, 2022). For example, publics may 'strategically withdraw' (McGlacken 2022), or articulate and question narratives of necessity (McGlacken 2023).



Publics

'I was a member of BUAV in my teens and remain entirely convinced of the argument that whilst some knowledge can be gained, essentially animal research tells you about that specific animal species and that for human medical research development we have to find ways to undertake ethical human research. However, I am a meat eater – so how do I square that with an abhorrence of animal exploitation for research purposes? Frankly I don't – and I struggle increasingly with this contradiction.'

(Mass Observer G4566, cited in McGlacken and Hobson-West, 2022)



Conclusion – reflections on ‘doing’ research

- Nexus approach requires us to demonstrate our own reflexivity (Davies et al, 2020), especially when working in teams (McGlacken, 2023b), as well as exploring it in research interviews/policy. We are citizens: patients: researchers.
- Attempting engagement prompted us to consider the ‘opportunities that we as academics arguably have to hold space for multiple perspectives and voices’ (McGlacken and Hobson-West, forthcoming)
- ‘our writing will never fully do justice to the complexity of the nexus, the messiness of our own identity positions, nor the experiences of the millions of research animals for whose lives and deaths we are somehow accountable’ (Hobson-West, forthcoming)

References

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