The participation of Research Fellow Sanja Petkovska at the Dangerous Writings symposium organized by the University of Manchester

The symposium "Dangerous Writings: A Symposium on the Ethics and Practicalities of Working with Risky Texts", organized by the Department of Criminology of the University of Manchester, was held on October 30 in the Manchester Museum. The symposium was organized by Dr Marion Vannier, an expert in criminology and criminal law at the University of Manchester. Approaching the writing from a criminological perspective, the symposium provided an overview of the research on the multiple dangers that can arise from writing, curating, and reading certain writings, while highlighting the associated responsibilities and ethical dilemmas. Although at first it might leave a different impression, outside of their numerous social and political meanings, writings have the power to influence current or even cause the legal repercussions, therefore anything but a marginal issue in criminology.

During the introductory part of the symposium, librarians and curators , experts in archiving documents of all kind texts that carry with them dangers ranging from institutional and emotional dangers some even possibly leading criminal proceedings and prosecution, Steven Hartshorne, Curator of the Science, Technology and Medicine Collection of the Manchester Museum Science, Technology and Medicine Printed Collections, spoke about the challenges accompanying the responsibility for the process of inclusion of materials in the catalogue and museum collections. Janette Martin (Manager of Research and Learning at the University of Manchester Library), Flora Chatt (Curator of the Humanities Archive of the University of Manchester Library), and Tereza Ward (Archivist and Curator the University of Manchester Library) spoke about the various aspects of risks and danger that accompany the archiving of material related to criminal acts whether individual or tied to mass atrocities, and making them available to the public. The second panel of the symposium focused on the ethical problems and challenges that researchers and academics working with dangerous texts face. Emily Turner and Marion Vannier from the Department of Criminology at the University of Manchester focused on the ethical dilemmas that arise when researchers encounter prisoners' diaries. Andriani Fili and Mary Bosworth from the University of Oxford presented problems related to the emotional consequences of collecting and analysing documents detailing the experiences of violence expressed by migrants. The panel was closed by Kate Herrity from the University of Cambridge, who discussed the ethical dilemmas associated with selecting stories for research.

Writing about and in the context of dangerous surrounding circumstances and its constituent elements was the focus of the third panel of the symposium. Lucy Campbell from the University of Edinburgh spoke about prison diaries written whilst imprisoned in Mexico and her own transformation, which resulted in a doctoral dissertation on the phenomenological and ethical dimensions of this experience transformed into academic research. The Research Fellow of the Institute of Sociological and Criminological Research, Sanja Petkovska, spoke about blogs about the prison experience and various penological aspects related to prison writings as a literary genre, a social phenomenon, and a source of research in criminology and related sciences. Jason Warr from the University of Nottingham spoke about the epistemological and methodological aspects of lived experience as a source in criminological research. The panel was accompanied by a lively discussion about the role that lived experience has in criminological research and its representation, as well as the abuse and exploitation it

may be exposed to for research purposes. The last, fourth panel focused on the reader of writings that carry with them broader societal and political dangers. Firstly, Jacopo Bernardini from the University of Pisa spoke about the social dangers depicted in the memoirs of a prefect supporter of Benito Mussolini's Italian Social Republic of. Afterwards, Jon Shute from the University of Manchester spoke about the diary written by commandant Hoess, SS and the difficulties grasping the workings of official and state denial in the face of mass atrocities.

The conference was closed with a unique performance directed by Steve Scott-Bottoms, professor of contemporary drama and performance at the University of Manchester, which was performed by three students. The performance reflected on the question whether an individual criminal, depicted as a national 'monster' could ever be humanised and seen under a different light. Uniquely performed for the attendees of the symposium, the reading opened space for future dialogue and reflection on the ways writings can elicit uncomfortable emotions and feelings, and a range of ethical and moral conflicts whilst also offering a sort of unique human experience in itself.