Editorial

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Critical Survey has throughout its existence published creative alongside critical writing. From time to time such work has included short stories and short plays;¹ while the 'Poetry' section has remained a constant element in the Table of Contents. This issue focuses on something rather different: on what the guest editors Rob Conkie and Scott Maisano call 'creative writing informed by literary criticism'.

Many academic critics have also practised creative writing, and some have gone on to prioritise the latter over the former; while some creative writers have been distinguished critics. *Critical Survey* will invest in a third kind of writing, creative writing that operates as a vehicle for exploring and articulating critical and theoretical ideas. This special issue on *Creative Critical Shakespeares* is published to coincide with the World Shakespeare Congress of 2016, whose title is 'Creating and Re-Creating Shakespeare'.²

The editors have aimed to 'integrate creative and critical modes of writing':

The aim is to examine how creative modes of writing might facilitate new or different types of critical engagement with Shakespeare. What kinds of critical insights are made possible only or especially via creative strategies? And, indeed, how do critical perspectives impel creative (re) engagement with Shakespeare?

This intervention is timely. Writing in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Margreta de Grazia announced the formation of a new 'literary category', 'Creative Criticism'.³ This has something in common with 'fan fiction', where enthusiastic readers become writers, prompted by their admiration of great writing to imitate and emulate. But it's much more about using creative writing as a form of criticism. The need to understand the work of creative practitioners like Shakespeare via criticism and theory is inseparable from the enthusiasm that provokes

his readers to emulate and imitate them. Shakespeare's creativity generates ideas and insights that criticism can examine; and our creativity can inject those ideas and insights back into the creative process. It's what you might call, adapting an influential term of Stephen Greenblatt's, 'a circulation of creative energy'.⁴

Though it may seem perverse – Shakespeare being synonymous with creativity itself – to speak of 'creating' that which is already so manifestly and abundantly created, Shakespeare criticism and scholarship is tending increasingly towards the view that every act of scholarly reproduction, critical interpretation, theatrical performance, stage and screen adaptation, or fictional appropriation produces a new and hitherto unconceived Shakespeare. We expect to see much more Creative Criticism, and *Critical Survey* intends to be at the cutting-edge of this new methodology.

Notes

1. Notable among the latter is Rowan Williams' play 'Shakeshafte' (*Critical Survey* 25:3, Winter 2013, pp. 43–87), explicitly inspired by Stephen Greenblatt's critical biography *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became 'Shakespeare'* (London and NY: Cape, 2004).

2. World Shakespeare Congress 2016, London and Stratford-on-Avon. See <http://www.wsc2016.info/>

3. Margreta de Grazia, 'Is there a Higgs boson in the house?', reviewing Graham Holderness, *Tales From Shakespeare: Creative Collisions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). *TLS*, 12 August 2015.

4 See Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: the Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).