

Kevin Curran, University of Lausanne

Caesar's Mantle: Judgment and Theatrical Virtue



Tuesday December 1st, 2020

12:15-13:45

On Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89344404388>

Abstract: This talk considers how objects contribute to the formation of virtue in public contexts. In act 3.2 of *Julius Caesar*, Mark Antony addresses the plebeians in the wake of Caesar's assassination using the latter's bloody mantle (i.e. cloak) as an object lesson in civic and moral failure. This scene is instructive, Professor Curran suggests, with respect to the theatricality of virtue, and the object-specific way in which particular things enable general moral insights. Here, virtue does not so much offer scripts for the cultivation of inner qualities as it does a community-oriented set of practices grounded in the capacity of humans to think, feel, and discern together. Virtue, conceived as a social logic or dynamic, like theater itself, provides a linked set of frameworks for physical, emotional, and ethical participation in the world.

Bio: Kevin Curran is professor of early modern literature at the University of Lausanne (Switzerland) and editor of the book series "Edinburgh Critical Studies in Shakespeare and Philosophy." He is the author of *Shakespeare's Legal Ecologies* (Northwestern, 2017) and *Marriage, Performance, and Politics at the Jacobean Court* (Ashgate, 2009) and editor of *Renaissance Personhood* (Edinburgh, 2020), *Shakespeare and Judgment* (Edinburgh, 2016), and (with James Kearney) a special issue of *Criticism* on "Shakespeare and Phenomenology" (2012). In 2017, Curran was named Distinguished International Visiting Fellow at the Center for the History Of Emotions in Australia. He is also the founder and president of the Lausanne Shakespeare Festival. Starting in 2021, Curran will be directing a four-year collaborative project entitled "Theater and Judgment in Early Modern England" funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation.