

The Perplexing Life and Afterlife of Arthur Desmond

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This seminar emerges from an accidental archival digression to trace the mysterious life of Arthur Desmond. Perhaps one of the few to have taken the pipeline from labour organiser, libertarian socialist, and Māori rights advocate, to anarchist, poet, and political agitator, turned Nietzschean white supremacist, racial primitivist and anarcho-individualist. At all times an ardent anticapitalist and steadfast racist. A 'friend' of Te Kooti, Banjo Patterson and the freethinker radicals of *fin de siècle* Chicago, his story is one that spans Aotearoa, the federating colony of Australia, and underbelly of the USA. He is still largely an unknown figure despite the significance of his subterranean cultural influence in the 20th Century: posthumously, he was a major influence on Anton LaVey (Church of Satan) and the US white supremacist movement. His influence has not yet been given full due owing to the fact that his major screed, 'Might is Right', was published under the pseudonym of 'Ragnar Redbeard'. This seminar outlines his story through what could be considered his media and publishing history, and I will explore the significance of his appropriation now through the shifting modes of ideological and technological publishing networks.

Sean McMorrow teaches in the department of Media & Communications, University of Melbourne. He is editor of *Parrhesia: A Journal of Critical Philosophy*, and author of *The Power to Assume Form: Cornelius Castoriadis and Regimes of Historicity* (Lexington Books, 2023) and co-edited volume *Marcel Gauchet and the Crisis of Democratic Politics* (Routledge, 2022).



Tuesday 15 April
3 pm (NZT)
Burns 4
QR for Zoom



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