Sources of Nietzsche’s Knowledge and Critique of Anarchism

Abstract: Hundreds of books and articles have been written on Nietzsche and anarchism, but the overwhelming number of them concern how later anarchists have viewed and have been inspired by, or have been critical of, Nietzsche. In the present contribution, I will instead emphasize how his views of anarchism changed, why he was so critical of anarchism and what were his main sources of knowledge of anarchism and the stimuli for his statements.

Keywords: Anarchism, Dühring, Socialism

Nietzsche was highly critical of the state and state power as well as of politics in general. This is probably most clearly expressed in Z I, Of the New Idol (the new idol refers to the modern state) where he e.g. writes:

The state is the coldest of all monsters. Coldly it lies, too; and this lie creeps from its mouth: “I, the state, am the people.” [...] I call it the state where everyone, good and bad, is a poison-drinker: the state where everyone, good and bad, loses himself; the state where universal suicide is called – life.¹

Nietzsche also emphasized the importance of individual autonomy. This, together with his general iconoclasm and critique of conventional morality and Christianity, has attracted many anarchists to Nietzsche’s writings. In fact, he was aware of that his critique of the state could lead to him being mistaken for an anarchist, and in a letter to his publisher Ernst Schmeitzner, on April 2, 1883 (no. 399, KSB 6.355), in which he refers to his claims about the state in Thus Spoke Zarathustra (1883–85), he comments: “By the way, concerning ‘the state’: I know what I know. One may count me among the ‘anarchists’, if one wants me ill.”

Hundreds of books and articles have been written on Nietzsche and anarchism, but the overwhelming number of them concern how later anarchists have viewed and have been inspired by, or have been critical of, Nietzsche.² In the present contribution, I will instead emphasize how his views of anarchism changed, why he was so critical

¹ Quoted according to Thus Spoke Zarathustra, trans. and introd. R. J. Hollingdale, Harmondsworth 1961. All other translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.
of anarchism and what were his main sources of knowledge of anarchism and the stimuli for his statements.

Let us examine Nietzsche’s statements about anarchism in chronological order. He makes almost one hundred explicit references to anarchy, anarchism and anarchists in all of his writings. The young Nietzsche, before he became professor at the age of 24, seems to have made no relevant reference to anarchism, or even anarchy. In fact, from 1872 until 1884 all his references are to anarchy – never anarchism or anarchists – with one exception, when he argues in *Dawn* (1881) that anarchists and socialists need strict laws since they are unrestrained, and that they would make iron-clad laws themselves if they came to power.

*The state as a product of the anarchists.* – In the lands where man is restrained and subdued there are still plenty of backsliding and unsubdued men: at the present moment they collect in the socialist camps more than anywhere else. If it should happen that they should one day lay down laws, then you can be sure they will put themselves in iron chains and practise a fearful discipline: *they know themselves!* (D 184)3

Not surprisingly, on the relatively few occasions during this long period that he refers to anarchy, equating anarchy with chaos, he is critical, but on the whole he does not show any interest in anarchy or anarchism. Nonetheless, on a few occasions anarchy is described as partially useful, for instance, for breaking something stale4 and for allowing the greatest possible individual development.5

Nietzsche’s earliest comments about anarchy do not concern politics directly, but they refer to *Bildung* and culture – they were made in connection with *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, five public lectures he held in 1872, and in notes from that time, in which he warns against anarchy.6 Nietzsche seems to always have been sceptical and critical of anarchism, but he does not begin to explicitly discuss and criticize it until 1885.7 When Nietzsche began to refer to anarchism in 1885, he was consistently critical and hostile. His very first use of the term was: “I am disinclined towards 1) socialism, since it in a naïve way dreams of the herd-idiocy of ‘the good, true and beautiful’ and about equal rights: also anarchism wants the same ideal, only in a more brutal way” (Nachlass 1885, 34[177], KSA 11.480).

Subsequently, he treats anarchism as a political movement and ideology, with about 25–30 brief statements in all, almost completely without any serious written

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4 Nachlass 1881, 11[26], KSA 9.652.
5 Nachlass 1880, 6[60], KSA 9.209, and Nachlass 1881, 11[27] and [29], KSA 9.652–3.
6 Twice in BA 2, KSA 1.681 and 683, and in Nachlass 1872/73, 24[2], KSA 7.562.
7 Once in 1884 he refers to the inner anarchistic state of affairs (Nachlass 1884, 26[417], KSA 11.263). Nietzsche’s reference seems to be both to European domestic politics and to the “inner state” of the European mind.
analysis or more detailed discussion. Frequently, Nietzsche engages in a more analytical approach in his notebooks than can be witnessed in his published works, but that is not the case for anarchism (with one possible exception, discussed below). From his notebooks, it appears as if he intended to discuss anarchism, or possibly merely use it as a symptom of modernity and decadence, for in many notes written in 1885 and 1886 he lists anarchism on several occasions as a topic to be discussed in the future.  

His most extensive discussions of anarchism in his published works can be found in *Beyond Good and Evil, On the Genealogy of Morality* and also to some extent in the fifth book of *The Gay Science*, i.e. from 1886 and 1887.

In BGE 202, Nietzsche points out:

> Morality is in Europe today herd-animal morality [...], the democratic movement inherits the Christian. But that the tempo of this movement is much too slow and somnolent for the more impatient, for the sick and suffering of the said instinct, is attested by the ever more frantic buying, the ever more undisguised fang-baring of the anarchist dogs which now rove the streets of European culture: apparently the reverse of the placidly industrious democrats and revolutionary ideologists, and even more so of the stupid philosophasters and brotherhood fanatics who call themselves socialists and want a “free society”, they are in fact at one with them all in their total and instinctive hostility towards every form of society other than that of the auton-omous herd (to the point of repudiating even the concepts “master” and “servant” – *ni dieu ni maître* says a socialist formula –); at one in their tenacious opposition to every special claim, every special right and privilege [...] at one in their mistrust of punitive justice [...] but equally at one in the religion of pity (BGE 202).

The source of these and other discussions of anarchism and anarchists in *Beyond Good and Evil, On the Genealogy of Morality* (perhaps most explicit in GM I 5, GM II 11 and GM III 26), and in the fifth book of *The Gay Science* have a single origin as I will show below.

Thereafter, in *Twilight of the Idols* (1889) and *The Antichrist* (1888), his main addition to this is to regard Jesus, the early Christians and Christianity as closely allied with anarchism. TI, Skirmishes 34, with the title “Christian and Anarchist” – added to the text after *The Antichrist* was finished – is a severe critique of Christians (and anarchists and socialists) as representing a “declining stratum of society” and as motivated by resentment and desire for revenge. Furthermore, he argues that what is often regarded as two opposing attitudes toward life and the world, and on the opposite sides of the religious and political scale, the Christian (traditionalist) and the anarchist (revolutionary) are, in fact, all but identical in the eyes of an immoral-

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8 Nachlass 1885, 36(47], KSA 11.570, 40(70], KSA 11.668, 42(1], KSA 11.691, 42(2], KSA 11.692, Nachlass 1885/86, 1(3], KSA 12.10, 2(122], KSA 12.122, and several other later notes.


ist (i.e. Nietzsche). They are both life-denying and governed by *ressentiment*. They need to blame someone or something, and to vent their suffering by revenge (or by the expression of feelings of revenge), and they can be characterized as denying and befouling the world and society, respectively. He furthermore claims in TI, Skirmishes 41, that modern instincts are turned against one another leading to individual and social anarchy and nihilism.

**General Sources of Nietzsche’s Knowledge of Anarchism**

Nietzsche seems to never have read any of the more influential of the anarchists, such as Charles Fourier, Max Stirner, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, William Godwin, Mikhail Bakunin, and Peter Kropotkin. Nor does he explicitly discuss any of them, except very briefly mentioning Proudhon and Bakunin in the early 1870s (see below). This lack of direct knowledge of the main anarchists should perhaps not surprise us, for Nietzsche’s use and critique of anarchism almost always proceeds along polemical and general lines, not by means of an analysis of specific claims (which at least sometimes is the case for pessimism and Christianity, and perhaps also for socialism and nihilism). His critique of, and comments about, anarchism, which only began in 1885, are usually more psychologically and axiologically oriented than academically or philosophically.

Anarchism is a vague and ill-defined movement, and Nietzsche reinforces this aspect of it by associating it closely with many other movements and tendencies, especially with decadence, socialism, nihilism, pessimism, Christianity, and anti-Semitism. Thus, a full treatment of Nietzsche’s relation to anarchism would have to also treat his relation to these other movements of thought, most of which Nietzsche was much better informed about.

Most of Nietzsche’s knowledge of anarchist thought probably came from one of these three sources:

1. Personal discussions: probably especially Wagner (who at least earlier had sympathised with and knew several important anarchists), but surely also with others. However, most of this would have been significantly before 1879, when he resigned his professorship and thereafter lived much more isolated. We see very little of this in Nietzsche’s writings from either before or after 1879.

2. From newspapers and contemporary journals: Nietzsche read such material in the 1870s and continued to read it in the 1880s, but less than earlier. Although we can name some of the newspapers and journals he occasionally read, we have no certain information about if and what he read in relation to anarchism in these sources.

3. Discussions of anarchism and anarchists in books he read: this is likely to be the most important source of information and stimulus for his comments, at least in
the 1880s, as I will show below, and it is the only source about which we have definitive knowledge.

Nietzsche referred to three specific thinkers as anarchists, in the sense of being thinkers and writers in this tradition; primarily Eugen Dühring, and much more vaguely Shelley and Tolstoy, and even more vaguely, early Christians and Jesus.

No single work of great importance for Nietzsche’s view of anarchism has until now been identified. Likely candidates that have been discussed are Philipp Mainländer, Dühring, Eduard von Hartmann, Dostoevsky, Turgenev and Tolstoy, but for none of them has it been shown that they have been of great importance for Nietzsche. Other likely sources that need to be confirmed are the many books Nietzsche read discussing radical politics and political economy, which I have discussed elsewhere.

Nietzsche read Wagner and Hartmann mainly in the 1870s, and Tolstoy is too late (1887/88), so they are unlikely to explain Nietzsche’s increasing criticism and concern with anarchism in 1885 and thereafter. In the 1870s, in spite of Wagner’s positive interest and at least earlier sympathy, Nietzsche makes very few references to this tradition, and these are mostly descriptive or conventional. The early 1870s is also the only time Nietzsche refers to any of the more famous anarchists, such as Bakunin and Proudhon. Much later, Georg Brandes, in a letter to Nietzsche (December 15–17, 1887,

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11 Dühring is associated with anarchism in notes Nachlass 1885, 37[11], KSA 11.586, Nachlass 1885/86, 1[226], KSA 12.60, and in BGE 204, GM II 11 and GM III 26, but he also stands behind many other of Nietzsche’s notes and statements about anarchism (as I show below).

12 Nietzsche mentions Shelley in a note from 1887/88, which is aimed more at a general tendency than at Shelley himself: “But to what does [...] the social pessimism of the anarchists (or Shelley’s) belong? [...] – is that not also signs of decline and unhealth?” (Nachlass 1887/88, 1[228], KSA 13.90) Almost all the notes in proximity to this note are quotations from, or indirect responses to, Nietzsche’s reading of Baudelaire’s Œuvres posthumes et Correspondances inédites, Paris 1887, and this note is also most likely inspired by that reading.

13 The references to Jesus as anarchist are in TI, Skirmishes 34, and in A 27, 57 and 58, and in several late notes.

14 There are most likely many minor sources for Nietzsche’s knowledge of anarchism. Until now, the most important sources seem to have been assumed to be Wagner (for early in life), Dühring (in a general sense, since Nietzsche explicitly refers to him), Hartmann (especially for possible information about Max Stirner) and Tolstoy (late in life, for 1887/88). All of them, except Hartmann, are clearly positively inclined toward anarchism.


16 In Nachlass 1873, 27[2], KSA 7.588, Nietzsche refers to a specific page in Strauss’ Der alte und der neue Glaube (1872), claiming that Strauss weakens a strong statement of Proudhon’s. Nietzsche later also mentions that, together with the Overbecks, he had met a “Herr Cook,” who was a friend of Proudhon, but he says nothing more about it. His only reference to Bakunin is in Nachlass 1873, 26[14], KSA 7.580. Its origins are almost certainly conversations with Cosima and Richard Wagner, since Cosima claims in her diaries that they discussed Bakunin with Nietzsche present, May 28, 1871: “At midday
no. 505, KGB III 6.131), says he feels somewhat wounded by Nietzsche’s comments about radical politics and defends anarchism, claiming that “the anarchism of Prince Kropotkin, e.g., is not stupid.” Nietzsche, however, does not respond to this in his reply to Brandes from January 8, 1888 (no. 974, KSB 8.227), nor does he ever mention Kropotkin. There is no discussion or treatment at all of the ideology of anarchism by Nietzsche in the 1870s, and therefore no obvious sources to be identified.

However, his reading of Dühring can explain this as we will see below. As we have seen above, Nietzsche really began to discuss anarchism only in his notes from 1885, and then in the published works *Beyond Good and Evil*, *On the Genealogy of Morality* and later ones. Is it possible to identify what caused Nietzsche to begin discussing anarchism in 1885? The answer is yes, and it turns out that it is Nietzsche’s reading of Dühring’s *Cursus der Philosophie* (1875), together with developments in Nietzsche’s own thought, that lie behind all, or almost all, of his discussions of anarchism in 1885 and thereafter, although in 1887 and 1888 a new emphasis on Jesus and Christianity was added.

To fully appreciate Nietzsche’s view and criticism of anarchism it is necessary to see it as part of the whole set of similar movements and ways of thought he closely associates it with, such as decadence, socialism, nihilism, pessimism, Christianity, and anti-Semitism.

### Dühring’s Importance for Nietzsche’s View of Anarchism

With the possible exception of Plato and Schopenhauer, the philosopher of whom Nietzsche has read the most books is the Schopenhauerian Eugen Dühring (1833–1921). He can reasonably be regarded as one of Nietzsche’s most important philosophical “teachers,” although when he began to read Dühring in 1875 – at a time when Nietzsche himself had already left Schopenhauerian views behind – he seems to have disagreed with Dühring more often than not. Nietzsche knew of, and spoke well of, Dühring, as a Schopenhauerian, already in 1868, and he may have read something by him at this time, but he only began to consider Dühring’s ideas more extensively only in 1875.17

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17 Nietzsche sent one of Dühring’s books to Cosima Wagner in 1869, probably his *Der Werth des Lebens*, see KSA 15.11. However, no reading before 1875 for Nietzsche has been identified.
That year he bought seven works by Dühring, and all but two contain annotations and were thus clearly read by him. Later, in 1884, he also purchased, read, and annotated Dühring’s autobiography *Sache, Leben und Feinde: Als Hauptwerk und Schlüssel zu seinen sämtlichen Schriften* (1882), which stretched over 434 pages. The work does not contain much explicit discussion of anarchy and anarchism, but the latter are mentioned and briefly discussed on a few pages annotated by Nietzsche. He may also have read other works by Dühring. Without implying that he actually had read the book, he makes a brief allusion, for example, to Dühring’s *Robert Mayer, der Galilei des XIX Jahrhunderts* (1880), which was about to be published in 1879 by Nietzsche’s own publisher, Ernst Schmeitzner, and Dühring was often discussed in letters between Schmeitzner and Nietzsche.

Dühring was not only a philosopher but also a political economist with socialist affiliations, and strongly nationalist and anti-Semitic, but otherwise with wide interests, including the natural sciences. In his books he attempted to give a broad summary of present knowledge, seeking to develop a philosophy that suited the modern world. His philosophy was broadly speaking positivist in orientation with clear debts to Schopenhauer, Ludwig Feuerbach and Auguste Comte. Although he retained many metaphysical tenets, Dühring denounced metaphysics and argued that philosophy must construct a worldview in accordance with the results of the natural sciences. He called his philosophy *Wirklichkeitsphilosophie*, philosophy of reality or reality-philosophy.

Of the books by Dühring that Nietzsche owned, four are specifically philosophical, but most of the others also contain philosophically relevant texts. For example, Dühring’s *Kritische Geschichte der Nationalökonomie und des Socialismus* (2nd edn., 1875) contains extensive discussions of socialism, including a detailed and hostile account of Marx’ views in the chapter “Der neuere Socialismus: Zweites Capitel: Gestaltungen in Deutschland” and also some limited discussions of anarchists and of Bakunin in the third edition of 1879.

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19 Letter to Overbeck, October 22, 1879, no. 894, KSB 5.457.


The first work by Dühring we know for certain that Nietzsche read, in great detail during the summer of 1875, was his Der Werth des Lebens: Eine philosophische Betrachtung (1865). Nietzsche wrote a commentary and summary of 50 printed pages of Dühring’s work for one of his notebooks – with the explicit intention of re-examining his own relation to Schopenhauer. Nietzsche’s copy of the book is sparingly annotated, mostly in places where Dühring discusses ressentiment and revenge. In a note outlining his intentions, which shows that his original interest in Dühring was engendered by his interest in Schopenhauer, Nietzsche wrote: “3) To study Dühring, as the attempt to sort out Schopenhauer and to see what I have in Schopenhauer, what not. Thereafter, yet again read Schopenhauer.” (Nachlass 1875, 8[4], KSA 8.129) At this time he also lists Dühring (together with Schopenhauer, Aristotle, Goethe, and Plato) under the somewhat enigmatic title “Books for 8 years,” possibly implying that he wanted to write books about these five authors (Nachlass 1875, 8[1], KSA 8.128).

Nietzsche read Cursus der Philosophie als streng wissenschaftlicher Weltanschauung und Lebensgestaltung (1875) in 1881, 1883 and 1885 (and perhaps also in 1875 and 1888). He has annotated the book fairly extensively with two different pens, and it

23 Nachlass 1875, 9[1], KSA 8.131–81. Apart from Venturelli, “Asketismus und Wille zur Macht,” it is surprising that there is no thorough examination of Nietzsche’s long excerpt and discussion of Dühring’s Der Werth des Lebens. This is particularly surprising, since Nietzsche wrote the summary at a pivotal period of his philosophical development.
24 Note that this is written during summer 1875, i.e., after Nietzsche had written his third Untimely Meditation: Schopenhauer as Educator (1874).
25 The table of contents of Dühring’s Cursus der Philosophie als streng wissenschaftlicher Weltanschauung und Lebensgestaltung, Leipzig 1875, consists of eight dense pages. Its main divisions are:

   Einleitung: a. Bedeutung der Philosophie, 1
   b. Bestandtheile und natürliches System, 8
   I. Grundgestalten des Seins, 16
      1. Elementarbegriffe der Weltauffassung
      2. Logische Eigenschaften des Seins
      3. Verhältnisse zum Denken
   II. Principien des Naturwissens, 56
      1. Ausgangspunkte
      2. Grundgesetze des Universums
      3. Organische Entwicklungsgesetze [incl. discussions of Lamarck and Darwin]
   III. Elemente des Bewusstseins, 128
      1. Empfindung
      2. Triebe und Leidenschaft
      3. Verstand und Vernunft
   IV. Sitte, Gerechtigkeit und edlere Menschlichkeit, 192
      1. Grundgesetze der Moral
      2. Natürliche Auffassung des Rechts [incl. ‘Rache als Naturgrund und Ausgangspunkt’]
      3. Bessere Menschheitsausprägung
is probably one of the most important philosophical works Nietzsche thoroughly examines and enters into dialogue with. In Dühring’s *Cursus der Philosophie* Nietzsche encountered a somewhat idiosyncratic account of many of the fields and aspects of philosophy. It is not impossible that reading the volume in 1881 was an important stimulus for his discovery of the idea of eternal recurrence, but there are also several other possible sources and none which is fully confirmed.

The late Nietzsche becomes increasingly hostile toward Dühring and frequently attacks him, including for his political and social views on socialism, anarchism, and anti-Semitism. Many, albeit certainly not all, of Nietzsche’s references to these political positions have Dühring as their primary stimulus.

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V. Gemeinwesen und Geschichte, 263
1. Freie Gesellschaft
2. Geschichtsauffassung und Civilisation
VI. Individualisierung und Werthsteigerung des Lebens, 341
1. Ursachen des Pessimismus
2. Schätzung der Lebenselemente
3. Entwicklung und Erhöhung der Daseinsreize
VII. Socialisirung aller Gesammtthätigkeiten, 386
1. Physiologische und materielle Existenz
2. Geistige Institutionen
VIII. Wissenschaft und Philosophie in der alten und in neuen Gesellschaft, 431
1. Erfahrung der Geschichte
2. Verhältnisse der Gegenwart
3. Umschaffende Grundlegung

Schluss: Studium und Entwicklung der Wirklichkeitsphilosophie, 525–560

Nietzsche’s copy of the book is fairly heavily annotated.

26 Dühring discusses the development of the universe in the second chapter of part 2 of his *Cursus der Philosophie* with the title “Grundgesetze des Universums: 1. Wesen des Naturgesetzes [...] Die wiederholten und die einmaligen Entwicklungen,” especially on pages 77–85, which are annotated in Nietzsche’s copy of the book. Dühring, who stands opposed to the idea of repetition and denied the possibility of the eternity of the world, writes: “Nun versteht es sich von selbst, dass die Principien des Lebensreizes mit ewiger Wiederholung derselben Formen nicht verträglich sind. [...] Aus dem, was zählbar ist, kann auch nur eine erschöpfbare Anzahl von Combinationen folgen. Aus dem aber, was seinem Wesen nach ohne Widerspruch gar nicht als etwas Zählbares concipirt werden darf, muss auch die unbeschränkte Mannichfaltigkeit der Lagen und Beziehungen hervorgehen können” (84 f.). This is part of a more extensive argument and discussion. Later, in 1888, Nietzsche also refers to and criticizes Dühring’s views on this question. See Nachlass 1888, 14[188], KSA 13.374. Nietzsche read Dühring’s book in 1881, and he returned to it several times, i.e. near the time of his own discovery of the idea.

27 Although in general hostile to Dühring, Nietzsche can nonetheless write to Overbeck, as late as September 14, 1884, expressing his pleasure to have met Heinrich von Stein, who regrettably was a Wagnerian, “but through the rational breeding that he has received in the vicinity of Dühring, is he well prepared for me!” (no. 533, KSB 6.531) This is repeated with slightly different words in a letter to Peter Gast, September 20, 1884, no. 536, KSB 6.535.
Nietzsche begins to use the word anarchism in the summer of 1885, and in the autumn he makes his only more detailed discussion or description of anarchism in his notebooks (Nachlass 1885, 44[8], KSA 11.707). This note is based on his reading of Dühring’s *Cursus der Philosophie* – as are probably the few earlier notes from summer 1885 in which he mentions anarchism, even though these notes are too brief to pinpoint any specific source.

It turns out that Dühring is by far the most important single source for Nietzsche’s comments on and about anarchism, and this is also true, albeit less so, for socialism, for which there are more sources, even though Dühring remains the most important one. Dühring is not a well-known name in relation to anarchism, but he was a highly influential nineteenth-century German socialist and philosopher, and prolific writer, with sympathies for anarchism. In nineteenth-century Germany, he is usually regarded as one of the most read philosophers, at least outside the universities. In the twentieth century, he was probably best known because Friedrich Engels wrote a massive book against him called *Anti-Dühring* (1878), but with the actually ironic title *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft*.

Nietzsche’s note from the autumn of 1885 (44[8], KSA 11.707), with the title “The New Japan,” begins with the unfinished sentence: “I read, with much malice in my mind, what a German anarchist [means] with the concept ‘free society’”, and the half-page note ends with Nietzsche claiming that he has seen all this, perhaps without love but also without spite, with the curiosity of a child that stands before the most colourful and fantastic peep box – presumably meaning that Dühring’s text is highly symptomatic and revealing about anarchist thought, values and psychology. In his comments and observations in the note, Nietzsche states that the description of a “free society” contains all the idealism “of a small species of herd animal.” He continues and refers to, paraphrases, quotes (the “quotes” being very loose), and comments:

“Justice” and the morality of equal rights – the Tartuffery of moral predicates
“the press,” the idealizing of it
“the abolition of the workers”
“the breakthrough of the pre-Aryan race”: and generally the oldest sorts of society
the decline of women [Dühring writes much about women and marriage, especially on forced marriages in this chapter, emphasizing equal rights for women – so the “decline” is due to Nietzsche’s evaluation; T. B.]
the Jews as the ruling race [this seems to be a response to Dühring’s explicit anti-Semitic views; T. B.]
noble and base culture [it is probably Nietzsche who makes this dichotomy, compare the whole last chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil*, “What is Noble?” – for Dühring has little to say about the noble and aristocratic; T. B.]
the scholar overvalued.

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One remarkable thing about this is that Dühring never mentions anarchy, anarchists or anarchism in the book, nor does he refer to a single anarchist – but he has a full chapter concerned with “Free Society.” What we see is Nietzsche interpreting, responding to, and also diagnosing Dühring (and anarchists generally), and probably interpreting anarchist views, values and psychology through Dühring’s discussions of free society and through his relation to the connected movements and concepts of socialism, decadence, nihilism, anti-Semitism, and ressentiment (in GM II 11, Nietzsche writes that it “blooms most beautifully among anarchists and anti-Semites”).

Nietzsche’s general view of anarchism, and his reading of Dühring, much of it summarized and implied in note Nachlass 1885, 44[8], KSA 11.707, then stands behind Nietzsche’s discussions of anarchism and “free society” in BGE 202, quoted above, which is the only time Nietzsche discusses free society apart from the note on Dühring and two sections in the fifth book of The Gay Science from 1887 (GS 356 and 377). The note 44[8], KSA 11.707 also shapes Nietzsche’s discussions of anarchism in BGE 188, 202, 203, 204, 242 and 258 as well as almost all of his references to anarchism in On the Genealogy or Morality as well as in the notes from 1885 to 1887.

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