

PHIL 3024: Existentialism  
T. Parent  
Final Project: Nietzsche prompt

On the first day of class, I had you write on the following two questions.

1. What is your dream? More precisely, what do you want to do with the rest of your life? (Avoid vague cop-outs like ‘be happy’, ‘be successful’, ‘be a good person’. Be as *detailed* as you can.)
2. In general, what is the most valuable sort of life? (Again, be detailed.)

For the final project, I want you to consider how various existentialists would respond to your answers. Here is the prompt for you to discuss what Nietzsche might say.

4. Many will say that part of their dream, or part of the best sort of life, is “helping people.” Nietzsche would have mixed feelings about this. On one hand, he thinks it is the “meaning of the earth” to advance the human species to the next level, namely, to a post-human, ultra-aristocratic species called the “Übermensch.” The basic thought is that we should strive for “excellence,” and that goes for the sort of species we should want to become.

However, when people talk about devoting themselves to “helping people,” they often have in mind the less fortunate. (Jesus: “that which you do for *the least* of my brothers...”). But Nietzsche would say that such efforts may contradict to the real “meaning of the earth,” that one might end up promoting *weakness* in the species rather than strength.

When you answered questions 1 and 2, did you say something about “helping people”? If so, why? If not, why not? In light of his general attitude, what would Nietzsche say about your reasons here? Would you agree with him or no? Why or why not?