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## Engineering 101 Paper 1

Pragmatism is the belief that the goal being worked for is important, and that emotions are not a practical part of this. Pragmatic people might not care about trivial things and are focused on the bigger picture and making measurable progress. Of the philosophical standpoints presented to us, I believe that I most closely relate to pragmatism.

I do not believe that everyone can do anything they want and that the only determining factor is their will to do it. Because I am more realistic, and consider more factors in life than just free will, I am not an existentialist. However, I am not a realist either, because I believe we do have some influence on our lives and we should not just always accept what is natural and concrete. Instead, I prefer to make a plan and follow it, so that I can have an influence on the world. I also believe in pursuing what is reasonably attainable. This means that I am not an idealist either, because I will not base my actions and thoughts on feelings of what would be the perfect outcome (Barger 42-43). Since one of the ethical frameworks we talked about in class is pragmatism, this is the framework that most closely relates to Barger's meaning of pragmatism. This form of pragmatism emphasizes that different situations call for different decisions and that the context of the situation is extremely important for decision making.

In the reactor meltdown at Three Mile Island, there were many ethical problems that were dealt with incorrectly. As a pragmatist, I would have done things slightly differently, by making decisions based upon their practicality, and would have developed a better plan for the events to come as soon as I was aware of the reactor situation. The first thing I would have done differently would be to not overly reassure the public that nothing was wrong when there could be something wrong. Instead I would tell them my theory of what I thought was going wrong, and then I would tell them the worst-case scenario as it pertains to them. After this, I would tell them that I do not think the situation would come to that point because of certain factors and facts of the situation. Because I am a pragmatist, I would develop a plan to schedule regular press conferences to update the public and give them feedback on their concerns. I would also put more evacuation measures in place, to have a process in place if the need for evacuation arose. Because it is more practical, I would also delegate more tasks so that I could view more of the big picture and make overarching decisions for the entire situation. As the situation developed, I would change my plan to better fit the new factors. As a pragmatist, I believe that change is constantly happening, due to the unpredictability of nature. This makes me able to adapt better than others who cannot factor in change to their processes. When the time of two different views on whether the core was going to turn explosive or not, I would develop two processes, one for each scenario. While this was going on I would consider more sources than just my two advisors, because I recognize that humans can make mistakes.

Many people dread the possible exposure to radiation and the stigma that follows living near a nuclear site that had an accident (Ramana 45). However, I believe nuclear power is good because it is extremely effective at providing massive amounts of power. This is due to my pragmatism and how the ends justify the means (Barger 44). This means that while I do

recognize the severity of the reactor meltdown situation and how it pertains to individuals, I also recognize the benefits of nuclear power. Therefore, I believe that a few people being worried about whether they need to evacuate is worth the benefits of nuclear power.

My pragmatism guides me to make decisions that will ultimately better the world for myself and those around me based upon the circumstances and current facts. Therefore, I consider myself a pragmatist because I like what is practical and efficient, and I believe in setting goals and making noticeable progress in anything that I do.