

Silver, Mitchell. **Rationalist pragmatism: a framework for moral objectivism**. Lexington Books, 2020. 222p ISBN 9781793605399, \$100.00; ISBN 9781793605399 ebook, \$95.00. Silver (formerly, Univ. of Massachusetts, Boston) offers an ethical theory based on philosophical pragmatism. Pragmatism has always been rationalist. Worthy beliefs require sufficient reasons to justify them, reasons appreciable and sharable by others, and justified beliefs in turn inferentially support conclusions about judging situations and actions. Beliefs about values are no exceptions. Pragmatist ethics expects worthy moral beliefs and judgments to meet these cognitivist standards. Silver argues that neither subjectivism nor relativism, long associated with pragmatism by critics, stands in the way of attaining objective moral truths through reasoning, so long as enough people over a long enough time assess all implications of their conduct. Subjectivism and relativism, like prejudice and oppression, are unintelligent refusals to care about wider consequences. This practical ethics, unlike constructivism or discourse ethics, methodically reaches social agreements for attaining common goals despite shared problems. Pluralism is an opportunity, not a roadblock. Silver then shows how this ethics is compatible with naturalism on normativity, defensible against Humean emotivism, and unaffected by post hoc rationalizings. Politics, for Silver, is the public space for practical reason's management of civic institutions in accord with objective morality.

Summing Up: **Recommended**. Lower-division undergraduates through faculty.