

# **That's Entertainment: Pragmatism and the Interpretation of Physical Theory - Laura Ruetsche**

## **Abstract:**

Pragmatist approaches tend to be leery of the idea that scientific theories represent. Insofar as an interpretation of a physical theory is an account of what it represents, pragmatist leery extends to interpretation as well. I'll make a case for a variety of pragmatism that embraces the interpretation of physical theories. Central to the case is the claim that, when it comes to living physical theories such as the quantum theories making up the Standard Model of particle physics, what physicists do with those theories is inseparable from how they interpret them. What prevents the claim from calcifying into a version of scientific realism anathema to pragmatism is another claim about living physical theories: afflicting upon them a unique interpretation, a single univocal account of what they represent that would provide the content of realist belief in those theories, impedes their capacity to function as physics. But if belief is the wrong attitude to adopt toward interpretations of living physical theories, what's the right one? I propose a candidate (anti-realist, pro-pragmatist) attitude: "entertainment."