

Analyzing Supernatural Claims using Peirce's Definitions of "Real" and Other Related Terms
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The term "supernatural" is vague and ill-defined. This paper seeks to establish a more concrete definition of the term. I argue that "supernatural" can be best defined as the inverse of the term "natural." The definition of "natural" is: having existence in the real and observable universe. In order to establish the existence of such a universe, I describe "basic realism," the belief that there is a real world. Additionally, in order to clarify what can be meant by "real," I turn to Charles Sanders Peirce's definitions of the word and a few other related terms.

I conclude that the definition of "natural" is equivalent to Peirce's definition of "real." Consequently, the best definition I can give for "supernatural" is: not real. This definition, however, contradicts different supernatural claims and does not reflect how the term is commonly used. With this in mind, I analyze a set of hypothetical supernatural claims that could conform to the various combinations of Peirce's definitions. I conclude that the term "supernatural" is impossible to pin down concretely within Peirce's definitions and is ultimately not useful when used to distinguish between claims made within them.