

*Abstract*

This essay claims that nature should be regarded as an essentially contested concept whose semantics is shaped by relating it to contrasting perspectives of the unnatural, the supernatural, and the cultural. It then explores the concept of nature as it was shaped through Western history of thought and demonstrates how the traditional concept of nature was disintegrated and systematically transformed by modern science. The paper ends with a discussion about whether or not this transformation has fundamental and universal significance and how theology might refer to a concept of nature which is realistic and yet is not prone to naturalistic reductionism.