

# Perennial Philosophy: What Is It and Does It Exist?



A PRESENTATION BY  
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# What Is Perennial Philosophy?



## Two Inherent Characteristics:

- (1) Eternal - without beginning or end
- (2) Universal - applicable to all

# What Is Perennial Philosophy?



## Four Core Suppositions:

- (1) The natural world is a demonstration of the supernatural.
- (2) Human beings are capable of attaining immediate knowledge of that *other* realm.
- (3) In addition to the egoic mind state, human beings possess a transcendental Self which is of and like the supernatural.
- (4) This identification with the *other* realm is life's chief purpose.

# Application to Religious Studies



Perennial Philosophy is believed by some to be the uniting factor behind all religions.

- Eliade – Patterns, Nostalgia for Paradise
- Paden - Universalism

Others disagree.

- Geertz - Particularity
- Durkheim - Separation

# Is There a Perennial Philosophy?



## Three Arguments For:

- (1) Moral Perspective  
Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperative  
[18<sup>th</sup> century Prussia]
- (2) Psychological Perspective  
Carl Jung's Collective Unconscious  
[20<sup>th</sup> century Switzerland]
- (3) Scientific Perspective  
Ken Wilber's Transcendental Unity  
[21<sup>st</sup> century America]

# Is There a Perennial Philosophy?



## Three Arguments Against:

- (1) Experientiality  
Steven Katz [20<sup>th</sup> century American author & professor]  
Mystical experiences vary by culture.  
Furthermore, religion is based on doctrine, not experience.
- (2) Pragmatism  
Richard Rorty [21<sup>st</sup> century American philosopher]  
Stresses the socially practical over the introspective theoretical.
- (3) Noneternalness  
Martin Heidegger [20<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher]  
How can we know it's eternal?  
Philosophy is temporal and historical.

# Sources



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# You Decide!



## Questions and Discussion



# Thank You!



**The End**  
of this presentation

**The Continuation**  
of term paper compilation

**The Beginning**  
of a new worldview