

we think of the universal triangularity, i.e. that which all triangles have in common and by virtue of which they are called triangles. Every particular triangle has a particular size, for example, but when we classify it as a triangle we abstract from this particular size feature and focus attention on a property which it shares with similar figures; it is this common property which philosophers call a UNIVERSAL.

The terms are also well defined in Runes: DICTIONARY OF PHILOSOPHY. But where they meet us is in the interesting discussion of what is real in life...and so worthwhile.

The Schoolmen who worked on this project developed into at least three classes. Many of them made significant contributions in other areas as well but for the moment we are chiefly concerned with their philosophical stance on the matter of reality and the concern for universals. The three basic positions are defined thus:

REALISTS: The universals exist antecedent to individual objects or particularizations and therefore are independent of them. The Latin term is ante rem, "before the thing". To those in this school the objects did not mean a whole lot because they were not "real". The ideal or form, the aesthetic concept, is real and it will have much more meaning. Realism, on this line, is closer to Christian idealism.

MODERATE REALISTS: Universals exist only in connexion with the individual object(s). The descriptive term is in re, "in the thing" and the physical objects have more meaning while the ideal, although not totally denied, has no separater existence from the object. In a practical setting, what you have is all you have.

NOMINALISTS; Universals exist only in thought and are only resemblance names for abstractions. The philosophic term is post rem (after or following the thing) and in a crude way it means the