The discussion hinged on the matter of **universals**
defined as concepts or matters that are true in
all ages and circumstances and so are worthy of
pursuit. A simple definition/discussion of these
is taken from Edwards and Pap: A Modern Introduc-
tion fo Philosophy.

> Plato was apparently so perplexed by the
> fact that we can know universal
> propositions independently of experience
> that he had to invent a myth in order to
> account for it; the soul remembers visions
> it has enjoyed in a former disembodied
> life. Other philosophers, less poetical
> than Plato, tried to account for it in
> terms of a distinctin between two kinds of
> entitites, a distinction that played a
> vital role in Plato's philosophy:
> "universals" (Plato called them "forms",
> Locke "ideas") and "particulars". When we
> look at blackboards we see particular
> triangles drawn but when we prove the
> Euclidean theorem about triangles, we think
> of the universal triangularity, i.e. that
> which all triangles have in commond 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 particu-
> lar size feature and focus attention on a
> property which it shares with similar
> figures; it is this common property which
> philosophers call a **universal**.

> I can only hope that is clear!

> (Philosophical terms, incidentally, are
> well defined in Rune's Dictionary of
> Philosophy).

The Schoolmen who were occupied with this project
fell into three basic classes:

REALISTS: The universals exist antecedent to in-
dividual objects of particularization and
therefore are independt of them. The Latin term
ante rem "before the thing" describes this. To
those of this school the objects did not mean a
wholed lot because they were not "real." The
ideal or form, the aesthetic concept was reality
and what really counted.