In interpreting Duns Scotus, Copleston argues that, "in its widest signification," being "simply means that which includes no contradiction, that which is not intrinsically impossible." So "[b]eing in its widest sense includes that which has extramental being and that which has intramental being, and it transcends all genera" (2:500). But, then, if Hartshorne is right, that a concept that, as such, has intramental being cannot mean simply itself, but can only mean something at least possible, and so something having extramental being, what Scotus says is the same, in effect, as saying that "being in its widest sense" includes the possible as well as the actual and the necessary, and excludes only the impossible or the self-contradictory.

But is it also the same to say, with Scotus, that a concept is univocal if affirming and denying it of the same subject at the same time yields a contradiction and to say, with Hartshorne, that a concept is literal in meaning if affirming or denying it of any subject is a matter not of more or less, but of all or none? So far as I can see, the answer is affirmative. The two formulations are either two ways of saying the same thing or else they necessarily imply one another.

Example: "God exists." and "Creatures exist." Both statements are univocal in Scotus's sense in that both to affirm and to deny either statement yields a contradiction. And both statements are literal in Hartshorne's sense in that affirming or denying either is a matter of all or none, not simply of more or less.

But what, in Scotus's sense, is the *ratio formalis* of "exists"? All he seems to say is that "is" on any of its uses means simply "opposed to nothingness or not being" (502). God and creatures both exist in the univocal sense that both are something and so opposed to nothing. But whereas God exists necessarily, without the possibility of not existing, creatures exist merely contingently, if they exist at all.

This means, for me as well as for Hartshorne, of course, that, whereas God exists noncompetitively or unconditionally, on any conditions whatever, creatures exist merely competitively or conditionally, on some conditions only. To which I should also wish to

add that "to be" and "to exist" are not simply the same, any more than they are simply different, but are related analogically. "To be" applies to anything real, abstract as well as concrete, creaturely as well as divine. "To exist," on the contrary, applies, in the proper sense, only to something concrete and, in its strict or narrow sense, only to something individual, as distinct both from other types of concretes, i.e., events and aggregates, and all abstracts, ordinary as well as extraordinary. I should want to hold further that for something "to exist" in the strict sense also means that its essence = individuality is somehow actualized in some concrete event(s).

* * * * * * *

If in Scotus's view, a concept is univocal if it cannot be both affirmed and denied of the same thing at the same time, he also says that a concept is univocal if, when it is employed as the middle term in a syllogism, no fallacy of equivocation is committed in drawing the conclusion. In this formulation, he is presumably thinking of Henry of Ghent, who holds that the predicates we apply to God and to creatures are equivocal, even though the two meanings may so resemble one another that one word can be used for both. Scotus agrees with Henry that God is not in a genus. But he does not agree with Henry's denial that the concept of being is univocal as applied to God and creatures. He argues, on the contrary, that it is compatible with God's simplicity that there should be some concept common to God and to the creature, although this common concept is not generically common because it is transcendental. Not to allow this, he insists, would be to admit that every argument from creatures to God is fallacious."[U]nless we can attain a common middle term with a univocal meaning, no argument from creatures to God is possible or valid" (504). Indeed, "[i]f Henry of Ghent's doctrine of the equivocal character of the concept of being as applied to God and to creatures were true, it would follow that the human mind was restricted (in this life at least) to the knowledge of creatures alone; agnosticism would thus be the consequence of Henry's theory" (501 f.).

In this context, one can appreciate Scotus's doctrine of the *ratio formalis* of an attribute. Any metaphysical inquiry concerning God involves considering some attribute

and removing from our idea of it the imperfection attaching to it as it applies to creatures. In this way, by abstracting or prescinding from its imperfection, we attain an idea of "the essence o[r] *ratio formalis* of the attribute," which we can then predicate of God in an eminent, supremely perfect sense (*perfectissime*). Thus the *ratio formalis* of "wisdom," for example, is "what wisdom is in itself" (504). If it is denied that we can thus form an idea of its *ratio formalis,* as well as that of other attributes, the only conclusion is that we cannot arrive at any natural knowledge of God. All our knowledge is founded on our experience of creatures, and yet we cannot predicate of God any attribute simply as we know it from them. Therefore, unless we can form an idea of the *ratio formalis* of an attribute, and thus attain a common middle term with a univocal meaning, no inquiry concerning God can possibly be successful.

As for Scotus's position with respect to Aquinas's doctrine of analogy, three points are pertinent. In the first place, he asserts, in agreement with Aquinas, that God and the creatures are utterly different in the real order. In the second place, he accepts Aquinas's analogy of attribution, in that he admits that being belongs primarily and principally to God, creatures being to God as *mensurata ad mensuram, vel excessa ad excedens,* and also saying elsewhere that *omnia entia habent attributionem ad ens primum, quod est Deus*. But, in the third place, he "insists that analogy itself presupposes a univocal concept, since we could not thus compare creatures with God as *mensurata ad mensuram, vel excessa ad excedens*, unless there was a concept common to both. . . . Even those masters who deny univocity with their lips, really presuppose it. If there were no univocal concepts, we should have only a negative knowledge of God, which is not the case" (505). Moreover, knowledge that something is an effect of God does not suffice to give us knowledge of God. Although all creatures are essentially dependent upon God, we possess no natural knowledge of God unless we can form univocal concepts common to God and creatures. "'[A]ll beings have an attribution to the first being, which is God . . . ; yet in spite of this fact there can be abstracted from all of them one common concept which is expressed by this word *being*, and is one logically speaking, although it is not (one) naturally and metaphysically speaking,' that is, speaking either as a natural philosopher or as a metaphysician" (505 f.).

* * * * * * *

A couple of apt quotations from Scotus:

"Whatever [predicates] are common to God and creatures are of such kind [*sc.* transcendental and outside any genus], pertaining as they do to being in its indifference to what is infinite and finite" (Wolter: 2; Copleston translates: "Whatsoever things are common to God and the creature are such as belong to being as indifferent to [in]finite and finite" [503 f.]).

"God cannot be known naturally unless being is univocal to the created and uncreated (*Deus non est cognoscibilis a nobis naturaliter nisi ens sit univocum creato et increato*)" (Wolter: 5).