central claims—crucially that the human face is the self-revelation of absolute otherness—are forged by explicitly refusing the limits of what Husserl or Heidegger would recognize as phenomenality. Mensch does not quite take either of these paths, but instead engages Levinas as if promoting a conception of human being that contests, above all, the Heideggerian conception precisely in order to improve it. How do the world and everything in it give themselves to us, if a relation with the Other would come first? What makes up the interior life of need and enjoyment, and what is the relation between all of that and the seemingly opposed desire by which we would suspend need and enjoyment in favor of selfless care for a stranger? What constitutes speech and language, and how does one come to words such that what would otherwise be a lifeless, neutral grammar is taken up in living communication? *Sein und Zeit* contains important answers to such questions. So, too, does *Totalité et Infini*, though with somewhat less influence.

All of that said, Mensch's book is, as his subtitle informs us, a commentary. His progression is also that of Levinas himself. After a sketch of Levinas's relation to Heidegger, one is introduced to the metaphysical principles that phenomenology will be called on to verify. Desire, truly as desire, is metaphysical, which is to say it is always already aimed from within the world beyond the world; and it is in and through the face of the other person that metaphysical desire meets its proper aim. Between metaphysical desire and the self-revelation of absolute otherness would be the life of a subject called to responsibility. This then is the field of investigation for Levinas's existential analytic, and Mensch devotes seven full chapters to exploring it. But this is more than an introduction. He is too well informed and too philosophically sophisticated merely to paraphrase what he finds there. Instead, one is led toward a lasting appreciation of the stakes between ethical metaphysics and fundamental ontology, and thus toward a lasting assessment of Levinas's philosophy, through close work among contesting accounts of the things themselves.—Jeffrey Bloechl, *Boston College*

NOVOTNÝ, Daniel D. *Ens rationis from Suárez to Caramuel: A Study in Scholasticism of the Baroque Era*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013. xvii + 296 pp. Cloth, $75.00—Daniel Novotný's *Ens Rationis from Suárez to Caramuel* provides a lucid outline of the discussion of "beings of reason" among several scholastics of the Baroque era. Novotný ably shows that these debates concerning *entia rationis* exemplify a philosophically robust consideration of "non-real objects." Extending far beyond the debates between Meinong and Russell, the topic of nonreal objects reaches back at least to Plato's own wondering about the phenomenon of speaking about nonbeing (for instance, in central

passages of the *Sophist*). Likewise, as Novotný notes in his text, fourteenth-century medieval authors such as Francis of Mayrone and Hervaeus Natalis (among others) reflected at appreciable lengths on the "being" that applies to *entia rationis*, which appear to be a kind of nonbeing in comparison to *entia realia*.

Novotný's text opens with a discussion of the historical problem of situating the Baroque period of scholasticism as a unique historical period in philosophical history, clearly distinct from medieval, Renaissance, and early modern philosophy. After this, he provides a lucid exposition of the general problems associated with *entia rationis*. With admirable clarity, he succeeds in making the topic intelligible to the reader, showing that these discussions are not mere scholastic quibbles. This chapter well summarizes the vast thematic and historical studies one can find in authors such as Theo Kobusch, Antonio Millán Puelles, and John Doyle.

In the body of the book, Novotný recounts three positions regarding *entia rationis*—objectualism, fallibilism, and linguistic eliminativism. He frames the discussion in terms taken from the fifty-fourth disputation in the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* of Francisco Suarez (1548–1617). Three chapters are devoted to discussing Suarez's position, which is taken as a classic example of objectualism. The first two of these chapters discuss the nature and causes of *entia rationis*. This requires a discussion of *esse obiectivum*, a topic quite important in late medieval discussions of cognition and relation. Related to this, Novotný carefully outlines Suárez's own account concerning the ways we can say that causality does and does not pertain to "entities" that are, in fact, distinct from all "real" being. In the final chapter on Suárez, Novotný summarizes the Baroque author's positions regarding the traditional division of *entia rationis* into negations, privations, and relations of reason. In this chapter, Novotný also registers his own critiques of Suárez's position, the details of which are best left to the reader of Novotný's text. Following this discussion of Suarez, he considers three post-Suarezian paradigms concerning the nature of *entia rationis*.

Novotný first considers the Jesuit Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza (1578–1641). Although Hurtado's words can superficially appear to agree with Suárez, his conclusions are unique and quite different from those of the *Doctor eximius*. He denies the standard division of beings of reason proposed by Suárez and reduces all *entia rationis* to false acts of knowledge, primarily to necessarily false mental propositions (though, leaving room for the formation of incompatible wholes by the first operation of the intellect). Understandably, Novotný calls Hurtado's overall position "fallibilism."

Following this, Novotný takes up the work of the pair of Franciscans, Bartolomeo Mastri (1602–1673) and Bonaventura Belluto (1600–1676). Interestingly, in the course of carrying forward intuitions within a broadly Scotistic framework, these two Franciscans provide an outlook quite amenable to that of Suárez—far more so than does Hurtado's thought. Novotný believes that these two thinkers correct Suárez's use of real

nonbeing in his ontology, thus clearly delineating *ens rationis* and *ens reale* as the only two ontological possibilities. This chapter introduces discussions pertaining to objectualist views of *entia rationis* that most clearly link to earlier medieval discussions of these topics—certainly due to Scotus's pivotal role in the history of discussions surrounding *esse obiectivum / esse intelligibile*. Mastri and Belluto undertake insightful discussions concerning extrinsic denominations, the ways that beings of reason are formed, the causality involved in forming *entia rationis*, the attributes of beings of reason, and the question of the potentiality and actuality involved in the being of *entia rationis*. These topics have many important links to late medieval discussions of *entia rationis* as well as to Baroque discussions of supertranscendentals (a topic always close at hand to the topics discussed throughout the text).

Finally, Novotný considers the novel opinions of the Luxemburgian-Czech Cistercian Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz (1606–1682). Caramuel's unique position focuses on the role of language in extrinsically granting unity to incompatible essences. Understandably, Novotný terms this a form of "linguistic eliminativism," for the ontology involved is quite bare. The details of Caramuel's though are intriguing, including his artificially constructed metaphysical language. Given that objectualism is the standard account usually presented by Thomists, Scotists, and Suarezians, Lobkowitz's writings provide a uniquely fertile ground for considering new aspects of *entia rationis*.

As Novotný indicates explicitly, these topics are related to a variety of phenomena in human experience. Discussions concerning *entia rationis* have implications regarding topics pertaining to logic, cultural and technical artifacts, as well as the way that human actions constitute the domain of "moral being." Novotný's chosen primary figures do not discuss these matters at great length. However, Novotný himself provides salient remarks connecting these figures' positions to aspects of this broader domain of philosophical problems, though he could have provided slightly more detailed documentation regarding late medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque discussions of second intentions, *esse morale*, and the problem of evil. Discussions of these topics often gave birth to intricate reflections concerning nonbeing (and, in consequence, *entia rationis*).

Still, one text cannot attempt to do everything. On the whole, Novotný's book is a very lucid exposition (and summarization) of quite difficult topics discussed by generally unknown Baroque authors. To those interested in the surprisingly dense domain of nonbeing, one should take Novotný as a guide into the Baroque discussions of *entia rationis*.—Matthew Minerd, *The Catholic University of America*