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## Book Review: The Metaphysics Of Creation: Aquinas's Natural Theology In Summa Contra Gentiles II

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*The Metaphysics of Creation: Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa contra gentiles II*, by Norman Kretzmann. New York/Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002. Pp. 498. \$45.00 (paperback).

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This book by the late Norman Kretzmann is the second of what was to be a three volume study of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa contra gentiles*. (Kretzmann passed away before completing the third volume.) Largely a commentary on the second book of *Summa contra gentiles*, it is a worthy sequel to Kretzmann's *The Metaphysics of Theism* (Oxford, 1997), which treated *Summa contra gentiles* I. The same careful, systematic exegesis and analysis of Aquinas's text displayed in *The Metaphysics of Theism* is evident throughout this book. While Book I of *Summa contra gentiles* is concerned with God in himself, Book II extends this exploration through a study of God's activities, specifically, in Aquinas's words, "the emergence of created things from him," or as Kretzmann puts it, "from God to everything else." This includes, in addition to the act of creation, the diversity of nature and the existence of minds or intellects within nature. Following Aquinas himself in the *Summa contra gentiles* II, Kretzmann's book devotes many more pages to the act of creation (chapters 2 through 5) and the existence of intellects (chapters 7 through 10) than it does the "origin of species" (chapter 6). But even so, this short section, which includes Kretzmann's superb treatment of Aquinas's "non-creationist" reading of Genesis 1, goes a long way toward reconciling classical theism with evolutionary theory and should prove to be a rich resource for contemporary theists engaged in the creation-intelligent design-evolution debate.

Indeed, the attempt at making Aquinas's natural theology relevant to contemporary discussions in philosophy of religion and philosophy of mind is a principal aim of this book. Kretzmann makes this aim clear in his first chapter where he also articulates his understanding of natural theology as that branch of philosophy that attempts not only to establish the existence and nature of God on the basis of reason and experience alone (the focus of *The Metaphysics of Theism*), but also (and this is the burden of *The Metaphysics of Creation*) attempts to show that many other areas of inquiry are best pursued from the perspective of a theistic metaphysics. Kretzmann succeeds in showing the contemporary relevance of Aquinas's theistic metaphysics by assiduously attending to Aquinas's arguments concerning the issues of God's action, power, freedom, intellect and will, as well as the relationship between mind and body in human beings, evaluating their cogency, and linking them to the relevant contemporary philosophical literature. Kretzmann is largely sympathetic to Aquinas's arguments, although he finds a number of problems throughout and he is not chary of arguing for an alternate view. For example, in the first part of the book he offers a sustained argument for a necessitarian account of creation (the view that God creates by necessity) against Aquinas's non-necessitarian account. Similarly, in the third part of the book, while Kretzmann is well-disposed towards Aquinas's view, *pace* Platonic soul-body dualism, that the human being is a "metaphysical hybrid" of intellect and body, he is critical of Aquinas's arguments for the incorruptibility of the soul after death.

Regardless of whether or not Kretzmann agrees or disagrees with his positions, the Aquinas that emerges from this book is worthy of serious attention by contemporary philosophers of religion and philosophers of mind. As a result, Kretzmann goes far in achieving his larger aim of reviving natural theology and a theistic metaphysics within which one can best solve the problems of philosophy. This is, no doubt, a hard sell, but whether we are buying it or not, we owe Kretzmann a large debt of appreciation for his efforts. His book will stand as an excellent resource for both scholars of medieval philosophy as well as those interested in the engagement of theism with some of the fundamental philosophical issues of the day.