



# The Metaphysics of Creation: Aquinas's Natural Theology in *Summa contra gentiles* II

*Norman Kretzmann*

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About Aquinas: St Thomas Aquinas lived from 1224/5 to 1274, mostly in his native Italy but for a time in France. He was the greatest of the medieval philosopher/theologians, and one of the most important of all Western thinkers. His most famous books are the two summaries of his teachings, the Summa contra gentiles and the Summa theologiae.

About this book: Norman Kretzmann expounds and criticizes Aquinas's natural theology of creation, which is 'natural' (or philosophical) in virtue of Aquinas's having developed it without depending on the data of Scripture. The Metaphysics of Creation is a continuation of the project Kretzmann began in The Metaphysics of Theism, moving the focus from the first to the second book of Aquinas's Summa contra gentiles.

Here we find Aquinas building upon his account of the existence and nature of God, arguing that the existence of things other than God must be explained by divine creation out of nothing. He develops arguments to identify God's motivation for creating, to defend the possibility of a beginningless created universe, and to explain the origin of species. He then focuses exclusively on creatures with intellects, with the result that more than half of his natural theology of creation constitutes a philosophy of mind. Kretzmann gives a masterful guide through all these arguments. As before, he not only expounds Aquinas's natural theology, but advocates it as the best historical instance available to us.

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