

***Meta-Physis* and the Natural Law: Golf, Gardens, and Good Business**

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Golf, Good Business, and the Natural Law

I have elsewhere explored how the natural-law theorist's approach to the concept of business would involve developing the notion of a "business" in its central case or focal meaning.¹ Much like the project to arrive at a definition of "law" in its central case in *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, this involves intentionally relating the activities one does or can do in business with the deliverances of the precepts of the natural law, which point to the important things in life that we ought to consider achieving.² Put more plainly, a natural-law businessman, if there were one, would draw on the professional insights he has into business and think through how these insights can be applied to realize the choice-worthy, important things. A conception of business like this would in turn be more important and sit more centrally in comparison with the peripheral instantiations of the term *business*; it would more fittingly be said to be "good business."

Of course, much depends on one's grasp of these important things. A natural-law theorist or a natural-law businessman would point to the natural law that identifies these important things, namely, the basic goods of life: knowledge, aesthetics, friendship, marriage, religion, and sound ethical behavior, and so forth.³ A focal vision of business (whether had by the business leader or by politicians governing a locale with businesses operating) informed by these basic values would not allow the business's activities to directly attack these goods, or would at least protect the right of businesses to not attack these goods should they so wish.⁴ For example, bakeries should not be forced to bake products that

celebrate wrongdoing, thus being complicit in promoting untruth and practical unreasonableness, and legislators should protect freedom of religion—topics that Ryan Anderson and Sherif Girgis discuss well.⁵ Instead, businesses should be attentive to opportunities to foster the basic goods.⁶ One would imagine that it would even explore ways these goods can be promoted or facilitated in its business design, organization, CSR activities, retreats, and so on, amidst the necessity of profit making and attentiveness to market prices, which in turn promote the sustainability of a business providing jobs and goods and that themselves go toward promoting these basic goods.⁷

The talk of basic goods then prompts the question: How are these basic goods known? How do we come to understand the natural law, which prescribes these basic goods as choice-worthy? My suggestion in this article is that the grasping of the natural law can be facilitated by a sport that many business leaders play during leisure or with other business partners: golf. In this article, I explore how the beautiful greens of golf courses as well as the apparent futility of the game-play afford us with opportunities to grasp the natural law.

Meta-Physis: Showing the Natural Law

We can begin by appreciating why a discussion such as this is important. Recall that the natural law is self-evident (*per se nota*). Saying that the natural law is self-evident *qua* underived from a metaphysics or account of human nature describes the knowing process in a negative way and tells us how the natural law is *not* grasped.⁸ But how then, positively, is it grasped? There is the reference to how one moves from inclination to an intelligible grasp of the relevant good, and the point made regarding how upon probing one often ends up with one of these goods as the point of one's actions without intending to seek any further thing or state of affairs.⁹ Finnis also supplies a dialectical argument in defense of the good of knowledge, pointing out how any serious denial of that good involved a performative self-contradiction, but that was just for one of the many goods.¹⁰

Still, my own reading of Aristotle,¹¹ John Deely's semiotics, and Martin Heidegger gives rise to a few exploratory ideas concerning the grasping of the natural law and the importance of "nature," which I suspect can usefully complement what already is in the literature detailing our coming to be conscious of the natural law's normative prescriptions.¹² Indeed, I would suggest that in some important sense, our grasp of the natural law comes after (*meta*) "nature" (*physis*). In unpacking these ideas below, I will relate them to the game of golf and suggest how golf can make important contributions to the grasping of the natural law.

Emerging Nature: Those Awe-some Greens

Consider the *Metaphysics*, in which Aristotle speaks of a “wonder” (or “astonishment” or “awe” [*thaumazein*]) that begins the philosophical comportment, specifically the wondering at a puzzle, leading to an interest in the knowledge of its answer for its own sake, to the extent that one then focuses with absorbed interest on studying the puzzle: “[I]t is because of wonder that men both now and formerly began to philosophize....”¹³ The quest to know for its own sake is different from the (previous) pursuit of knowledge for the sake of one’s needs in relation to survival. Wondering (say, at a puzzle) leads to our interest in knowledge for its own sake, over and above knowing for survival. Such wondering is not itself the quest for knowledge for its own sake, but comports one for the latter.

Aristotle sounds like he is equating wonder with an emotional fascination with whatever one is ignorant about. Here, we have a *desire* to know for its own sake, different from the desire to survive, but still a desire nonetheless. Inspired by this desire, the quest for knowledge for its own sake proceeds. Aquinas’s own commentary, following Aristotle closely, also focuses on the way in which philosophy began because men were motivated to escape ignorance, and this might also give the impression that Aquinas had in mind some kind of emotive desire like curiosity:

For when we see certain obvious effects whose cause we do not know, we wonder about their cause.... [S]ince wonder stems from ignorance, they are obviously moved to philosophize in order to escape from ignorance. It is accordingly evident from this that “they pursued” knowledge, or diligently sought it, only for itself and not for any utility or usefulness.¹⁴

Indeed, Beatrice Zedler suggests that for Aquinas, philosophizing could be motivated by something like fear—namely, the fear of ignorance. In which case, wonder is merely a kind of fear: “[a]ccording to Thomas, wonder is a species of fear following upon the apprehension of something exceeding our knowledge and sometimes exceeding our ability to know it.”¹⁵

Whereas, I suspect there could be something more than the substitution of psychological drives at work. Unhelpfully, neither Aristotle’s text in that section of the *Metaphysics* nor Aquinas’s commentary on it distinguish for us “the quest for knowledge for its own sake following wonder,” understood as (1) “the quest for knowledge for its own sake *motivated as such by some kind of desire or emotion*” as distinct from (2) “the quest for knowledge for its own sake that follows from a comportment categorically different from the motivating presence of some feeling.” While both seek knowledge as an end in itself rather than for

instrumental uses, the first (1) is powered, as it were, by a kind of desire or emotion, whereas the second (2) is the result of some mental state that is something categorically quite different from feelings.

There is no need to deny that some psychological drive to escape ignorance—whether curiosity or fear—and hence “wonder” in these senses, is at play. The question I would ask is whether the experience of wonder points to something else apart from such an emotive drive. Aristotle’s reference in chapter 1 of the *Metaphysics* to all men *desiring* to know and “the *delight* we all take in the senses ... and most of all the sense which operates through the eyes,”¹⁶ would seem to signal that he is thinking only of such emotive or preferential drives at work during wonder. Wonder spurs the quest to know, and when appeased, particularly through the sense of sight, one experiences delight. Wonder, therefore, on a natural reading in the context of all the references to sensations and feelings in the Aristotelian corpus, sounds like something emotive as well, akin to a feeling of fascination.

What also interests me, however, is Aquinas’s commentary on that passage which, unlike Aristotle’s, speaks of “desire” in a way that relates not specifically to delight of any kind but refers rather to “desiring” in the broader sense of “tending toward” and in this sense, of the desire of matter for form and also of the intellect for knowledge:

[E]ach thing naturally desires its own perfection. Hence matter is also said to desire form as any imperfect thing desires its perfection. Therefore, since the intellect, by which man is what he is, considered in itself is all things potentially, and becomes them actually only through knowledge, because the intellect is none of the things that exist before it understands them ... so each man naturally desires knowledge just as matter desires form.¹⁷

Even if we take Aristotle and Aquinas to be admitting the presence of an emotive drive to seek knowledge for its own sake, it seems to me that for Aquinas at least, there is room to accommodate the interpretation that the desirous-tending-toward knowledge for its own sake is not driven merely by our feeling-desires. For here Aquinas speaks of the human intellect itself tending toward (desiring) knowledge just as it seeks its own perfection and that view of “desiring” would not need to point merely to some emotive basis. So we can accept Aquinas’s vision of beings, including the human intellect, “desiring” *qua* “tending toward” its own perfection, and be a little more nuanced when unpacking what may be involved in the genesis and processes of such desiring *qua* tending toward. John Deely’s musings on the event of the philosophical and metaphysical consciousness of the human being is helpful here:

The human animal ... goes beyond the relation of objects to the self by sometimes asking what are these objects quite apart from any biological interest which we find in them, insofar as they exhibit an independence of relations to us. It is true that such an inquiry perforce exhibits an "interest" on the part of the organism pursuing it. But the possibility of *such* an interest is consequent upon, rather than constitutive of, a unique objectification.... Usually when we speak of the "needs and interests" of an organism we are speaking of something that arises from the physiology of biological heritage. Here we are speaking of an "interest" which, to be sure, presupposes a psychological capacity, but which presupposes more fundamentally a unique objectification in the absence of which the "interest" has no possibility of arising.¹⁸

Again,

The human *Innenwelt* begins, as does any animal *Innenwelt*, by giving rise to an objective world, an *Umwelt*, dually rooted in the interaction between physical environment and biological organism. But the action proper to understanding within this *Umwelt* begins by loosening this tie whereby biological heritage wholly determines the organization of the objective world or *Umwelt*.¹⁹

What Deely is referring to here (and in other related works), as I read him, is the beginning of the human ability to think and enquire after things for the sake of knowing them for their own sakes, and part of the process includes, among other things, the loosening of the vice-like grip of the animal's (*zoö-semiotic*) way of perceiving the world, where everything is related according to whether it is useful, harmful, or irrelevant for our survival. Of course, the desire for survival and fear of death would be a major driving force for relating the world to ourselves in this way. But the point Deely is making here is that when the human mind enters the picture there is a detachment from this manner of relating to things, and with that detachment or loosening comes that other uniquely human ability to relate objects to themselves, that is, to be interested in objects for their own sakes—for example, for our sheer knowledge of them without any intention to instrumentalize our interested knowledge of them for any other utility in relation to our biological needs or survival.

If that is so, I would suggest that a more complete notion of *thaumazein* that begins any philosophical inquiry into knowing things for their own sake is to understand *thaumazein* not merely as a type of feeling or emotion, whether desire or fear. Instead we should understand *thaumazein* to be a proto-philosophical *event* which, amongst other things, marks that point in our consciousness wherein we are able to achieve some measure of *detachment* and disentanglement from what drives our survival and biological needs and their way of relating our experience

of the world. And there could well be emotions attendant or even consequent, whether fear or desire. Yet it remains that *thaumazein* signals that point where there is a kind of *prior* suspension of or fracturing of the imperative of desires that drive us to survive and to steer our thinking to relate our experiences primarily as useful, harmful, or irrelevant to our biological needs and survival.

But the achievement of *thaumazein* ought not be restricted to the emergence of thinking in the speculative order, of knowing for its own sake, and ultimately the emergence of speculative science. After all, if *thaumazein* and its *detachment* from the compulsion of our sense appetites and preferences and their manner of relating the world to ourselves now allows our attention to fall on or be steered by the interest to seek knowledge for its own sake, then this is simply because that event we call *thaumazein* is, by way of the said detachment, allowing our attention to fall on or be steered by *other* interests or directives (the quest for knowledge being one of them) besides those relevant to our survival, whatever these other interests or directives may be. This suggests that where there are other intellectual principles or directives at play, these too would now be more visible to our consciousness. These other important first or basic principles in our minds would now foreground. These must include the first principles of practical reason, the natural law.²⁰

Of course, there is a tendency in the natural-law tradition to overstate the contrast between preferences and reasons, which I do not want to repeat here. It must be said that the grasp of intelligent ideas during understanding is very much dependent on what sensation and perception gives, and understanding is but a further transformation of the *Umwelt*, or the species-specific life-world, and it is by building and drawing on that that the human life-world, the *Lebenswelt*, in which there is the manifestation of understanding, emerges.²¹

Still, just as the compulsion to know instrumental facts for the sake of survival is loosened and backgrounded, and the quest to know for its own sake is therefore in its place, foregrounded, so also, as we experience a greater detachment from other drives instrumental to our biological survival and related principally to our biological needs (or what Deely calls “cathexis”²²), we then grasp more clearly the normative direction of the natural law or the first principles of practical reason—namely, the gentler but no less important direction to pursue other goods in life for their own sakes and as intelligible ends understood as terminal *reasons* for action and not as mere emotions or feelings. In a sense, the natural law is “shown,” in the same way the stars show when the brightness of the sun is dimmed. John Finnis, we recall, identified some of these goods: knowledge, life, friendship, the experience of beauty, the skillful play in work or performance,

the need to experience a moral integration between one's feelings and reason, and some kind of religious or overarching worldview, to name a few.

In short, *thaumazein*, I think, does not just mark the stage of detachment that clears our way to pursue knowledge for its own sake; it also allows to be brought to mind those various intelligible goods that make up human flourishing and hence are worthy of our pursuit if we are to experience fulfillment apart from mere existence.

What gives rise to this sense of wonder and its clearing? Not merely the confrontation with a puzzle or *aporia*, I think. Here I want to chart out some lines of thought that may need further critical discussion, but which nevertheless can indicate the ways in which golf plays a part in our thinking about the natural law and business. Martin Heidegger, as Richard Capobianco's reading points out, reminds us of the way in which wonder follows from our engagement with nature or *physis*, understood as the *coming-into-presence-and-then-passing-away-of-things*.²³ Capobianco's commentary on Heidegger is lucid on this point:

We must endeavour, [Heidegger] tells us ... to return to the "originary meaning of nature as *physis*" that prevailed in the ancient Greeks, and accordingly, this means understanding Nature-*physis* as the "emerging-and-letting-come-to-presence of what is present".... At the core of [the Greeks'] experience of *physis* "is the *overabundance*, the *excess* of what presences. Here one should recall the anecdote of Thales: he is that person so struck by the overabundance of the world of the stars that he was compelled to direct his gaze towards the heavens *alone*. In the Greek climate, the human is so overwhelmed by the presence of what is present, that he is compelled to the question concerning what is present as what is present. The Greeks name the relation to his thrust of presence *thaumazein* [wonder, astonishment] (Heidegger, *Four Seminars*)."
Nature-*physis*-Being, is this "thrust of presence," and we are astonished before the "overflow of presence".... Even in Plato and Aristotle, this remained the case, according to Heidegger.²⁴

It is important to grasp that the overflowing or excess of that presence-ing of things refers not so much to the magnitude or volume of that thing which emerges before us, but refers instead to its infinitude in relation to a limiting meaning or meanings. Like an act that cannot be received in limiting potency, it appears to escape the confines of our cognitive grasp. Hence Capobianco adds:

Furthermore, the *presence* of things to us is never exhausted by meaning: a friend, the sea, the tree, the flower—all that present themselves to us—are always more than how we present them. Cezanne painted Mont Sainte-Victoire more than sixty times by several accounts, but never once did he think he had

exhausted its showing, its manifestation. Similarly, we can never say enough about even one of Cezanne's paintings of the mountains! All things show themselves to us and address us—again and again—and they are always more than their sense or meaning. Presence always exceeds, overflows, meaning and therefore is not reducible to meaning.²⁵

Thus, as things become present—say a flower entering full bloom, or a child emerging into a toddler from a mere infant²⁶—their presence-ing, their becoming more real and actual, yet also addressing us again and again, could inspire in us that sense of wonder. At other times, an aesthetic scenery coming into view, attractive and calling our attention, flooding our consciousness in succession and therefore yet another manner of the presence-ing of *physis*—say the long stretch of sand set against the blue waves of a lagoon, or else the landscape of mountains invading one's consciousness repeatedly as we approach—does the same.

Or for that matter: *the garden of a golf course*—even better set against a beautiful coast line, or flanked by lush forest-hills and mountains, say those courses in the Riau Islands in Bintan or Batam in Indonesia—could certainly inspire wonderous awe. Robert Fudge and Joseph Ulatowski have a relevant discussion of the beauty of gardens and golf courses in the intriguing collection, *Golf and Philosophy: Lessons from the Links*, edited by Andy Wible. In “On the Beauty and Sublimity of Golf,” they write,

Linksland, public commons linksland, and the stateside links-style courses resemble English gardens by virtue of their more natural state. An appreciation of these courses must forfeit perfectly manicured greens, fairways, and rough. Built golf courses and designer golf courses are far more well-groomed than their linksland and links-style relatives and more closely resemble French gardens. The standards of beauty that apply to them therefore differ. But despite these differences, all golf courses create an atmosphere that serves as the foundation for the aesthetic appreciation and can transform a round of golf into something similar to a garden stroll.²⁷

So, consider the beautiful landscape coming into view as you come to that signature hole set against the sea, or each distinct, beautiful garden-course opening up to you at every hole while you peer down from the tee box toward the greens and the pin. The suggestion that the experienced presence-ing of nature-*physis* can stimulate the experience of *thaumazein* is a suggestion that may be true in varying degrees from person to person, depending on the character of the person involved, assuming entrenched habits and so forth. Yet if Heidegger's suggestion and the testimony of Heidegger's Greeks regarding the co-relating connection

between nature-*physis* and *thaumazein* is anything to go by, then it seems to me the presence-ing of a beautiful golf course as it opens up to your consciousness holds much promise for recovering the experience of *thaumazein*, and with that, the foregrounding of the prescription of the natural law *et al*, as said above.

Passing Nature: The End of the Game

But it is not merely the presence-ing of stunning, awe-inspiring natural or manicured gardens and landscapes in golf that is relevant to the grasping of the natural law by way of the *physis-thaumazein* or that “nature-wonder” connection. Thus far mention has been of the emergence of *physis* in golf, that arrests us, and dislocates or fractures *cathexis*’s hold on us. Yet in *physis* is also the “passing away,” which is equally relevant—or at least I would think so. For the death and the dying of *physis* also comports us in ways that foreground the truly important and essential—precisely by comporting us to think practically, even amidst the juxtaposition of speculative modes of thinking. This means that, whereas the “coming into presence” of *physis* and wonder frees us from the shackles of *cathexis* so that in that clearing speculative and practical modes of understanding and thinking can foreground, the “passing away” of *physis* now steers us to reflect seriously, evaluatively, practically, and not merely speculatively. When death approaches, when things come to an end, and when we become acutely aware of our own temporality, amidst our purely theoretical pursuits, we are nudged to ask (at times accompanied by angst and anxiety)—is this all worth it, and what else is worth (the rest of) our (precious and limited) time?²⁸ What then is the point or end of it all?

As it happens golf can be quite useful as a fruitful retreat in which one meditates about one’s temporality, backgrounds speculative thinking, and comports into practical thinking. For a start, as one walks toward the first hole and tees off, the course opens up to the golfer in its stunning beauty, but as one approaches the ninth or eighteenth hole, depending on the length of the game for the day, the golf course then begins to close, and the window of golfing opportunity approaches its own passing away, and its closure. Although the stunning gardens of themselves do not pass away, they are soon hidden from our view, as the holes pass us by, and the experience of being immersed in wondrous beauty also passes. Hence, there is sometimes the insinuation of an analogy between the way in which the wonderful game enters its closure at the last hole, and the reminder that life comes to an end for all of us—a reminder about the reality of death that Martin Heidegger invites us to take a little more seriously for ourselves, not for morbid reasons, but simply so that we would take more seriously the life we have before

it inevitably ends.²⁹ Sometimes, knowing that we do not have something forever invites us to value something much more, instead of taking it for granted. Here, a bit of human psychology is at work, for better or for worse.

Still, the connection between golf and our temporality is not merely analogous but more intimate: The time between the first and the (ninth or) eighteenth hole, anywhere between one-and-a-half hours to four hours, is a window of opportunity to play golf, but it is also a window of opportunity to do something else in a counterfactual, other possible world, now being traded off when one plays golf and walks the fairways. If one were a god, perhaps it would not have mattered. Yet as mortal beings, our time is not an unlimited resource. Hence when one trades off hours of doing other things so as to play golf, one directly draws on the temporal resource one has—a resource that is, as said earlier, very finite.³⁰ If so, sooner or later, one is going to realize that such time spent using one's lifetime had better be fruitful and not futile. Such considerations in fact come rather naturally, in part, as I will detail below, because of our confrontation with the potential futility of the fun play of golf.

Ironically, we are often attracted to golf simply because it is fun, even if also occasionally frustrating. The play of hitting a ball into a hole across or around different kinds of obstacles has its own entertaining appeal alongside the aesthetics of the course. Indeed, golf is defined by the hitting of a ball into a hole. While pleasurable and entertaining for a while, the game of golf can soon appear rather pointless. Is that all there is? What, spend hours merely hitting a ball into a hole? One does not live forever, and this time could have been spent doing something else.

Yet, as I have suggested elsewhere, the apparent purposelessness and pointlessness of the game-play in golf is particularly useful and also transformative, as it affords the interrogation into the point of the game and the play.³¹ Soon when it is not that fun, one asks, what are we doing here? What is this business of putting a ball into a hole? It seems futile and pointless. Indeed its pointlessness stares at you. Its futility is glaring. Its uselessness is arresting. Yet this moment in encounter with glaring pointlessness is precisely that which invites us to think about the point of this game, if any: "What is the purpose here?" By that one means: "What is (or are) the choice-worthy goal(s) to be pursued in this activity called golf?" Here one is comported into practical thinking.

I might add that without its glaring pointlessness that comports into practical thinking might not have worked that well. Consider, in contrast, those times one is engaged in everyday useful things. Such everyday busyness is not pointless, and so does not arrest one's thinking, and does not stop one to think. One carries on doing. And oftentimes, as one continues in one's busy doings,

it is speculative thinking that continues to foreground: here one continues to execute plans, to think efficient ways and better means to realize given goals, just as a mathematician thinks speculatively best and shortest ways to connect two dots on a plane. But when one's doing comes across as glaringly futile, one might perhaps stop and think. Here, golf's pointless futility stops us, fractures our everyday speculative thinking's busy direction, backgrounds the latter and foregrounds practical thinking and begs for its advice, by posing the question: "Is this really worth following through?"³²

If one finds nothing of worth, one gives up the sport soon, except to revisit it on occasion for sheer fun in the future. One cannot waste one's life playing golf. Yet the other approach to play is indeed to locate choice-worthy goods in it, for some goods do show up: It is great exercise for a healthy life; there is the mastery of skillful play; again, the conversations that help one learn about the other's true character and also nurture understanding and friendship amongst players; the taming of anger and the exercise of perseverance which tempers emotions for the sake of reason's direction; the appreciation of the surrounding beauty; a time of peace and quiet, walking between holes, to voice one's aspirations and worries to God (if one so believes), and the building of familial bonds when husband (man), wife (woman), and child spend time together without interruption from technology and other trifles. One's mind is adverted toward the things and states of affairs that are worth seeking—and one spots them and seeks them in that mess of phenomena we capture with the label "golf." Only if we find these goods, and fortunately do find these goods, can playing golf continue and also continue to make sense. Only thus are those few hours spent well. Yet the insight that spending these few hours well in golfing means achieving through "golf" these various choice-worthy goods is also an expression of, and a showing of, practical thinking's judgment that these are the things that constitute human flourishing and the truly important things worth seeking: the good of life, of play, of truth and friendship, of practical reasonableness, of aesthetic experience, of religion and of marriage. Hence, the natural law becomes visible through its direction to pursue the various basic goods.³³

Here one is reminded of the "experience machine" thought experiment, where one is offered a lifetime of pleasure being plugged into the experience machine.³⁴ There, one confronts the futility of an existence of sheer pleasure (fun) without other attending (unsimulated) goods, and hesitates to plug in, worrying about the loss of other goods besides the experience of pleasure. Such worry—such concerned practical thinking—is at the same time an expression of, and a showing of, that concerned practical thinking's judgment that these other goods ought to be sought in any life worth living. That grasp of important things worth seek-

ing and achieving in life is potentially further heightened by the prospect of the complete termination (because one is being plugged in “*for life*”), and hence, death of one’s life as one knows it, that is, not plugged into a machine and floating in a tank of water, say. With the irreversibility of the death of one’s current life, one’s mood is very serious—this is not mere empty speculation. In the context of the need for serious deliberation about what truly matters, practical thinking kicks in. Yet here also is where it sometimes fails: As a *thought experiment*, and unlike really playing golf and really investing one’s finite temporal resource, one knows at the back of one’s mind that all this is just the contemplation of an abstract possibility, and so one cannot take it seriously enough. In this case, one does not comport seriously in practical thinking but instead indulges in the speculative consideration of whether such plugging in is logically possible. The thought experiment loses its punch and efficacy for showing the natural law.

Leisure for Leaders, Golf for Good Business

In this short article my thoughts have been on how golf can be relevant to the showing of the natural law, which in turn is theoretically important for developing *central case conceptions* of what a (good) “business” might mean. In this way, my aim was to relate golf and business by alluding to golf’s contribution to our reflective conception of what a business in its focal and hence truly important and praiseworthy sense might be, distinguishable from corrupt, poor, and peripheral senses deserving of criticism. I suggested that the experience of stunning beauty in golf can inspire *thaumazein*, which fractures the human being’s fixation on biological motives focused on survival, so that the direction of practical reason, including the natural law, can better foreground. At the same time, the golfer’s concern to spend time well against the backdrop of his own temporality also helps him or her think more seriously about how to spend well that time on the course, thus showing the important goods to which natural law points. Such showing of the natural law could well be characterized as “meta-physi-cal” events, if I may, since these are events that occur after *nature-physis*, taken as the emerging-and-passing-away of things. Of course, nothing in this means golfing replaces business or leadership schools. Yet, it does seem to me that businessmen and organizational leaders could benefit from golf during leisure (or else, a golfing business retreat with suitable reflective seminars)³⁵ to better recollect and grasp important values that enable them to steer their businesses in directions that promote human fulfilment, whether this is within their own organizations, or for the market which they service.

Notes

1. See Jude Chua Soo Meng, “Doing Business: Professional Work and Eutrapelian Play,” in *Handbook of Virtue Ethics in Business and Management*, vol. 1, ed. Alejo Sison, Gregory R. Beabout, and Ignacio Ferrero (Netherlands: Springer, 2017), 223–38.
2. See Jude Chua, “Doing Business,” 223–38.
3. See Jude Chua, “Doing Business,” 223–38. See also John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 86–90.
4. See Samuel Gregg, “New Classical Natural Law Theory, Virtue and the Economy,” in *Handbook of Virtue Ethics*, ed. Sison, Beabout, and Ferrero, 1:239–48.
5. See, for instance, their responses in *Debating Religious Liberty and Discrimination*, ed. John Corvino, Sherif Girgis, and Ryan T. Anderson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).
6. See J. I. Pinto, “The Firm and Its Common Good: Cooperation, Virtuous Work, and Friendship,” in *Handbook of Virtue Ethics*, ed. Sison, Beabout, and Ferrero, 1:249–56.
7. See Jude Chua Soo Meng, “What Profits for a Man to Gain: Just (the) Price (of the Soul),” *Journal of Markets & Morality* 8, no. 1, (Spring 2005): 7–26, for a discussion of how a natural-law theory of just pricing relates sympathetically with market-price signals.
8. See Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, 33–49.
9. See Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, 60–62.
10. Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, 73–75.
11. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1. 982b 11–983a 23, also published together with Aquinas’s commentary in Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, vol. 1, trans. John P. Rowan (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1961), 22–25.
12. A brief sketch of aspects of these ideas also appears in the magazine, *NIE News* (2018), which I further develop here.
13. See Aristotle 1. 982b 11–983a 23
14. See Aristotle 1. 982b 11–983a 23
15. Beatrice Zedler, *Aquinas Lecture 1983: How Philosophy Begins* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1983), 8.
16. See Aristotle 1. 982b 11–983a 23
17. Aquinas, *Commentary*, 7.

18. John Deely, *What Distinguishes Human Understanding?* (Indiana: St Augustine Press, 2002), 75–76, emphasis original; see also idem, *Purely Objective Reality* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 40–41.
19. Deely, *What Distinguishes Human Understanding?*, 111, emphasis original.
20. The natural law seems to me to be a kind of *syntactical* language in the sense meant in semiotics. These are the structuring grammar of the human mind, which our cultural languages (English, Mandarin, Spanish, etc.) presupposes. See John Deely and Susan Petrilli’s work, which builds on Thomas Sebeok.
21. See John Deely, *What Distinguishes Human Understanding?*, 110–19.
22. See John Deely, *Purely Objective Reality*, 6.
23. Richard Capobianco, “On Holderlin on ‘Nature’s Gleaming,’” in idem, *Heidegger’s Way of Being* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 35–36.
24. Richard Capobianco, “The Greek Experience of Nature-Physis-Being,” in idem, *Heidegger’s Way of Being*, 43–44.
25. Capobianco, “The Greek Experience,” 42.
26. I might mention in passing that the ongoing experience of the conception and birth of a child and experiencing him, engaging and educating him, seeing him coming into presence, just as the child qua *physis* is born, grows, acquires abilities and develops, and with his presence-ing abundantly addressing you, is another example of how *physis* leads to the wonder that breaks down the grip of *cathexis* and so shows the natural law. As a parent, one inevitably grasps the important things—and perhaps this important basic good called “marriage,” which we grasp under reason as worth seeking but distinguishable from the *cathexic*, romantic, and/or lustful feelings that encourage community, procreation, and the survival of the species. See Jude Chua Soo Meng, “Showing What ‘Marriage’ Is: Law’s Civilizing Sign,” *Semiotica* 209, Special Issue: Law’s Hidden Meanings (2016): 249–75.
27. Robert Fudge and Joseph Ulatowski, “On the Beauty and Sublimity of Golf,” in *Golf and Philosophy: Lessons from the Links*, ed. Andy Wimble (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 23.
28. See Jude Chua Soo Meng, “Being Written: Thinking the Normative in the EdD,” *London Review of Education* 16, no. 1 (January 2018): 56–61; also related is Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 296–304.
29. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 302.
30. See Jude Chua, “Being Written.”

31. See Jude Chua, “Golf: Playing Where It Lies (A Poem with Commentary)” in *Athanor*, ed. Susan Petrilli (forthcoming).
32. See Jude Chua, “Golf.” For a discussion that seeks to disentangle the confusion between speculative thinking and practical thinking, and for the point that the natural law is principally thinking in the practical mode, see John Finnis, *Fundamentals of Ethics* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1983), 1–23.
33. Jude Chua, “Golf.”
34. See John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, 95–97.
35. And leisure is certainly not the wasting of time, but resting refreshment that also develops the human person.