

ZBIGNIEW WESOŁOWSKI SVD

*BEYOND EAST AND WEST:*  
WHAT ‘LADDER’ DID JOHN WU USE  
TOWARDS THIS GOAL?<sup>\*</sup>  
(PART TWO)<sup>\*\*</sup>

**Abstract.** John Wu Jingxiong (1899-1986) was a diplomat, scholar, and authority on international law. He was also a prominent Chinese Catholic convert. His spiritual autobiography *Beyond East and West* (1951) reminds us of the *Confessiones* of St. Augustine for its moving description of John Wu’s conversion to Catholicism in 1937 and his early years as a Catholic. The very title of Wu’s autobiography points to his spiritual ideal which let humanity go beyond cultural particularities (be they Western, Chinese, or other). John Wu found wisdom in China’s great traditions, i.e., Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, pointing to their universal truths that come ultimately from, and are fulfilled in, Christ. The author of this contribution has searched for John Wu’s universal traits which go beyond any culture and calls them, metaphorically, a “ladder”. He has found a threefold ladder, i.e. that of the Christian faith, of human friendship and human and divine love, and that of natural law.

**Keywords:** John Wu; *Beyond East and West*; spiritual autobiography; Christian faith, friendship; human and divine love; natural law.

---

Prof. Dr. ZBIGNIEW WESOŁOWSKI – Monumenta Serica Institute, Sankt Augustin, Germany; correspondence address: Monumenta Serica Institute, Arnold-Janssen-Str. 20, 53757 Sankt Augustin, Germany; e-mail: wesolowski@monumenta-serica.de. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3449-4830>.

\* Abbreviations for John Wu’s three works:

*BEW*: *Beyond East and West*. Sheed and Ward, 1951.

*SoL*: *The Science of Love: A Study in the Teachings of Thérèse von Lisieux*. Catholic Truth Society, 1941.

*FoJ*: *Fountain of Justice: A Study in the Natural Law*. Mei Ya Publications, Inc., 1971.

\*\* Part One was published in *Roczniki Humanistyczne* (Sinologia), vol. 68, issue 9, 2020, pp. 21-45.

## 2.1 THE LADDER OF HUMAN FRIENDSHIP AND HUMAN AND DIVINE LOVE

John Wu was very much pleased that an English Carmelite Sister, herself also a convert, who testified him that he never was a “pagan.” He quoted her words:

The very inmost—the most precious—of our souls has always, consciously or unconsciously, asleep or awake, sought **the Face of Jesus**,<sup>1</sup> seeking *truly the Truth* and catching glimpses of it in all values. Sometimes perhaps captious as willful “children” but always in love with our God, — because in His Infinite Mercy He loved us first. (*BEW* 345)

John Wu’s response to these words testifies the importance of the experience of love in his life:

Yes, as I look back upon these fifty-odd years of my life, it appears all of one piece, the keynote being **Love. My whole life has been surrounded by God’s Love.** All the scattered leaves of my life have been gathered together by His loving hand and bound into an harmonious volume. Indeed, the Spirit of Love has arranged all things sweetly. Even in human relations I have received more love than I have given. But if I am a debtor to men, how much more am I a debtor of God! (*BEW* 345-346)

Thus, we can find **another ladder of “moving beyond East and West”** in John Wu’s thought and life, that is, **love**. Although love (charity) is a basic attitude in Christian life, because “God is love” (1 John 4:8), this attitude, however, transcends Christianity as such, and is to be **universally found in all human beings**.

[...] **Love is all.** In dealing with the Orientals, one cannot too much emphasize that God is more motherly than a mother. The Chinese respect the father, but love the mother. One of the things that attracted me so strongly to **St. Thérèse of Lisieux** is that she knew well the **maternal quality of God’s love**. As she said, “I had long felt that Our Lord is more tender than a mother, and I have sounded the depths of more than one mother’s heart .... Fear makes me shrink, whereas under love’s sweet rule I not only advance —I fly.” When I read it, I said to myself, “**How Chinese she is!**” (*BEW* 352)

In John Wu’s life, the human face of love is present from the very beginning. It was present in painful experiences of losing very early his two

---

<sup>1</sup> All bold letters are done by the author of this contribution, if not otherwise noticed.

mothers (cf. Part One, pp. 32-33). As a child, he was impressed by one poem<sup>2</sup> from *The Book of Songs* (*Shijing*) which “[f]or more than forty years [...] has been haunting me, and its meaning has grown richer and deeper for me with the passing of time” (*BEW* 44).

In these few lines, the **whole philosophy of love and friendship**, which is the purest form of love, is shrined. For love does not count in terms of material gifts. Love is lavish. Love is generous. Love is the infinite, in the presence of which all mathematical and worldly distinctions melt and vanish into the air. Do you call it extravagant to return a greenstone for a peach? No, he says, it is not enough. She gives me a peach, because she loves me. I can only repay her love with my love. (*BEW* 44)

John Wu’s love for his wife he married on April 12, 1916, was “at the first sight” (*BEW* 59).<sup>3</sup> Even during his drifting away from Christianity while in the U.S.A., love and charity remained for John Wu the core of his humanism:

The differences between Christ and the founders of other religions were differences of degree, not of kind. I could not understand why people plunged themselves into meaningless theological controversies, while neglecting the **one essential lesson of fraternal charity**. It seems to me that such persons had wandered far from the **royal way of Love** to lose themselves in a *cul-de-sac* [dead-end street]. (*BEW* 78)

In this period of his life, we witness John Wu’s friendship with Holmes. This friendship permeates the whole *BEW*. In its chapter 9: “The Story of a Friendship” (pp. 87-106), it takes a prominent place.

---

<sup>2</sup> “She threw a quince to me;  
I requited her with a girdle-gem.  
No, not just as requital,  
But as a pledge of eternal love.  
  
She threw a peach to me;  
I requited her with a greenstone.  
No, not just as requital.  
But as a pledge of eternal love.  
  
She threw a plum to me;  
I requited her with an amulet.  
No, not just as requital,  
But as a pledge of eternal love.” (*BEW* 44)

<sup>3</sup> John Wu had a severe crisis of his marital love, cf. *BEW* 135-137. Besides, a dubious thing was his contacts to so-called “singing girls”, cf. for example *BEW* 137.

We were two old babies. **I was a baby who was an old man. He was an old man who was a baby.**<sup>4</sup> And the two old babies corresponded with each other for fourteen years on questions belonging more to eternity than to time. We were asking each other whether life was a dream. Our conclusion was that we could never prove that we were awake, and that it took an act of faith to assert that. He never wearied of stressing the need of faith. He wrote to me, “If I were dying my last words would be: have faith and pursue the unknown end.” It is ironical that a man who talked so much about faith should be called a sceptic. Concretely his faith was not mine, but **his philosophy of faith**, vague as it was, did encourage me to embrace what I could not help regarding as **the true Faith**. I said to him once, “Beneath your cynicism. Sir, there pulses a warm heart.” (*BEW* 130)

In his *BEW*, John Wu asked himself: “What is the secret of this lasting friendship [with Holmes]?” (*BEW* 129), and his answer was: “So far as I can see, the most fundamental thing that we have in common is **an ever fresh sense of wonder at the mystery of the universe**” (*BEW* 129-130).

On November 17, 1936, John Wu wrote in his diary:

During these four trying years, one person has remained **my constant friend**, and that is my political superior, Dr. Sun Fo.<sup>5</sup> He is one of those leaders who **never fail to defend their associates** against unreasonable attacks. He is also a man from whom you can really learn something. **His intellectual interests are so wide that my contact with him had broadened my mental horizon.** While in the daytime we might be arguing about some insignificant bills in the Legislative Yuan, in the evening, especially when the stars were sparkling over our heads, we used to meditate together on the evanescence of life. (*BEW* 191)

Apart from Sun Fo, there are also mentioned the *T'ien Hsia*<sup>6</sup> friends who “broadened [his] intellectual interests considerably. It also intensified [his] love of learning. [He] tended toward a **new, broadened Humanism**” (*BEW* 201).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. “The grand old man of eighty had begun to take a serious interest in a young man of twenty-two” (*BEW* 89).

<sup>5</sup> Sun Fo (Sun Ke 孫科, 1895-1973, courtesy name Zhesheng 哲生) was a high-ranking official in the government of the Republic of China. He was the son of Sun Yat-sen and his first wife Lu Muzhen. At the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, he exiled himself to Hong Kong until 1951, and moved to Europe from 1951 to 1952, and finally resided in the United States from 1952 to 1965. Sun Fo returned to serve in the government of the Republic of China in Taipei as a Senior Advisor to President Chiang from 1965, and as President of the Examination Yuan from 1966 until his death in 1973. Sun Fo and his wife are buried at Yangmingshan Private Cemetery, in the Beitou District, Taipei, Taiwan.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *BEW* 200: “The birth of *Tien Hsia* was as casual as any of the good things that have happened to me. I had met at one of the *China Critic* dinners Wen Yuan-ning [溫源寧], a former Professor of English Literature at the Peking University. I was deeply impressed by this man’s erudition and personality. We took to each other, and **became friends**. One day, we were talking about the possibility of starting a cultural and literary periodical in English, for the sake of

As far as John Wu's understanding of love is concerned, it is to be found especially in his *SoL*. In *BEW* on pages 267-269, John Wu looks back at how he came to write *SoL*. This booklet is interesting because it displays what I would call "empathetic<sup>7</sup> epistemology"<sup>8</sup> as understanding through the discovery of spiritual affinity. An epistemic value of spiritual life is an important way and approach to know oneself, others, and the whole universe. John Wu's *SoL* is a classical example of it, although in his *BEW* this element of his epistemology is also fruitfully at work. In John Wu's description of his friendship with Holmes in *BEW*, he said: "We were two old babies. **I was a baby who was an old man.** He was an old man who was a baby" (*BEW* 130). In view of Thérèse of Lisieux, he wrote 10 years earlier: "Nor is it for nothing that his time He [the Holy Spirit] has raised '**a baby who is an old man**'" (*SoL* 34-35). Thus, through his empathetic understanding John Wu is able to say for example that Thérèse of Lisieux "seemed to [him] to combine the heart of the Buddha, the virtues of Confucius, and the philosophic detachment of Lao Tse" (*BEW* 243)<sup>9</sup> or "[o]ne of the things that

---

interpreting Chinese culture to the West. That was only wishful thinking. Such a periodical would be too high-brow to have a circulation that would make it self-supporting. And who would finance it? So we left the matter at that."

<sup>7</sup> Empathy is the human capacity to recognize emotions and psychic states that are being experienced by another human or sentient, or even fictional, being. For example: A human being may need to have a certain amount of empathy before he or she can experience compassion. The German word for empathy was originally "Einfühlungsvermögen" (later also re-translated as "Empathie") a new phenomenon explored at the end of 19th century mainly by Theodor Lipps (1851-1914). Apart from an emotional empathy (affective empathy) as the capacity to respond with an appropriate emotion to another's mental states, there is also a cognitive empathy as the ability to identify another's mental states which for us here is more important. Cf. Shamay-Tsoory, Aharon-Peretz, and Perry 617-627.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Laura and Zhou 224-229 (website: IPCBEE, [www.ipcbee.com/vol28/41-ICFEE2012-H2009.pdf](http://www.ipcbee.com/vol28/41-ICFEE2012-H2009.pdf), accessed 31.08.2021). Here "empathetic epistemology" is contrasted with "power epistemology" as a historically Western dominant epistemological tenet, namely, that 'Knowledge is tantamount to Power'. The reliance on 'power epistemology' as the dominant model for technologization has created a scientific discourse which marginalizes the importance of the ethical issues. "As Professor Laura reminds us in his book *Empathetic Education*, 'moral sensibility requires affective empathy, and empathy is not a value enshrined within the epistemology of power because all values are inevitably subservient to the ultimate value of power, as the medium of control'. Given this epistemic paradox, we shall argue that Laura's theory of 'empathetic epistemology' can be deployed to help reconceptualise the ways in which we come to know and thus relate to the world around us as a modality of 'participatory consciousness'. Thus, every act of knowing now enshrines the value of connecting with the world in such a way that the value of empathy defines our decisional outcomes. This in turn relates to defining the ways in which we choose to reconstruct the world to suit man's purposes" (226-227).

<sup>9</sup> This judgment could be expressed like follows: "What I understood of Thérèse of Lisieux through her *Story of a Soul*, that is, her autobiography seemed to [him] to combine the heart of

attracted [him] so strongly to St. Thérèse of Lisieux is that she knew well the maternal quality of God's love" (*BEW* 352). What we experience here is simply that John Wu has re-discovered himself in Thérèse of Lisieux!

The very title of John Wu's pamphlet on Thérèse of Lisieux, that is, *Science of Love (SoL)*, seems to be provocative. In his *BEW* 210, he writes in view of science<sup>10</sup> a thought-provoking sentence:

**Science** has turned the universe into a wonderland, but at the same time it has **destroyed our sense of wonder**. We are living in an age when not only **our bodies but also our souls are starving in the midst of abundance**. Ah, when will man **become a child again?**

Do we still remember John Wu's search for a Mother? Have we understood his longing to become a child again? And, after all, are these not our very own yearnings?

In our present-day age, such a title could be misunderstood as a biology, physiology, or even chemistry of love!<sup>11</sup> John Wu's ideal was the expectation of Pope Pius XI that "It might even be said that **a knowledge of Nature** will serve as an introduction to what is of far greater value, **an understanding of things supernatural**" (*SoL* 2). John Wu's personal hope was

**The more science grows, the nearer we shall be to a living Faith**. Material civilization is a welcome fuel to the fire of love. If the fire is weak, it may be smothered by the fuel. But if the fire is strong, the more fuel it has to feed on, the brighter will be its flame. (*SoL* 2)

---

the Buddha, the virtues of Confucius, and the philosophic detachment of Laozi as I understood them in my hitherto life in Chinese culture and lecture of their works.

<sup>10</sup> Science (from Latin *scientia*: "knowledge") is a systematic human undertaking that builds and organizes knowledge in the form of testable explanations and predictions about the universe. Cf. J. L. Heilbron words: "[...] modern science is a **discovery** as well as an **invention**. It was a discovery that nature generally acts regularly enough to be described by laws and even by mathematics; and required invention to devise the techniques, apparatus, and organization for exhibiting the regularities and securing their law-like descriptions." Heilbron vii. Normally by "science" are understood so-called "natural sciences." They are those branches of science that seek to elucidate the rules that govern the natural world through scientific methods. Cf. Ledoux 34-36 (PDF on website: [behaviorology.org/oldsite/pdf/DefineNatI\\_Sciences.pdf](http://behaviorology.org/oldsite/pdf/DefineNatI_Sciences.pdf), accessed 18.07.2019).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. "Science of love" in [www.parade.com/health/2012/02/the-science-of-love.html](http://www.parade.com/health/2012/02/the-science-of-love.html), accessed 31.08.2021; "Biological basis of love" in [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biological\\_basis\\_of\\_love](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biological_basis_of_love), accessed 31.08.2021; "Science of love" in [esciencecommons.blogspot.de/2009/10/science-of-love.html](http://esciencecommons.blogspot.de/2009/10/science-of-love.html), accessed 31.08.2021.

John Wu wanted to be a prophet of love he experienced in his own life and through the grace of God in the life of Thérèse of Lisieux. That is why he seemed to be optimistic about the progress of both human love and civilization:

Love has nothing to lose and everything to gain by the continual progress of civilization. And how can science ever supersede Christianity, which is the religion of Love *par excellence*? (SoL 3)

However, there is also in him a sense of criticism of our modern scientific civilization when he expresses his judgment:

The whole trouble about modern civilization seems to me to lie just in this: There is **too much love of science** and **too little science of love**.

**“The science of love!”** exclaimed little Thérèse, “Ah! sweet is the echo of that word to the ear of my soul! I desire no other science than that. For the sake of love, *having giving all my riches*, like the spouse in the Canticles, *I feel as though I had given nothing*. There is nothing except love which could render us agreeable to the good God. This is so plain to me that this love has become the sole treasure upon which I set my heart.” (SoL 3)

**Thus, this alternative “too much love of science”<sup>12</sup> or “too little science of love” is the future fate of humanity envisaged by John Wu.** The example of Thérèse of Lisieux’s science of love, that is, a love in action each day anew, a love lived and experienced on daily basis, is a hope to every Christian, because as to Christians, John Wu says:

Now, to Christians, there is no other way of loving God than by loving Jesus His Son, for it is through Jesus that God has revealed Himself to man. The Word took on flesh in order that all flesh might take on Divinity. The incarnation of the Word has humanized the relation between the Creator and the creature. For human purposes, to love Jesus is the same as to love God, for Jesus is God. (SoL 5)

In the second section “Some Types of Saints: Martha and Magdalen” (SoL 5-10), John Wu juxtaposed the love of Martha<sup>13</sup> with that of Mary

---

<sup>12</sup> This attitude could be called scientism as belief in the universal applicability of the scientific method and approach, and the view that empirical science constitutes the most authoritative worldview or most valuable part of human learning to the exclusion of other viewpoints. Cf. Sorell 1 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Mary and Martha are the most familiar set of sisters in the Gospels. Both Luke and John describe them as friends of Jesus. Luke’s story, though only four verses long, has been a complex source of interpretation and debate for centuries. John’s story, which says the sisters had a brother

Magdalene.<sup>14</sup> What is important here is his understanding “what exactly [...] God to us [is]:

Is He our Father – Yes, He is our Father, but He is more than that. Is He then our Mother? Yes, He is also our Mother, but He is more than that. He is, besides. Our Friend, our Brother, our Sister, our Spouse, our Lord, our Minister, our All! His relation with us is so all-embracing that it includes all the five relations of men<sup>15</sup> and something infinitely more. We may call Him this or that; but all these names are used analogically, for human language has its limits, beyond which it can no longer denote anything definite and can at best only hint. (*SoL* 5)

And John Wu further says:

Now, of all relations, the dearest and the most fundamental is, at least according to the **Chinese way of thinking**, that between **man and woman**. It is, then, no accident that many saints, and among them some of the greatest, purest and sweetest, speak of their relation with God in terms of **the Bridegroom and the bride**.<sup>16</sup> This is the highest offering that human speech can make to God. (*SoL* 6)

But why have I dwelt so long upon Mary Magdalen?<sup>17</sup> Because she is **the prototype of Thérèse of Lisieux. She knew the art of love. Having given all, she feels as though she had given nothing**. Thérèse herself has said, “Most of all do I imitate

---

named Lazarus, spans seventy verses. Although some earlier interpreters blended the person of Mary of Bethany with Mary Magdalene and the sinful woman of Luke 7:36-50, current scholars believe she was a different person.

<sup>14</sup> Here John Wu followed the Western Roman-Catholic Church which taught for many centuries that Mary Magdalene was the person mentioned in the Gospels as both Mary of Bethany and the “sinful woman” who anoints Jesus in Luke 7:36-50.

<sup>15</sup> Here John Wu meant Chinese (Confucian) five relationships (五倫 *wulun*), that is, the so-called Five Bonds: (1) Ruler to Ruled, (2) Father to Son, (3) Husband to Wife, (4) Elder Brother to Younger Brother, and (5) Friend to Friend. Notice that only the last one is not hierarchal.

<sup>16</sup> The Bride of Christ (or Bride), the Lamb's wife is a term used in reference to a group of related verses in the Bible – in the Gospels, Revelation, the Epistles and related verses in the Old Testament. Sometimes the Bride is implied through calling Jesus a Bridegroom. The Church has always identified herself as the bride betrothed to Christ. In Old Testament, marriage was used as a picture of God's relationship with the nation Israel. Instead of being a “bride-to-be,” Israel was depicted as the unfaithful “wife” of God (cf. Jeremiah 3:1, 31:31-33, Ezekiel 16:2-5; Deuteronomy 7:6-8, 26:1-5).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Kun: “Mary Magdalene's love for Jesus knew no limits. She had experienced his love and its power when he drove seven demons away from her, and she responded with a grateful, loving heart. So great was her devotion to Jesus that she accompanied him as he went about his ministry and braved the horror of Golgotha to stand faithfully by him as he was crucified. Even when her beloved Lord was laid in the tomb, Mary's love did not die. Indeed, her ardor grew more intense when his body was not to be found, and she sought it with longing.” *Living bulwark*, [www.swordofthespirit.net/bulwark/apr08p2.htm](http://www.swordofthespirit.net/bulwark/apr08p2.htm), accessed 31.08.2021.

the behavior of Magdalen, for her amazing – or rather I should say her loving – **audacity**,<sup>18</sup> which delighted the Heart of Jesus, has cast its spell upon mine.” (*SoL* 9-10)

In section 3: “Love: Natural and Divine” (*SoL* 10-14), John Wu describes Thérèse of Lisieux’s natural and divine genius of love<sup>19</sup>:

**Thérèse was born with a genius for love**, extraordinary even for a woman. Her **affection** for her parents, her sisters, her cousins, and her neighbours, was as deep as it was strong. Her **sympathy** for the poor, her **compassion** for sinners, revealed itself early in life. She had a **heart on fire with love**, and she was destined to be united with God. Even as a child, she was conscious of her high destiny, but she was not proud, because she knew that her high destiny was a **free gift from her Lover**. She was as humble as she was gifted. **Nature and grace conspired together to make a great saint of little Thérèse**, for **nature prepared her to be a great lover and grace led her to love the Holy Face**. It was not Jesus transfigured on the Mount of Tabor, it was Jesus on His way to Calvary [...]. [This attentive and considerate love to suffering Jesus] seems to me to constitute the **keynote of her character**. I even think that there is a **tinge of chivalry in her love of Jesus**. [...] Who, then, will serve Jesus for Himself? Ah! It shall be Thérèse.” What a gallant lover this woman was! (*SoL* 12-13)

These words of John Wu epitomize the art of love of Thérèse of Lisieux’s in his human and divine dimensions. Thus, her nature and grace worked together toward the same goal, that is, her sanctity,<sup>20</sup> a perfect union with God in Jesus Christ. John Wu also discerned in her art of love “a tinge of chivalry,” that is, the sum of the ideal qualifications of a **knight of love**, including **courtesy, generosity, valor** (heroic courage and bravery), and **dexterity** in arms, that is, in the art of love.

<sup>18</sup> Audacity means extraordinary boldness and courage. An audacious person may be willing to risk shame or rejection in social situations, and willing to bend rules of etiquette or politeness.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *SoL* 11: “It often occurs to me that a woman’s love, as a rule, is deeper and more constant than that of a man” and 12: “If only a woman would turn her natural capacity for unselfish love from man to God, she would already be at the very portals of Heaven [...]”

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *SoL* 23-24: “Sanctity is like a pyramid. The higher the apex, the broader the base, and the larger the bulk. The pyramid of Thérèse has Love for its apex, Nature for its base, and all the circumstances of our everyday life for its bulk. With her the greatest simplicity goes hand in hand with the greatest diversity. By embracing the One, she embraces all!” Another witness of John Wu’s understanding the sanctity is to be found in *SoL* 34: “Thérèse has not superseded the other saints, but she has brought sanctity up to date. She is a revolutionary who knows how to effect reforms by way of transformation. The Holy Catholic Church is a living organism, it grows with the centuries, and our twentieth century, which may be called the age of psychological subtlety, has need of a saint like Thérèse, for she is one of the keenest psychologists and the most ruthless analyst that I know of. In her hands, sanctity is no longer merely sublime, it has seeped down like water into the *subliminal* [i.e. operating below the threshold of consciousness] regions. The Holy Ghost has always raised new saints to forestall and cope with the needs of a new age.”

In the following sections of *SoL*, John Wu works out this “**keynote of her character**” as “**a genius for love.**” In section 4: “Sincerity as the Soul of Love” (*SoL* 14-17), John Wu brings such characteristics of Thérèse of Lisieux’s love to Jesus: She was able to bring herself into a relation with Jesus by indirect or artful methods: 1) “The wise serpent that she is, she bores sinuously into the deepest recesses of the Sacred Heart of her Beloved [...]” (*SoL* 14); 2) “she has a boundless confidence in His goodness” (*SoL* 16); 3) modesty: she “has a glimpse into the infinite greatness of God and [her] own nothingness [...]” (*SoL* 17).

In section 5: “God as Love” (*SoL* 17-20), John Wu further explains the characteristics of Thérèse of Lisieux’s love for God and *vice versa* through Jesus: 1) the teasing (provoking and annoying) character of God’s love: “I sometimes think of God as a Lover who knows how to tease” (*SoL* 17); 2) “She was so thoroughly saturated with the Holy Spirit that everything became for her a parable of the Truth and a symbol of Love” (*SoL* 18); 3) “[...] emancipated from the dominion of that hydra-headed monster called Public Opinion” (*SoL* 18): “happily God has given me the grace to be absolutely indifferent to it” (*SoL* 20: similar to Confucius); 4) the peace in the soul (equanimity: *SoL* 20).

In section 6: “The Martyrdom of Love” (*SoL* 21-24), John Wu stresses Thérèse of Lisieux’s special aspect of her love for Jesus, that is, her ability to suffer for the sake of the Beloved: “She wants to be a martyr without appearing to be one. Her heroism reaches such a height that it no longer seems heroic but quite ordinary” (*SoL* 21). That is why John Wu quotes George Herbert’s (1593-1633) words: “Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws, Makes that and th’ action fine,”<sup>21</sup> and then says: “For God really does not need our sacrifices, they are useful only as proofs of our love for Him” (*SoL* 22).<sup>22</sup>

In section 7: “‘A Baby who is an old Man’” (24-30), we learn the *locus classicus* of this very peculiar phrase and that John Wu’s empathetic understanding that Thérèse of Lisieux’s spirituality is congenial with that of Laozi and Confucius:

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *BEW* 128: “[...] Herbert’s couplet is **one of the most spiritual insights** that I have come across in the **religious poetry of England.**”

<sup>22</sup> *SoL* 23: “In other words, the Martyrdom of Love absorbs all other forms of sacrifice and mortification and adds something new, over and above. ‘Many make themselves victims to Justice, while none think of making themselves victims to love.’ Needless to say, she was not the first to practice this form of martyrdom. All saints are more or less martyrs of love. But there is no denying that she, or rather the Holy Spirit working in her, brought this fundamental aspect of Christian doctrine to an intenser focus and clearer articulation.”

During [...] [Thérèse of Lisieux's] serious illness, she once said, "Let God play the part of Papa; he knows what is best for baby." Her eldest sister Marie asked her, "Are you a baby?" Thérèse looked serious and said, "Yes, – but a very wise baby ! A baby who is an old man." Is she then proud? No, no one realizes better than she where all her wisdom comes from. "My special favourites in Heaven are those who, so to speak, stole it, such as the Holy Innocents and the Good Thief. There are great Saints who won it by their works. I want **to be like the thieves and to win it by stratagem – a stratagem of love** which will open its gates to me and to other poor sinners. In the Book of Proverbs the Holy Ghost encourages me, saying: 'Come to Me, little one, to learn subtlety!'" The charming thing about it is that it is **an open theft**. God allows her to steal into Heaven because she allows God to steal herself. (*SoL* 24-25)

[I]t is Thérèse who has confirmed my faith in my Religion [that is, Christianity], for her mind is as **subtle and detached** as that of **Lao Tzu**, while her heart is as **affectionate and cordial** as that of **Confucius**. (*SoL* 30)

In section 8: "Emancipation through Love" (*SoL* 30-35), John Wu exposes Thérèse of Lisieux's spiritual perspective on everyday life, that is, her doctrine of **empty-handedness** which again shows the spiritual affinity of Thérèse of Lisieux with Laozi (*SoL* 33):

[S]he looked at the world *sub specie eternitatis* (in the light of eternity). This general outlook on life prepared her for detachment from particular things, however much she might be affected toward them in her heart. She detached herself successively from dependence upon creatures, from love of the beauties of Nature, from the allurements of Art, and from the possessive instinct, not only in regard to material things, but also in connection with what she calls "spiritual riches." (*SoL* 31)

John Wu cites Thérèse of Lisieux's doctrine of empty-handedness with her wording:

There is but one means to compelling God not to judge us: we must take care to appear before Him **empty-handed**. It is quite simple: lay nothing by, spend your treasures as fast as you gain them. Were I to live to be eighty, I should always be poor, because I cannot economize [...] (*SoL* 32)

In section 9: "The Art of Life" (pp. 35-39), John Wu describes Thérèse of Lisieux's "greatest art [...] to conceal [her] art" (*SoL* 32):

In a very real sense, to take Holy Orders or to enter a Carmel is already martyrdom. What bigger offerings can one make than to sacrifice all the pleasures of the

world and cut off all earthly ties for the sake of God? That Thérèse did not regard her vocation as a sacrifice but a privilege did not make it less a sacrifice in the accepted sense of the word. (*SoL*:39)

In section 10: “Self-Revelation” (*SoL* 39-42), John Wu reflects on Thérèse of Lisieux’s “fullest self-revelation [...] given us in a moment of self-forgetfulness” (*SoL* 40):

It allows us to have some glimpses into her **evasive** [elusive or evanescent] **personality**. I seem to see **three different layers in her wonderful soul**. The layer that lies nearest to the surface is symbolized by her **sweet smile**. To all appearances, she is a **carefree sprite**<sup>23</sup>! (*SoL* 40)

This first layer was expressed with help of a poem of Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770). “But probe a little deeper, and you come to **the second layer**, the layer which is composed of **bitterness and sandy desolation**. It makes me think of an autumnal song by Hsin Ch’i-chi [Xin Qiji 辛棄疾, 1140-1207]” (*SoL* 40). As to the third layer of Thérèse of Lisieux’s soul, John Wu says:

[...] let us probe yet a little deeper, and we shall find in **the depths of her soul a fathomless tranquility and serenity**, completely unruffled by all the stormy disturbances she experienced a little higher up in her extremely sensitive mind. It is here that we find **the hidden Fountain of her joy**, a joy that filters patiently through [...] sandy strata and issues finally in distilled smiles and sometimes even in spontaneous spurts of congenial humour. **Without the sandy strata, the smile would not be so pure and sweet. Without the hidden Fountain of joy, the smile would have been pathetic, like the silver lining of a black coffin, or like the hysterical laughter of a mad person. But having both the sandy strata and the Fountain of joy within her, she is at once inebriated and sober!** (*SoL* 41)

In section 11: “The Logic of Love” (*SoL* 42-45), John Wu discovers in Thérèse of Lisieux’s art of love the epistemic force and creativity of her love<sup>24</sup>:

Love opened the eyes of little Thérèse to new truths and new reasons for loving Jesus. She was not such a great sinner as Magdalen, and, logically speaking, she did not need as much forgiveness from God as Magdalen. But does it follow that

---

<sup>23</sup> *Sprite* (also: spright) is an elf (plural: elves: is a type of supernatural being in Germanic mythology and folklore), fairy (a type of mythical being or legendary creature, a form of spirit, often described as supernatural or preternatural.), or goblin (a legendary evil or mischievous creature; a grotesquely evil or evil-like phantom). Cf. *BEW* 63 where John Wu defined himself as “a carefree mystic.”

<sup>24</sup> On October 19, 1997, Pope John Paul II declared her the thirty-third Doctor of the Church, the youngest person, and only the third woman, to be so honored. Cf. Nevin.

she loved Him the less? No, on the contrary, she loved Him all the more. **Love has its own logic that mathematicians have no notion of.** “I love Him,” she reasoned, “because He has forgiven me, not much, but *all*.” “He has forgiven me beforehand the sins which I could have committed.” She seems **to know by intuition** what very few theologians have arrived at by their long-winded reasonings. St. Thomas Aquinas had, indeed, pointed out that it is “also a divine benefit that God should keep a man from sins, just as He forgives his past sins.” St. Augustine had also confessed, “I put it down to Your grace and mercy that You melted the ice of my sins; I put it down to Your grace also all the sins that I did not, that I could not, commit.” But little Thérèse went a step further than these great lights of the Church! She spoke, not in terms of “also,” but in terms of “all the more.” (*SoL* 43-44)<sup>25</sup>

In the last section: “Life and Death” (*SoL* 46-48), John Wu testifies to us **what he actually means by “moving beyond East and West.”** It is nothing else than **rising “above life and death”** (*SoL* 46). And before John Wu had re-discovered this truth for himself, this goal was already realized by Thérèse of Lisieux, the Little Flower of Jesus:

This was possible because she had attained **a spiritual state where her own will was merged into the Will of God.** “I do not like one thing better than another; what the good God likes best and chooses for me, that is it which pleases me most.” (*SoL* 46)

Thus, “[w]ith a faith enlivened by such intense love and enlightened by such a transparent vision, it is no wonder that she even conquered death before she died” (*SoL* 46). At the end of his booklet on the art of love of Thérèse of Lisieux, John Wu reiterates her spiritual testament:

She wants millions and millions of other souls to love Him as she does. “I invite all the angels and saints to come and sing canticles of love.” Even were the whole of creation to participate one day in the living concert of love, she would hardly think of it as more than a tiny drop of water lost in the **Infinite Ocean of Divine Love.** She would still feel as **a little child towards its mother** [...] (*SoL* 47-48)

---

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *SoL* 44-45: “Let us suppose that the son of a very clever doctor, stumbling over a stone on the road, falls and breaks his leg. His father hastens to his aid, and binds up the fractured limb with all the skill at his command. When cured, the son shows the utmost gratitude [...] and with good reason. But, on the other hand, suppose that the father, knowing that a large stone lies on his son’s path, anticipates the danger, and unseen by anyone, hastens to remove it. Unconscious of the accident from which such tender forethought has saved him, the son will not show any mark of gratitude for it, or feel the same love for his father as he would have done had he been cured of some grievous wound. But if he came **to learn the whole truth**, would he not love his father **all the more?**”

With help of Thérèse of Lisieux's art of love, John Wu demonstrated his second ladder of "moving beyond East and West," or now – more precisely – "rising above life and death." This second ladder has its human aspects like friendship or human love, but ultimately the way of love, or the ladder of love, is Divine!

## 2.2 THE LADDER OF THE NATURAL LAW

Yet another ladder of "**moving beyond East and West**" can be found in John Wu's thought. It is his conception of **natural law** (also called the law of nature) which can be found for example in his *Fountain of Justice: A Study in the Natural Law (FoJ)*.<sup>26</sup> Chapter ten of John Wu's *BEW*, called "Law is my Idol" (pp. 107-132), testifies that the science of law was once in his life one of substitutes for God in his life (especially, *BEW* 110, 116, 118-119). Thus, we have here to do with his professional knowledge and lifelong passion. It takes no wonder that John Wu's natural law theory is a classical Thomist position, because it was not until St. Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) that natural law theory took on its most solid form (Bix 68):

In order to understand what human law is, we must have some notion of **the eternal law**, and particularly of **the natural law**, which is not only the origin from which **all human law** is derived, but constitutes an essential part of it. As **St. Thomas** has said, "Every law enacted by man enjoys the character of law to the extent that it is derived from **the natural law**." The human sovereign is, indeed, subject to God and to the law, because it is from them that he derives his authority. (*FoJ* 7)

---

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *FoJ*:275-277: "Although this book is not a volume of collected legal papers but possesses a unity of its own, yet it should be pointed out that in composing it I have drawn liberally upon a number of papers I have published or delivered on various occasions during the past four years [that is, 1951-1955] [...] The genesis of Part One ["The Natural Law and Our Common Law," pp. 55-154] of the present work [...] is based upon an article published in the *Fordham Law Review*, March, 1954. But as the reader will see, it has been expanded considerably, and the second section dealing with the common law in its new home has practically been rewritten. [...] Part Two ["In the School of Christ," pp. 157-235] of the book, dealing with the juridical wisdom of Christ and the Christian influences on the Common Law, constitutes a further development of Part One. The two have an organic connection, although they were conceived at different times. [...] As to the Epilogue ["The Art of Law," 240-271, dealing with the art of law and expounding a theory of justice, I must acknowledge that it grew from a paper I had read before the National Association of Women Lawyers at their Annual Banquet held in New York on September 15, 1951. A summary of the address was later published under the title 'Toward a Christian Philosophy of Law' in *Women Lawyers Journal* (vol. 37, No. 4)."

John Wu's appreciation of St. Thomas' juristic philosophy let him say:

Comparatively **the most adequate definition of the law** is that of **St. Thomas**: "It is nothing other than **a certain rule of reason for the purpose of the common good**, laid down by him who is entrusted with the welfare of the community, and promulgated." This definition takes care of **the essence as well as the end and the process of the law**. The essence of the law is **conformity to reason**, the end is **the common good**, and the process consists in **gradual realization of its essence through a progressive attainment of the end**, by means of legislation, promulgation, judgment and enforcement. The definition comprehends all kinds of law: **the eternal law, the natural law, the human law, and the revealed Divine law of the Old and the New Dispensation**. (*FoJ* 12)

So let us see how John Wu understands various kinds of law, especially eternal law and natural law. As to **eternal law**, he says:

Wherever there is order, there is law. **The whole cosmos is an ordinance of Divine Reason**. God, who is its Creator, is also its Lawgiver, its Judge and its King. He governs the whole creation according to **the plan of His Divine Providence** for the good of all. **This plan is called the eternal law** [...]. **The eternal law is the fountainhead of both the physical order and the moral order**. We see it darkly through the mirror of its effects. Poets and philosophers of all ages have experienced momentary transports, when they are struck by the ineffable wonders of the universe and the mysterious harmony between the physical order and the moral order. The realization that **the same Love and Wisdom** that kindle and enlighten our hearts give life and order to the whole mysterious universe, sends us into raptures. (*FoJ* 12-13)

Above we have a powerful witness of John Wu's Judeo-Christian theism as an expression of his innermost spiritual life. Thus, he further says:

We know that the law of the Decalogue, the law of gravitation, the law of conservation of energy, the Mendelian law, the law of diminishing returns, and criminal and civil law, all belong to different orders of laws. But when we reflect that **God is the sole Lawgiver, whose intention** we read with more or less accuracy, we begin to see **the fundamental unity of all kinds of laws**. (*FoJ* 13)

And then John Wu stresses:

**While the eternal law in its essence is beyond our powers of comprehension, it is enough for us to know that "all laws to the degree that they share in right reason, to that degree are they derived from the eternal law."** It is because **physical law and moral law share a common origin in the eternal law** that both are rooted in the reality of things and belong to the same universe. However little

we may know about the eternal law, this transcendental reference is an indispensable starting point **of a sound philosophy of law**. (*FoJ* 14)

Yes, what John Wu wants from a philosophy of law, is that it should be sound. It means in the first place that it should be freed from

[o]ne of the commonest errors of modern thinkers is to hold that **physical law is objective**, while **moral law is subjective**; for the former has to do with what **is true**, while the latter has to do with what is **good**. But it cannot be too much emphasized that if the good is not founded in Reality or Being, it would not be good at all, just as truth would not be truth if it did not correspond with Reality. (*FoJ* 14)

Besides,

[t]here is a true realism, and there is a false realism. There is a true existentialism and a false existentialism. **True realism and existentialism** start from **the fundamental insight** that of **the Supreme Being** alone can we say that **His Existence is His Essence, and, as a corollary from this initial perception, that in all other beings existence falls short of essence and carries within itself an aspiration to the essence**. Without this aspiration, existence is a mere empty husk with no living kernel inside; and this is precisely what false realism and existentialism would lead us to. This aspiration of the existential to embody more and more fully the essential is rooted, and evoked by, the very nature of the Supreme Being, who is Reality Itself.

To put it more plainly, with God reality is a fact; but with us reality must be achieved. Our reality consists in realization, in a continuous process of progressive realization. **True realism differs from false realism in that it perceives the aspiration to the essence as a necessary constituent of existence**. It differs, on the other hand, from mere idealism in that it sees the aspiration in the context of ontological Reality. A true realism would echo the words of the Psalmist: “Deep calleth on deep, at the noise of Thy flood-gates” (Ps.51:8). (*FoJ* 16)

Here one is confronted with one annoying question: What about atheists who deny the existence of the Supreme Being or even any supernatural aspects in human life? John Wu knew at least a kind of practical atheism from his own life (various substitutes of God; cf. Part One, p. 23 n. 5, 37) and a tendency towards pantheism during his stay in the U.S.A.<sup>27</sup> The most radical question were here: Are atheists mentally ill? However, the atheists can, of course, ask a parallel question of theists!<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *BEW* 102 ff.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. “Are atheists mentally ill?” in [http://atheismexposed.tripod.com/atheists\\_mentally\\_ill.htm](http://atheismexposed.tripod.com/atheists_mentally_ill.htm) (accessed 18.07.2019).

Let us turn to John Wu's concept of the natural law<sup>29</sup> which is seen by us as his ladder to "moving beyond East and West":

[...] **our vision of Natural Law**, which, **like the face of God**, is ever-glowing, vivid, expressive of internal feelings, responsive to external changes, and **looking forward to the welfare of Humanity**, is a **truer vision of Natural Law**. (*BEW* 97)

As said above, John Wu is a student of St. Thomas' theory of natural law:

St. Thomas defines **the natural law** as "**a participation in the eternal law by the rational creature**." It is important to know the distinction between the eternal law and the natural law, if we are to avoid the pitfall of unwarranted dogmatism. **The eternal law is the Plan of Divine Providence, and therefore it is absolutely perfect. The natural law**, on the other hand, **is only an imprint of the eternal law on the natural reason of man, which is finite and cannot be absolutely perfect**. (*FoJ* 17)

The definition of the natural law as only an imprint of the eternal law on the natural reason of man begs for the further explanation of the concept of the natural reason of man. Furthermore, John Wu takes over St. Thomas' distinction between practical and speculative reason which are of paramount importance in understanding a theory of natural law:

St. Thomas further distinguishes **practical reason** from **speculative reason**. Speculative reason deals mainly with **cause and effect**, while practical reason deals mainly **with end and means**. The former has for its object **the true**, while the latter has for its end **the good**. The former deals with **facts** and factual relations, while the latter deals with **values** and their relative importance, and involves the choice of ends and the determination of the means thereto. In

---

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *BEW* 96-97 where John Wu cited his letter to Holmes from January 8, 1922 in Berlin: "In your 'Natural Law' you state that 'the jurists who believe in natural law seem to me to be in that naïve state of mind that accepts what has been familiar and accepted by them and their neighbors as something that must be accepted by all men everywhere.' This is true. You did not hint, however, that what makes the jurists or any other man, for that matter, believe such things to be natural law is itself a natural law, which is very real and which we may term '**psychological natural law**.' And psychological natural law is not the highest form of natural law either. The highest form, to my mind, is **Natural Law in the philosophical sense**. [...] jurists, in general, are conservative in their use of terms, and they will not yield up their 'natural law' unless we show them that they have only visualized the back of Natural Law – as Moses only saw the back of God – and that **our vision of Natural Law**, which, **like the face of God**, is ever-glowing, vivid, expressive of internal feelings, responsive to external changes, and **looking forward to the welfare of Humanity**, is a **truer vision of Natural Law**. The habit of the lawyers has been to preserve the form while changing the contents." As John Wu himself says: "Thus, I was trying to save the notion of 'Natural Law' in the very teeth of Holmes' skepticism" (*BEW* 97).

consequence of this difference in subject matter, practical reason, to which law belongs, is differently situated from speculative reason with regard to certitude.

Since **speculative reason** deals chiefly with necessary relations which cannot possibly be other than they are, **truth is found without any defect in particular conclusions** just as it is found in general principles. But **practical reason deals with contingencies**, among which are **human actions**, and therefore, although **there is some necessity in the general principles, the further you descend to particular conclusions, the more you find the lack thereof**.

For John Wu

**St. Thomas's philosophy of the natural law** saves us, on the one hand, from such a "**jurisprudence of conceptions**"<sup>30</sup> and, on the other hand, from a **purely utilitarian and pragmatic jurisprudence**.<sup>31</sup> He steers carefully between a naïve and **unconscious dogmatism** which attributes cosmic validity to all ideas one may happen to hold, and a **sheer psychological relativism** which recognizes no objective standards of right and justice. (*FoJ* 21)

Following St. Thomas, John Wu is convinced that

[...] **the basic precepts of the natural law are immediate dictates of man's natural reason**. They are self-evident principles. The first precept is that *good is to be done and evil is to be avoided*. All other precepts are based upon this. Whatever practical reason naturally apprehends as good or evil to man as man belongs to the precepts of the natural law as something to be done or avoided. He places **human goods on three levels**. First, **life as such is a good**, and therefore "whatever conduces to the preservation of human life, and to the elimination of its obstacles, belongs to the natural law." Secondly, **the procreation and education of offspring is a good**. Therefore, whatever preserves **the integrity of the family** and promotes its welfare belongs to the natural law. Thirdly, **man being a ratio-**

---

<sup>30</sup> "Jurisprudence of conceptions" is also called "conceptual jurisprudence" or "jurisprudence of concepts." This approach in juristic philosophy was the first sub-school of legal positivism based on the thesis that the existence and content of law depends on social facts and not on its merits. According to this way of thinking, the written law must reflect concepts, when interpreted, that is, it means the expansion of a maxim or definition to a logical extreme (a search for the justification of a specific norm with basis from more generic ones with persistent disregard for the consequences). Other main characters of the jurisprudence of concepts are: formalism in a search of rights in written law and a predication for conceptual systemization.

<sup>31</sup> Utilitarian jurisprudence holds that the laws should be crafted so as to produce the best consequences for the greatest number of people possible. Legal pragmatism or a pragmatic stance towards jurisprudence asserts that laws are best understood as a practice that is rooted in a specific context at hand and without secure foundations. Besides, laws are instrumental and functional, and always attached to a perspective to look at them.

nal creature, he has a **natural inclination to know the truth about God and to live peacefully and harmoniously in human society**. Therefore, whatever secures **religious and intellectual freedom**, whatever establishes **justice, peace and order in society** belongs to the natural law. (*FoJ* 22)

And what about human law? John Wu gives us a beautiful illustration of different orders of law in this world, saying:

The eternal law, the natural law and human law form a continuous series. **The whole series may be compared to a tree**, with the eternal law for its root, the natural law for its trunk, and the different systems of human law for its branches. Wherever the soil is not too thin and the climate favorable, **the tree sends forth its splendid flowers of justice and equity and yields the fruits of peace and order, virtue and happiness**. Indeed, peace is the fruit of justice. Formally, the eternal law and the natural law belong to higher orders than human law; but materially, human law is richer and furnishes a more interesting field for study, because it embodies, within the limits of its capacity, part of the natural law together with certain positive or conventional rules and measures which vary with time and circumstances. (*FoJ* 24-25) .

To round up John Wu's conception of natural law, we have to mention the relation of human laws with natural law:

The truth is that **human laws are derived from the natural law in two ways**: first, **by way of conclusion from premises**<sup>32</sup>; secondly, **by way of determination of certain generalities**. In his own words, "Some things are derived from the general principles of natural law by way of conclusions: thus the precept that '*one must not kill*' can be derived as a certain conclusion from the principle that '*evil should be done to no man*.'" Other things, however, are derived by way of determination: thus it is the law of nature that he who does evil should be punished; but that he should be punished in any specific way is "kind of determination of the natural law." (*FoJ* 25)

From the above quotations of John Wu, we can conclude that natural law is an order of law understood as determined by nature itself (immanent in nature), and thus **universally valid**. It uses **human reason to analyze human nature** in order to **deduce and determine obligatory and required rules of moral behavior**. Thus, **human law (that is, positive law as "man-made law") cannot exist without reference to natural law**. Natural law is inherently connected with morality and, in historical perspective, also with

---

<sup>32</sup> This is also called a practical syllogism as an instance of practical (moral, ethical) reasoning. It takes the form of a syllogism, where the conclusion of the syllogism is an action.

the intentions of God as Creator. Interestingly enough, natural law theory can be accepted both by theists and atheists.<sup>33</sup> Thus, founded in our nature and revealed to us by our reason, natural law is known to us in the amount in which human reason gets hold of and brings it to our understanding. The question arises: How far can man be ignorant of the natural law, which, as St. Paul says, is written in the human heart (Romans 2:14)? I suppose John Wu would dare to say that wherever we find human beings we find him or her with a moral code, which is founded on the first principle that good is to be done and evil avoided. No human person whose reason and moral nature is ever so little developed can remain in ignorance of such a universal precept (or similar such as: “Do not commit adultery” or “Honor your parents”) except through his own fault. However, when we pass from **the universal to more particular conclusions**, the situation is different. Such conclusions are reached only by a more or less complex way of reasoning. Thus, they may remain unknown to, or be misinterpreted even by men whose intellectual development is worthy of respect.

John Wu’s “vision of Natural Law, which, like the face of God, is ever-glowing, vivid, expressive of internal feelings, responsive to external changes, and looking forward to the welfare of Humanity [... as] a truer vision of Natural Law” (*BEW* 97) is still to be realized.<sup>34</sup> Germain Gabriel Grisez (1929-2018), a Catholic moral theologian, with his new form “New

---

<sup>33</sup> Cf. O’Sullivan and Pecorino, Chapter 7: “Deontological Theories: Natural Law, Section 4: “Natural Law Theory” ([www.qcc.cuny.edu/SocialSciences/ppecorino/ETHICS\\_TEXT/CONTENTS.htm](http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/SocialSciences/ppecorino/ETHICS_TEXT/CONTENTS.htm); accessed 31.08.2021): “Natural Law Theory can be held and applied to human conduct by both theists and atheists. **The atheist uses reason to discover the laws governing natural events and applies them to thinking about human action.** Actions in accord with such natural law are morally correct. Those that go against such natural laws are morally wrong. **For the theists there is a deity that created all of nature and created the laws** as well and so obedience to those laws and the supplement to those laws provided by the deity is the morally correct thing to do. **For atheists** there is still the belief that **humans have reasoning ability and with it the laws of nature are discernible.** For atheists who accept this approach to act in keeping with the laws of nature is the morally correct thing to do. What are the laws of nature that provide guidance for human actions? These would include: the law of survival, the natural action for living things to maintain themselves and to reproduce, etc. It is a major problem for this theory to determine what exactly those laws are and how they apply to human circumstances.”

<sup>34</sup> During human history and its vicissitudes, natural law theories have proved resilient. During the rise of positivism with its absolutely empirical spirit, natural law seemed not to have been present from 19th to mid-20th centuries. However, events the atrocities of World War II were so horrifying that they made a re-emergence of natural law under the guise of human rights (cf. Nuremberg trials, 1946-1947) possible. Thus, this interest in natural still develops, also outside the Roman-Catholic circles, till this day. Cf. Leiboff and Thomas 159, footnote 9.

Natural Law,"<sup>35</sup> and other theorists of natural law are in a sense successors of this John Wu's vision.<sup>36</sup>

## CONCLUSION

L. Wittgenstein's in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* says:

My propositions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands me finally recognizes them as senseless, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak **throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it.**) He must surmount these propositions; then he sees the world rightly. (6.54)

**What about the threefold ladder of John Wu? When can we throw it away?**

Above we depicted a threefold ladder of John Wu for reaching the realm of „beyond East and West.” As to the first ladder of Christian faith, it is a pure grace of God. This ladder is given by God Himself from heaven as a pure gift to a human being. This ladder given from above can only be accepted or refused by a human person.

**When is it possible to throw away this ladder?** The answer gives us St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:8-13:

Love never fails. [...]. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; **then we shall see face to face.** Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. **And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.**

In the last section of *SoL*, that is, in “Life and Death” (46-48), John Wu testifies to us what he actually means by “**moving beyond East and West.**” It is nothing else than **rising “above life and death”** (*SoL* 46). It is “**a spiritual state where her own will was merged into the Will of God.**” (*SoL* 46).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Grisez 1983.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Tollefsen, *LYCEUM* X:1. He says: “The New Natural Law (NNL) theory, sometimes also called the New Classical Natural Law theory, is the name given a particular revival and revision of Thomistic Natural Law theory, initiated in the 1960s by Germain Grisez. Grisez's initial collaborators included Joseph Boyle, John Finnis and Olaf Tollefsen. More recently, Robert P. George, Patrick Lee, Fr. Peter Ryan, S.J., Gerard Bradley, William E. May, Christian Brugger, and Christopher Tollefsen have done work on the NNL” (after [lyceumphilosophy.com/?q=node/97](http://lyceumphilosophy.com/?q=node/97); accessed 31.08.2021).

Thus, “[w]ith a faith enlivened by such intense love and enlightened by such a transparent vision, it is no wonder that Thérèse of Lisieux even conquered death before she died” (*SoL* 46). This all means that with one’s death the ladder of faith will be thrown away, and what will eternally remain is only love, that is, the second ladder of John Wu.

This second ladder is that of human or natural and divine love. This ladder is constructed both by a human being with his or her natural ability of love and God who has first loved us (cf. 1 John 4:19). Thus, we could say that this ladder helps to construct an “eternal ladder” to Go with pieces of ladder going from earth to Heaven and from Heaven to earth. The second ladder has its human aspects like friendship or human love, but ultimately the way of love, or the ladder of love, is Divine and eternal!

The third ladder is that of the natural law which depends on a sound human reason. This kind of a ladder is totally a work of human ability to know and reason which to John Wu – of course – was given by God. Thus, natural law is an order of law understood as determined by nature itself (immanent in nature), and thus universally valid. It uses human reason to analyze human nature in order to deduce and determine obligatory and required rules of moral behavior. According to John Wu’s understanding, human law (that is, positive law as “man-made law”) cannot exist without reference to natural law. This ladder, however, like the first one will be thrown away with one’s death with which ends all spatial-geographical and historical-cultural limitations of human beings, and we will be freed “[...] from our bondage to the dialectical process of time. What is more, by His [Christ’s] grace we are enabled **to reach the Beyond** by riding the chariot of mutability (*BEW* 144).

Well, one does not become a saint and go to Heaven by cleverness, while sanctification is my sole ambition now, and the **Beatific Vision my sole objective**. (*BEW* 323).

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

##### PRIMARY SOURCES

*BEW* – Wu, John. *Beyond East and West*. Sheed and Ward, 1951.

*FoJ* – Wu, John. *Fountain of Justice: A Study in the Natural Law*. Mei Ya Publications Inc., 1971.

*SoL* – Wu, John. *The Science of Love: A Study in the Teachings of Thérèse von Lisieux*. Catholic Truth Society, 1941.

## SECONDARY LITERATURE

- Bix, Brian H. *Jurisprudence: Theory and Context*. Carolina Academic Press, 2004.
- Grisez, Germain Gabriel. *Way of the Lord Jesus* (vol. 1: *Christian Moral Principles*; vol. 2: *Living a Christian Life*; vol. 3: *Difficult Moral Questions*). Franciscan Herald Press, 1983.
- Heilbron, J. L., editor-in-chief. *The Oxford Companion to the History of Modern Science*. Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Kun, Jeanne. „Mary Magdalene: A Portrait of Love Stronger than Death.” *Living Bulwark*, [www.swordofthespirit.net/bulwark/apr08p2.htm](http://www.swordofthespirit.net/bulwark/apr08p2.htm). Accessed 31.08.2021.
- Laura, Ronald S., and Dan Zhou. “Reconceptualizing the Foundations of Knowledge to Enhance the Pedagogic Goals of Environmental Education with Special Reference to the Three Gorges Dam Project.” *International Proceedings of Chemical, Biological & Environmental Engineering*, vol. 28, 2012, pp. 224-229, IPCBEE. International Proceedings of Chemical, Biological and Environmental Engineering, [www.ipcbee.com/vol28/41-ICFEE2012-H2009.pdf](http://www.ipcbee.com/vol28/41-ICFEE2012-H2009.pdf). Accessed 31.08.2021
- Ledoux, Stephen F. “Defining Natural Sciences.” *Behaviorology Today*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2002, pp. 34-36.
- Leiboff, Marett, and Mark Thomas. *Legal Theories: Contexts and Practices*. Lawbook Co., Australia, 2009.
- Nevin, Thomas R. *Thérèse of Lisieux: God's Gentle Warrior*. Oxford University Press, 2006.
- O'Sullivan, Stephen, and Philip A. Pecorino. ETHICS: An Online Textbook. Stephen O'Sullivan and Philip A. Pecorino, 2002, [www.qcc.cuny.edu/SocialSciences/ppcorino/ETHICS\\_TEXT/CONTENTS.htm](http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/SocialSciences/ppcorino/ETHICS_TEXT/CONTENTS.htm). Accessed 31.08.2021.
- Shamay-Tsoory, Simone G., Judith Aharon-Peretz and Daniella Perry. “Two Systems for Empathy: A Double Dissociation between Emotional and Cognitive Empathy in Inferior Frontal Gyrus versus Ventromedial Prefrontal Lesions.” *Brain. Journal of Neurology*, vol. 132, no. 3, 2009, pp. 617-627.
- Sorell, Tom. *Scientism: Philosophy and the Infatuation with Science*. Routledge, 1994.

„POZA WSCHODEM I ZACHODEM” –  
 JAKIEJ „DRABINY” UŻYŁ JOHN WU DO OSIĄGNIĘCIA TEGO CELU?

Streszczenie

John Wu Jingxiong (1899-1986) był dyplomatą, uczonym i autorytetem w dziedzinie prawa międzynarodowego. Był także wybitnym chińskim katolikiem. Jego duchowa autobiografia *Beyond East and West* (1951) przypomina *Wyznania* św. Augustyna poprzez poruszający opis nawrócenia Johna Wu na katolicyzm w 1937 r. i jego wczesne lata jako katolika. Sam tytuł autobiografii Wu wskazuje na jego duchowy ideał, który pozwala ludziom wykraczać poza kulturowe osobliwości (czy to zachodnie, chińskie czy inne). John Wu znalazł mądrość w wielkich chińskich tradycjach, tj. w konfucjanizmie, daoizmie i buddyźmie, wskazując na ich uniwersalne prawdy, które ostatecznie pochodzą od Chrystusa i w nim się wypełniają. Autor tego artykułu szukał uniwersalnych cech Johna Wu, które wykraczają poza jakąkolwiek kulturę i które metaforycznie nazwał „drabiną”. Znalazł potrójną drabinę, tj. wiarę chrześcijańską, przyjaźń wraz ludzką i boską miłością i prawo naturalne.

**Słowa kluczowe:** John Wu; *Beyond East and West*; duchowa autobiografia; wiara chrześcijańska; przyjaźń; ludzka i boska miłość; prawo naturalne.