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Esoteric Influences in Wincenty Lutosławski's Programme of National Improvement. Prolegomena

ABSTRACT

Wincenty Lutosławski, Polish philosopher and social activist is widely known as the author of the first Polish yoga textbook *Rozwój potęgi woli* [The Development of the Power of Will] which covers the method of yoga practice worked out by Lutosławski himself. Much less known, however, remain the sources that were used by the philosopher to create the system of yoga practices and their actual aims. The paper focuses on presenting the system of yoga exercises developed by Lutosławski as a part of his programme of national improvement and traces its esoteric foundations.

KEYWORDS

Lutosławski, esotericism, New Thought, yoga, Vivekananda, Ramacharaka

It is simply not possible to present Wincenty Lutosławski (1863–1954) within a few sentences – and that is all I have here – the philosopher, writer, publicist, university professor teaching, among others, in Cracow, Kazan, Vilnius, Lviv, London, Geneva, Lausanne, a tireless social activist, organiser of many and varied educational circles, interests groups, societies and fraternities. In the 1980s and 1990s the philosophical English-speaking world considered him as the most outstanding representative of Polish philosophical thought, though this does not mean that his ideas were accepted uncritically. Without

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any doubts, his research on Plato brought him the greatest recognition. Lutosławski was famous for his extremely complex analysis of the chronology of Plato's *Dialogues*, which he determined using a method called stylometry – a pioneering method which he developed himself.¹ The results of his research were presented in an impressive book entitled *The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic with an Account of Plato's Style and of Chronology of his Writings* (London–New York 1897), which turned Lutosławski into one of the most recognisable Polish philosophers of that time.

In Poland, however, he remained unappreciated. Moreover, he was strongly criticised on various levels – as a philosopher for the idea of eleuterism which he created and promulgated, spiritualism which he ardently advocated and palingenesis which he included in his metaphysical concepts. As a social thinker he was considered to be an exponent and “one of the last who, standing at the university lectern, proclaimed the philosophy of Polish national messianism,”² which, to put it in a delicate manner, evoked ambivalent feelings. His diverse social (hyper)activity also made him an object of fierce criticism. Some regarded it as a “product of a sick mind,” a clear sign of “primary lunatic.”³ while others thought it to be the symptom of the light-heartedness of a “philosophical bee” – a man who “walks through his life in a cheerful autohypnosis, going past all social and national realities.”⁴

It should be emphasised that in Lutosławski's life passion for philosophy was perfectly combined with his zeal for social activity. This philosopher and “reformer-utopian”⁵ did not content himself with mere theoretical speculations or expounding his philosophical and social ideas, but he would always seek out different ways to implement them, to find and use every opportunity to put them into practice. Almost all Lutosławski's activities may be seen merely as an expression of his views, the views of a man in whom, as Stanisław Pigoń wrote, “continuously burns unsmothered desire to embody the ideal, to transform the souls, to reshape the world, to create the utopian State of Perfection.”⁶

¹ Cf. W. Lutosławski, *Principes de stylométrie appliqués à la chronologie des oeuvres de Platon*, Paris 1898.

² T. Mróz, *Metafizyka – nieznaną książką Wincentego Lutosławskiego*, Archiwum Historii Filozofii i Myśli Społecznej, t. 52, Warszawa 2007, p. 295.

³ A. Mikulski, *Polska literatura psychopatyczna. Przyczynek do psychologii twórczości*, Lwów 1908, p. 130.

⁴ T. Żeleński-Boy, *Uroczy znachor*, [in:] idem, *Znasz li ten kraj*, Gdański 2001, p. 166.

⁵ E. Łubieniewska, *Słowacki – Lutosławski (czyli niebezpieczne związki rewelatora z reformatorem)*, [in:] *Filozofia i mistyka Wincentego Lutosławskiego*, red. R. Zaborowski, Warszawa 2000, p. 152.

⁶ S. Pigoń, *Z Komborni w świat*, Kraków 1957, p. 234.

More than that, Lutosławski considered himself to be the initiator of the moral renewal of Polish society: this and only this, as he thought, could bring freedom to Poland. He saw himself as the one in whom and through whom such a renewal and revival was possible – not only for Poland – but in the long term, thanks to Poland – for the whole of human kind. In one of his letters addressed to William James,⁷ Lutosławski stated: “...new life was beginning in me and **through me for Poland and through Poland for mankind...**”⁸ In another letter he pictured himself as a messiah called by the Divine Providence to bring freedom to his motherland. He wrote:

I prophesied Poland's freedom and no thunder fell from heaven to kill me [...] out of 20 million Poles I have been selected by Providence to do that deed. Why is mankind so base that there was not one worthier than me? [...] How is it possible that I should now be designed to lead the noblest nation to its own freedom and through it the whole of mankind to a new regeneration [...]. I shall not fail. I shall go straight ahead, fearless. In three years Poland will be free. In a century Europe regenerated. May I be forgotten, may I undergo eternal damnation if such a thing exists at all, if only I'm allowed to make the slightest step on the true Road of mankind's emancipation from Evil.⁹

This, as he wrote “leading the noblest nation to its own freedom,” “regeneration” and “emancipation from Evil” took a particular shape in Lutosławski's thought – the philosopher's aim was the formation of a morally perfect man, that is one who realises in the fullest possible manner the ethical ideals, which were expressed, as Lutosławski claimed, in the most distinctive and clear way in the works of the Polish poets (“Bards”) – Juliusz Słowacki (1809–1849) and Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855).

The perfect Pole – Lutosławski wrote – is a real Spirit-King being in control of the material conditions of the existence, proving his omnipotence as Słowacki's Popiel, some-

⁷ Lutosławski met James in 1839 during his stay in the USA. This meeting resulted in a long-term friendship of both thinkers. For details on the Lutosławski-James relationship see: W. Jaworski, *Eleuteryzm i mesjanizm. U źródeł filozofii społecznej Wincentego Lutosławskiego*, Kraków 1994.

⁸ Wincenty Lutosławski to William James, a letter of November 3, 1903, in Avenches (emphasis mine). All letters of Wincenty Lutosławski (and those addressed to him) quoted in this article are gathered in the Archive of Science of Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (PAU) in Cracow under the reference number K III – 155. I would like to thank the Director of the Archive Rita Majkowska, Ph.D. and Małgorzata Mrówka, M.A. for directing me through the infinite maze of Lutosławski's letters.

⁹ Wincenty Lutosławski to William James, a letter of November 7, 1900, in Kraków.

times even challenging God – as Konrad in Mickiewicz, but at the same time he is the one who knows how to give the evidence of humility just as the Father Piotr.¹⁰

Shaped as such, the “ideal Pole,” the ideal member of the society, “the contemporary saint”¹¹ could, according to the philosopher, serve the “national cause” (i.e. the fight for independence) in the most perfect way. His work, as well as his entire attitude would contribute to the coming of “the independence most widely understood and permeating all the areas.”¹² This unrequited desire to improve the society, the nation and the whole of human kind, should be regarded as the source of Lutosławski’s activity which brought about more or less formal social organisations, institutions of national revival such as the most recognisable and influential Eleusis Society as well as the association of Eleuteria, Zakon Kowali [The Order of the Smiths], Kuźnica [Forge], Wszecznica Mickiewiczowska [Mickiewicz’s University], Koła Filareckie [Filaret Associations], Seminarium Wychowania Narodowego [Seminary of National Education] whose members worked in accordance with Lutosławski’s recommendations and programmes on moral formation, putting a strong emphasis on the development of nationalistic and patriotic attitudes.

The source of Lutosławski’s inspirations for his writings was exactly the same: *O wychowaniu narodowym* [On National Education] (Kraków 1900); *Praca narodowa: program polityki polskiej* [National Work: the Programme of Polish Politics] (Wilno 1922); *Młodzi święci współcześni* [Young Saints of Today] (Kraków 1948); *Ludzkość odrodzona. Wizje przyszłości* [Humanity Revived. The Visions of the Future] (Warszawa 1910); a collection of essays *Na drodze ku wielkiej przemianie* [On the Way to the Great Transformation] (Warszawa 1912) or *Rozwój potęgi woli* [The Development of the Power of Will] (Warszawa 1909, which will be mentioned in detail further in this paper) are only selected examples of Lutosławski’s writings, in which the Polish philosopher, well aware of the limitations of his social initiatives, would describe in minute detail various programmes of national education or patriotic, didactic, formative, self-educational and self-developmental schemes which may be considered as fully fledged scenarios for of all those who wished to start working on their own moral characters and (or) were ready to make an effort to educate “the real leaders of the nation, who would not lose what is their

¹⁰ Quoted in: T. Podgórska, *Stowarzyszenie Patriotyczno-Religijne Eleusis w latach 1902–1914*, Lublin 1999, p. 103.

¹¹ W. Jaworski, *Wincentego Lutosławskiego filozofia religii*, “Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Górniczo-Hutniczej im. Stanisława Staszica” 1985, nr 1008, p. 80.

¹² W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi woli przez psychofizyczne ćwiczenia*, Kraków 1909, p. 180.

nation's power, but would develop it and make it even more noble – gaining new strength, given by national consciousness along with mind formation.”¹³

The philosophical background for Lutosławski's comprehensive reformist activity constituted a system, created by himself, which he called eleuterism (from the Greek *eleuteros* 'free'). A major pillar of this system, its basic premise was the existence of the “creative, constitutive character of an unrestricted free will of the Self, which is embodied in man.”¹⁴ It is exactly this free will “brought to life by the bright light of reason”¹⁵ which, according to Lutosławski, is the source of all creative human activity, through which men can shape their own lives, influence others and the whole surrounding reality. This free will is manifested in the fullest manner through human creativity, our willingness and ability to act, the will to change our whole reality. As Lutosławski wrote: “The will is what is felt as omnipotent and creative, **what directly embodies the idea into action**, in harmony with the higher will.”¹⁶

According to Lutosławski, a person is in fact a spiritual being, the Self, which is free and entirely independent from the body. The very core, “the heart” of the Self is will.¹⁷ Free will may be considered as one of the dimensions of the Self. “The freedom of the will – as Lutosławski stated – is to be understood as a different description of the same reality which we call the very existence of the Self.”¹⁸ The Polish philosopher considered will to be the ability to make free choices, meaning those which are motivated by impulses flowing directly from the will (free by nature) and unconditioned by any external factors. Human freedom consisted therefore – according to the philosopher – in the ability and skills to use free will, taking each action in accordance with

¹³ Idem, *Sprawozdanie z kursów robotniczych Wszechnicy Mickiewicza odbytych w Krakowie od listopada 1906 do lipca 1907*, “Eleusis. Czasopismo Elsów”, red. S. Witkowski, t. II, p. 141.

¹⁴ W. Groblewski, *Antypozytywistyczna koncepcja jednostki Wincentego Lutosławskiego*, [in:] *W kręgu zagadnień antropologii społeczno-filozoficznej*, red. S. Kaczmarek, Poznań 1978, p. 50.

¹⁵ L. Wiśniewska, *Mesjanizm Wincentego Lutosławskiego a mesjanizm wrocławski Jerzego Brauna*, [in:] *Filozofia i mistyka Wincentego Lutosławskiego*, red. R. Zaborowski, Warszawa 2000, p. 162.

¹⁶ Quoted in: T. Kobierzycki, *Koncepcja jaźni według Wincentego Lutosławskiego*, [in:] *Filozofia i mistyka Wincentego Lutosławskiego*, red. R. Zaborowski, Warszawa 2000, p. 102 (emphasis mine).

¹⁷ This is one of the distinctive and central categories which builds up Lutosławski's philosophical anthropology hence named voluntarism. For details on Lutosławski's concept of will see: W. Jaworski, *Metafizyka eleuteryzmu. Podstawowe założenia ontologii Wincentego Lutosławskiego*, “Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Górniczo-Hutniczej im. Stanisława Staszica” 1989, nr 1182, pp. 69–95.

¹⁸ Quoted: *ibidem*, p. 92.

totally unconditioned and unlimited will. Such activities, which are in harmony with the promptings of the Self, which are the results of free choices, will always, as the philosopher claimed, aim at the gradual improvement of the Self. This is due to the fact that – by nature – as Lutosławski wrote:

Each and every Self has this intrinsic power of getting closer to its own ideal of perfection, resolving that the present day will bring it to this ideal closer, more than yesterday. Every Self may keep renewing this resolution until it awakens the will hidden within, the will which knows no obstacle nor resistance.¹⁹

Hence Lutosławski searched for a way, or rather **all possible ways** to discover will – this very essence of the Self – which would lead to a situation in which free will would become the main and the only driving force of appropriate action. The “revealing of this very essence of the pure Self, independent from the body, controlling the body and the external world”²⁰ would allow a man, as Lutosławski claimed, to “achieve power,” to use the full potential of a human being.

The result of this search is a book, now commonly referred to as the first Polish textbook of yoga, whose full title is *Rozwój potęgi woli przez psychofizyczne ćwiczenia według dawnych aryjskich tradycji oraz własnych swoich doświadczeń podaje do użytku rodaków Wincenty Lutosławski* [The Development of the Power of Will through the Psychophysical exercises according to the Ancient Aryan Traditions and His Own Experiences Given by Wincenty Lutosławski for the use of his Compatriots].²¹

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. 151.

²¹ *Rozwój potęgi woli* (first edition) was issued in 1909 in Warsaw, but came to life four years earlier – in 1905 in a sanatorium founded and run by Apolinary Tarnawski in Kosiv near Kolomyia which was frequently visited by Lutosławski. Copies of the texts, as the author mentioned in the foreword to the book, “were in use since then (i.e. since 1905 – A. Ś.) and were so effective that publishing them today gives an answer to the existing need” (W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. V). The publication of *Rozwój potęgi woli* in the form of a book preceded a detailed, two-piece paper entitled *Joga, czyli rozwój potęgi woli* [Yoga or the development of the power of will], which was published in “Eleusis. Czasopismo Elsów” [Eleusis. The Elses’ Periodical]. This paper concentrated mainly on practical hints which were to spur the readers towards unassisted experiments with the methods presented. *Rozwój potęgi woli* was reissued twice in 1910 (Warsaw) and in 1923 (Vilnius). The second edition is almost identical with the first one but the third one includes a number of changes made by Lutosławski under the influence of the “experience of grace” which he received in 1913 and later, which entirely changed his attitude towards the practices he proposed in the original version of the book (see further parts of this paper).

The programme described in this book by the philosopher – the programme of self-discipline as well as self-development, although created as a remedy for the personal frailty²² which afflicted Lutosławski, eventually turned into a full procedure for the nation's renewal which was to be achieved by the improvement of each and every individual who was its member. The book *Rozwój potęgi woli* includes a complete system of work that when put into practice by all members of the society would bring – and so Lutosławski saw it – the physical, mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual development of the Polish people, who would thus gain the strength to fight for their lost freedom. The philosopher wrote:

There are no other possible exercises which could be practiced so constantly, as the easiest and the simplest exercises of will. They will give peace, give strength and inspiration that will show the way out of the worst snare [...]. This is the way leading not only to the physical and moral regeneration, but also to the independence most widely understood and permeating all the areas.²³

The programme described in *Rozwój potęgi woli* is compiled from recommendations, guidelines and practices derived from various sources. Some of those practices were personally tested by Lutosławski while others were known to him only in theory.²⁴ Without a doubt, Lutosławski's theoretical knowledge and practical experience were vast since the philosopher not only led an extensive literary quærenda but was also keen on experimenting with various medicinal, dietary, gymnastic and, as he called them, “psychophysical” (i.e. yoga) systems, trying to create a situation in which his body and mind would become obedient tools of free will.

The starting point of the training proposed by Lutosławski in *Rozwój potęgi woli* was a bodily discipline whose aim, as the philosopher emphasised, was not to afflict the body, but rather to make it a functional and efficient tool fully subordinate and obedient to the impulses of will.²⁵ “Systematic efforts –

²² Lutosławski, as he himself stated, having published in 1897 his lifework - *Plato's Logic* – which took him over ten years to complete, fell seriously ill. The sickness consisted of general weakness, a feeling of constant fatigue and deep physical exhaustion. The symptoms were so acute that, as Lutosławski wrote, “while being still alive I experienced death” (W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. VII).

²³ Ibidem, pp. 179–180.

²⁴ Idem, *Jeden latwy żywot*, Warszawa 1933 [1994], p. 277.

²⁵ The body, according to Lutosławski, has a certain independence manifested in the fact that body may not want to submit to the soul but may even act rebelliously against the soul. However, in the long process of disciplining the body, of gradually subjecting it to control, it is possible to teach the body submission to the soul, creating a situation where it

wrote Lutosławski – competent internal management can **bring the body under control**²⁶ making it an obedient tool in the hands of the conscious Self.

Hence it is no wonder that the philosopher eagerly reached for various strategies with whose help, as he believed, it would be possible to conduct smoothly this “internal management”. So Lutosławski sought inspiration in the ideas of (among others): Maximilian Bircher-Benner (1867-1939) – an advocate of eating raw, unprocessed food;²⁷ Hereward Carrington (1880–1958)²⁸ and Edward E. Purinton (1878–1945),²⁹ who presented the details of the entire philosophy and physiology of fasting, along with the minute practical instructions for those about to embark on a period of fasting; Horace Fletcher (1849–1919) who stressed the importance of proper chewing as the key factor for good health and hence nicknamed “the great masticator;”³⁰

becomes a “direct instrument of the soul” (W. Jaworski, *Metafizyka eleuteryzmu...*, op. cit., p. 82).

²⁶ W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. 86 (emphasis mine).

²⁷ Ibidem, p. XXI; Lutosławski recalled Bircher-Benner’s fundamental work *Grundzüge der Ernährungstherapie auf Grund der Energiespannung der Nahrung* (Berlin 1903) in Polish translation – *Podstawy żywienia leczniczego na zasadach energetyki*, trans. J. Luczyński, Warszawa 1908.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. XXI, XXII; Hereward Carrington was also a well known investigator of psychic and paranormal phenomena. It seems, however, that Lutosławski was interested mainly in his alternative health strategies, such as the aforementioned fasting. In one of his letters to Wiliam James Lutosławski recalled in an enthusiastic manner Carrington’s well known book *Vitality, Fasting and Nutrition* (New York 1908) saying: “If he [Carrington – A. Ś.] succeeds to convince you [James – A. Ś.], this may mean a totally different use of these latter years of your life...” (Wincenty Lutosławski to William James, a letter of January 17, 1908, in Los Angeles). In another letter he wrote: “I have begun a new fast after reading the very interesting book of Carrington which I recommend you with all my good wishes for your health. He makes it as plain and evident as nobody else before that you are eating too much” (Wincenty Lutosławski to William James, a letter of January 22, 1908, in Los Angeles).

²⁹ Edward Earle Purinton was a naturopath and author of several self-help books such as *Personal Efficiency in Business* (New York 1919), *Efficient Living* (New York 1915), *The Triumph of the Man who Acts* (New York 1916). Lutosławski, however, was interested, as it seems, only in his *Philosophy of Fasting. A Message for Sufferers and Sinners* (New York 1906) where Purinton elaborates on various aspects of this practice. Inspired by this book, Lutosławski made one of his fasting experiments. He confesses to William James and complements the book: “I have made recently interesting experiment in fasting. Do you know Purinton’s *Philosophy of Fasting*? It is worth reading. Some good things besides brownings and fountain pen begin to come from America” (Wincenty Lutosławski to William James, a letter of June 24, 1907, in Brixham).

³⁰ W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., pp. XXI–XXII; Lutosławski recommends reading one of Fletcher’s leater books *The ABC of Our Own Nutrition* (New York

Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie (1871–1940), who thoroughly described all possible dimensions of regeneration³¹ or Alexander Haig (1853–1924),³² explaining that most health problems (both physical and psychical) were due to an excess of uric acid, caused by an inappropriate diet.

Even though in Lutosławski's programme dietary and physiological issues were doubtlessly of great importance, they only served as an introduction for the main and most important discipline directly aimed at the development of the power of will. In this case too did Lutosławski perform experiments on himself. He also researched the vast literature devoted to this topic. It seems that Lutosławski willingly drew his ideas from a wide and very diverse stream of esoteric writing.³³

The Polish philosopher was well acquainted with the literature of this genre. He had had the opportunity to delve deeply into this issue during his first stay in London in the years 1889–1890 when he made his research in the library of the British Museum, the first time he, according to his recollection, absorbed “hundreds and thousands of volumes, making such accurate extracts that they may replace the books,”³⁴ and later in the years 1903–1905. It was exactly during this time that while still struggling with his own frailty Lutosławski started to read “everything I could find there on health, the relation between spirit and body and various methods of chronic disease control.”³⁵ This kind of literature was for Lutosławski the main source of information and also – and this is crucial – practical instructions for a spiritual discipline which, as he himself asserted, may speed up the “so much desired and expected transformation of human kind, at least in certain individuals.”³⁶

1908). The most influential one was however *Menticulture or the A-B-C of True Living* (Chicago 1895).

³¹ Ibidem; Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie was a man of many interests – a philosopher, translator (known mainly from his translations of writings of Plotyn and Proclus), poet, composer, ardent prohibitionist. He authored a book *Regeneration. The Gate of Heaven* (Boston 1897) which was known to Lutosławski.

³² Wincenty Lutosławski to William James, a letter of June 5, 1906, in London. Alexander Haig was a physician and health reformer. Lutosławski met him personally in London in 1906.

³³ I mean esotericism as a hidden, secret knowledge concerning the spiritual world and available only for the initiated, who are convinced of the absolute authenticity of the knowledge they possess. That *scientia occulta*, and consequently, the practices based on it are supposed to lead an adept to the reality of the spiritual world.

³⁴ W. Lutosławski, *Jeden latwy...*, op. cit., p. 174.

³⁵ Idem, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. XI.

³⁶ Ibidem, p. XXII.

It must be remembered, however, that Lutosławski's attitude towards esoteric knowledge and esoteric quest was not unambiguous. Moreover, it changed radically under the influence of his own spiritual experience meaning, first of all, the "experience of grace," the philosopher started to feel in 1913. Lutosławski's way of thinking about esoteric knowledge is clearly expressed in his critical comments upon it. Esoteric knowledge is that which its owners claim to be contained in the tradition derived from distant times and places, which must remain a mystery. This kind of knowledge is granted during an initiation, only to chosen individuals who, in this particular moment, experience the "sudden enrichment of beliefs"³⁷ but, as Lutosławski specifies, "each and every esoteric initiation always aims at power not knowledge."³⁸

Although Lutosławski, until this aforementioned "experience of grace," generally accepted a variety of search strategies within the field of esoteric knowledge (which does not mean that he accepted and positively evaluated all of them), he, perhaps paradoxically, questioned the very existence of any secret knowledge, understood as indicated above. This kind of knowledge, as Lutosławski saw it, could not withstand comparison with the real, the true knowledge represented by Plato's philosophy. For Lutosławski Plato's philosophy was the main point of reference while evaluating any other systems of knowledge and Plato himself was a paragon sage, and so the man who possessed the true, real wisdom. Lutosławski wrote:

In the British Museum catalogue works by Plato occupy two huge volumes.³⁹ I got to know them all and made extracts. Besides, I often referred to other authors, especially to those who tried to express in any way the world view. So I got acquainted with the vast occult literature and tried to apply to it the criteria of rigorous philosophy. **I became convinced that the secret knowledge does not exist and cannot exist for every significant knowledge radiates openly and cannot be hidden. Reading about different initiations I compared them with the crucial initiation of the discovery of the Self and was convinced that those allegedly initiated do not possess the real knowledge.** It was so much easier that all those allegedly initiated refer to Plato as the great in the know and I myself know Plato as the conscientious thinker having no claims to secrecy as regarding the knowledge.⁴⁰

³⁷ Idem, *Główne prawdy*, "Lotos" 1937, nr 2, p. 6; idem, *Metafizyka*, Drozdowo 2004, p. 182.

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ Lutosławski means the bibliography of the works by and on Plato.

⁴⁰ W. Lutosławski, *Jeden łatwy...*, op. cit., pp. 206–207 (emphasis mine).

And he added:

Along with Plato I got to know such writers and comparing them with Plato I could assess their intrinsic value. Detailed knowledge about one truly great thinker gives the key to the understanding and evaluation of the various writers trying to explain reality in their own way.⁴¹

While writing *Rozwój potęgi woli*, Lutosławski himself followed various tropes, sought various opportunities and made different self-experiments so despite the aforementioned reservations he accepted, or at least allowed for the opportunity to seek knowledge in various ways. Therefore, there are few people here, whom the philosopher would discredit entirely. Even though Lutosławski was quite reluctant to accept all sorts of spiritualists, mediums and mages, so those who, as he wrote “claim that particular clairvoyance revealed to them secrets unknown to us,”⁴² he acknowledged the testimony of their experience and saw a certain value in it. A spiritist, mesmerist, clairvoyant and prophet Andrew Jackson Davis (1826–1910); an occultist, spiritist and socialist at the same time Thomas Lake Harris (1823–1906)⁴³; magician and occultist Elphinas Levi (1810–1875); medium Stainton Moses (1839–1892) – their works “written in a chaotic manner” are not, according to Lutosławski, particularly useful, as they contain only “some vague delusions of the people who, according to the opinion of ordinary medical doctors, suffer from a kind of mental disorder.”⁴⁴ According to Lutosławski, however, their visions should not be totally discredited as they prove the fact that “normal” (i.e. sensory) impressions are not the only ones which are available for a human being, and they show the existence of another category of impressions, “eccentric” impressions, which go beyond the sensual reality. The only people whom Lutosławski from the very beginning judged extremely negatively were: “a fraud”⁴⁵ Anthroposophist Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), who made on

⁴¹ Ibidem, pp. 208–209 (emphasis mine).

⁴² Idem, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. 13.

⁴³ Lutosławski's attitude to Andrew Jackson Davis and Thomas Lake Harris seems to be a good example of this ambiguity. For, on the one hand he expresses negative views, such as those mentioned above, or even condemning Harris (cf. W. Lutosławski, *Posłanictwo polskiego narodu*, Warszawa 1939, pp. 148–149), but at the same it is possible to find very positive, enthusiastic opinions in which Lutosławski acknowledges “real spiritual experiences” of both of them (for example idem, *Jeden latwy...*, op. cit., p. 208) or stresses the fact that his association with Davis was more important than the friendship with William James (ibidem, p. 284).

⁴⁴ Idem, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. 13.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 2.

the Polish philosopher an impression of “an actor, who mainly wanted to affect others”⁴⁶ and “rowdies”⁴⁷ Theosophists Helena Pietrowna Blavatska (1831–1891) and Anie Besant (1847–1943). Lutosławski explicitly warned against the publications and all information arising out of the Theosophical milieu. He believed it to be unreliable and, in addition, created by people hostile to Christianity.⁴⁸

After 1913 the philosopher’s views changed radically. Since then, Lutosławski started to negate any value of any esoteric paths and any knowledge derived from them. He asserted that the only true, real and fundamental knowledge arose from the cognition of the Self and, of particularly importance, the source of this knowledge was God himself. This knowledge “is sometimes given by the Divine inspiration to those who earnestly cry for it without any claims for the secret.”⁴⁹ Hence, Lutosławski referred to the propagators of secret, esoteric knowledge as “false teachers” and “false prophets” who “do not know the true philosophy”. He stated that “the occultism has always been based on false claims,”⁵⁰ that the “reading of occult delusions [...] weakens the skills needed to perform important duties” and “studying the works by Peladan or Papus etc. dazes the readers and stands in such a relation to a major philosophical knowledge as Conan Doyle stories to the actual knowledge of how to detect criminals and crime motives.”⁵¹ His criticism and refutation of esotericism was so utterly pervasive that when in 1923 he gave his permission to publish the third edition of *Rozwój potęgi woli*, he preceded the book with a new preface in which he strongly discourages the reader from using the methods described in the book, stressing the fact that fasting, prayer and service to God are the most appropriate and effective ways to acquire the “omnipotence of will.”

As mentioned previously, while struggling with health problems and trying to find a cure for them, Lutosławski thoroughly researched esoteric literature. As it seems, the Polish philosopher willingly and abundantly used the ideas emerging from the circles of the so-called New Thought Movement which became highly popular in the USA in the 19th century. New Thought was a conglomerate of different beliefs and practices which were grounded in the conviction that the very nature of each human being is in fact identical with a variously conceptualised Infinite Intelligence. This power may mani-

⁴⁶ Idem, *Jeden latwy...*, op. cit., p. 303.

⁴⁷ Idem, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. 2.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, p. XXIII.

⁴⁹ Idem, *Metafizyka*, op. cit., p. 183.

⁵⁰ Ibidem, pp. 182–183.

⁵¹ Idem, *Główne prawdy*, op. cit., p. 46.

fest itself in a human being only when a man, using appropriate practices and techniques, learns how to master his own mind. The acquisition of this skill would bring, first of all, perfect health (this is why the movement was also known as “mind-healing”) but also, in a longer perspective, the realisation of the full potential of a human being.⁵² “The fundamental concern of New Thought, as its alternative moniker ‘mind cure’ suggests, is with health and healing – whether it be of the body, the psyche or the bank balance.”⁵³

Hence, New Thought represented a kind of “practical spirituality,” which would give its follower a sense of communion with transcendence allowing at the same time for the very pragmatic interpretation and usage of this spiritual experience – it would give a sense of having perfect (or at least good) control over all aspects of reality. Horatio W. Dresser (1866–1954), one of the most prominent representatives of the movement and one of its early historians wrote:

The New Thought stands for the affirmative attitude. It affirms success even amidst failure. It endeavours to compass the whole of life, and to show that there are inner resources for every possible need or occasion [...] It is a vigorous gospel of health and healing. It is constructive, positive, optimistic; believes in the supremacy of the good, the triumph of ideals, the development of productive individuality.⁵⁴

Two key people from the New Thought Movement for Lutosławski himself were Yogi Ramacharaka (i.e. William Walker Atkinson, 1862–1932) and “the ambassador of yoga in the West” Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902).

Atkinson was an American attorney, merchant, publisher, and, most of all, a famous occultist and one of the most prolific and popular authors of New Thought literature. The list of Atkinson’s work is impressive, or, better to say the list of papers attributed to him, since we cannot be sure whether all the texts published under various pseudonyms actually come from his pen. These

⁵² Cf. for example: A. Anderson, D. Whitehouse, *New Thought: A Practical American Spirituality*, New York 1995; G. R. Mosley, *The History and Future New Thought: Ancient Wisdom of the New Thought*, Philadelphia 2006; C. Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit*, Yale 2007.

⁵³ M. Singleton, *Suggestive Therapeutics: New Thought's Relationship to Modern Yoga*, “Asian Medicine” 2007, No. 3, p. 66.

⁵⁴ Ibidem. Lutosławski mentioned Dresser among other people who „work systematically on the body or soul or both of them to speed up so much desired and needed transformation of the human kind at least in selected individuals” (W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. XXII). Dresser authored many books of which the most famous are *The power of Silence* (Boston 1895) and later: *Human Efficiency. A Psychological Study of Modern Problems* (New York 1912) and *A History of New Thought Movement* (New York 1919).

works deal with various subjects circulating around themes of interest to the followers of the New Thought path – telepathy, power of mind, mind-healing, self-healing, the relationship between body and mind, mind reading, psychomancy, crystalomancy, clairvoyance, spiritism, mediumism, mesmerism, mysticism, alchemy, alchemy of mind, life after death, naturotherapy, astrology and many others. Not without significance are also the guide books authored by him, which contain practical courses of self-development (all based on New Thought ideas) which found favour among officials and white-collar workers whose number grew considerably during that time. A significant part of Atkinson's publications concern the philosophical, religious and spiritual traditions of India, mainly Hinduism and yoga (usually published under the name of Yogi Ramacharaka). In this matter the main source of inspiration for the American occultist was Swami Vivekananda. A number of ideas which appear in Ramacharaka's books come from the Vivekananda's most well-known, widespread and influential treatise *Raja Yoga* (London–New York 1896). Ramacharaka used them mainly as the theoretical basis for the practices he derived from various sources (or even invented himself). It should be noted, however, that Swami Vivekananda's version of raja yoga was far from the pure, original and traditional Indian yoga (even though it was presented as such). Swami's vision of yoga promoted so strongly in the cultic milieu in the West was in fact already an interpretation which fitted perfectly within the New Thought ideas. The message conveyed in Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga*, as Michelis states, "was what many in cultic milieus worldwide had been waiting for: a flexible set of teachings that would meet their craving for exotic but nevertheless accessible and ideologically familiar forms of practical spirituality."⁵⁵

Western physics, psychology, anatomy, western esoteric motives, philosophy, mesmerism, Harmonial Religion, New Thought are only a few among many sources from which Vivekananda took the ideas which he later used to create his own interpretation and vision of raja yoga.

Vivekananda's and Ramacharaka's books formed the basis for the programme described by Lutosławski in *Rozwój potęgi woli*. Drawing profusely from the aforementioned Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga*⁵⁶ and Ramacharaka's

⁵⁵ E. de Michelis, *A History of Modern Yoga. Patanjali and Western Esotericism*, London–New York 2005, p. 150.

⁵⁶ Lutosławski mentioned also Vivekananda's *Yoga philosophy, lectures delivered in New York, Winter 1895-96 on Raja Yoga, or conquering the internal nature* (London 1903), saying it was one of the best of Vivekananda's books (W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. 5). About Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga* Lutosławski said: "Mastering the breath has been sufficiently explained in many books among which *Raja Yoga* is the most useful" (idem, *Metafizyka*, op. cit., p. 209).

Hatha Yoga or the Yogi Philosophy of Physical Well-Being With Numerous Exercises (Chicago 1904),⁵⁷ the Polish philosopher began his own practice of yoga and, having obtained very positive results, he decided to refine the method and propagate it. In one of his letters to William James, Lutosławski wrote:

I want to send you good news – I have essentially improved my health and look forward to further improvements. Thanks to constant practice for the last six month of very valuable directions contained in a book called *Hatha Yoga* by Ramacharaka [...] and also another by Swami Vivekananda *Raja Yoga* [...]. These two combined with Edward Carpenter's *Art of Creation* [...] have given a great impulse to my thought and will and have led me to exercises which transform slowly my body and regenerate it. If you try the same I feel confident that you might still become young again and transform your heart like I have transformed my brain.⁵⁸

In another one he added:

I am now trying to learn more about yoga from different publications [...] and I am hopeful that much good may come for our race if we take up some of the practice of our Aryan forefathers.⁵⁹

Lutosławski's efforts brought about the book *Rozwój potęgi woli* which, as the author wrote in his dedication for Apollinary Tarnawski,⁶⁰ was to be used as "a tool for liberating our countrymen out of laziness of the spirit, which is the main source of our misery."⁶¹

This paper is too short to indicate all the ideas and concepts that Lutosławski derived from both yogis. It would be also impossible to show how the philosopher reinterpreted them by incorporating themes from other sources. Perhaps it suffices to only mention that the programme described in *Rozwój potęgi woli* is a comprehensive and coherent system of exercises which covers all the spheres of human functioning – body, psyche, mind and spirit. The application of the programme in everyday life was supposed to bring

⁵⁷ According to Lutosławski, this is the best book presenting exercises and theories worked out by Indians which may be successfully used by the Polish people (idem, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. 4).

⁵⁸ Wincenty Lutosławski to William James, a letter of October 2, 1905 in Kossow near Kołomyja.

⁵⁹ Wincenty Lutosławski to William James, a letter of October 29, 1905, in Castelnuovo, Dalmazia.

⁶⁰ Apollinary Tarnawski (1851–1943) was a medical doctor, one of the founders of Polish naturotherapy. He ran a sanatorium in Kosiv near Kolomyia where Lutosławski liked to come to restore his health.

⁶¹ W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. III.

harmony and equilibrium within the body, psyche and mind, and was aimed at providing perfect control over them. This in turn would be the source of free, undetermined actions, stimulated only by impulses flowing from the spirit (the Self). Lutosławski borrowed the framework and the structure of his programme from the Patanjali yoga system interpreted by Swami Vivekananda. Hence Lutosławski's method is divided into two parts: external (Patanjali's *bahiranga* corresponding to Vivekananda's so called "prana model") and internal (Patanjali's *antaranga* corresponding to Vivekananda's so called "samadhi model").⁶² In Lutosławski's programme, the external part, similarly to Vivekananda's interpretation, is designed to bring the body to a state of perfect balance and to learn how to manipulate the currents of prana, which is a prerequisite for practising the raja yoga exercises which Lutosławski named "psychophysical exercises." The internal part includes the practices which are supposed to "reveal the power" and "reveal the very essence of the pure Self, independent from the body and controlling the body and external world."⁶³ Such frames Lutosławski filled with various exercises which he took from Ramacharaka's works.⁶⁴ The Polish philosopher explained their mechanism and efficacy in two ways. First of all he used the category of prana, which is crucial for Vivekananda's interpretations of yoga. However, this "vital force in every being"⁶⁵ in Swami's vision of yoga (and consequently in Lutosławski's version too) was of a strongly mesmeric character. As Michelis states: "When, therefore, our author [i.e. Vivekananda – A. Ś.] identifies *prana* with the «vital force in every being» we should be aware that he is employing one of the expressions by which the mesmeric fluid was commonly known in his day."⁶⁶ Secondly, Lutosławski recalls (though not explicitly) the ability, a kind of a skill described by Ramacharaka of "putting" one's mind into his body and "sending" the mind to certain parts of his body to perform particular actions in the chosen place.⁶⁷ In other word a practitioner was supposed to insert his thought into his physical body sending it later to different bodily parts in order to take full control over them – develop them or heal them.⁶⁸ With these

⁶² Cf. E. de Michelis, op. cit., p. 151.

⁶³ W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi...*, op. cit., p. 151.

⁶⁴ I mean yoga-style exercises since, as mentioned before, Lutosławski drew information also from other non-yoga sources.

⁶⁵ Swami Vivekananda, *Raja Yoga*, Leeds 2003, p. 29.

⁶⁶ E. de Michelis, op. cit., p. 162.

⁶⁷ Ramacharaka calls this ability "this «knack» of sending the mind" (Ramacharaka, *Hatha Yoga or the Yogi Philosophy of Physical Well-Being. With Numerous Exercises*, Chicago 1904: 199, emphasis mine).

⁶⁸ Cf. for example Ramacharaka, *Hatha Yoga or the Yogi Philosophy of Physical Well-Being. With Numerous Exercises*, Chicago 1904, p. 18.

knowledge and skills it was also possible to control the flow of prana, directing it to any part of the body, assimilating it or “pulling” it from the air, water or food.⁶⁹

However, in Lutosławski's letter cited above, in addition to Vivekananda and Ramacharaka, there is another important figure, another source of inspiration for the Polish philosopher. It is an English writer, poet, philosopher, social activist, advocate of free love and also a mystic fascinated by the Indian tradition⁷⁰ – Edward Carpenter (1844–1929). Among the works of Carpenter, numerous, popular, influential and in many cases controversial, which I shall not even attempt to mention here, there is one, today almost forgotten, which was referred to by Lutosławski – *The Art of Creation. Essays of the Self and Its Powers* (London 1904). This particular book is considered to be one of the early motivational books presenting the realm of possibilities of human consciousness – how to get to know it, explore it and use it for the sake of raising a human being to his or her physical and intellectual potential. It is worth stressing that this is not only the theoretical exposition but – as the author himself asserted – it contains wisdom which must come to life, as “It is not sufficient to study and investigate the art of Creation as an external problem; we have to learn and to practice the art in ourselves. So alone will it become vital and really intelligible to us.”⁷¹

Carpenter's pivotal categories which organise the whole theoretical narration are the categories of the creation and the Self. The first one – the creation – Carpenter understands as a “process and method [by which] things are made to appear”⁷² but this “appearing” is investigated by Carpenter mainly on the cosmic plane. The second category – the Self – is in fact considered to be the primordial source of all creation – “The World and the whole Creation, is self-revelment” as Carpenter noted.⁷³ A man who manages to discover this primeval source and get through to the Self takes the possession of the key for the entire creation, so in fact he would be able to establish a new order of things, he would have the power to create an entirely new and perfect reality always in accordance with the cosmic laws. The convergence of the ideas that underlie the whole structure of the programme described in the *Rozwój potęgi*

⁶⁹ Cf. for example: W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. 19.

⁷⁰ It seems that Carpenter's most famous book concerning his Indian fascination is *A Visit to a Gnani* (1892), in which he describes his encounter with a gnani-yogi, a self-realised sage who discusses with him ways and methods of attaining self-realisation.

⁷¹ E. Carpenter, *The Art of Creation. Essays of the Self and its Powers*, London 1921, p. VIII.

⁷² Ibidem, p. 10.

⁷³ Ibidem, p. 44.

woli with those of Carpenter is striking. This does not mean of course that the Polish philosopher adopted the whole of Carpenter's system (there are also many differences), but without a doubt it is one of the most important sources of inspiration.

As mentioned previously, the ideas of Carpenter, Vivekananda and Ramacharaka formed the basis for the programme of Self-development and Self-realisation which Lutosławski proposed in his *Rozwój potęgi woli*. Ramacharaka was also a rich source of various practical tips which the Polish philosopher used in his system of discipline. Ramacharaka, though important, was not the only person representing the esoteric circles whose ideas were taken by Lutosławski to create the practical part of his system. The second one, equally important was Genevieve Stebbins (1857–c.1915) the author of the so-called system of harmonial gymnastics. Almost all physical exercises recommended by Lutosławski in his book were taken from Stebbin's system.⁷⁴ These exercises, called aesthetic exercises, as Lutosławski claimed "develop grace of movements, flexibility and elasticity of the limbs."⁷⁵ It must be stressed that these exercises were of a physical as well as a spiritual character – the finest, graceful movements and gestures were to express beautiful and lofty feelings and combined together were to influence the mind "which renews, on a higher spiritual level, the Greek ideal of beautiful spirit in a beautiful and flawless body."⁷⁶

Genevieve Stebbins was one of the most famous exponents of the Delsarte system of expression⁷⁷ which she, however, did not teach in the version

⁷⁴ Lutosławski was acquainted with the most important book by Stebbins i.e. *Dynamic Breathing and Harmonial Gymnastics: A Complete System of Psychical, Aesthetic and Physical Culture* (1892), which he thought to be "the best work on this issue" (W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., pp. 112–113).

⁷⁵ Ibidem, p. 114.

⁷⁶ Ibidem, p. 130.

⁷⁷ François Delsarte (1811–1871) was a singer, who never managed to make a stage career. Convinced that he lost his voice while studying in conservatoire, he took up the search for other forms of artistic expression and created a system of so-called "applied aesthetics." This grew out of Delsarte's belief that communing with art is essentially of a spiritual nature and that through art a man may participate in the divine, and also express his experiences. The original system of Delsarte was already steeped in various esoteric ideas which became even more pronounced later when the system achieved such a great success, especially in the esoterically oriented 19th century USA. Eventually Delsarte's applied aesthetics "gained dubious reputation as an hermetic science, a storehouse of esoteric knowledge to be intuited by a special coterie of adepts" (G. Dasgupta, *Commedia Delsarte*, "Performing Arts Journal" 1993, No. 15/3, p. 96, quoted in: G. Cavanaugh, *Corresponding with Delsarte: Occult and Ontological Dimensions of Nineteenth-century Elocutionary Performance*, "Text and Performance Quarterly" 2011, Vol. 31, No. 2, p. 131).

which she had learnt from Steel Mackay (1842–1894), one of the direct pupils of Delsarte. Instead she taught her own method – harmonial gymnastic – for which Delsarte's system was only a base. The main goal of the harmonial gymnastic was to harmoniously unite body, mind and soul. Stebbins herself described this system of psychophysical exercises⁷⁸ as:

[...] a completely rounded system for the development of body, brain and soul; a system of training which shall bring this grand trinity of the human microcosm into one continuous interacting unison, so that nothing shall be useless, nothing thoughtless and, consequently, nothing that is vital wasted.⁷⁹

Stebbins, in forming her system, derived abundantly from esoteric themes which she knew very well – not only in theory but also in practice. Stebbins was an important person within the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor and Church of Light. What is more, she also used Ramacharaka's ideas but reinterpreted them in a highly esoteric character. Breathing exercises, which form the core of her system, are strikingly similar to those described by Ramacharaka; the same applies to many physical exercises.⁸⁰ The direction of the influences seems to be clear. Singleton states: "Stebbins's popular system of «rhythmic breathing» is an important site of exchange for American harmonial beliefs and *haṭha yoga prāṇāyāma*."⁸¹

On the list of the people who provided Lutosławski with the ideas he used to build up his own system of discipline there is one more person representing circles of the New Thought Movement, namely Hiram Erastus Butler (1841–1916) – an astrologer who created his own astrological system called the Solar Biology,⁸² sexual mage, the founder of an society called Genii of Nations,

⁷⁸ In *Rozwój potęgi woli* Lutosławski uses exactly the same expression while describing the physical exercises he advised to practice.

⁷⁹ G. Stebbins, op. cit., p. 57.

⁸⁰ Cf. Ramacharaka, *The Hindu-Yogi Science Of Breath. A Complete Manual of the Oriental Breathing Philosophy of Physical, Mental, Psychic and Spiritual Development*, Chicago 1905; G. Stebbins, op. cit.

⁸¹ M. Singleton, *Yoga Body. The Origins of Modern Posture Practice*, Oxford 2010, p. 146.

⁸² Butler expounded the principles of Solar Biology in his book *Solar Biology* (Applegate 1887). This astrological system was based on sun and moon signs, instead of complex planetary movements. It may be added, as a curiosity but quite well illustrating Lutosławski's attitude towards esoteric knowledge that at the request of the Polish philosopher, Butler, using the Solar Biology system, prepared a detailed astrological horoscope of Tadeusz Lutosławski (1913–1997). It pictures the beloved son of Lutosławski as an outstanding person "[...] this boy has all the qualifications to make him a man far above the ordinary in mental capacity and spiritual attainments" (Hiram Erastus Butler to Wincenty Lutosławski, a letter of June 7, 1915 in Applegate, California, page 2).

Knowledge and Religions as well as The Esoteric Fraternity, publisher of the widely-read *The Esoteric* magazine and the author of several well-known hand-books of the spiritual self-help genre.⁸³ Lutosławski met Butler, most probably in 1908 during his stay in the USA while giving lectures in Sacramento and Applegate.⁸⁴ He visited The Esoteric Society and shared with its members some of his ideas and experiences with various forms of self-discipline. Apparently he also mentioned his plans to create a special laboratory to perform experiments which would prove the efficacy of different forms of psycho-physical exercises⁸⁵ as in one of his letters to Lutosławski Butler wrote: “We remember you visit with us and extend utmost good wishes for your success in individual growth and in the spirit and in the success of your **psycho-physical laboratory**.”⁸⁶ Having returned to Poland, Lutosławski corresponded with Butler seeking not only inspiration but also practical hints both for his social activity and his personal problems and doubts.

A book which was undoubtedly known to Lutosławski⁸⁷ was Butler’s guidebook *Practical Methods to Insure Success* (Applegate 1893), a classic of the literature flowing from the circles of the New Thought movement. Its traits appear in *Rozwój potęgi woli* in all those (numerous) passages in which Lutosławski describes strategies of mind control. *Practical Methods to Insure Success* covers a set of practical advice which, if applied properly, would bring success in all areas of life. It is a clear example of the aforementioned “practical spirituality” which unites in a pragmatic way the human need for transcendence beyond every day and mundane affairs. Butler’s book is in fact a model illustration of this combination: it has a bookend structure – between the chapters “Change of thought habit” and “Control of the mind” (which

⁸³ In addition to the aforementioned *Solar Biology*, most popular were: *Practical Methods to Insure Success* (Applegate 1893) and *The Seven Creative Principles* (Applegate 1887).

⁸⁴ W. Lutosławski, *Jeden łatwy...*, op. cit., p. 264.

⁸⁵ Cf. idem, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. XV.

⁸⁶ Hiram Erastus Butler to Wincenty Lutosławski, a letter of July 9, 1911 in Applegate, California (emphasis mine).

⁸⁷ Lutosławski had access to Butler’s *Practical Methods to Insure Success*. He mentions this book in *Rozwój potęgi woli*. Later on, in one of his letters Butler informs Lutosławski that one of the members of the Esoteric Fraternity has sent him a new edition of this very book along with other New Thought publications (Hiram Erastus Butler to Wincenty Lutosławski, a letter of August 7, 1911, in Applegate, California). Butler wanted Lutosławski to translate *Practical Methods to Insure Success* into Polish. The Polish philosopher was quite willing to do so but the whole enterprise was never finalised (cf. Hiram Erastus Butler to Wincenty Lutosławski, letters of September 9, 1911 in Applegate California, October 31, 1917 in Applegate California and April 8, 1918 in Applegate California).

describe how a man can use his spiritual powers) there are six chapters in which Butler talks over the most important problems plaguing each human being – health (including the problem of regeneration) and inter-sex relationships. Here he also gives simple, practical hints how to avoid troubles in these spheres. We may add that in the spirit of these recommendations, Butler gave Lutosławski his personal suggestions concerning how to effectively ignore the obstacles that stand in the way of reaching a goal.⁸⁸

It must also be mentioned that in 1887 Butler founded The Esoteric Fraternity, a society in many respect similar to Lutosławski's Patriotic and Religious Society of Eleusis. The members of the Esoteric Fraternity passed through many rituals of imitation dedicating their lives (in celibacy) to constant self-development so that finally, when their number grew up to 144 thousands, there would be established here on Earth "the kingdom of God and his righteousness"⁸⁹ on the basis of the total unity of the divine and human mind. Before that time came, the Fraternity's members were supposed to cultivate their closeness to God, listen to his messages, follow them, remain faithful to them and "hold the light to the world through our publications."⁹⁰ An important element of the discipline practiced by the members of Butler's society was the development of the mind, which in this case meant gaining perfect control over it so that, at the right time, it would become possible to remove from the mind all that is not God's consciousness. In fact the Esoteric Fraternity's members, just like the members of the Eleusis society practiced self-development within the community and tried to become an inspiration for others to undertake such an effort.

The surviving Butler – Lutosławski correspondence reveals that the Polish philosopher shared with the esoterist his personal experience with his work in the community, but also sought, within Butler's experiences, verification and

⁸⁸ "Therefore, there is but one way – effectual and right, to conquer all difficulties [...] so when evils and difficulties are in your way, learn how to ignore them, it is the worst possible rebuke and the only effectual treatment of things in your way; simply ignore them; thus the thing no longer exists for you [...]. Live in the Light of Cheer, enthusiasm, patient endurance; be absorbed and be like the "blind men" to what you do not wish to see [...]. Concentrate on your purpose, thus you withdraw all sense perceptions except in the line of your specialty and any one particular time: Again you ask how? The Lord Spirit, the great Spirit of Love is a Light and Power, and interest that so occupies one's attention, that evils do not, cannot touch you; therefore they die..." (Hiram Erastus Butler to Wincenty Lutoslawski, a letter of July 9, 1911, in Applegate, California).

⁸⁹ Hiram Erastus Butler to Wincenty Lutosławski, a letter of July 9, 1911, in Applegate, California.

⁹⁰ Hiram Erastus Butler to Wincenty Lutosławski, a letter of August 7, 1911, in Applegate, California.

confirmation of the right course of his actions. He also asked for more general and practical advice regarding the educational work in which he was engaged. Lutosławski also asked Butler various questions concerning more prosaic matters such as the way in which the society was organised, how to finance and manage funds as well as attract and admit new members. In asking all these questions, Lutosławski thought not only about the Eleusis society which already functioned quite well but, as it seems, he also had in mind a longer-term perspective. In *Rozwój potęgi woli*, Lutosławski expressed the idea of creating “modern monasteries” which would become places of residence for all of those who would like to devote their lives entirely to “carry on the research on the conditions under which body might be transformed by the influences of the spirit.”⁹¹ All the strength gained this way might be used for educational purposes i.e. publishing and “sending out the missionaries” – everything to popularise the effects of the work and to prove the efficacy of the practices undertaken in those “monasteries.” In the vision of Lutosławski, over time these places could become centres of care and upbringing for all “life castaways who would there find revival of body and spirit.”⁹² The operation of these “monasteries” and their goals are strikingly similar to Butler’s Esoteric Fraternity.⁹³

Coming to a close but at the same time opening the floor for further research it is worth adding that the various educational circles, interests groups, Eleusis society and envisaged “monasteries” mentioned above did not exhaust Lutosławski’s ideas. Even *Rozwój potęgi woli* which Lutosławski considered to be a tool for individual work did not put a stop to his inventions. All of this was but an introduction to an enterprise which the Polish philosopher planned with much greater imagination. Lutosławski thought of organising a settlement which would provide the ideal conditions for “common living in brotherhood.” In such an environment the members of the Eleusis society could practice love and brotherhood, which Lutosławski understood as “interpersonal relationship based on sincerity, kindness, trust and cooperation needed to reach common goals.” The main condition for the development of this kind of relationship was the individual work of each inhabitant of the settlement in

⁹¹ W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. XVI.

⁹² Ibidem, pp. XVI–XVII.

⁹³ Lutosławski wanted to create a fraternity / society similar to the one run by Butler. On a small scale he tried to do it in Tlemcen (Algeria) where, in 1911, he organised one of his Kuźnica [Forge]. The enterprise, however, lasted only a couple of months (cf. Hiram Erastus Butler to Wincenty Lutosławski, a letter of August 7, 1911 in Applegate California. Butler wrote: “You say you expect to create a society in Algeria similar to ours. I sincerely hope that the Spirit of God may guide your intelligence and prosper you in your efforts.”)

the observation of humility and eradication of egoism.⁹⁴ In trying to transform his visions into reality, Lutosławski sought all kind of inspirations and this is exactly the point which opens up scope for new and extremely interesting explorations covering esoteric themes as well.⁹⁵ Since the issue requires further detailed research and goes far beyond the frames of this paper, at this point we may say that among the people who gave Lutosławski new ideas and an abundance of inspiration were for example: the perfectionist and founder of the utopian Oneida community John Humphrey Noyes (1811–1886),⁹⁶ an occultist and social activist as well as one of the forefathers of eugenic occultism, the founder of the Eulis brotherhood Paschal Beverly Randolph (1825–1875) or Harriot Felkin (1872–1959) the clairvoyant, wife, confidant and co-worker of Robert William Felkin (1853–1926) who was a well known occultist, mage, a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, co-founder of the initiatory brotherhood Stella Matutina and Whare Ra whose members sought various ways to reach spiritual perfection.

The names mentioned and motives briefly described in this paper by no means exhaust the problem of esoteric references and inspirations in Lutosławski's thought. In fact it is but a preliminary attempt to indicate a fascinating subject yet entirely neglected. The guide book *Rozwój potęgi woli* in which esoteric traits are particularly visible was only a starting point for the present reflections. But other works of Lutosławski, like *Preexistence and Reincarnation* (London 1928), *Nieśmiertelność duszy i wolność woli* [Immortality of the Soul and the Freedom of Will] (Warszawa 1909, enlarged version: *Nieśmiertelność duszy. Zarys metafizyki polskiej* [Immortality of the Soul. An Outline of the Polish Metaphysics], Warszawa 1925), *The World of Souls* (London 1924), lectures delivered in 1911 in Paris in *Mutualité Maintenon* and published as *Volonté et Liberté* (Paris 1911), as well as various articles published in the periodical "Eleusis" are excellent and still unexplored sources of information on the esoteric interests of the Polish philosopher, not to mention the vast and until now uncatalogued correspondence of Lutosławski which gives an insight not only into his esoteric fascinations but shows his never ending quest within this field, his constant hunger for information and unceasing attempts to verify what had already been acquired.

⁹⁴ T. Podgórska, op. cit., pp. 110–111.

⁹⁵ Not only, of course. It would interesting to examine how and to what extent Plato's philosophy, which Lutosławski knew perfectly well, influenced his vision of the settlement which I mentioned above.

⁹⁶ W. Lutosławski, *Rozwój potęgi woli...*, op. cit., p. XXII; idem, *Posłannictwo polskiego narodu*, Warszawa 1939, p. 148.

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UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

1. Wincenty Lutosławski to William James:
 - a letter of November 7, 1900, in Krakow
 - a letter of November 3, 1903, in Avenches
 - a letter of October 2, 1905, in Kossow near Kołomyja
 - a letter of October 29, 1905, in Castelnuovo, Dalmazia
 - a letter of June 24, 1907, in Brixham
 - a letter of January 17, 1908, in Los Angeles
 - a letter of January 22, 1908, in Los Angeles
2. Hiram Erastus Butler to Wincenty Lutosławski:
 - a letter of July 9, 1911, in Applegate, California
 - a letter of August 7, 1911, in Applegate, California
 - a letter of September 9, 1911, in Applegate, California
 - a letter of June 7, 1915, in Applegate, California
 - a letter of October 31, 1917, in Applegate, California
 - a letter of April 8, 1918, in Applegate, California