



THE POLISH
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY
IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Jacek Woroniecki

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Table of contents

I. JACEK WORONIECKI OP: PERSON AND WORK

1. LIFE AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY	9
2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT	19
3. CONCEPT OF PHILOSOPHY	31
4. PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY	41
5. MORALITY AND ETHICS	53
6. PEDAGOGY AND UPBRINGING	65
7. SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY	77
8. THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT	87
9. DISCUSSION AND POLEMICS	99
10. LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMPACT	109
11. GLOSSARY	119

II. JACEK WORONIECKI OP: SELECTED WRITINGS

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM OF ETHICS IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER ETHICAL SYSTEMS Jacek Woroniecki, <i>Katolicka Etyka Wychowawcza</i> , vol. 1, Lublin: Fundacja Servire Veritati. Instytut Edukacji Naro- dowej, 2013, pp. 109–118	131
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MAN’S “PERSONALENCE” Jacek Woroniecki, “Rozwój osobistości człowieka. Dyna- miczny aspekt personalizmu,” in <i>Wychowanie człowieka.</i> <i>Pisma wybrane</i> , pp. 59–92. Kraków: Znak, 1961	141

HABIT OR SKILL

Jacek Woroniecki, "Nawyk czy sprawność," in *Wychowanie człowieka. Pisma wybrane*, pp. 33–57. Kraków: Znak, 1961 167

THE SKILL OF GOVERNING AND GIVING ORDERS

Jacek Woroniecki, *Umiejętność rządzenia i rozkazywania*, Lublin: Fundacja Servire Veritati. Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, 2016, pp. 5–31 185

ON NATION AND STATE

Jacek Woroniecki, *Quaestio disputata de natione et statu civili. O narodzie i państwie*. Translated from Latin into Polish by Rafał Maliszewski, Lublin: Fundacja Servire Veritati. Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, 2004, pp. 15–31 195

BIBLIOGRAPHY 205

I.

JACEK WORONIECKI OP:
PERSON AND WORK

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OF THE WORKS OF JACEK WORONIECKI OP

- CEE** – *Katolicka Etyka Wychowawcza* [The Catholic Educational Ethics]. 3 vols. Lublin: Fundacja Servire Veritati. Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, 2013.
- CPP** – “Program pedagogiki katolickiej” [Catholic Pedagogy Program], in *Pedagogika Katolicka. Zagadnienia wybrane*. Edited by A. Rynio, pp. 15–36. Stalowa Wola: Wydział Nauk Społecznych KUL, 1999.
- CT** – *Katolickość tomizmu* [The Catholicity of Thomism]. Lublin: Fundacja Servire Veritati. Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, 1999.
- DPM** – “Rozwój osobistości człowieka. Dynamiczny aspekt personalizmu” [The Development of the Personalence of a Man: A Dynamic Aspect of Personalism], in *Wychowanie człowieka. Pisma wybrane*, pp. 59–92. Kraków: Znak, 1961.
- Ethics** – “Etyka” [Ethics], in *Zarys filozofii. Praca zbiorowa*. Vol. 2, pp. 179–281. Lublin: Towarzystwo Wiedzy Chrześcijańskiej, 1929.
- FCC** – *U podstaw kultury katolickiej* [At the Foundations of Catholic Culture]. Lublin: Fundacja Servire Veritati. Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, 2002.
- FTMF** – “Podstawy nauki o małżeństwie i rodzinie” [The Foundations of Teaching on Marriage and Family], in *Wychowanie człowieka. Pisma wybrane*, pp. 212–247. Kraków: Znak, 1961.
- HS** – “Nawyk czy sprawność” [Habit or Skill], in *Wychowanie człowieka. Pisma wybrane*, pp. 33–58. Kraków: Znak, 1961.
- NS** – *Quaestio disputata de natione et statu civili. O narodzie i państwie* [Quaestio disputata de natione et statu civili: On Nation and State]. Translated from Latin into Polish by R. Maliszewski. Lublin: Fundacja Servire Veritati. Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, 2004.
- PP** – “Paedagogia perennis. Św. Tomasz a pedagogika nowożytna” [Paedagogia perennis: St. Thomas and Modern Pedagogy], *Przegląd Teologiczny* 5 (1924), pp. 143–160.
- PTFChTM** – “Podstawy filozoficzne i teologiczne chrześcijańskiej nauki o małżeństwie” [The Philosophical and Theological Foundations of the Christian Teachings on Marriage], in *U podstaw kultury katolickiej*, pp. 71–108. Lublin: Fundacja Servire Veritati. Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, 2002.
- RLCPI** – “Życie religijne współczesnej inteligencji polskiej” [The Religious Life of the Contemporary Polish Intelligentsia], in *U podstaw kultury katolickiej*, pp. 23–70. Lublin: Fundacja Servire Veritati. Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, 2002.
- SGGO** – *Umiejętność rządzenia i rozkazywania* [The Skill of Governing and Giving Orders]. Lublin: Fundacja Servire Veritati. Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, 2016.
- SU** – *W szkole wychowania. Teksty wybrane* [In the School of Upbringing: Selected Writings]. Lublin: Fundacja Servire Veritati. Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, 2008.
- SUSW** – “Wychowanie społeczne i praca społeczna” [Social Upbringing and Social Work], *Prąd* 9, no. 1–2 (1921), pp. 13–22; no. 3–4, pp. 58–73.
- UM** – *Wychowanie człowieka. Pisma wybrane* [The Upbringing of Man: Selected Writings]. Kraków: Znak, 1961.

LIFE AND SCHOLAR ACTIVITY

Jacek Adam Woroniecki was born on December 21, 1878 to Duke Mieczysław Woroniecki and Countess Marianna Drohojewska; at his baptism he received the names Adam (his grandfather's name), Marian (after his mother), Tomasz (which was prophetic), Pius and Leon. He was the second child from a large family and spent his childhood on his father's estate in Kanie, in the vicinity of Chełm (in the Lublin region). From 1892, he attended the 4th all-boys Gymnasium in Warsaw, where he also participated in clandestine Polish language and history lectures. It was during this period that he developed an enduring interest in the humanities and natural sciences. He received his high school diploma [*matura*] in 1898 and subsequently opted to join a military academy, from which he graduated with the rank of ensign of the cavalry (cornet).¹

After completing one year of service in the Grodno Hussar Regiment, he left in 1899 for Freiburg, Switzerland, where he studied the natural sciences and, later, theology and philosophy. During his stay in Switzerland he became acquainted with the work of the Dominican friars who were professors at the University of Freiburg, individuals who influenced his later decision to join the priesthood. It is there that he received a Bachelor of Science in natural sciences, in 1902, and in 1905 a Bachelor of Arts in theology. In the same year he entered the Lublin Seminary, where he was ordained the following year. The studies

¹ Fr. Jacek Woroniecki's personal archive; no. 39/1, Personal documents: birth certificate, identification documents, passports, diplomas, academic degrees et al; years 1878–1949.

and the intense activities of the future Dominican led to exhaustion, which affected his health and resulted in vagotonia—an illness of the vagus nerve—that he suffered from until the end of his life.²

Considering his vocation for religious life would occupy his mind ever more frequently. During a trip around Italy, he felt compelled to enter the Dominican Order upon visiting the cell of St. Dominic in Rome (on December 24, 1907). In 1909, he left for Switzerland again where he defended his doctoral thesis in theology entitled *Les principes fondamentaux de la sociologie thomiste* at the University of Freiburg. In the same year, after his father's death, he began his novitiate at the San Domenico di Fiesole cloister near Florence run by the Dominican Order and assumed the religious name of Jacek. On October 11, 1911 he took his perpetual vows in Düsseldorf and was appointed as the spiritual father and viceregent of the theological boarding school in Freiburg.³

From 1914, Jacek Woroniecki taught ethics at the Dominican priory in Krakow. He was accepted on the History of Philosophy Commission at the Polish Academy of Learning. In 1918, he took up the mission to revive religious life in Poland by spreading awareness among the members of the Polish intelligentsia about their tasks and obligations.⁴ In 1919, he was appointed as professor of moral theology and ethics at the Catholic University of Lublin, where he became involved in the process of hiring specialists in the field of humanities and the natural sciences. Between 1922 and 1924, he was the rector of the Catholic University of Lublin and in 1928 he became its vice-rector. As a professor and rector, he contributed to the development of the Catholic University of Lublin, which he saw as becoming a center of the official teaching of the Church, namely Thomism; he was ultimately thwarted in this venture due to external circumstances. He participated in talks at the Ministry of Religious Beliefs and Public Enlightenment to secure support for the Catholic University of Lublin. He was the founder of the Friends of the Catholic University

² Fr. Jacek Woroniecki's personal archive; no. 39/19, Biographies and memoirs.

³ I.Z. Błęszyńska, *O. Jacek Woroniecki – Dominikanin – Wychowawca – Patriotą 1878–1949* (Lublin: Fundacja Servire Veritati Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, 2006), pp. 49–54.

⁴ K. Kalinowska, *Jacek Woroniecki o społeczeństwie i państwie* (Lublin: Fundacja Servire Veritati Instytut Edukacji Narodowej, 2005), p. 169.

of Lublin Association as well as the Saint Thomas Aquinas Society, which was created to fund fellowships to enable priests to study abroad. Furthermore, it was on his initiative that the university building was expanded. He was the patron of the Religious Studies Club, a student association which took on the task of deepening religious, philosophical and ethical knowledge. In order to get the youth involved in the Catholic missionary endeavor, in 1927 he established the Academic Missionary Club.⁵

Proficiency in several foreign languages enabled Woroniecki to publish his works in international journals, as well as correspond with numerous European universities. In 1929 he became Chair of Moral Theology at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome, and a year later he received its highest possible scholarly title: master of sacred theology. He left the Holy City due to the progressive deterioration of his health. In 1932, he founded the Jesus and Mary Dominican Missionary Nuns Congregation, wanting to keep this fact a secret. The purpose of the congregation was the Christianization of Russia which had been overwhelmed by communist ideology. From 1933 he performed the duties of the rector of the Philosophical-Theological Dominican College in Lwow (Lviv), where he lectured on moral theology, patristics and Church history. He ensured a high intellectual level among his future brethren by initiating and participating in the construction of a cloister-college of the Dominican friars in Warsaw. Between 1937 and 1939, he lectured at that institution, performing the duty of rector and dedicating his time to editorial work for the *Szkoła Chrystusowa* [Christ's School] journal. When World War II broke out, Father Woroniecki was in Krakow, where he remained until the end of his life. Initially he gave sermons and lectured on moral theology and canon law; however, due to his deteriorating health, he devoted himself to writing on philosophical matters, especially in the field of ethics, pedagogy and the history of the Church. During his residence in Krakow, he established the St. Augustine Society and he organized the monasterial archive. He passed away with what was deemed a saintly reputation on May 18, 1949. He was buried in the Dominican Order tomb in the Rakowicki Cemetery in Krakow and in 1960 his remains were moved to St. Hyacinth's

⁵ I.Z. Błeszyńska, *O. Jacek Woroniecki – Dominikanin – Wychowawca – Patriotą 1878–1949*, pp. 100–101.

Church in Warsaw.⁶ His beatification process began on December 7, 2004 in Krakow.

Father Jacek Woroniecki left behind significant accomplishments that continue to make a substantial contribution to Polish intellectual life. He was considered an authority in the fields of theology, religion and Catholic life, as well as an excellent educator. He was also renowned for his piety and had an immense impact on the formation of the Polish intelligentsia, especially in the inter-war period.⁷

PUBLICATIONS

Among Jacek Woroniecki's most important works are: *Historia katolickiej akcji społecznej w XIX wieku* [The History of the Catholic Action in the 19th Century] (Lublin 1906), *Metoda i program nauczania teologii moralnej* [The Method and Program of Teaching of the Moral Theology] (Lublin 1922), *Okolo kultu mowy ojczystej* [On the Cultivation of the Language of the Fatherland] (Lwów 1925), *Umiejętność rządzenia i rozkazywania* [The Skill of Governing and Giving Orders] (Poznań 1947, 1992, 2001, 2016), *U podstaw kultury katolickiej* [At the Foundations of Catholic Culture] (Poznań 1935, 2002, 2013), *Nawyki czy sprawność. Centralne zagadnienie pedagogiki katolickiej* [Habit or Skill: The Central Problem of Catholic Pedagogy] (Wilno 1939, Kraków 1961), *Hagiografia, jej przedmiot, trudności i zadania w Polsce. Rzecz o świętych polskich* [Hagiography, Its Subject, Difficulties and Tasks in Poland: On Polish Saints] (Kraków 1940), *Św. Jacek Odrowąż i wprowadzenie Zakonu Kaznodziejskiego do Polski* [Saint Hyacinth, O.P. and the Introduction of the Order of Preachers to Poland] (Kraków 1947), *Błogosławiony Czesław dominikanin (1175[?]-1242)* [The Blessed Ceslaus, O.P. (1175[?]-1242)] (Opole 1947).

The Dominican philosopher was also the author of many academic articles, among others: *O stosunku moralności do religii* [On the relationship of morality to religion] (Warszawa 1911), *Studium nad*

⁶ Jacek Woroniecki's personal archive, no. 39/23; Posthumous memories.

⁷ M.L. Niedziela, "Jacek Woroniecki OP i jego troska o nową świadomość chrześcijaństwa w Polsce," in *Człowiek – moralność – wychowanie. Życie i myśl Jacka Woronieckiego OP*, eds. J. Gałkowski, M.L. Niedziela (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 2000), p. 79.

kardynalną cnotą roztropności [Study on the cardinal virtue of prudence] (Wilno 1923), *Ofiarność społeczna i warunki jej rozwoju* [Social generosity and conditions for its development] (Lublin 1923), *Paedagogia parennis. Św. Tomasz a pedagogika nowożytna* [Paedagogia parennis: St. Thomas and Modern Pedagogy] (Lublin 1924), *Katolickość tomizmu* [The Catholicity of Thomism] (Lublin 1924, 1938, 1999, 2010, 2011), *Życie religijne współczesnej inteligencji polskiej* [The Religious Life of the Contemporary Polish Intelligentsia] (Warszawa 1926, Lublin 2002), *Moc i wartość spekulatywnych cech tomizmu* [The Power and Value of the Speculative Traits of Thomism] (Lwów 1927), *Ogólne podstawy filozoficzne i teologiczne chrześcijańskiej nauki o małżeństwie* [The General Philosophical and Theological Foundations of the Christian Teachings on Marriage] (Lublin 1928, 2011), *Nauka św. Tomasza o gorliwości* [St. Thomas's Teachings on Ardour] (Warszawa 1936), *Moralność a religia* [Morality vs. Religion] (Lwów 1944, Lublin 2002).

Altogether, Woroniecki wrote about 199 works that were published yet numerous works remain in the form of manuscripts and typescripts in the Archive of the Polish Province of the Dominican Order in Krakow. Among his scholarly accomplishments there are works on philosophical, ethical-pedagogical and theological issues. His philosophical interests focus especially on the issues of upbringing, ethics and morality, society and politics. He was against the separation of philosophy from theology and pedagogy from philosophy, linking the latter especially with ethics. He treated philosophy as an autonomous sphere of inquiry in relation to the positive sciences, based on metaphysics and anthropology, and practiced in a social manner. He stands in opposition to cognitive individualism and subjectivism. He places a particular emphasis on the issue of the upbringing of people, as well as pedagogy, stressing their lasting connection to Catholic philosophy, by which he meant Thomism. He indicates the significance of the potentialized human being in upbringing as well as the role of the cardinal virtues: prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice. In the social realm he stresses the role of natural communities: monogamous marriage, the family, nation and state. As a theologian, he rejected moral casuistry and taking up the issue of divine mercy, instead preaching the necessity of a religious and patriotic upbringing.⁸

⁸ R. Polak, "Woroniecki Jacek," in *Encyklopedia Filozofii Polskiej*, ed. A. Maryniarczyk, vol. 2 (Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, 2011), p. 844.

In his research Woroniecki remained under the enormous influence of St. Thomas Aquinas, something which was evident in almost all his works. His publications from the field of ethics and pedagogy indicate his in-depth study of Aquinas's writings. He believes that the thought of the author of the *Summa theologiae* is characterized by universalism, for it was formulated as a synthesis of humanity's hitherto scholarly accomplishments and it is constantly open to what is true with respect to the scope of the entire human cognition. It makes it possible not only to avoid the errors of individualism and subjectivism when practicing philosophy, but it is also open for further progress, ultimately serving the good of the human being. He considers Thomistic realism to be the best method of cognizing objective truth. Being grounded in this system he refers simultaneously to the classics of philosophy, among others Aristotle, and his contemporaries, seeking inspiration among them as well as disputing them on a variety of issues. In his considerations he often used examples from daily life, literature and history.⁹

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PUBLICATIONS

In *Historia katolickiej akcji społecznej w XIX wieku* [The History of the Catholic Action in the 19th Century] (Lublin 1906) Woroniecki analyzes the historical background and development of this social movement throughout history. He also underlines the role played by the social activities of the Catholic Church, the intense development of which took place in the 19th century. He dedicates particular attention to the difficulties of the expansion of Catholic Action in Poland which due to historical circumstances could not develop to such an extent as in Western Europe.

Katolickość tomizmu [The Catholicity of Thomism] (Lublin 1924, Warszawa 1938, Lublin 1999) which he wrote for the 600th anniversary of the canonization of St. Thomas Aquinas, sheds light on the particularities of the Angelic Doctor's philosophy. The author emphasizes the universalist nature of Aquinas's doctrine, explaining the significance of his approach for the cognition of the objective existence of

⁹ P. Szydłowski, "Woroniecki Jacek," in *Wizerunki filozofów i humanistów polskich wiek XX*, ed. J. Szmyd (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne, 2000), p. 412.

the world and stressing his input in the intellectual heritage of humanity. This universalism is linked with the social practice of philosophy, which is different from the individualistic concept of practicing philosophy, specific for modern and contemporary thinkers. St. Thomas's teachings surpass the existing philosophical systems. It is impossible to ascribe them to theological categories and doctrines. Woroniecki indicates the origins and the reasons for which St. Thomas Aquinas's teachings should be linked to and interpreted in reference to the Gospel. By the "Catholicity" of Thomism, he understands not only the connection of that system with Christ's teachings, but also the universalism of Aquinas's thought.

Pełnia modlitwy. Studium teologiczne dla inteligencji [The Fullness of Prayer: A Theological Study for the Intelligentsia] (Poznań 1924, 1935, 1982, 1988, Kraków 1997, Lublin 2000) is an analysis of the character of Catholicism in Poland. In this book he accuses the social elites that they lack the fullness of Christian faith, the reason for which is their susceptibility to other intellectual trends. In this study he lays out detailed teachings on prayer, questioning the Fideist, Quietist, Jansenist, sentimentalist as well as individualistic interpretation of religious phenomena. He places emphasis on the significance of prayer which he perceives as the revival of religious life. Grounding his theses in Thomas Aquinas's thought, he stresses the need to combine the practice of daily life with prayer in order to endow it with power and durability.

Woroniecki's most significant philosophical work is *Katolicka Etyka Wychowawcza* [The Catholic Educational Ethics] (*Etyka ogólna* [General Ethics], vol. I, Poznań 1925; *Etyka ogólna* [General Ethics], vol. I, *Etyka szczegółowa* [Applied Ethics], vol. II, Kraków 1948; *Etyka ogólna* [General Ethics], vol. I, *Etyka szczegółowa* [Applied Ethics], vol. II/1, II/2, Lublin 1986, 1995; *Etyka szczegółowa* [Applied Ethics], vol. I–III, Lublin 2013) containing a meticulous analysis of man's moral life as manifested in the following spheres: theological, ethical, and pedagogical. The crux of the work is to show the indissolubility of the relationship between moral improvement and man's upbringing which is focused on the religious life of the human being, derived from his reason and will. The improvement of these powers is required both by the integration of the corporal-biological life with the personal life as well as the actualization of the potentiality situated in human nature. The formation of natural skills is linked with the readiness of man to open

himself up to the influence of the supernatural. Woroniecki considers upbringing to be a social process in which some people form the personality of others as well as themselves. *Katolicka Etyka Wychowawcza* [The Catholic Educational Ethics] can be considered a work in the field of philosophy, moral theology and pedagogy.

In *Quaestio disputata de natione et statu civili. O narodzie i państwie* [Quaestio disputata de natione et statu civili: On the Nation and State] (Piacenza 1926, Lublin 2004) Woroniecki focuses on the issue of the role of the state and nation in human life. He understands the natural moral-customary bond, through which members of a community influence other people, as aiding one another in personal development.

In the article “Moc i wartość spekulatywnych cech tomizmu” [The Power and Value of the Speculative Traits of Thomism] (Lwów 1927) Woroniecki emphasizes that the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas occupy a distinct position in the history of human thought. Because of its role in the teaching of the Church, it has been exposed to much criticism and many negative remarks. One of the sources of this misunderstanding is the dispute on the speculative and positive method in theology and philosophy. When refuting critical accusations in reference to the teachings of Thomas Aquinas, he states that his teachings was based on cognizing the being. According to Woroniecki, Thomism is a speculative study which is characterized by realism, a source of which is the observation and cognition of reality. It is also a philosophical study which undertakes meticulous inquiry into the structure of reality, looking for its essential reasons. Woroniecki states that the speculative theology is the analytical inquiry of truths of the Catholic faith, in order to build particular norms of human action on their basis.

Ogólne podstawy filozoficzne i teologiczne chrześcijańskiej nauki o małżeństwie [The General Philosophical and Theological Foundations of the Christian Teachings on Marriage] (Lublin 1928, 2002) were dedicated to the topic of marriage and the factors that lead to the weakening of relations between spouses. Woroniecki emphasizes the social character of marriage which is most fully realized by having children and raising them appropriately. When writing on the significance of marriage as a sacrament, he refers to St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. He states that marriage is characterized by sanctity which is not only the symptom of distinct Divine grace, but it is the reason

for this grace. In the social sphere marriage is a contract which is agreed upon between the spouses. Through this contract the act of mutual sacrifice of the spouses takes place.

U podstaw kultury katolickiej [At the Foundations of Catholic Culture] (Poznań 1935, Lublin 2002) is a collection of articles and papers delivered at conferences where the author grapples with the broadly understood issue of religious-moral culture. Referring to Thomistic philosophy, he points to the most significant Polish moral vices which weaken the spirit of the nation and hamper its progress. He expresses his objections towards fideism, individualism, and sentimentalism which have deformed Polish religiosity. In his opinion, the fundamental role in religious life is played by the Catholic sensibility which manifests itself in objectivism and universalism. At the same time, he criticizes subjectivism, which leads to spiritual selfishness.

Nawyk czy sprawność. Centralne zagadnienie pedagogiki katolickiej [Habit or Skill: The Central Problem of Catholic Pedagogy] (Wilno 1939, Kraków 1961) is a treatise discussing the issue of human upbringing which is to a greater extent based on the development of skills rather than habits. Woroniecki describes the two eponymous issues in a very detailed manner, indicating the differences between them and their mutual dependencies. He believes that the entire study on upbringing should be reconsidered and understood anew taking these two issues into consideration. According to Thomas Aquinas's understanding of pedagogy the study of skills has a central position.

In his article "Moralność a religia" [Morality vs. Religion] (Lwów 1944, Lublin 2002) Woroniecki discusses the issue of the mutual relationship between morality and religion. In his view, this frequently causes many misunderstandings between the supporters of independent ethics. At the heart of his reasoning he places the concepts of natural and supernatural order. He poses himself the question of whether natural morality is possible without reference to a supernatural religion and he replies that, without morality supported by religion, the human being is not able to fully understand one's actions.

Umiejętność rządzenia i rozkazywania [The Skill of Governing and Giving Orders] (Poznań 1947, Wrocław 1992, 2004, Lublin 2016) is about the manner of governing, which is connected with the responsibility for the realization of the common good as well as the pursuit of the community's development. According to Woroniecki it is supposed to teach the art of managing one's actions as well as those of

third parties, both in the aspect of the effectiveness of this governance as well as the obedience to moral rules. The author emphasizes the role of giving orders which are inseparably connected with moral, divine and human law that draws its mandate from those. He treats it as a part of the virtue of prudence which is an improvement on the practical reason that directs human action. In his work he also discusses the issues of discipline and reprimands.

In his article “Rozwój osobistości człowieka” [The Development of the Personalence of a Man] (Kraków 1961) he confronts the problem of the human person as a being endowed with a potentialized nature. The dynamic aspect of the personal status of the human being is personality which is the result of the actions of the spiritual powers: the intellect and the will. Personalence¹⁰, in turn, is perfection resulting from such an improvement of the actions of these powers that respect the dignity of the human person.

¹⁰ Personalence: One of the key concepts in Woroniecki’s writings. It is understood by him as perfection, to which the development of human personality should ultimately lead, on account of its personal status and rational nature. Personalence demonstrates how a particular person should behave and act with a sense of responsibility for oneself.