Soliloquies as an inner philosophical or spiritual dialogue. From Augustine and Bonaventure to Valerian Magni

Tomáš Nejeschleba

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Soliloquies as an inner philosophical or spiritual dialogue. From Augustine and Bonaventure to Valerian Magni[1]

Tomáš Nejeschleba

The inspiration for the topic of this paper was a remark made by Paul Richard Blum in his book on the types of philosophizing in 17th century philosophy. In the chapter dealing with the philosophy of the Capuchin friar Valerian Magni, Blum stresses, that Magni views knowledge as illumination and his continuity with the theory of illumination of the Platonic-Augustinian-Bonaventurian tradition is obvious. In Magni, Blum continues, knowledge has a form of light (Lichthaftigkeit der Erkenntnis). This idea is not based on medieval mysticism but on the ontological dignity of light. Paul Richard Blum quotes Magni's work *Soliloquia* and he notes that it would be good to compare them with the *Soliloquium* of St. Bonaventure.[2] Apart from this brief remark, no one, to my knowledge, has dealt with Valerian Magni's *Soliloquia* and the comparison has not yet been made.

The topic seems to be interesting from at least two points of view. Firstly, Valerian Magni (1586-1661),[3] although he is a thinker that is almost forgotten today, was in his time an important figure within church policy (the legate of the Congregation De propaganda fide, the head of the Austrian-Bohemian Capuchin province, a candidate for a cardinal's hat, a critic of the Jesuits order), a famous theologian, an experimenter with vacuum and a promoter of the natural philosophy of Galileo Galilei, even after his condemnation,[4] and the author of a distinctive metaphysical system that according to certain interpreters anticipates Immanuel Kant's transcendental philosophy.[5] Thus, the analysis of his *Soliloquies* is important for a better understanding of his philosophy and his position in the history of philosophy.

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[1] The study is a result of the research funded by the Czech Science Foundation as the project GA ČR 22-25687S "Valerian Magni (1586-1661)".

[2] Blum (1998) 109.

[3] To basic information cf. Nejeschleba (2015); Nejeschleba (2019), 345–56.

[4] Cygan (1969) 135–66; Nejeschleba (2018) 611–27.

[5] Sousedík (1982).

Secondly, the literary form of soliloquies, together with the authority of St. Augustine who is considered to be its author, enjoyed relatively great popularity in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the early modern period. If we focus on the title *Soliloquium - Soliloquia* itself, we can see that it appears already in the titles of medieval theological works, from Isidore of Seville and Bede the Venerable, through Hugo of St. Victor and Peter Abaelard, Adam of Duysburg and Bonaventure, to Thomas of Kempen.[6] These medieval soliloquies follow Augustine in name and in the use of the principle of inner dialogue, and their content falls within the realm of so-called spiritual literature, dealing with the inner life of the Christian. In the Renaissance, we can see the development of Augustine's principle of "soliloquy" as inner speech in the form of a dialogue in both prose and poetry, notably in Francesco Petrarch,[7] and in theatrical works, with a spectacular climax in Shakespeare's Hamlet in the soliloquy "To be or not to be."[8] The principle of internal, soliloquial dialogue is also reflected in philosophical texts, such as the essays of Michel de Montaigne, who influenced Shakespeare.[9] However to my knowledge, a thorough study of the use of soliloquy in the philosophy of the early modern period, especially in relation to the ancient and medieval traditions, is still lacking. Therefore, a case study of the role of soliloquy in Valerian, who explicitly regarded his philosophy as an elaboration of both Augustine and Bonaventure,[10] might contribute to an understanding of the importance of this format in the early modern period.

So, in my paper, I will focus on Valerian Magni's *Soliloquies*, that were probably first published in 1648 in Warsaw. Since this printing has not yet been traced,[11] I follow the text of his *Soliloquia* that is a part of his book *Principia et specimen Philosophiae* (1652) which contains eight of Magni's treatises on metaphysical and natural philosophical issues.[12] My task is to answer the question of the extent to which Magni follows

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[6] Stock (2010) 64.

[7] Cf. Zak (2010).

[8] Newell (1991); Cousins and Derrin (2018).

[9] Mack (2010).

[10] Especially in the work entitled *De Luce Mentium et eius imagine ex Sanctis Patribus Augustino et Bonaventura*, Magni (1645).

[11] To the list of Magni's works cf. Cygan (1989).

[12] Magni (1652). It contains treatises entitled: *Axiomata*; *ENS non factum*; *LUX mentium*; *Vacuum*; *Vitrum mirabiliter fractum*; *Incoruptibilitas aquae*; *Atheismus Aristotelis*; *Soliloquia Animae cum Deo*.

the tradition of Augustine and the post-Augustinian Soliloquies, notably that of Bonaventure. Therefore, in the first part, I will briefly summarize St. Augustine's "invention" of the philosophical form of soliloquy, that would be the starting point for later soliloquial literature. Then I will move to Bonaventure's *Soliloquium*, since St. Bonaventure was a key authority not only for Valerian Magni but for the entire Capuchin order to which Magni belonged. In the final part, I will move to Magni's *Soliloquies* and try to assess which authority Magni follows and in what sense he can be considered innovative.

I. Augustine's Soliloquy

Soliloquium - soliloquy - is, according to Isidore of Seville's definition, a figure of speech in which we answer a question to ourselves.[13] In other words, it is a dialogue in which we are our own partner, i.e. it is an inner dialogue. We already encounter self-talk in earlier ancient literary works, the famous example being certainly Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*.[14] However, the philosopher emperor does not speak to himself "dialogically" here; his conversations are more a sequence of thoughts than an internal conversation. And so, it seems that soliloquy in the true sense of the word is found only in Aurelius Augustine. In any case, the term "soliloquium", which is a compound of the adjective "solus" (alone) and the verb "loquor" (to speak), and is meant to denote a dialogue with oneself, was first used by Augustine to name his work, and thus established a certain tradition of "soliloquial" literature.

Let us first briefly examine Augustine's *Soliloquia* themselves, which were written during Augustine's stay in Cassiciacum, so after his conversion to Christianity but before his baptism.[15] All four works from this period are in the form of dialogues. This is not surprising, for if we want to get at the truth, Augustine reasons, and in this he follows Plato, dialogue is the most appropriate form. While the other three are literary accounts of conversations between Augustine and his friends and disciples, the fourth dialogue is a conversation with himself. When Augustine chooses to dialogue with himself, he now abandons the role of teacher and instructing mentor that he occupies in the other dialogues

[13] Isidor of Seville, *Etymologies* II, 21 (47).

[14] To soliloquy by Marcus Aurelius cf. Balthusen (2010) 39–57. Balthusen follows Pierre Hadot and his monograph, see Hadot (1998).

[15] See Fitzgerald (1999) 135.

and becomes the one who is instructed by the other interlocutor. This other interlocutor is reason, personified ratio.

Augustine begins the *Soliloquia* by introducing the situation: for many days he has been preoccupied with various things within himself, looking for himself ("querenti memetipsum") and what is good for him, or how to avoid evil. When suddenly a mysterious speaker spoke to him, without Augustine knowing at first whether it was himself, something within him or something external ("sive ego ipse, sive alius quis extrinsecus, sive intrinsecus nescio").[16] A few chapters later, that speaker reveals itself as reason ("ratio").[17] Reason in the *Soliloquia* presents its role through an analogy with sensory knowledge, more precisely with vision, which has a privileged position among the sensory ways of knowing. The mind is to the soul what the eyes are to the body, and so reason is to the mind as sight is to the eyes. The analogy goes further, for just as the eyes, through sight, infer the existence of the sun, which is the source of light, so the mind infers the existence of God, who illuminates it.

This brings us to the things which Augustine longs to know and whose dialogical discussion forms the content of the work. In the first chapter of the first book of the *Soliloquia,* Augustine utters a lengthy prayer, which he then summarizes in response to the challenge of ratio: "I long to know God and the soul." ("Deum et anima scire cupio.").[18] Then, at the beginning of the second book of the *Soliloquies*, he expresses the object of his inquiry again by means of an opening prayer, now short: "God, who art ever the same, let me know myself, let me know Thee." ("Deus semper idem, noverim me, noverim te.")[19] Thus, the goal is both the knowledge of self in accordance with the ancient philosophical endeavor "gnothi seauton" and the knowledge of God, here by means of natural theology. It turns out that the knowledge of both is interrelated. God cannot be known except through introspection, except through knowledge of self. But introspection, as the setting in prayer suggests, is not possible without God's help.

In the first book, Augustine, in a dialogue with the ratio, deals with how it is possible to know God and what can be an obstacle to this. Alongside the rejection of the senses and the questioning of the sufficiency of

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[16] Augustine, *Solil*. I,1,1 (*CSEL* 89, 3).

[17] Ibid. I,6,12 (*CSEL* 89, 19).

[18] Ibid. I,2,7 (*CSEL* 89, 11).

[19] Ibid. II,1,1 (*CSEL* 89, 45)

geometry as a source of knowledge of God, there is an ethical dimension: ratio lists the things that prevent the soul from belonging to the true sun: the desire for wealth, for a career, for honors, for sensual and sexual pleasures etc.[20] In the second book, which is devoted to the nature of the soul, the dialogue between Augustine and ratio gets very quickly to the immortality of the soul.

Let us stop briefly at the ethical aspect of *Soliloquies*. The longer passage in which ratio asks Augustine to "confess" whether he does or does not cling to external things, and Augustine "questions" his past and present behavior following the Socratic method of cultivating the self, which Pierre Hadot calls "spiritual exercise".[21] Augustine's conception of a soliloquy is based on the principle of ancient spiritual exercises seeking to control the passions and consciously secure control over the self, spiritual exercises which he knows mostly from Cicero[22] and the letters of Seneca. The spiritual exercises, if we accept Hadot's interpretation, are not a purely ethical stance, but their goal is "existential," the transformation of the self. Augustine, then, according to Brian Stock, who follows Hadot, gives the spiritual exercises a new, soliloquial form, i.e., he translates them into the first person.

II. Bonaventure's *Soliloquia*

Let us now leave Augustine's *Soliloquia* and turn to the work of St. Bonaventure, which is entitled *Soliloquium de quattuor mentalibus exercitiis* and thus follows Augustine's pattern at least in the title. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, the most important representative of the so-called early Franciscan school of the thirteenth century, was undoubtedly influenced by the work of Augustine. In his inaugural sermon of 1257, which he delivered on the occasion of his admission to the College of Masters at the University of Paris, he distinguishes between the authority of Plato and that of Aristotle, both of which he believes are united and surpassed by St Augustine.[23] It is Augustine who, according to Bonaventure, links Aristotelian knowledge and Platonic wisdom, although both were given to an even greater extent to St. Paul

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[20] Ibid. I,10–13 (*CSEL* 89, 26-36).

[21] Hadot (1995).

[22] Cfr. Augustine, *Confess*. VIII,17 (*CSEL* 33, 184); Augustine, *Solil.* I,10,17 (*CSEL* 89, 26).

[23] Bonaventure, *Sermo IV. Christus unus magister omnium*, 19 (*Opera omnia,* 5, 572).

and Moses. The exaltation of Augustine's authority in theology and philosophy is fairly typical of Bonaventure throughout his work.

Bonaventure, as a thinker who was strongly oriented towards triadism, works most closely with Augustine's *De Trinitate*. However, even Augustine's *Soliloquies* are not unknown to Bonaventure. Although they are not among the most cited of Augustine's works,[24] Bonaventure makes several explicit references to them, citing the author and the work. In the aforementioned sermon *Unus est magister vester, Christus*, Bonaventure quotes a passage from the *Soliloquia* with the triadic metaphor of light (the sun is, shines, and illuminates) and with the analogy of sensory vision, which is impossible without illumination by the sun, and insight, which requires illumination by God.[25] In the *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi*, which date from the same time as the above sermon, Bonaventure quotes from the *Soliloquia* Augustine's "definition" of truth as the being of a thing: "true is that which is".[26] Bonaventure then explicitly refers to Augustine's concept of truth from the *Soliloquies* in *Quaestiones disputatae de Mysterio Trinitatis*.[27] It can be assumed, therefore, that Bonaventure's *Soliloquium de quattuor mentalibus exercitiis* is also based on a reading of Augustine's *Soliloquia*. It may be all the more surprising to discover that Bonaventure's *Soliloquium*, despite its title, does not contain a single citation, a single reference to Augustine's *Soliloquia*.

Although it is evident from Bonaventure's other works that this Franciscan thinker is well acquainted with Augustine's *Soliloquia*, his *Soliloquium* differs quite fundamentally from Augustine's. Like the *Breviloquium*, which is Bonaventure's compendium of theology written in 1257, the *Soliloquium* is based on an interpretation of a passage in St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians (3:14-19), which speaks of breadth and length, height and depth, as far as knowledge in Christ is concerned. In the *Breviloquium*,[28] this opening quotation leads to distinguishing four

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[24] Bougerol (1964) 33.

[25] Bonaventure, *Sermo IV.*, 10 (*Opera omnia*, 5, 570). Augustine, *Solil.* I,8,15 (*CSEL* 89, 23-24).

[26] Bonaventure, *Quaestiones disputatae de Scientia Christi*, II, 9, (*Opera omnia*, 5, 10); Augustine, *Solil.*, II,5,8 (*CSEL* 89, 55).

[27] Bonaventure, *Quaestiones disputatae de Mysterio Trinitatis*, I,1,25; V,1,5, (*Opera omnia*, 5, 47; 88); Augustine, *Solil.* I, 8, 15 (*CSEL* 89, 24). To the conception of "truth" in Augustine's *Soliloquy* cf. Enders (2006), 65–102. Kahnert (2007) 45–75.

[28] Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, prologus (*Opera omnia*, 5, 202).

ways of interpreting Scripture that correspond to the image of the cross, whereby Bonaventure establishes a specific biblical hermeneutic according to which Scripture is to be read in terms of the cross of Christ. In the *Soliloquium*, this basic division and the hermeneutical principle based on the theology of the cross remain, but the quatrain corresponding to the points of the cross is now related to spiritual theology, to the four ways of exercising the devotional mind.

The theme of spiritual exercise links Bonaventure's *Soliloquy* directly with his *Threefold Way* (*De triplici via*), which discusses a threefold way of exercising the mind according to the model of purification, illumination and completion in the activities of prayer, meditation and contemplation.[29] Whereas the Triadic division of the *Threefold Way* speaks of the three acts of the ray of contemplation in one phase of the path, the *Soliloquy* focuses on this ray of contemplation specifically, describing it in terms of a fourfold division according to length, breadth, height and depth, or inward and outward, to lower and higher.[30] In the metaphor that Bonaventure uses, this means, first, a turning of the soul inward in order to recognize its nature, the corruption of sin and the gift of grace. Second, the soul's gaze is to turn to external things and recognize that which they offer is only vanity. Thirdly, the turning of the soul to the lower is the realization of the prospect of death, which is inevitable, and fourthly, finally, the passage to higher things is the prospect of a heavenly eternity.

The *Soliloquy* is also linked to another work by Bonaventure, *The Advice to the Sisters on the Perfection of Life*, through a potential addressee. *The Advice to Sisters* were written at the request of a sister of King Louis of France, the Claresse Isabella of Longchamp, and thus does not presuppose a theological background in its readers, unlike *De triplici via*, from which the advice is drawn and which is written for a reader familiar with theology (presumably a priest). Similarly, Bonaventure explicitly addresses the *Soliloquium* to "simpler people" ("propter simpliciores"), by which he means readers without a university education.[31] Bonaventure's *Soliloquium* and his *Advice to the Sisters* are

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[29] Bonaventura, *De triplici via alias incendium amoris* (*Opera omnia*, 8, 3–27). Cfr. Bonaventure (2006), 81–133.

[30] Bonaventura, *Soliloquium de quattuor mentalibus exercitiis*, 2 (*Opera omnia*, 8,29).

[31] Schlosser (2014) 44.

also linked by the same conclusion, which is a quotation of the conclusion of the *Proslogion* of Anselm of Canterbury.[32]

The above characteristics of Bonaventure's *Soliloquy* distance his work from Augustine's *Soliloquies*, rather than pointing to a direct development of Augustine's legacy. While Augustine's dialogue is a philosophical conversation that presupposes a certain education, Bonaventure's *Soliloquium* is, by contrast, intended, at least in his own words, for a less educated readership. In contrast to Augustine's philosophical dialogue, which falls more in the realm of natural theology, Bonaventure's *Soliloquy* is strongly grounded in the New Testament and emphasizes the Christological aspect. It is the Christological dimension that is completely absent from Augustine's *Soliloquies* as an early dialogue.[33] In Bonaventure's *Soliloquium*, by contrast, Christology is the framework in which the internal dialogue is set. The development of the soliloquy against the background of the Cross of Christ, which determines the basic directions and stages of the soliloquy, links Bonaventure's *Soliloquy* with the *Threefold Way* and the *Itinerary*,[34] a journey of the mind that does not consist only in an ascent, but also includes a descent with Christ into death, which corresponds to the third stage of Bonaventure's spiritual exercise.[35] If we also add to this the different sub-themes of Augustine's and Bonaventure's soliloquies, it would seem that Bonaventure's continuity with the patristic father lies only in the title itself, which, however, is singular in Bonaventure, whereas Augustine calls his work the *Soliloquies* in the plural.

In addition, in Bonaventure, the "partners" of the dialogue also change. Augustine's soliloquy is an internal dialogue between Augustine and ratio, the nature of which, though not easy to determine, is nevertheless related to Augustine's soul. In Bonaventure's *Soliloquium*, by contrast, it is the soul that asks the questions and is answered by the "inner man." Again, this modification has a New Testament basis, referring to the opening quotation from the Epistle to the Ephesians, where the Apostle Paul asks for the strengthening of the Holy Spirit, so that the "inner man"

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[32] We can find a similar ending also in *Breviloquium*, see Bonaventura, *Breviloquium,* VII, 7, (*Opera omnia*, 5, 291).

[33] Ramsey (2000) 7–14; Silk (1939) 19–39.

[34] Cf. Bonaventure (2002).

[35] Cf. Pospíšil (2010).

("homo interior") may be strengthened and "Christ may dwell in men's hearts through faith." (Eph 3,16).

It turns out that despite Bonaventure's familiarity with Augustine's *Soliloquies*, the key source for his *Soliloquium* was a work by Hugo of St. Victor called *Soliloquium de arrha animae* (*Homily on the Betrothal of the Soul*). Hugo of St. Victor, whom Bonaventure follows very often in his writings, conceives of his *Soliloquium* as a conversation between man ("homo") and the soul ("anima").[36] Bonaventure takes this pairing from Hugo, although by man, as the reference to the Epistle to the Ephesians shows, he means "the inner man". Bonaventure's *Soliloquium* is also more closely related in content to Hugo's with respect to its content. In particular, the metaphor of the betrothal gift as a natural beauty given to the soul appears in it, as well as the gift of redemption and the gift of grace with which Hugo works. Bonaventure also took from Hugo the transformation of the soliloquy form. Although Hugo, like Augustine, asks what the soul desires, even justifies the use of the soliloquium, as Augustine did, through the fear of the shame of the dialogue partner answering in truth, his soliloquy is disembodied; it is not an internal conversation of a particular author with himself (his soul or ratio), but a dialogue of abstractly conceived individuality in general. Such is the character of Bonaventure's *Soliloquy*. It is not Bonaventure delving into his own interior, into his own concrete past and thought-contents, as Augustine does, but an unspecified soul talking to an unspecified inner man who teaches it how to perform the spiritual exercises that are meant to bring salvation to the mind ("mens"). However, Bonaventure's advice on how to train the mind derives from a particular place, the cross of Jesus Christ, the imitation of which has universal validity for any particular soul.

Augustine's principle of soliloquy, that is, dialogue with oneself in introspection, is present to some extent in Bonaventure, as it is in his model Hugo of St. Victor. The goal of the spiritual exercises, which is the self-perfection of the soul, or better of man, which in Bonaventure has a soteriological meaning, also remains valid. However, Bonaventure's introspection by means of self-talk lacks concrete features in contrast to Augustine's conception.

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[36] Hugh of St. Victor (1913), Hugh of St. Victor (1956).

III. Valerian Magni's *Soliloquies*

I now turn to the *Soliloquies* of Valerian Magni. The title of the work claims the Augustinian tradition of the soliloquies. The title page of the edition states *Soliloquia Animae cum Deo*, but the text itself is entitled *Soliloquiorum decas prima*.

In Magni's *Soliloquies*, their form changes again. It is still a dialogue, but it is not a non-specific soul speaking to a non-specific inner man as in Bonaventure. It is closer to the *Soliloquies* of Augustine. For it is a dialogue between Valerian and himself, Valerian here speaking in the first person and addressing himself. In the *Soliloquies*, he alternates statements, taken mainly from biblical books but also from Virgil, with statements that he arrives at by rational argumentation. These biblical quotations, for example, from the Psalms, from the Song of Songs, from the Book of Job (without, of course, citing the sources), are generally in the form of exclamations that are complaints about the speaker's plight ("Taedet animam meam vitae meae"), or addresses to God with a plea ("Ostende mihi faciem tuam").[37] The arguments of reason, then, are more like meditations based on introspection.

When Valerian speaks to himself, he asks questions to which he answers himself. The answers are not given to him by some personified ratio or "inner man", but by Valerian himself. However, this inner dialogue often, in most of the *Soliloquies*, turns into a conversation between Valerian and God, who gives him advice, e.g. to turn the edge of his mind towards him. Valerian responds to them and subsequently praises God in the form of a prayer.

In the first *Soliloquy*, he refers to himself as a poor entity that has not been and will not be. His life will become ugly to him. Surely there is an eternal being, but he neither sees nor hears it. Having said this to himself, however, he has taken into his mind the words "I am that I am," and he, Valerian, is only by his grace who he is. From the knowledge of himself, of his own spatial limitation and temporal finitude, he arrives at the existence of a being that is eternal, uncreated, unlimited and infinite, attributes that he cannot attribute to any other being.[38] Much of the soliloquies revolve around this distinction.

In addition, motifs and themes appear here that Valerian has been discussing in other writings since his first philosophical work, *De luce*

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[37] Magni (1652) 136.

[38] Ibid, 137.

mentium et eius imagine.[39] In his mind he finds the light that comes from God, and through it he comes to know it. He speaks of the eternal art of which the created world is an imitation. He also finds art in his soul. This art, for example, is followed by the one who creates clocks. But the clock itself is not the art; the art is the intelligible light ("lumen intelligibile"). The emphasis on light is omnipresent in the *Soliloquies*, with the distinction between light as a source ("lux") and light emanating from it ("lumen"). God communicates to Valerian that light is God's "esse". And the *Soliloquia* ends with passages about the light that illuminates every person, that light being the Ratio, a term Valerian uses as the Latin equivalent of the Greek logos from the beginning of John's Gospel.

Magni's *Soliloquia* combine, as I have already indicated, several forms. Sometimes they function as prayer, sometimes as spiritual literature, sometimes as philosophical argumentation in the form of meditations. The form of the dialogue itself varies. On the one hand, the form of soliloquial dialogue should be natural for Magni, since he builds his philosophy on introspection. On the other hand, however, the inner dialogue here merely plays the role of an external form through which Magni intends to present the main points of his philosophy in a simplified and accessible form, without the dialogical soliloquy being the method by which truth is to be arrived at.

It is now time to turn to the subject of what soliloquies Valerian Magni is building on. It is quite clear that Magni's source here was not the *Soliloquium* of Bonaventure. Although Bonaventure was the primary authority for the Capuchin order, and Magni himself regards his own thought primarily as an elaboration of Bonaventure's philosophically-theological thought,[40] Bonaventure's *Soliloquia*, with its strong Christological emphasis, do not appear here. Nor are they reflected in the formal articulation of the partners of the internal dialogue.

Magni's text is much closer to Augustine's *Soliloquies*. Augustine's call to know oneself and to know God permeates Magni's *Soliloquies* from the very beginning. The Augustinian metaphor of light is also present. A connecting element is also the interweaving of prayer and a more or less philosophical way of treating themes on the level of natural theology

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[39] Magni (Roma 1642). Modern edition with the Czech translation Magni (2016). Here, Magni refers explicitly to Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* as to the main source of his metaphysics of light.

[40] Cf. Elpert (2008) 349–93.

without recourse to Christological motifs. But alien to Augustine's *Soliloquies* is Valerian's transition of the inner dialogue with himself into a dialogue with God. In this context, however, one more possible source of Magni's *Soliloquies* should be mentioned.

In fact, besides Augustine's Cassiciac Dialogue, there is another text that has been attributed to Augustine since the Middle Ages. This is the so-called *Soliloquia animae ad Deum*, an anonymous work probably dating from the thirteenth century, which in the late Middle Ages, the Renaissance and until the mid-twentieth century was considered to be the authorial text of Augustine.[41] The pseudo-Augustinian *Soliloquia* differ quite fundamentally from the authentic *Soliloquia*. Formally, as the title of the work itself indicates, they are a conversation of the (disembodied) soul with God. The fact that Valerian moves from a conversation with himself to a conversation with God is not the only thing that shows that this text may have been his inspiration, even the title of Magni's work is itself a variation on this pseudo-Augustinian writing. Indeed, it turns out that the *Soliloquia animae ad Deum* was much more influential than Augustine's *Soliloquia* authentica from the 15th century onwards.[42] It was often published in print and translated into national languages, including, for example, English. According to some interpreters, it was this *Soliloquy*, through its English translation, that influenced Shakespeare and his Hamlet.[43]

On the other hand, the *Soliloquia animae ad Deum* is a spiritual text that lacks the philosophical dimension of Valerian Magni's *Soliloquia*, but rather develops Christological and partly trinitological issues, which are absent in Magni's *Soliloquia*.

In conclusion, I must admit that it is very difficult to assess the continuity of Valerian Magni's *Soliloquies* with previous texts. While an affinity with Augustine's *Soliloquies* is offered, the introspective moments that link Magni's and Augustine's *Soliloquies* may have been taken from other works by Augustine, such as the *Confessiones*, which Magni was securely familiar with. From the pseudo-Augustinian *Soliloquies*, Magni could only have taken the title and formally the dialogue of the soul with God, but he filled it with an entirely different content that corresponded to his philosophical-theological elaboration

[41] See the Latin text *PL* 40, 883-898.

[42] Sturges (1985) 73–79.

[43] Staykova (2009) 121–41.

of the Augustinian-Bonaventurian metaphysics of light, which Magni takes from Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, and not from Bonaventure's *Soliloquies*. In any case, however, Magni's *Soliloquies* are a testimony to the development of a form founded by Augustine that underwent many transformations by the seventeenth century.

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