St. augustine's political philosophy

St. Augustine is a fourth century philosopher whose groundbreaking philosophy infused Christian doctrine with Neoplatonism. He is famous for being an inimitable Catholic theologian and for his agnostic contributions to Western philosophy.

He argues that skeptics have no basis for claiming to know that there is no knowledge. In a proof for existence similar to one later made famous by René Descartes, Augustine says, "[Even] If I am mistaken, I am." He is the first Western philosopher to promote what has come to be called " the argument by analogy" against solipsism: there are bodies external to mine that behave as I behave and that appear to be nourished as mine is nourished; so, by analogy, I am justified in believing that these bodies have a similar mental life to mine.

Augustine believes reason to be a uniquely human cognitive capacity that comprehends deductive truths and logical necessity. Additionally, Augustine adopts a subjective view of time and says that time is nothing in reality but exists only in the human mind's apprehension of reality. He believes that time is not infinite because God " created" it. Augustine tries to reconcile his beliefs about freewill, especially the belief that humans are morally responsible for their actions, with his belief that one's life is predestined.

Though initially optimistic about the ability of humans to behave morally, at the end he is pessimistic, and thinks that original sin makes human moral behavior nearly impossible: if it were not for the rare appearance of an accidental and undeserved Grace of God, humans could not be moral. Augustine's theological discussion of freewill is relevant to a non-religious discussion regardless of the religious-specific language he uses; one can

switch Augustine's " omnipotent being" and " original sin" explanation of predestination for the present day " biology" explanation of predestination; the latter tendency is apparent in modern slogans such as " biology is destiny."