

The Enduring Influence of St. Augustine in Western Philosophy

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Abstract— Far beyond the Medieval antiquity of his time. St. Augustine remains a towering figure with an enduring relevance in western philosophy history. With his ideas leveraging most Modern and Contemporary philosophical systems, his significance in western philosophical thought cannot be over-emphasized. To enunciate this with evidential supports, this Paper reviews some of Augustine's thoughts that have remained influential in western philosophy. The paper adopts the descriptive and analytic research method.

Keywords— Medieval, Divine Illumination, Privation, Time, Just War

INTRODUCTION

Saint Augustine (also known as Augustine of Hippo), was perhaps the greatest philosopher of the Medieval Antiquity and certainly, one who exerted the deepest and most lasting influence. In fact, "in order to understand the currents of thought in the Middle Ages, a knowledge of Augustinianism is essential" (Copleston, 1962, p. 40). However, Augustine's significance in Western Philosophy tradition extends far beyond this period to our Contemporary time. His resourceful philosophical insights on epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and politics have not only remained important today, but do not lack currency as veritable conceptual framework for many contemporary philosophical enterprises. This work presents a review of some key areas of his philosophy with significantly influence on western thought. The areas considered are his concept of philosophy, epistemology, evil, time, politics and the just war theory.

AUGUSTINE'S LIFE AND BACKGROUND

Augustine was born in A.D.354 in Tagaste, now South Ahras in Algeria, North Africa (Onuche, 2020, p. 46). His father, Patricius, was a pagan, though he later converted to Christianity on his deathbed. His mother, Monica, was a devout Christian, who exerted some influences on his early Christian formation and later conversion to Christianity. After his initial educational formation at Tagaste and Madaura (now M'Daourouch) in Latin literature and grammar (Knowles and Penkett, 2004, p. 2), Augustine went to Carthage to study Rhetoric at the age of 17, where he lived a hedonistic

lifestyle (Confessions, 2004, pp. 35-36). At Carthage too, he read the Hortensius of Cicero, which deeply turned his mind to the search of truth in philosophy.

Among the truths he yearned to know was the cause of evil in the world, supposed created by a perfectly good God. Finding no satisfactory answer to this problem in Christianity, Augustine abandoned the Christian religion for Manichaeism, which held a dualistic cosmology that, evil and good were primeval and had independent existences and are in constant struggle with each other (Encyclopedia Britannica Online, 2013, n.p.). In A.D. 383, Augustine left Africa for Rome. While at Rome, he turned away from Manichaeism the scepticism of the Academics, who believed that no truth could be comprehended by man and that we ought to doubt everything (Chadwick, 2001, p. 14).

In A.D. 383 he moved to Milan to become a publicly paid professor of rhetoric of the city (Portalie, 1967, p. 68). Here, he came to think a little better of Christianity. He equally came upon certain forms of Platonism, especially the Neoplatonism found in the Enneads of Plotinus. The idealistic character of this philosophy awakened unbounded enthusiasm in him, and he was attracted to it also by its exposition of pure intellectual being and of the origin of evil. Moreover, it provided for him what he had been looking for about the solution to the problem of evil, and thus made it possible for him to overcome his former dualism and scepticism.

It made him to appreciate the idea of the contemplation of spiritual things, of wisdom in the intellectual sense, and above all, to see the reasonableness of Christianity. What is more, after coming in contact with St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan and his sermons, Augustine re-evaluated himself and was forever changed. He decided to devote his life to defending the church. In A.D. 391, he returned to North Africa and was ordained a priest to the diocese of Hippo Regius, and later consecrated bishop of Hippo in A.D. 396. He died on August 28, 430 A.D as Vandals were besieging his city. Augustine wrote over 100 books, with his Confessions, the City of God and the Enchiridion being among the most influential in Western thought.

SETTING THE MEDIEVAL MOOD OF THOUGHT

Augustine embraced the ancient notion of philosophy as “love of wisdom”. However, he believes that wisdom is to be sought, not for purely academic purpose, but in function of an end of helping man to understand God (*Contra Academicos*, 1.1). For him, a true philosopher is a lover of God because true wisdom is, in the last resort, identical with God (cited in Tornau, 2019, art. 3). And true philosophy is inconceivable without a confluence of faith and reason. He epitomizes his philosophical program in his Soliloquies, with the phrase “to know God and the soul” (1.7); and pursues it with the means provided by Platonic philosophy as long as these are not in conflict with the authority of biblical revelation (*Contra Academicos*, 3.43). Augustine believes there could be no distinction between philosophy and theology, and that one could not properly philosophize until one’s will is transformed under the influence of grace, which comes through faith. For him too, all knowledge upon all subjects must take into account the revealed truths of the Scripture along with the insights of philosophy. With this construal of philosophy, Augustine set the dominant mode of philosophizing in the Middle Ages, namely, the combination of faith and reason.

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

A problem of particular concern to Augustine was how we come to know certain truths that are universal, necessary and eternal in nature. Before considering this question, Augustine set about refuting the sceptics for denying the possibility of knowledge. He points to a range of things we clearly know to be true, which the sceptic cannot possibly deny (Mambrol, 2018, p. 1). For instance, he points to the law of non-contradiction, whereby we know that, if something is true, it cannot also be the case at the same time that the opposite is true (*Contra Academicos*, 3.6). He also points to the certainty of our private or subjective knowledge, saying that appearance cannot in themselves be false; for I know infallibly what my subjective experiences are, even though my judgement, which goes beyond what seems to be the case to me, may introduce the possibility of error (*Contra Academicos*, 3.26).

He also says the we know with certainty mathematical and geometrical truths (3.24–29). Furthermore, Augustine says that even the capacity to doubt, is itself a prove of one truth they cannot deny, namely: there is doubting. Moreover, we also know real existences: we know that we exist, and that we are alive. Thus, even if our experiences were a dream, we, nevertheless, still know we are alive: “whether we are asleep or awake, we

live” (cited in Copleston, 1962, p. 54). Again, even if I am being deceived into thinking that I exist, I could not be deceived if I did not exist. Thus, anticipating Descartes’ cogito, Augustine says: “If I err, I exist (*si fallor, sum*).

On how we know the universal, necessary and eternal truth, Augustine, “denied the reliability of the senses while also indicating their limitations” (Stumpf, 138). He believes that, owing to the mutability of both the objects of senses and the sense organs themselves, knowledge derived from the senses is at the lowest level of knowing and less certain. In his view, the objects of senses are not the proper object of knowledge, but are the starting point in the mind’s ascent to knowledge. The objects of true knowledge – the truths we can know with greatest certainty, which constitute the highest form of knowledge – are the universal, necessary, unchanging and eternal truths. They are to be found within the mind, though they are mind-independent themselves. The human mind simply discovers these truths as the absolute standards by which all else is judged, and which are assumed in our judgments. Plato called these truths “Forms” in the world of Forms, but Augustine identifies them as ideas originating from the eternal and immutable mind of God.

But how are these truths accessible to the mutable human mind? To answer this question, Augustine develops the idea of divine illumination. The “divine illumination” is the divine light of God, which illuminates the human mind and enables it to grasp these truths which are superior to it and thereby enable it to acquire true and certain knowledge in case of any perception and knowledge production. Plato’s world of Forms becomes the mind of God for Augustine; and the idea of Good, which illuminates all other ideas as the sun illuminates material objects, becomes God himself or the divine light, in Augustine’s philosophy. Thus, operating under the influence of these eternal ideas with the aid of divine illumination, the mind is able to overcome the limitations of knowledge caused by the mutability of physical objects and sense organs, as well as the finitude of the human mind, to apprehend these eternal truths.

Augustine’s epistemology has been quite crucial for the development of western epistemology. Many successive epistemologists have relied heavily upon his ideas in dealing with the sceptics’ challenge and to demonstrate the possibility of knowledge. In the Modern period, Descartes’ for instance, relied on Augustine for his foundationalism. His maxim of “Cogito ergo sum” (I think, therefore I exist), by which he overcame his

universal doubt, and established a firm foundation for knowledge about the reality of his own existence and that of the external world, was inspired by Augustine's "Si fallor, sum" (If I err, therefore, I exist). Roderick Chisholm's foundationalism was also inspired by Augustine's argument about the reality of our immediate experience. Following Augustine, Chisholm maintains that, "the indubitable certainties in knowledge are first-person propositions about one's experiences" (1966, p. 187). That is, experiences are self-presenting; for as one undergoes an experience and eventually reflects upon it, the proposition that one is experiencing in a specific way is certain and indubitable for oneself (1966, p. 45). In other words, our immediate experiences are not only certain, they are also primarily basic enough to support other beliefs that may arise therefrom. This influence is also shared by C. I. Lewis, a contemporary epistemologist, who submits that, "one's apprehension of what is given to one in immediate experience is certain in the sense not only that it is immune from error, but also in the sense that it is immune from unjustifiedness, and any other empirical beliefs one has are justified by its support" (cited in Susan Haack, 1993, p. 34).

Furthermore, the currents of thought around "Reformed Epistemology" in the contemporary Religious Epistemology, is basically a revival of Augustinianism. Spearheaded by Alvin Plantinga, Reformed Epistemology seeks to challenge the evidentialist assumption that, "a belief is justified only if it is proportioned to the evidence" (Forrest, 1997, art. 2). The Evidentialist, who take their locus from W. K. Clifford's provocative claim that, "It is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence" (Clifford 1879: 186), argue that, to be justified, religious beliefs must have conclusive and supporting evidence, which must either be self-evident, incorrigible or evident to the senses (Evans and Manis, 2009, p. 191).

However, following Augustine's idea of "divine illumination" for the human mind (an idea also embraced by John Calvin), Plantinga challenges this assumption that that religious beliefs require evidential support to be rational or justified. He argues that belief in God can be rationally justified apart from any argument or evidence; and it is properly basic and self-evident, because, "we have supernatural divine inspiration from God that enables our minds to be disposed to form an immediate (non-inferential) belief about Him" (cited in Evans and Manis 2009, p. 191). Plantinga calls this supernatural inspiration, the *sensus*

divinitatis (sense of the divine), describing it as, "a disposition or set of dispositions to form theistic beliefs in various circumstances or stimuli that trigger the working of this sense of divinity" (Plantinga, 1983, p. 16–93). On this view, he provides an explanation for why belief in God is so pervasive.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Augustine endorsed the Neoplatonists' view that evil is non-substantial being, but a privation or corruption of goodness (Tornau, 2019, art. 7.5). He believes that evil is negative and is not something positive in the sense of being something created by God. All that God created is good; therefore, the cause of evil is not God but lack of being, essence, or goodness (Augustine 2004, 314). But how does moral evil arise? For Augustine, the source of evil is the created will of man which turns away from God. The will is free to turn away from the Supreme and immutable Good (God) and to attach itself to finite and mutable goods in place of God in its quest for happiness, and vice versa. But if we turn away from God and direct our attention and love to mutable goods in place of God, we become miserable, foolish and wicked (*De libero arbitrio*, 2.52–54). This is the source of evil, as he writes in the *Enchiridion*: "evil is turning away of the created will from the immutable and infinite Good" (1987, p. 23).

An evil will has no "efficient" but only a "deficient" cause, which is none other than the will's spontaneous defection from God. Furthermore, though God did not create evil, He only permitted it without desiring it, by creating the will free to either incline toward Him or other things as it might choose. Free will may therefore, be a necessary condition of evil but not a sufficient one (after all the good angels are not only free, but successfully kept their good will). Evil exists for the sake of the good, for the development of man's character and the exercise of virtue, but they have come into existence as the punishment for the misuse of free will in the Original sin (*Enchiridion*, 2).

Augustine's notion of evil has had a lasting influence in the history of western philosophy. It became the common heritage of the scholastic philosophers of the Medieval period (Hemmerle, 2004, p. 471). For instance, following Augustine, Aquinas sees evil is a privation and as something conditionally necessary for good: "evil is not a thing, an essence, or a nature in itself...rather, evil is the absence of some good which a person or thing ought to have" (Gratsch, 2008, p. 37). Aquinas also embraced Augustine's view that evil exists for the sake of greater moral good. In his *Summa Theologica* Aquinas notes that though it is not logically

necessary that God must allow for there to be a moral evil, yet, “If all evil were prevented, much good would be absent from the universe...there would be no patience of martyrs if there were no tyrannical persecution” (1948, 1.22.2. Reply OBJ 2).

The Augustinian notion of evil has equally served as a veritable conceptual framework for most modern philosophers on the issue. For instance, Spinoza, who recognizes nothing as evil – since all finite things are logically necessary modification of the one divine substance (God or Nature) – drew inspiration from Augustine natural goodness of created things by God as well as God’s indirect permission of evil (cited in Hemmerle, p.471); though for him, what is seen as evil in any way, is no evil, but “part of a whole, fulfilling its own proper function within the universal system” (Omeregbe, 1999, p. 28). Also, Immanuel Kant follows Augustine in his idea that the “good will” requires that we are free to be able to consciously responsible for affirming the categorical imperative, which requires that whatever we will as good for us can be universally willed for all rather than doing so from a spontaneous inclination (2002, p. 37). Kant requires freedom as a postulate not only to establish the good will as freely good, but also to account for evil without indicting God in the process. Given Kant’s Augustinian onto-theology, it should come as no surprise that his theodicy describes evil as a privation or “deviation” from the moral law: “the proposition, the human being is evil, can signify nothing other than this: he is conscious of the moral law and yet has admitted the deviation from it into his maxim” (2009, p. 35).

While Kant tends to describe evil as the moral law’s deviation, he elsewhere describes it in identical terms to those of Augustine as “negation or “limitation”, without any reality apart from the being of the good from whence it derives: “evil...is only a negation, and consists only in a limitation of what is good” (1978, p.117). Kant does not stop there in his transcendental deduction of Augustine’s theodicy; he even identifies precisely our free will as the source of this deviation. Hence, as with Augustine, Kant certainly admits that our capacity to deviate from the categorical imperative, stems from God’s conferral of freedom on us and our misuse of it: “If man is to be a free creature, ...it must also be within his power to follow or to shun the laws of morality. Man’s use of his freedom has to depend on him, even if it should wholly conflict with the plan God designed for the moral world. Hence, if God does not prevent evil in the world, this never sanctions evil; it only permits it” (2009, p. 32).

AUGUSTINE’S POLITICAL THEORY

Augustine’s political thought follows from his concept of human nature. Three important characteristics of human nature can be derived from Augustine’s work, namely: Humans have free will; Human are moved by loves (appetites), which can at times be sinful or are mostly disordered; and, all humans ultimately crave for peace (cited in Mattox, 2012, n. p). Augustine believes that humans have free will, for “God’s precepts would be of no use to man unless he had free will of choice so that by performing them, he might have the promised rewards” (On Free Choice of the Will, 1.2). Secondly, humans are essentially driven by “loves”; and the human race can be divided into those who love God and prefer God to self and that of those who prefer self to God (cited in Copleston, 1962, 85). There being two basically different kinds of love, there are then two opposing societies of people or cities: Those who love God, the City of God; and those who love self and the world, the City of the World (cited in Onuche, 48). However, Augustine maintains a pessimistic view of human nature, whereby, on account of the Fall of Adam, people are prone to love of self, and are driven by avarice, lust for power to power and the unquenchable lust to dominate over others (cited in Deane, 1956, p. 56).

Thirdly, all humans ultimately crave for peace, “for peace is a good so great, that even in this earthly and mortal life there is no word we can hear with such pleasure, nothing we desire with such zest, or find to be more thoroughly gratifying” (Augustine, 2003, XIX.11). For Augustine, political authority’s chief purpose is to keep peace between people. Hence, political states, imperfect as they are, serve a divine purpose in Augustine’s view. At the very least, they serve as vehicles for maintaining order and peace and for preventing chaos and disorder. In that respect, the state is a divine gift and an expression of divine mercy—especially if the state is righteously ruled. Rulers have the right to establish any law that does not conflict with the law of God. Citizens have the duty to obey their political leaders regardless of whether the leader is wicked or righteous. There is no right of civil disobedience, except in case where the state commands what is contrary to the law of God.

Augustine also sees the most important function of the state or political order as that of dispensing justice; for justice is the public good. Any state that is not engaged with the dispensation of justice is no state at all, but a criminal gang writ large masquerading as a state: “Remove justice,” Augustine asks rhetorically, “and what are kingdoms but gangs of criminals on a large scale?” What are criminal gangs but petty kingdoms?”

(City of God, 4.5.). Augustine's notion of justice embraces what by his day was a well-established definition of justice of "giving every man his due." (City of God, 19.21). However, he grounds his application of the definition in distinctively Christian philosophical commitments: "justice," he says, "is love serving God only, and therefore ruling well all else" (Mattox, 2012, p.2).

Augustine is also interested in exploring why justice fails in human political societies; for as he says, "the general characteristic of that city [of man] is that it is devoid of true justice" (cited in Onuche, 2020, p. 49). Social justice, for Augustine, is first and foremost a work of love. Hence, true justice, begins with the love of God, and extends to love of others since the love of others is the ultimate expression of love of God; the two commandments that embody the whole of the Law (Clark, 1963, p. 88). In other words, the love of God is the fountain from which justice flows; for it is only in the love of God, manifested in the love of others, from which justice can "assign to each his due" (Onuche, 2000, p. 49). Hence, what people love affects how justice is dispensed in society, since the dispensing of justice will correlate with love of self or God.

However, for Augustine, since the city of man is centered on the love of self (and falsity) rather than the love of God, this prevents it from effectively and charitably loving others and practicing justice. It is devoid of true justice because the desires of humans in the city of man are disordered and inevitably exhaust into falsity which prevents true justice from being dispensed (Fortin, 1987, p. 182). But this is not to say that there is no justice in the city of man, or that there are no signs of justice in the city of man. It is to say that the justice dispensed in the city of man is deeply flawed because of man's disordered love of self (City of God, 19.4).

Augustine's political theory has also had a lasting influence in the political thought of western philosophy. For instance, following Augustine's pessimistic concept of the human nature, Machiavelli argues for the justification of political deception and even brutality. His reason is that, "If all men were good, this precept would not be good; but because men are wretched creatures who would not keep their word to you, you need not keep your word to them" (Machiavelli, 1999, p. 57). Also, Augustine's picture of fallen man, ridden by avarice, lust for power, and selfish desires, formed the background of Hobbes' political theory and idea of 'state of nature', where everyone pursued the satisfaction of his selfish interest and appetites, resulting

in man living in "continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" (Hobbes, 1946, p.32).

This impelled men in the state of nature to come together to form a social contract and accept state control and social life as a necessary evil to avoid greater evil and to have peace; for it is only in a condition of peace that man can safely pursue his interest. It is therefore understandable that, following Augustine still, Hobbes makes the obligation to strive for peace the first and fundamental law of nature: "And consequently it is a precept, or general Rule of Reason that every man ought to endeavour peace, as far as far as he has hope of attaining it" (1946, p.186). And for Hobbes was with Augustine, the state's basic function then is to provide security by keeping the peace" (cited in Mabbott, 1967, p. 16).

AUGUSTINE'S CONCEPT OF TIME

Augustine also explores the nature of time as part of his larger reflections on God's creation of the universe. He developed a psychological account of time in his Confessions in order to refute the sceptics who reject creation as act of God as well as resolve the paradoxes associated with the illusory concept of time that traces to Aristotle, where time comprises of past, present and future; and where the past and future are believed to have duration but the present has not. Between considering the theory of time being an illusion (paradox) and theory of reality of time, he chooses a conservative approach, maintaining, that time is an aspect of human soul (Mojtahed, 2000, p. 74), and as a phenomenon of human consciousness, and so does not have an objective existence (Hernandez, 2016, 37).

Augustine admits that time is a kind of duration and extension: "I see then, that, time is a certain extension" (2004, p. 242). However, since extension and duration must be extension and duration of something, it is certainly not the duration and extension of past, future and present; for in Augustine's view, the past and future do not exist all, and the present does not have stability and continuity, but vanishes into past; so, it does not exist either (Augustine, 2004, p. 234). He says: "For these three (past, present and future), somehow exist in the mind, for otherwise, I do not see them; there is present of things past, memory; present of present, sight; present of things future, expectation" (Augustine, 2004, p. 239). Hence, as an aspect of the human soul, time is the duration and extension of the mind itself: "From this it appears to me that time is nothing else than extension, but of what, I do not know, and I wonder if it could be of the mind itself" (2004, p. 244).

There is no substantiality or factuality of time; for it is my mind that I measure time. Time arises from changes and as a result of object change specifications. If time is an aspect of the human soul, Augustine then believes time to be introvertive and rejects it as extravertive. The very existence of time depends on man as he remembers the past and anticipates the future in the present. He says, "It is by embracing the past and future and expanding the mind in memory and prediction that a phenomenon called time is formed" (cited in Azimi et. al., 2013, p. 366). Everything that happened in the past and everything that is expected to happen in future are actually manifested in the human mind. Time is a human phenomenon. It is present in, and measured by the mind; and only humans have history. No other natural beings than humans have a future or a past because they have no understanding of their present.

Augustine's psychological and subjective concept of time has had a pervasive influence in the western thought. Manning says that this has influenced philosophers and psychologists across centuries (2013, p.233). According to Azim et al. with his subjective notion of time, "Augustine founds a special understanding of subjectivity in the thought of the west. This point of view of the human being would pave the way for an ideology that led Descartes and other philosophers to a new perception of man and the world" (2013, p. 366). Dawson equally notes that, "this new theory of time which Augustine originated also renders possible a new concept of history. If man is not the slave and creature of time, but its master and creator, then history also becomes a creative process" (1930, p. 20-21).

An example of influence from Augustine's subjective and psychological view of time is found in Locke, who explains that as far as the consciousness can be protracted or extended backwards to any past actions or forward to action to come, so far reaches the identity of the person" (1999, IV. 5.). The echoes of the extendedness of the mind is also present in the current neuropsychology. For instance, Barba, emphatically criticizes what he calls the paradox of the memory trace. His central argument is that objects and events acquire a temporal dimension, past or future, only in the presence of a person (Barba, Dalla. 2002, p. 89). Consciousness of past things (or future things) is neither contained in a physiological nor cognitive trace, but experienced in a phenomenological way. Moreover, a recent investigation carried out by Nyberg et. al., on the phenomenal experience and the conscious temporality of the experience, shows that "imagining oneself

carrying out a familiar activity at the present, imagining the same task done yesterday or tomorrow, activates the left lateral parietal cortex, the left frontal cortex, the right cerebellum and the thalamus" (2010, p. 22359). The conclusion here is that, holding constant the phenomenal experience (a familiar activity), creates a pattern of cerebral activations different from that observed in investigations in which phenomenal experience is at study and in which a relatively consensual observation is a hippocampal involvement. This is part of the rich and current investigations on temporality of experience arising from St. Augustine's subjective and psychological of time.

AUGUSTINE'S JUST WAR THEORY

Augustine is a principal proponent of the just war theory, who originated the very phrase "just war" in his work *The City of God*. The just war theory (Latin: *jus bellum justum*) is a theory meant to ensure that war is morally justifiable through a series of criteria, all of which must be met for a war to be considered just. For Augustine, these criteria are split into two groups: "right to go to war" (*jus ad bellum*) and "right conduct in war" (*jus in bello*). The first concerns the morality of going to war, and the second the moral conduct within war (Guthrie, et al., 2007, 11–15). About the first (*jus ad bellum*), Augustine says that, for war to be just: It must be fought for a just cause (in self-defense or such as to defend the state from external invasion); with the right intention to restore peace and not with the purpose to do harm; and it must only be declared by the right authority. Concerning the second principles (*jus in bello*): The principle of proportionality should be followed, no excessive suffering should be caused; discrimination between combatants and civilian population must be made; and treaties should be observed (*pacta sunt servanda*) – soldiers engaged in warfare must not be motivated by cruelty, bloodlust, or desire for vengeance (cited in Weithman, 2006, 247).

Augustine's just war theory formed the foundation of the 'just war' tradition in the western thought, which has had enormous influence upon moral-philosophical thought on military issues in the West ever since (Mattox, 2006, p. 196). In the Modern period, Immanuel Kant's project for perpetual peace in international relations, largely shows his indebtedness to Augustine's just war theory. Like Augustine, Kant, cited in Mbat, sees war as permissible under the context of "self-defense", which is "a natural reaction essential in life, and therefore admissible, although not committed to the course of international justice through law" (2011, p. 144). The idea of self-defense as a justification for war

is also associated with Kant's legalism and in line with the Augustine's view, it accounts for the citizens political allegiance to their own states or government. Kant says: "To value anything, human personality, or any basic right, entails committing oneself to secure, for that person or right, a legally protected status, so far as one's circumstances and other commitments allow" (cited in Gallie, 1978, 22). Also, reflecting on the moral conduct within war (jus in bello), Kant, also references Augustine's principle of proportionality and avoidance of excessive force by combatants, saying that, "[N]o state, shall, during war permit such acts of hostility, which would make mutual confidence in the subsequent peace impossible: such as the employment of assassins, poisoners, breach of capitulation, and incitement to treason in the opposing state" (1983, p.198).

CONCLUSION

Without any shadow of doubt, in western Philosophy, the name, Augustine, is a force to reckon with. Indeed, nothing is truer than saying that the knowledge of the philosophy of Augustine is essential for the understanding of several currents of thoughts western philosophy. We have in the present work attempted a review of Augustine's philosophical views on human knowledge, creation, ethics, the problem of evil, state and justice, concept of time as well as just war theory, which not only commanded unquestionable authority throughout the Middle Ages, but have also continued to influenced philosophical discourse in the Contemporary period. This has set him up and an unquestionable pathfinder in western philosophy. For anyone who is interested in studying these areas in philosophy, there is no better advantage than reading Augustine.

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