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How Confessions Illustrates the Transition from Ancient Roman to the Christian World

**Introduction**

St. Augustine (354-430 C.E), also known as Aurelius Augustinus, who was one of the Catholic bishops who lived in North America. He is also known to be a Roman Trained rhetorician who was a prolific writer and a Christian philosopher. He was one of the keen observers of society before the fall of the Roman Empire, where his views on social and political philosophy comprise of critical and intellectual connections between the emerging medieval world and late antiquity (Augustine). The life span of St Augustine is also spanned as one of the most important phases in transition from Roman paganism to Christianity. The impulse of Augustine's thinking was driven by the cultural and education system that supplied the initial impulse for Augustine’s thinking. His passion for searching truth and wisdom initiated by reading lost dialogue if Cicero, “The Hortensius”. One of the most historic and commendable experiences of the philosopher was that of “Confessions” written by him when he was forty years old. This writing not only changed his interest and vison but it gave a new vision and direction to his life accompanied by the search of wisdom. The Confession is a profound account that illustrates Augustine’s transition from ancient Roman to the Christian World.

**Discussion**

In the book, "The Confession", Saint Augustine presents confession of his life of sin to God along with a critical insight into the biblical doctrines such as the relationship between man and nature, human nature, creation, and the divine nature. It would not be wrong to say that the book is more like a transition from the narrative to a psalm like confession accompanied by worship to the doctrinal expression. Confession is an amalgamation of both, philosophy and human relationships. The essence of family relationship is traced in the inspiration from mother Monica, Ambrose, who was the Bishop of Milon and two unnamed friends who died, one of the friends who converted to Christianity along with Augustine and then the son of his friend Adeodatus. There are 13 books in confession, each addressing one of the doctrines of Christianity. These themes are Sin, Grace and, Freewill. One of the major evidence of Augustine’s conversion to Christianity is a quotation from the book, “Our Heart is restless until it finds rest in you” (Augustine). The major section describing Augustine’s conversion to Christianity can be found in the first three chapters of the book, deciphering a series of conversion that Augustine has underwent. There are several experiences of conversion quoted in The Confession, where the first conversion was studying Carthage. After that Augustine embraces Manicheanism which is defined as the gnostic interpretation of Christianity and it is views matter as evil and he is encouraged to create the spark of light from within.

In the Confession, St Augustine is an all-rounded person, a mixture of different feelings and emotions such as a candid personality, acerbic, restless man, passionate being, ambitious souls and some who are subjected to flaws of pride and excess in all dimensions of life. There are a lot of examples that illustrates his transition to Christianity, found in each book, In Book, one Augustine expresses the expression of utility for God in all sections of work and analysis of God as a sovereign Creator (Augustine). In Book II, Augustine noted that God worked through his sins by offering him sensual pleasure that is also found to be a personal experience (Augustine). In Book III, he identifies the idolatry of this worldly philosophy and denounces it by beginning the process of intellectual admonishing asserting it as a path that can lead to truth (Augustine). In Book IV, Augustine explains his attempt to redeem himself after the confession of the sin of fornication by elaborating virtue of his affection for the love of a child (Augustine). In Book V, Augustine expresses his delight in confession that is found to be consistent with the regeneration of the soul, (an ideology in Christianity) indwelt by the spirit of God (Augustine). In Book IV, Augustine exemplifies humanity and contrition in accepting the correction in the practice of her faith and life in general causes. Here is seen in the pace of revelation that has brought clarity to the fielding faith (Augustine). Book VII, explain Augustine having inklings of God’s omnipresence as he struggles with his inner self and the physical image of God that he has viewed and observed in his whole life (Augustine). In Book VIII, the title “Conversion” asserts and specifies Augustine’s decision of being obedient to baptism. He explains salvation in an emotional trance where he finds conversion as an instantaneous task that can occur at any time (Augustine). In Book IX, he elaborates his conversion in full bloom and he narrated his decision of abandoning his teaching career to give time to spiritual thoughts. Book X, explains the principals of confession and Book XI shows Augustine’s insight into time and eternity. In the end (Augustine). In Book XII, Augustine describes heaven and earth, and then the creation of heaven and hearth to explain spiritual realms (Augustine).

A more exegetical account infers that “The Confession” opens in restless confusion accompanied by faith. It is an illustration of how Augustine proceeded from faith to the understanding of his inner voice. There are several topics of discussion, that step by step depict and explain his feelings and gathering from different events, leading him to a strong believe in Christianity. In Confessions, Augustine presents his autobiographical account of the life that ended in converting to Christianity. He discusses the aftermath of the monumental spiritual event and, hitch can be observed throughout confessions. The philosopher has offered his vulnerable and honest rumination on past that was way-war and worldly attitudes where poignantly and painstakingly directed him to the reconciliation with Divine Creator. Also, the earliest works of the saint also depict his inner passion towards Christianity as he quoted in one of the texts. "I would know you [God], I would know myself. (Augustine)" The text of the book itself is an essential stage of the development of spirituality in Augustine along with an awareness that what that has been already passed is history what matters is, what lay ahead. It is observed that Augustine is searching his heart with a desire to discover and expose the fact that human beings are weak in their nature, they are sinful and sensual but on the same board, they are hopeful and filled with passion that they will find out the truth one day.

The confession opens with a prayer, “Grant me, Lord, to know and understand" (Augustine). Here, Augustine is seen scrutinizing his memory and remanuring his ambitions from the past that he hates to be deceived and he founds delight in truth as a catchline. It is also critical to note that the essence of Confession is marked by an unfailing consistency of the authenticity of style and tone, where writer's function and a believer is one with no embarrassment and no awkwardness. There are three major confessions found in confessions. The first one is, of God and the soul is all that Augustine wants to know and if they are to be known in the best relationship to each other, the session confession we as the acknowledgment of the weakness and then the power and greatness of God. These three confessions are a profound illustration of the transition where faith declares what has transpired to the community of those who believe. It would not be wrong to say that confession is more like a working out of the redemption in the life of a sinner.

To Augustine, sin has always been unprincipled self-assertion. He gives several examples to determine the distinct for survival in the bests of the wills that made a man turn away from the love of God and get attracted towards pride and emptiness, He uses the imagery of society, being at the brink of commuting himself to the lofty ideals, he made gestures to express his underlying passions. He questions the postponement of his baptism and what impact it brought to life (Augustine). So, it would not be wrong to say that Confession is more like a story of a saint, with each section explaining one step towards the transition to Christianity. Augustine’s book is deeply devotional work that is full of praise, prayer, communion, praise and confession, all directed towards God.

**Conclusion**

St Augustine, one of the greatest thinkers and philosopher who belongs to Ancient Rome, converted to Christianity and this conversion is explained in detail and passionate way in the book Confession. As inferred from the title, this conversion starts with the feeling of confession that strengthened with some familial and world association. Augustine’s book the Confession is not a straightforward account but it is a description of events that keyed a major role in driving saint to Christianity. In a nutshell, the book, “confession” is a dramatic, and logical insight into the facts and figures along with a sentimental approach that pushed Augustine to hear his inner voice and convert to Christianity, Also, the book is a source of inspiration for Christianism in terms of philosophical connotations and religious understandings.

**Work Cited**Augustine, Saint. *The confessions*. Clark, 1876.