

Robinson Crusoe: A Product of Elective Affinity of the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe* takes a sailor named Alexander Selkirk as its prototype, telling a story of the protagonist Robinson Crusoe's life and adventure, especially his experience on an island for 28 years. Critics argue that there are two major themes in the novel: economic individualism and religious belief, and more or less believe that making a good fortune and spiritual pursuit are opposite. However, analysis of the protagonist from a single perspective--economics or religion--inevitably leads to contradiction of understanding the character. This paper analyzes Robinson Crusoe from the theoretical perspective of Max Weber's Protestant ethic and spirit of capitalism, seeking the "elective affinity" of the two. Crusoe is an ambitious adventurer, a diligent laborer and a lonely ascetic, all of which has an elective affinity with the Protestant ethic. Meanwhile, Robinson Crusoe converts to religion to guide his life. His seemingly contradictory behaviors reflects that he is in fact a product of the elective affinity of the economic ideology and the religious consciousness.

Keywords: *Robinson Crusoe*, the Protestant Ethic, the Spirit of Capitalism, Elective Affinity.

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INTRODUCTION

Daniel Defoe was an English writer, businessman and a spy. He was born into a London family of Presbyterian Dissenters, and received education in Charles Morton's dissenting academy. His pious father wanted his son to be a Presbyterian minister but the child was de facto in a dilemma which could be seen in his *Meditations*--he was "full of comparison" (Backscheider, 1992) at that time. By the end of 1681, he made his choice and later became a wholesale dealer in hosiery and an importer of wine, tabaco, and other goods (Richetti, 2005). Not only was him a businessman, he was also a prolific writer. During his writing career, there were 545 titles including satirical poems, political and religious pamphlets and volumes ascribed to him.

Defoe was a political activist as well. He was involved in the political movements in the early 18th century when Queen Anne intentionally attacked Nonconformists and Defoe, in response, anonymously published *The Shortest Way with Dissenters* in which the rhetoric of High Tory officials was mocked. Even though

the enemies detected the true author of the pamphlet and Defoe was arrested and sentenced to stand in the pillory for three times, he was greeted with flowers instead of putrid vegetables (Black *et al.*, 2012). Besides the pamphlets, Daniel Defoe published many novels such as *Robinson Crusoe*, *Captain Singleton*, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, *Moll Flanders* and so on. In April 24th, 1731, Defoe died in poverty.

At the turn of 17th and 18th century, books telling the stories of sailings and adventures were popular in England (Huang 2003). Robinson Crusoe, with Alexander Selkirk who was a castaway in the remote Juan Fernández Islands for four years as prototype, is a protagonist of Daniel Defoe's novel: *Robinson Crusoe*. The book centers on the life of Robinson Crusoe, whose name is originally Robinson Kreutznaer, and especially on his near 28-year life on a desert island. Similar to Defoe's personal experience, Robinson Crusoe violates his father's wish to be a lawyer and sets out voyages for seven times. The protagonist meets with failures: either is he shipwrecked or enslaved by Moors. His escape from the Moors, rather than helping him start an ordinary life,

pushes him into morass of despair. He is shipwrecked again and is not as lucky as him years ago to be saved. During his 28 years on the island, he plants, feeds, makes tools and gets a slave. Equally interesting, his life on the island seemingly witnesses his change of attitude toward religion and his reflections on his disobedience and lack of faith. After 28 years, he comes to Brazil to reclaim the profit of his estate; he actually becomes a man of wealth.

The novel *Robinson Crusoe* presents the conflict between the material motive of commercial profit and the spiritual salvation from God (Zhong, 2000). Such a conflict has been discussed for a long time. In 1957, Ian Watt put forward that Robinson Crusoe is “an embodiment of economic individualism hardly needs demonstration”, and the influence of Puritanism was “curiously little” (2001). In 1961, Maximillian E. Novak pointed out that since 1920s people have tended to use economic theory to analyze the novel. He emphasized the importance of Crusoe’s fictionality and Defoe’s personal economic views, because all his actions are endowed by the author rather than entirely out of the protagonist’s reason (1961). Ian Watt’s view was opposed by his contemporaries. George A. Starr was one of them. Even though to some extent Starr accepted the view that Robinson Crusoe is indeed an economic man, the theme of the novel is religion and belief. According to Starr, the novel discusses how to find true faith in the society of that time, and the novel itself belongs to the genre of spiritual autobiography, which reflects puritanism in the 17th century (Hui *et al.*, 2011). Later as a revision of his own opinion, Ian Watt detailed the economic individualism reflected by Robinson Crusoe and pointed out that “in the context of Crusoe’s life on the island, rational ecological and economic labor can be seen as the moral premise which underlines his character” (1997), but what follows is a larger section on religious individualism of the protagonist, which was a response to George A. Starr. Watt actually has discussed the significance of economic and religious aspects under the concept of “individualism”, avoiding the limitation of purely discussing economic sense. Watt’s view was more eclectic that it has been 30 years earlier. On the basis of foreign scholars, Chinese researchers have tended to reconcile the contradiction between economic factors and religious ones in Crusoe’s behavior. Huang Mei is one of the pioneers in researching Robinson Crusoe in China. She affirmed that Crusoe is an entrepreneurial hero in the new world (2003) and Crusoe repeatedly reflects on what he has done in the past in order to find the right way to spiritual salvation, but Huang emphasized that Crusoe’s repentance and conversion on the island are ambiguous (2003). Hui Haifeng and Shen Dan recognized that Huang Mei reconciliated the contradictions between the two factions (2011), and like Ian Watt, they two believed that individualism should be considered in the novel under a macro framework. They analyzed the rising trend of individualism in Defoe’s period in both economic and religious aspects, and considered that the marginalization

of family ethics led to Crusoe’s economic prosperity and status promotion. Moreover, some researchers discuss family ethics independently from economic and religious aspects, either. It was found that traditionally, the British centered their domestic life and it was the basic duty of the British people to educate their children and support their relatives and friends; and it is mentioned that in Defoe’s time, father-son, husband-wife, master-servant relationships were particularly important (Yang, 2017). However, Crusoe repeatedly disobeyed his father’s request. His love and marriage are not involved in the novel. Instead, Crusoe’s relationship with the slave Friday occupies a large part of the novel. Ian Watt, Huang Mei, Maximillian E. Novak and others have all borrowed Max Weber’s thoughts in their analysis. Similarly, Chinese scholar Cui Weiqiao’s journal article *The Perfect Combination of the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of European Capitalism: A Reinterpretation of Robinson Crusoe* made use of Weber’s viewpoint (2008). However, he spent a great deal of time discussing the change of religious belief in Western Europe and characteristics of the spirit of capitalism, but did not carefully analyze the capitalist thoughts reflected in Crusoe, nor did he respond to the relationship between economic ideology and religious consciousness of Crusoe. On the basis of previous studies, how to avoid the contradictions caused by the analysis of Robinson from the perspective of economy or religion, and rationalize Robinson’s inconsistent behavior is a key point of current research.

This paper argues that Robinson Crusoe is actually the product of the elective affinity of the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. In order to prove the point of view, the paper is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, the author summarizes three main characteristics of the spirit of capitalism proposed by Max Weber, and analyzes to what extent the capitalist spirit is embodied in Crusoe. The second chapter mainly discusses how Crusoe converts to religion from a secular youth, aiming to show that the author Daniel Defoe in fact portrayed a religious convert in the novel, rather than a man who just takes his belief as something dispensable. In the third chapter, the author would analyze the elective affinity of the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism from the perspective of historical development, and it explains that Crusoe’s seemingly inconsistent and ambiguous belief is owing to the function of this elective affinity.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This research mainly adopts the interpretivism approach to explain Robinson’s behavior influenced by the elective affinity between the Protestant ethic and the capitalist spirit. The widespread use of the concept of elective affinity is inseparable from the development of capitalism and religion. German sociologist Max Weber used the concept of *Wahlverwandtschaft* (elective affinity) to discuss the relation of the spirit of capitalism

and the Protestant ethic in his book. *Wahlverwandschaft* was not created by Weber, but a concept describing interpersonal relationship in the novel of German writer Johann Wolfgang Goethe (Ren, 2021).

Weber first mentioned *Verwandschaft* (affinity) in his book to counter the prejudice that religious piety and the pursuit of material gain are mutually exclusive. He asked such a question: “Could not the entire contrast between estrangement from the world, asceticism, and church-based piety on the one hand, and the earning of one's living under capitalism on the other, be understood as actually implying an inner affinity (innere *Verwandschaft*)” (Kalberg, 2012)? Then he put forward the concept of *Wahlverwandschaft* (elective affinity). Weber argued that, given the great confusion between material foundations, forms of social and political organization, and ideas of the Reformation, we can only firstly examine whether and to what extent specific “elective affinities” (*Wahlverwandschaften*, the plural form of *Wahlverwandschaft*) of certain forms of religious belief and a vocational ethic (*Berufsethik*) can be worked out (Kalberg, 2012). Here, “forms of religious belief” refers to the various types of Protestantism, namely Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism and the Baptizing Sects and Churches followed by Puritanism. The “vocational ethic” refers to the ascetic moral code that guides the daily work of the world – the rational work of the world, and thus makes their calling to constantly seek legitimate advantage (Chen, 2007).

Chapter One Robinson Crusoe and the Spirit of Capitalism

As it mentioned in the introduction part, Max Weber discussed the spirit of capitalism. Kenneth Morrison summed up Weber's understanding of the spirit of capitalism as “four overriding imperatives”, namely “(i) distance from the world and a rejection of luxury and excess; (ii) the devotion to amassing wealth and profit beyond the personal needs; (iii) methodical adherence to a way of life involving a commitment to unrelieved toil and work coupled with self-denial; (iv) the avoidance of the use of wealth for purposes of personal enjoyment (Morrison, 2006). Besides, Anthony Giddens also summarized the spirit of capitalism after analyzing Weber's thought. According to Giddens, the spirit of capitalism “is characterized by a unique combination of devotion to the earning of wealth through legitimate economic activity, together with the avoidance of the use of this income for personal enjoyment. This is rooted in a belief in the value of efficient performance in a chosen vocation as a duty and a virtue” (Giddens, 1971). Here, it could be briefly concluded that the spirit of capitalism expressed by Weber, that is, 1) emphasis on economic pursuits that exceed demand; 2) commitment to unrelieved toil; and 3) thrift, avoidance of indulgence in pleasure. Daniel Defoe's protagonist Robinson Crusoe is the embodiment of the spirit of capitalism. He is an ambitious adventurer, a diligent laborer and a lonely ascetic.

1. Crusoe as an Ambitious Adventurer

Clearly, Robinson Crusoe does not have to go to sea to meet his survival needs. His families do not live in poverty. Instead, he is born into a typical middle-class British family. As his father says, Crusoe can “be well introduced, and had a prospect of rising my (Crusoe's) fortunes by application and industry”(Defoe 2006), and the father find “by long experience” the middle class family or “the middle state” is the best living style for the happiness of human beings and it keeps people free from sufferings and envies. If Crusoe follows his father's advice, there would be nothing but a person who perceive the world only “by long experience”. He resolutely sails to the sea for seven times in total, thus getting out of the comfort zone of the middle class.

This ambitious adventurer gets thumbs down from his contemporaries as well. Apart from the admonition of Crusoe's father before, there are other people persuading Crusoe not to go to sea. The ship owner who takes Crusoe for the first time, after hearing about this young man's family background, “burst out with a strange kind of passion (Defoe 2006)” and later gravely exhorts Crusoe to go back home. For this reason, the ship owner does not hesitate to regard this shipwreck as the will of God. Leaving aside Defoe's religious indication (which would be elaborated on in the next chapter), the ship owner's advice echoes the father's thought—the middle-class bourgeoisie should not take risks to pursue the seemingly illusory wealth. However, instead of accepting the suggestions, Crusoe goes even further. His behavior reflects the desire to capture excess profits.

This desire eventually leads him to the desert island. Even though Crusoe is trapped on the uninhabited island, he has not changed his identity as an ambitious adventurer. On the island, he is not limited to the harsh living conditions, but works diligently and eventually becomes the true owner of the island. Robinson runs everything on the island far beyond his own needs. Under the temptation of obtaining greater interests, Robinson chooses to become an ambitious adventurer again and again. Every island adventure after satisfying personal needs is a gamble with Crusoe's life. Robinson not only competes for interests with nature, but also competes with human beings. He takes Friday as his slave, who is both an assistant and property for him. If we examine this process of taking this slave, it could be found that it is another practice in taking interests beyond his needs. Robinson has more than one reason to take a stand when Friday is in danger or kill Friday because Friday himself is a cannibal and poses a threat to Crusoe, and Crusoe does not know how dangerous the situation is at that time when he sees the savages. However, Crusoe chooses to save and keep Friday. Although for Crusoe, Friday is as much his property as the cat, dog and bird in the cage, it is risky to get Friday and keep Friday loyal to him. Again, as before, Crusoe takes risks for his ambition in order to gain excessive benefits.

2. Crusoe as a Diligent Laborer

On the island, Crusoe is a diligent laborer, either. The labor reflects the influence of Protestant ethical concepts. In this chapter we mainly discuss the spirit of capitalism embodied by Crusoe, but as it mentioned in the introduction part, there is an elective affinity of the spirit of capitalism and the Protestant ethic. Therefore, it is improper to explain Crusoe's diligent work on the island entirely without the religious thoughts, and the Reformation that has a great influence on the thoughts.

Martin Luther, the leader of the Reformation, proposed that individuals should be saved by absolute faith in God, not by the church and its "indulgences". In the Christian tradition, religious affairs were sacrament and other matters of life were secular. Martin Luther's introduction of the concept of "calling" in his translation of the Bible actually blurred the line between the sacred and the secular (Yang, 1994). It was in sharp contrast to the theology of Austine and Thomas Aquinas, which the Catholic Church had embraced as orthodoxy. However, according to Weber, "Luther's conception of the calling remained tied to economic traditionalism. As a divine decree, the calling is something that must be submitted to" (Kalberg, 2012). It is noted that the spirit of capitalism includes the desire to acquire wealth, which is also different from Luther's view. Here, Calvinism has to be mentioned, which went further in secularizing religion. Calvin's most important thought was his idea of predestination, but he did not make his followers know whether he or she was chosen by God or not (Liu, 2020). Therefore, Calvinist followers believed that they have an obligation to make sure they are the chosen ones by promoting their faith through an "intense worldly activity". Calvin excluded Luther's mysticism and believed that only the rational way of belief was reliable. He advocated verifying personal belief state from secular life (Shen, 2020).

In Crusoe's life, especially his life on the island, he constantly explores, plans and expands his living space. Or in other words, Crusoe always devotes himself to the "intense worldly activities". After he finds that the ship stuck in the sand has been blown to the sea near the shore, by his good swimming skill, he successfully goes to the ship 12 times to obtain some necessities and equipment, such as dried mutton, biscuits, weapons and ammunition, and some knives. Although at first Crusoe thinks the island is barren, he later discovers that there are countless water bird, wild goats and turtles on the island, so he tries his best to hunt and collect wild fruits to make a living. After he discovers the growing barley by accident, he begins to cultivate crops. The novel also depicts the effort spent by him in order to make labor tools. On the island, once upon time Crusoe finds a very tough tree. He cuts a piece of wood with great difficulty and spends a long time making it into a spade. Crusoe weaves a basket to help him transport things and makes a pot to cook things easily. When his ammunition

reserves are low, Crusoe domesticates wild goats to ensure his meat supply—he even has goat's milk, butter and cheese on the inhabited island. Crusoe not only feeds himself through labor, but also gradually makes the whole island his own property.

Like a bourgeois who protected his property from encroachment, Crusoe carried all his "riches", "provisions, ammunition and stores" into the "fence or fortress" (Defoe, 2016). Later, his life on the island simulated the life of the nobles (Huang, 2003). Not only does Crusoe not live in a small, dirty environment, he had a "fortress" and a "country house" (Defoe, 2016). It has been proved again and again that through diligent work, Crusoe becomes the master of the desert island. Crusoe even bluntly says that it was "my island":

My Island was now peopled, and I thought myself very rich in Subjects...How like a King I look'd. First of all, the whole Country was my own meer Property; so that I had an undoubted Right of Dominion. My People were perfectly subjected: I was absolute Lord and Law-giver ...and they were of three different Religions. My Man Friday was a Protestant, his Father was a Pagan and a Cannibal, and the Spaniard was a Papist: However, I allow'd Liberty of Conscience throughout my Dominions (Defoe, 2016)

Protestants influenced by Calvinism did not find salvation through a mystical connection with God as Lutherans did. They personally did not know whether they are God's chosen people and can be favored by God. Therefore, the believers must be convinced that they are God's chosen people, and then prove it by diligent labor in worldly activities. It is true that in the first part of the novel, and even during a long time after he comes to the island, Crusoe cannot be completely regarded as a pious believer, but the characteristics of diligent labor reflected by Crusoe is indeed a manifestation of the way to gain the salvation from the God. After his conversion, Crusoe's daily restless toil is an accurate way for a Protestant to prove that he is the God's chosen man. Protestant ethic and capitalist spirit were two kinds of social consciousness, and they two were imperceptibly integrated, or in this paper, in an elective affinity. Crusoe is affected by this kind of affinity, so he has unconsciously possessed a certain ideology required by religion even though he has not yet converted to religion. Through his diligent labor, the protagonist achieves material property, which is also the manifestation of the Protestant ethic of receiving God's favor.

3. Crusoe as a Lonely Ascetic

Asceticism, the abandonment of sensual and emotional pleasures, is common to many of the world's religions. However, monastic asceticism is opposed by Calvinism. "The more intensively asceticism took hold of the individual the more it drove him out of everyday life and into the monastery, precisely because the

uniquely holy life was to be found only in a surpassing of everyday morality” (Kalberg, 2016). Calvin's ascetic spirit, on the other hand, is associated with the solitary individual's success in worldly life in order to glorify God (Liu, 2020). Since the path of salvation cannot be accomplished in a ritualistic way. Monastic meditation is not an option, so asceticism can only permeate everyday life. In addition to diligent work, one cannot use wealth to enjoy a life of idleness and pleasure. Accompanied by diligent work, Robinson Crusoe does not enjoy his achievement, but shows thriftiness and avoidance of luxury.

Crusoe has been living a thrift life on the island. No matter the goods obtained from the ship, or the harvest by Crusoe planting grain and hunting, he plans to consume. He values what he saves in the daily life, as can be seen in his treatment of the foraging birds. In response to the birds stealing grain, Crusoe does not simply drive away or kill the birds, but first called them "thieves" who violates his property, and then kills three birds, following an English way of hanging them in chains for a terror to others. In dealing with these "thieves" Crusoe clearly recognizes his identity as an investor—every grain the birds eat now was a peck-loaf in the consequence (Defoe, 2016). In addition to saving his daily necessities, Crusoe also values his time very much, which can be found in his diaries. Apart from his illness and bad weather, he is always busy on the island.

Meanwhile, Crusoe is lonely, even though he may not think so. Love does not play an important role in Crusoe's island life. The interpersonal relation that Crusoe forms on the island is not husband and wife, but master-servant relationship, which is not the relation of emotion, but of interest. On the island, Crusoe is even more delighted with the existence of slaves, because Friday's coming allows him to accumulate more wealth. The way Robinson builds his relationship with Friday is worth studying. The two first meet in that rescue action. Robinson first shoots down a savage with a gun, and kills another savage chasing Friday. He uses the hot weapons in his hands to defeat cannibals' cold weapons - swords and bows. As for Friday, his awe of Robinson begins from their first meeting. Not only that, Robinson kills a parrot in front of Friday, symbolizing Robinson's threat to Friday: if you do not obey my orders, you are also doomed to die. In addition, Robinson does warn Friday that if Friday dares to eat human flesh one more time, he would kill Friday. In Friday's mind, there is something wonderful hidden in Robinson's gun that can produce a steady stream of death and destruction. Crusoe, armed, was like a god to Friday. Robinson's threat to Friday is so great that when Robinson takes Friday to hunt goats, Friday is once again frightened by the sound of Robinson's gunfire, nearly collapses to the ground, and kneels down to beg Robinson not to kill him. This master-servant relationship is clouded by the threat of death from the beginning, and the basic condition of the relationship between the two people is that Robinson can end Friday's life at anytime and anywhere. Friday's

feelings for Robinson are dominated by fear, not to mention whether an equal relationship can be established under the threat of force. In the course of reading this novel, many people are prone to see Friday as a companion to life on Robinson's island. However, despite the fact that Robinson and Friday exist as companions, emotionally, Friday is also his potential enemy. From the emotional point of view, there are two kinds of feelings of fear and hope for Robinson on Friday, and the two kinds of emotions are mixed with each other, which jointly serve Robinson's economic ambition.

The existence of human on the island cannot solve the problem of Robinson's loneliness, and the animals also do not let Robinson really get company. Out of the pursuit of interests, Robinson has little need for companionship. The European female cat that Robinson brings back could have accompanied him, but due to the overbreeding of them, Robinson's attitude toward cats is to cull them. Dogs are human friends, but Robinson does not have much interaction with dogs, and he just let the dog guard their own crops. Finally, the only animal that can accompany Robinson is the parrot that keeps repeating Robinson's words, but parrots can also be killed. Robinson's desert island life is always lonely.

If we say it is because there is no condition for love on the island, but after Crusoe returns to society, even though he has become rich, he does not indulge in sex. Crusoe's marriage is only briefly touched upon in the novel. "I marry'd, and that not either to my disadvantage or dissatisfaction, and had three children, two sons and one daughter: but my wife dying..." (Defoe, 2016). Compared with Crusoe's detailed record of making tools on the island, his description of his children and wife is minimal. Marriage, to Robinson Crusoe, is merely a no-loss business.

Chapter Two the Religious Conversion of A Protestant

In the first chapter, we discuss the embodiment of the spirit of capitalism in Robinson Crusoe, and three aspects have been mentioned above. In this chapter, the whole process of Crusoe's conversion to religion would be studied—to test whether Crusoe really believes in religion or not. It foreshadows the third chapter to prove that Crusoe is the product of the elective affinity of Protestant ethic and capitalist spirit.

Daniel Defoe himself was born into a Presbyterian family, which was different from the Church of England. Presbyterian Church originated in the 16th century western European Religious Reformation, especially under the great influence of Calvinism (Cui, 2008). As it mentioned before, Calvinist predeterminism holds that individual success is determined by God, and that even the most pious and noble acts of virtue cannot change the fate that has already been determined (Yang, 1994). Being pious and

acquiring wealth previously are two fundamentally different roads but Daniel Defoe and his contemporaries gradually believed that these two choices are not opposed, because the pursuit of wealth itself is not for personal enjoyment or indulgence, but for the glory of the God. In the novel, Crusoe can hardly be regarded as a pious religious believer as many people believe. He seems to be indifferent to religion for a long time before his conversion. However, Crusoe's daily behavior after religious conversion shows many differences from what he has done previously. He works diligently and methodically to make his life better on the island. And finally, he becomes the true master. His property in Brazil has a surprising appreciation as well. Robinson Crusoe is reflected the way in which a Protestant, as God's chosen man, succeeds.

1. Crusoe as a Secular Youth

Before Crusoe's desert island life begins, he is hardly a devout believer. He has repeatedly shown his disobedience to God's will. The first is Crusoe goes against his father's will and determines to go abroad in order to get rich. His father says to him that if he goes abroad as he wished, God would not bless him, but it does not change Crusoe's determination. Once Crusoe shakes his idea of going abroad, but this is not out of the fear of God; he is moved by his father's sincere attitude, no wonder then "a few days wore it all off. (Defoe, 2016)" Crusoe's first experience of sailing is not good. The shipwreck of the first voyage echoes his father's admonition. It is worthy to note that Crusoe prays to God for the first time in the novel when he is in a dangerous situation, and there is no reason to doubt his feelings when he is on the verge of death. God's will soon appear. It could be interpreted that God saves Crusoe and his companions from danger. However, at that time, Crusoe does not become pious. He quickly starts to prepare for his next adventures after his rescue.

The experience of living on the island witnesses Crusoe's change of faith. Crusoe himself says that he "had hitherto acted upon no religious foundation at all", and "had very few notions of religion" in his mind, but he is astonished noticing barley growing on the island and thinks "God miraculously caused this grain to grow without any help (Defoe, 2016)". However, Crusoe does not immediately begin to think about the meaning of religion after the event. He soon discovers that the barley grows from seeds that has accidentally slipped out of a bag. With such an explanation it leads Crusoe to discover what the God's miracle is. The same thing happens when Crusoe hopes for God's rescue in the earthquake, but he does not examine his own inner world afterwards, neither. It can be seen that Crusoe is a secular youth for a long time. The only goal in the young man's mind is to get rich as soon as possible, even though he has no skills, no plans, only the desire to get rich. He shows no opposition to religion, no devotion to, except for a few customary prayers to God in distress. Therefore, although Robinson's conversion will be discussed later,

it is clear that there is always a lack of thoroughness in Robinson's process of changing his attitude from non-committer to respect for religion.

2. Religious Conversion as the Way to Individual Fulfillment

Robinson Crusoe's experience of suffering from ague on the island is a crucial point of change in his mentality. In his misery, for two or three hours he cries "Lord Look upon me, Lord pity me, Lord have mercy upon me (Defoe, 2016)". Between dream and bitter suffering, he "saw a man descend from a great black cloud (Defoe, 2016)". Crusoe shows his fear and uneasiness facing the man from the sky. Just as he worries about losing his life several times before, he begins to repent. He confesses that he has never thought of sin and lived a faithless life. Different from the previous reflections on what he does, this time Crusoe realizes how disrespectful he is when forgetting the God's goodness after salvation. He regards his reflection on himself during his illness as his first prayer in life. In his confession, there are "for 8 years, of Seafaring wickedness", "wicked and profane to the last Degree", "a certain stupidity of soul, without desire of Good, or conscience of evil", "hardened, unthinking, wicked creature" and "my rebellious behavior against my father..." (Defoe, 2016). Crusoe reflects on his own thoughts and actions in the past; all these mentioned above are collectively referred to as "sin" by him, and his miserable experience is also thought as "a just punishment" for his sin. After that, Crusoe no longer regards faith in God as a thing to be taken and used at any time, but really has religious thoughts in his mind.

During his recovery, he intentionally asks for god's blessing while eating meat. If the behavior of asking for blessing is Crusoe's passive imitation, his philosophical reflections on the world he lives in would be the premise of knowing the fundamentals of the world and actively getting closer to the religion. Crusoe first inquires the visible world (the earth and the sea), and then pursues the origin of all things, including human beings as well as human's dignity and identity. The series of questions actually leads him to the theory that the God creates these all. At that stage, Crusoe admits the existence of the God as a creator of the universe. Based on his previous inquire, Crusoe then connects God's will to his tragic experience. His next question is "why has God done this to me" (Defoe, 2016)? This question is soon denied by Crusoe himself. Crusoe realizes that what he has done as secular youth is blasphemy against the God, and there is no place for religion in his life previously. In secular life, rather than in churches or monasteries, Crusoe constantly introspects himself and converts to religion. Crusoe converts to religion not through family influence or church baptism, but through spiritual review of his own sin, and consciously restraining his own behavior. This is a manifestation of the Protestant tradition. At the critical moment of Crusoe's life, he rediscovers the essence of the world.

When Crusoe gradually becomes healthy, what he faces is no longer the contradiction between wealth and belief, but a triangle of wealth-self-belief. Wealth is what the bourgeoisie represented by Crusoe pursues, but that is not an excuse of knowing nothing about themselves. According to Mackeon, his conversion on the island was based on “a new-found ability to spiritualize his situation, to detect and interpret the signs of God’s presence in his life on the island” (Defoe, 2016).

Here we might take a step further to re-examine what is the “sin” this protagonist says. As Crusoe mentions, his “rebellious behavior” could be the sin, and his disrespect for the God could be the sin, too. However, just like Adam and Eve who are driven by curiosity and eat the forbidden apple in the Garden of Eden against God’s will, Crusoe’s original sin can only be explained by disobeying his father’s order and being curious about the unknown overseas world. The novel itself echoes the ancient Christian tradition (Li, 2006). Did Defoe bemoan the loss of faith in the rapid development of capitalism? Or did he advocate forgetting religion and actively engaging in economic expansion? Apparently, it is neither. “Crusoe’s original sin is really the dynamic tendency of capitalism itself, whose aim is never merely to maintain the status quo, but to transform it incessantly” (Watt, 2001). Defoe tried to plot a story that a faithless man converted to religion due to the disaster he experienced, and the story did not stop when Crusoe returned to society because the God’s grace has not yet come. After returning to society, Crusoe finds that he changes back to a man with no wealth. However, Defoe specially arranged for the property appreciation of Crusoe’s Brazilian estate as a reward for this God’s chosen man converting to religion. It could be demonstrated that for Defoe, asset appreciation is consistent with Crusoe’s spiritual belief. It is because of Crusoe’s diligent labor and cultivation of virtue on the island that makes his property appreciated. Religious conversion, according to Daniel Defoe, is the way led to personal fulfillment. However, in the final analysis, Robinson's religious belief has its limitation, that is, in some cases, religious belief gives way to economic pursuit. In order to deal with this contradiction caused by the limitation of faith, we have to study this problem from the perspective of the elective affinity between the Protestant ethic and the capitalist spirit.

Chapter Three Robinson Crusoe and the Elective Affinity

For a long time, it has always been incomprehensible to link devout religious believers with secular capitalism, and it is also an important reason for the ongoing debate on the internal driving force of Crusoe’s behaviors. In previous interpretation of Robinson Crusoe, scholars either regard economic pursuit as the only driving force of Crusoe, and thus focus on Crusoe’s economic individualism. Or Crusoe is considered to be a devout Christian, but in fact in the novel it is difficult to regard him as a pious believer.

Nevertheless, this paper regards Crusoe's life experience as a process of unification of economic pursuit and religious conversion under the guidance of Protestant ethics. In the previous sections, the author discusses the spirit of capitalism influenced by Protestant ethic and Crusoe's great success after converting to religion, but it could be easily thought that the Protestant ethics dictated the spirit of capitalism. The author does not take such an idealistic view of history, and regards the emergence of the spirit of capitalism as the influence of Protestantism or the Reformation. Instead, it is believed that there is an elective affinity of them. Religion and capitalism have their own independence, but the elective affinity of the two is inevitable in history--Crusoe is the product of such an affinity.

1. An Elective Affinity of the Spirit of the Capitalism and the Religious Ethic

The bourgeoisie always regards the appreciation of property as its goal, and a wealthy secular life is its ultimate direction. Generally speaking, religion ignores wealth in this life and pursues salvation in God and peace in the afterlife. Before the Reformation had an impact on the development of capitalism, there was already a kind of pre-capitalist spirit in society. According to Weber's definition, the connotation of the pre-capitalist spirit is simple; it refers to a period of time when “the rational utilization a permanent enterprise and the rational capitalistic organization of labor had not yet become dominant forces in the determination of economic activity (Kalberg, 2012). The further development of pre-capitalism requires the establishment of a dominant cultural system in social life. Provided that the religion played an important role in the society, the Reformation satisfied the demands of the pre-capitalists, even if it was not the intention of the reformers.

“We shall thus have to admit that the cultural consequences of the Reformation were to a great extent, perhaps in the particular aspects with which we are dealing predominantly, unforeseen and even unwished -for results of the labors of the reformers. They were often far removed from or even in contradiction to all that they themselves thought to attain” (Kalberg, 2012).

The Protestant ethic formed through the Reformation made the capitalist spirit the dominant culture of the society (Chen, 2011). In fact, the reformation met the requirements of the pre-bourgeoisie. In other words, the formation of capitalist spirit is inextricably linked with the development of religion, but it is not a causal relationship between the two, because before the Reformation promoted the spirit of capitalism, pre-capitalism had already formed a corresponding religious or cultural atmosphere in the society. Such Protestant ethic accelerated the emergence of the spirit of capitalism so that modern capitalism came after. Capitalist spirit and religious belief form an

affinity on this point of economic pursuit. Capitalism, which advocates active participation in secular activities, is linked to religious ideas that seek salvation from God in the pursuit of individual wealth. The affinity is not ubiquitous, but elective. Crusoe is a product of the affinity.

2. Crusoe as the Product of the Elective Affinity

Exploring individual motivations and intentions in the context of history is complicated because individuals often have multiple identities in different domains. Crusoe is such a man with multiple identities. He grows up in a family with a Christian cultural atmosphere, which let him, consciously or unconsciously, measure his choices in life with Christian tradition. His several near-death experiences change his attitude towards God from noncommittal to deep thinking about the relationship between man and God, so as to repent for his previous blasphemous behavior and hope to get God's forgiveness. After converting to Religion, Crusoe arranges his life according to the requirements of the Bible, worships God three times a day, and gains spiritual strength from the Bible. Indeed, Crusoe's understanding of Christian theology is considerably less than that of the medieval monks, which prevents him from answering Friday's question accurately. It has to do with Crusoe's limited conditions on the island and the value orientation of religion at the time. As it mentioned before, the Protestants are very different from the previous monks. They are more willing to engage in worldly activities.

Crusoe is the representative of the bourgeoisie, reflecting a profound spirit of capitalism. Given the choice between eating better and sleeping better, Crusoe chooses the former one. He is an ambitious adventurer who wanted to make a difference in the wider world; he also lives a laborious life and is thrifty, rather than indulgent. In Defoe's era, labor and profit had ethical significance and religious value, and the huge wealth accumulated by industry and thrift gave the bourgeoisie capital to expand reproduction. From a historical point of view, Crusoe is a new individual under the dual effect of religion and capitalist spirit, and he is not controlled by either force--he himself is a product of the elective affinity of two forces. Therefore, the antagonism between the protagonist's dual identities--a restless wanderer and a pious penitent--can be resolved. Although he is shipwrecked on a desert island, the spirit of capitalism in him still makes him a member of the capitalist society, and religious thought is not wiped from his mind.

The affinity discussed in this article is elective, rather than ubiquitous. That is the reason why one kind of ideology in the image of Crusoe cannot fully reflect itself, but permeate the influence of another one. As a result, Crusoe's words are sometimes ambiguous and his behavior inconsistent. While he fawns over money found on the ship, he keeps it; while he berates his ambition for

leaving him on the island, he gradually makes him a true master. Hundreds of years later, in reading this novel, readers cannot help but find flaws and irony in Crusoe's seemingly strict words of justice but this is indeed a real picture of people's mental situation in Daniel Defoe's period, when the spirit of capitalism and the Protestant ethic exhibited characteristics of the elective affinity. Defoe did observe the existence and correlation of the two consciousnesses in society; instead of analyzing the them, he created a figure in his novel. If readers today fail to take account of the social and historical realities at that time, it is inevitable to cause a strong sense of contradiction while analyzing this protagonist from a single perspective of economics or religion. Seeing the protagonist as the product of the elective affinity, the contradiction could be resolved.

CONCLUSION

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber argues that the spirit of capitalism stresses economic pursuit beyond personal need, diligent work, thrift, and avoidance of indulgence in pleasure. Crusoe reflects the spirit of capitalism. He is an ambitious adventure, a diligent laborer, and a lonely ascetic. Not content with a comfortable middle-class life, the adventurer always looks forward to going to see to make a fortune. Although he is repeatedly blocked and criticized, Crusoe's desire of getting rich did not disappear. In addition, Crusoe is a diligent worker. Under the influence of Protestant ethic, especially Calvinism, salvation can only be achieved through rational labor in the secular world. He gathers, hunts, and risk his life again and again to get supplies from wrecked ship and to make tools to help him. He builds his own fort and palisade to protect his private property and lives as if he were a noble. Finally, he makes the whole island his personal property. However, wealth for Crusoe is not to enjoy, but a byproduct of his effort to test whether he is the chosen one or not. Having an affluent life, he remains thrifty. He protects his property from encroachment and he himself spends his fortune carefully. The value of time also shows Crusoe's thrift, too--he is always busy except in illness and bad weather days. Lonely Crusoe does not get any emotional support, but a master-servant relation that can create economic benefits. There is no specific description of pleasure in the novel, too. Robinson Crusoe is a lonely ascetic.

Crusoe has an uncertain attitude towards religion in the beginning of the novel, but it is undeniable that later he recognizes the relationship between man and the world on the island. He repeatedly thinks about his spiritual salvation, again and again to reflect on himself, and hates his past impulse and unruly behaviors. If the island is the continuation of Crusoe's sailing experience, then his spiritual quest is the correction of his previous behavior. After taking refuge in religion, Crusoe repents his sin and prays for redemption. While god's chosen man works diligently and lives religiously on the island,

his fortune in Brazil continues to grow. Increased wealth is the reward for Crusoe's religiosity.

The elective affinity of Protestant ethic and capitalist spirit jointly creates Crusoe. Historically, pre-capitalism shaped the religious and cultural atmosphere during its development. Reformers of the religious movement actually inherited some of the requirements of pre-capitalist development and formed the Protestant ethic. Protestant ethic called on believers' obligations and responsibilities in the secular society, and entrusts ethical values of professional labor and commercial profit. From the perspective of religious development, the Reformation made religion go further and further on the road of secularization. In terms of economic development, the emerging bourgeoisie, which advocated diligent work and thrift, accumulated great wealth. Represented by Robinson Crusoe, the novels reflecting Britain's overseas colonial expansion captures the doctrine of that time and reflects the ideology of the emerging British bourgeoisie under the joint influence of Protestant ethic and capitalist spirit. Robinson Crusoe, the protagonist of the novel, is the product of the elective affinity of the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.

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