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Overturning the Notion of White Supremacy in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

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Abstract

This essay discusses how Mark Twain in the novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* uses the description of the white American Christian civilization in order to overturn the colonial notion of white supremacy. This is done through juxtaposing the characterization of the people of the white American civilization and the people that are alienated or 'other'. The Grangerford family, the Widow and Miss Watson, and Colonel Sherburn are brought up as examples of the white American civilization's hypocrisy and double standard in the novel. The analysis focuses on how these supposedly Christian characters do not follow the Christian ethics and sermon teaching even though they claim to do so. The colonial notion of the white western civilization's supremacy over other people's societies is thus overturned by Twain's description of the immorality of this white American society. As opposed to this, the people who are outside of this society and who do not label themselves as Christians, prove to be those who in reality follow the Christian notion of brotherly love towards everybody, no matter the social standing or skin color of the person in need. Furthermore, Huck's moral fight whether or not he should continue to help the runaway slave Jim to freedom or turn him in to the slave owner Miss Watson, is crucial. Through the portrait of this inner struggle, Twain pinpoints the absurdity of the supremacy of such an immoral law. The law of society was upheld with an almost religious devotion, and the irony in this works to further overturn the notion of the white American civilization's supremacy.

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Introduction

Mark Twain's novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has since it was first published in 1884 been considered one of the best works among American classics. Earnest Hemingway stated that "All modern American literature comes from one book of Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*... it's the best book we've had. All American writing comes from that. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since" (Hemingway, 16). There are of course several reasons why this novel has been so highly estimated for such a long time. Hemingway highlights one reason in his quote – how the novel, and specifically the character Huck, has been "considered representative of the 'true' American spirit and culture", especially since it takes place during the 1840s, when modern America was formed¹ (Hildebrand, 179). Another reason why this piece of writing has been held so high during such a long time is that it brings up subjects for discussion that are as important today as they were one hundred and fifty years ago, although society has changed since then. The strong critique against the institution of slavery that the novel contains is a good starting point for discussions about equality, racism, morals and ethics today, and the focus of many analyses of the novel has also been on such moral issues.

One cannot read *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* without noticing Twain's severe criticism of the white American society. He brings up issues that he considered important in the latter part of the 19th century such as the importance of questioning authorities, prejudice, pretense, and the immorality of Southern civilization and Christianity. Clearly, many of these issues are still of great importance today in the 21st century. By the choice of the young boy Huck as a main character, who is socioeconomically marginalized in white American civilization throughout his childhood, Twain manages to depict an alternative way of living, behaving and thinking as opposed to the white American civilization and Christianity depicted in the novel. The focus of this essay will be on proving that Twain uses his representation of white American Christian civilization in the novel in order to overturn the colonial notion of white supremacy.

The narrator Huck tells the story in the first person, as someone that stands half outside of both the white American "civilized" way of living and Christianity. He is partly socialized into the white American civilization and partly outside of it. By using this character that so to say stands in-between two worlds, Twain manages to reveal sides of this civilization that would not be as evident otherwise. In the analysis it will first be brought up how Huck is

¹ *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was first published in 1884, and Mark Twain states on the title page that it takes place "Forty to Fifty Years Ago".

living in-between two cultures and proves not to have the same sense of belonging to white American civilization as most of the other white characters in the novel have. In this section the black slave Jim's exclusion and otherness from the white American civilization will also be brought up. Secondly, it will be discussed how Twain portrays the characters of white American civilization. While these characters in several scenes pretend to be well behaved and loving, the reader also experience how they behave cruelly and coldheartedly towards everyone that they perceive as 'other' to their society. Thirdly, Huck's moral fight concerning whether or not he should break the law in order to help the black slave Jim to freedom is brought into the light. This inner struggle pinpoints the strong sense of authority that the law had, while being highly immoral. This irony serves to further undermine the notion of supremacy of this white American civilization. Fourthly, the focus will once again be on the characters that do not identify themselves as Christians. Several of these characters are black slaves and 'other' in relation to the white American civilization. Concerning the white boy Huck, he is included in this section since he proves not to have the same sense of belonging to the white American Christian civilization as other members of this society have. The black Americans together with Huck prove to be those who follow the notion of "brotherly love" from the sermon. In this way Twain shows how the notion of white Christian supremacy is proven to be invalid. By being able to identify with and show mercy towards people they meet regardless of their social standing, the characters that do not have any sense of belonging or as in Huck's case only have a weaker sense of belonging, to white American civilization, prove to have a higher moral awareness than the supposedly civilized ones.

Theory

White Supremacy

In this essay, the term that will be used to describe the colonial notion of the white western civilized people's superiority in relation to 'other', excluded people is 'white supremacy'. Donnarae MacCann quotes George M. Fredrickson to describe the term: "'White supremacy", he says, "refers to the attitudes, ideologies, and policies associated with the rise of blatant forms of white or European dominance over 'nonwhite' populations'"(MacCann, xxvi). Hence, the association between the notion of white supremacy and white western nations' colonization and imperialism, is evident. The notion of white supremacy had the function of "justifying the changing international order, which increasingly saw Europeans assuming political control over peoples of darker skin color through military force and ideological

means, such as religion and education” (*International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*). Accordingly, the conviction that the white western civilization was more developed than other civilizations was built upon the notion of white supremacy. Support for the theory of white people’s supremacy was brought from both the Christian religion, where the Bible was interpreted selectively in order to justify the claim, and from science where Charles Darwin’s claim that there existed lower races were interpreted as referring to black people (MacCann, xxviii-xxiv). Although the notion of white supremacy had existed before, the notion became “systematized and more fully articulated” in the 1830’s due to the growing need to justify slavery (MacCann, xxviii). However, although the institution of slavery was outlawed in the United States by the end of the civil war 1865, the belief in white supremacy reached the highest levels of favor between the late 19th century and the first part of the 20th century (*International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*). In the United States, this was evident through the Jim Crow laws that followed the civil war and lasted until the middle of the 20th century (*Oxford Reference Online*). In other words, the notion of white supremacy not only had a high level of popularity, but was also practiced through segregation laws, at the time when Twain wrote and published the novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Even though the institution of slavery was outlawed, the conviction of white supremacy was still alive, to the highest possible degree. In the 21st century the notion of white supremacy still exists and prevails among different groups of people in both America and Europe. Accordingly, as it was in Mark Twain’s days, it is still of great importance to bring the false notion of white supremacy into the light.

‘The other’/’otherness’

The origin of the postcolonial theory’s use of the ‘other’ is found in the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s theory. Since Lacan’s way of using the word is not a part of postcolonial theory, but rather of psychoanalysis, his focus is not on the societal level but on the individual. However, as will be shown, the term the ‘other’ can be transferred to postcolonial theory. Ashcroft et al. make an attempt to describe the state of things in Lacan’s use of the ‘other’. According to Lacan there are two different types of “others” – the ‘other’ and the ‘Other’. The ‘other’ is not really another person but the reflection the child discovers in the mirror that resembles itself but at the same time is “separate enough to ground the child’s hope for an ‘anticipated mastery’” that will be “the basis for the ego” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, 170). In postcolonialism this reflection refers to “the colonized others who are marginalized by

imperial discourse, identified by their difference from the centre and... become the focus of anticipated mastery by the imperial 'ego' (Ibid). In contrast, the Other is called the great Other, and can be "embodied" in the mother or father. It is in the Other's "gaze that the subject gains identity" (Ibid). "This Other can be compared to the imperial centre, imperial discourse, or the empire itself" (Ibid). Similarly, the colonized people have to understand the world through the colonizer's world view and construct their own identity in relation to the colonizers. Moreover, the colonizing power is often described as having a "maternal and nurturing function" towards the colonized peoples (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, 171).

Within postcolonialism the 'other' is a term usually used to describe the Western colonizer's view of the colonized people. These 'other' people were seen as completely different and inferior to people in the West, which with Edward Said's terms is called the Occident. In a nonscientific way, the colonizers created their own truths about the Orient/the 'other' so that oriental people should look like savages, and thus in need of being civilized by the West (McLeod, 24). It was an actual "creation of 'others'" in order to construct irreconcilable differences between "the allegedly civilized Occident and savage Orient" (McLeod, 89). The Orient/'other' was considered to be everything that the civilized West was not. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin state that "The colonized subject is characterized as 'other' through discourses such as primitivism and cannibalism, as a means of establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 169).

In this way, the colonizers collectively construct themselves by upholding an imaginary difference between 'self' and 'other'. In writing about national belonging, John McLeod states that "a sense of mutual belonging is manufactured by the performance of various *traditions, narratives, rituals* and *symbols* which stimulates an individual's sense of being a member of a particular national collective" (McLeod, 82). In other words, the performance of common traditions and activities forms the individuals' sense of belonging to the (constructed) nation. Furthermore "common historical narrative" helps form the unity of a nation (McLeod, 83). While there are different versions and perspectives of history, there is "one particular version of the past" that is seen as the only one that matters for the nation (McLeod, 83). Thus, the nation forms a sense of belonging by separating itself from 'other' people that in their world view cannot belong to their nation or society. Accordingly, McLeod maintains that the creation of a nation involves "constructions of otherness" that is fundamental to the nation (McLeod, 89). He continues, "Every definition of identity is always made *in relation* to something else, a perceived other" (ibid). With this way of looking upon

the term, the 'other' refers to all the people on the other side of a nation's imaginary border, all the people who are not included in the narrative of the nation. In the same way as the binary opposition between the colonial 'self' and the colonized 'other' was constructed by the colonizers, so are the borders of the nations constructed and in need of being reconstructed every day. As will be shown below, in this paper the 'other' thus refers to people who live inside of the nation's physical borders. In this paper the focus will not be on a whole nation, but on the white, slaveholding American South of the 19th century and the beliefs and practices that formed the included people's sense of belonging and the excluded people's 'otherness'.

'Civilization' versa 'savagery'/'primitivism'

'Civilization' is defined as follows: "1... a state of human society that is very developed and organized 4... a place that offers you the comfortable way of life of a modern society"². The word 'primitive' is in the same lexicon described as "1 belonging to a very simple society with no industry... 2 belonging to an early stage in the development of humans or animals... 4 very strong and not based on reason, as if from the earliest period of human life". McLeod states that the peoples not belonging to Western society were considered as being "trapped in antiquity far behind the modern development of the 'enlightened' West" (McLeod, p. 52). Furthermore, the "Oriental peoples were considered as possessing a tenuous moral sense and the readiness to indulge themselves in the more dubious and criminal aspects of human behaviour" (McLeod, p. 55). So while in colonial thought Western society has evolved to new and more developed stages, the different societies considered as 'other' have stayed on more undeveloped stages. Ashcroft et al points out the problem with this way of thinking in their chapter on 'primitivism': "it assumes a linear, teleological unfolding of human history from simple to complex. Thus early or primitive art is seen as leading to a culmination and fulfillment in later sophisticated or civilized art" (Ashcroft et al, p. 195-196). They continue to claim that "[t]his discrimination lends itself too easily to unfounded and often pejorative comparisons of the 'value' of different cultures" (Ashcroft et al, p. 196). The term 'civilization's is a construction and contains an element of arbitrariness in the definition of what a civilized society is. This leads to discrimination when these kinds of comparisons between different societies are made.

² In *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*.

As the analysis of above demonstrates, Western people were convinced of their own superiority and undertook during colonization a “civilizing mission” in order to help civilize the less fortunate peoples (Mgbeoji, 856). The absurd part is that this “burden of taming the savages” always brought about “a persistent pattern of brutality and imperialism” (Ibid). Thus, the countries claiming to have the highest civilization with their behavior proved that it could be discussed if they really had the right to be entitled a civilized society. This was also the case with 19th century White, Southern American society, and in the same way as the colonized peoples could never be considered civilized, so were the American slaves likewise excluded from the group of people regarded as civilized.

In this paper, the term ‘civilization’ will be used in line with Ashcroft et al’s, McLeod’s and Mgbeoji’s use of the term. On some occasions ‘civilized’ behavior or people will be mentioned. This term is described as follows in *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*: “**1** well-organized socially with a very developed culture and way of life... **3** having or showing polite and reasonable behaviour”. This term is of course intimately related to the meaning of the word ‘civilization’. The people of the white western civilization considered themselves as having a developed culture and correct behavior, while the people belonging to other societies were seen as having underdeveloped cultures and bad behavior.

Analysis

As was stated in the introduction, Huck is not excluded or ‘other’ in relation to the white American civilization in the way that the black characters are. However, parts of the analysis will be built upon the notion that Huck is in-between two worlds and does not have the same sense of belonging to white American civilization as most of the other white characters in the novel have. Hence, it is of importance to describe Huck’s relation to white American civilization in order to see what his detachment is due to. As a matter of fact, when the novel begins, the Widow has just adopted Huck. Previously he has lived life on his own, without anyone taking care of him since his father was an alcoholic and not able to care for him. This life was not the life of the white American civilization, but was rather characterized by his “old rags and... sugar-hogshead” (H.F.3). Even after Huck had become more used to the so called ‘civilized’ life he still used to “slide out and sleep in the woods, sometimes” (H.F.16). The first chapter is filled with several examples of how the Widow and Miss Watson try to civilize Huck. For example, they teach him to be on time for meals, to stop smoking and to behave correctly (H.F. 3, 4). Included in the civilizing process were the teachings of important

Christian notions such as heaven and hell as well as information about main biblical characters such as Moses (H.F. 4). In the description of this civilizing process, it becomes evident that Huck is not used to the white American civilized way of living or to the Christian religion. When he is taken care of by the Widow he meets a complete new culture, he so to speak crosses the imaginary border to white American society for the first time. As will be shown below, this is clearly seen in Huck's attitudes and way of thinking which differs from other representatives of white American civilization.

The fact that Huck neither follows nor understands the importance of the different authorities that existed in white American civilization shows that he is at least partly outside of this society. The Widow and Huck's friend Tom Sawyer, who both live in the white American civilization, have a strong belief in their authorities, in the Widow's case the bible and in Tom's case his adventure books. They are both alike in that they never question these authorities. This can be exemplified by Tom's and Huck's attempts to set Jim free from the farm where he has ended up after the King and the Duke has sold him. In this situation Tom insists that the freeing of Jim has to be done altogether according to what "the authorities" say about setting captives free. Tom insists on the importance of him and Huck digging Jim out with case-knives (H.F. 221). When they have dug for hours without accomplishing anything except getting sore hands, he finally changes his mind and agrees to "dig him out with the picks, and *let on* it's case-knives" (H.F. 221). As soon as Tom plays a game (and the freeing of Jim is a game to him) everything has to be in line with what the authorities think at all costs, even though Tom himself cannot explain why they should do a certain thing. A parallel to the Widow's and Miss Watson's world can be seen in that both their and Tom's understanding are built upon books, authorities and illusions as Richard Poirier points out (Poirier, 95-96). Tom cannot explain why they should dig Jim out with case-knives in any other way than by saying that "it's the *right* way" and that he has "read all the books" (H.B. 219). In the same way the Widow and Miss Watson are not able to explain for Huck why he should live as to come to heaven when he dies. Both of them go back to the simple fact that the "authorities" say so. Huck, on the other hand, is different. As Claudia Durst Johnson puts it: "Huck, unlike Tom, hasn't learned a great deal about what he should think about cultural matters from teachers and books" (Durst Johnson, 4). This can be seen in his way of reacting to digging with case-knives. Huck comments that "it's foolish" and later on he states that he "don't give a dead rat what the authorities think" (H.F. 219, 222). He does not understand neither the importance of following what Tom calls "the authorities" nor the point in playing pretend games. As will be shown later, the adults in this society played pretend "games" in

their lives as well, and Tom, living in this society naturally thought in line with this. For Tom, these games and the importance of following “the authorities” when playing them, are his way of growing up and finding his way into society. Huck however, has not grown up into white American civilization and his way of not being able to understand these games or the importance of the authorities proves that he does not have the same sense of belonging in white American civilization.

Huck is not only different by not following “the authorities” but also by thinking oppositional in relation to them. “The authorities”, in Tom’s case the adventure novels and in the Widow and Miss Watson’s case the bible, shape their way of thinking. Huck, on the other hand, who does not have any relation to neither of these nor believes in any of them, thus thinks differently. As was stated in the theory section, McLeod points out that common narratives and traditions shape a nation’s sense of belonging (McLeod, 82). Since Huck does not have the same kind of relation to the white American civilization’s narratives, he is also left at least partly outside of that society. To Tom who has the adventure stories vividly in his mind, it makes sense to dig with case-knives since it is a part of his play game pretending to live the life of his literary heroes. Huck does not have the reference and therefore it does not make sense in his mind. Moreover, Huck’s way of thinking concerning the whole operation of freeing Jim is different since it to him is reality and not a game. He, as opposed to Tom, is not aware of the fact that Miss Watson has already freed Jim in her will and therefore he wants “the handiest thing” in order to get Jim out as fast as possible (H.F. 222). Similarly, it makes sense to the Widow to teach Huck about Moses, since it is a story in the bible that Huck can learn something out of. Huck, however, “didn’t care no more about him” once he understood that Moses had been dead a long time (H.F. 4). Since the bible is no authority to him, his way of thinking about this matter differs. This questioning of the bible and its degree of truth is on the whole the same approach as the black slave Jim has.

Jim is excluded from the white American civilization by being a slave. Colonization and slavery were deeply entangled. Before independence America was a British colony among others and the bringing of slaves to America was a part of global trade from the different colonies. It is not surprising that the same notions were behind both colonization and the institution of slavery. In the same way as the people of the white Western civilization were seen as superior in relation to the colonized peoples, so the people of the white American civilization were seen as superior to the slaves. The colonized peoples in various parts of the world were considered to be in need of help to be civilized (McLeod, 55). This was a way of justifying colonization. Similarly, the slaves were seen as inferior to white people, but as

opposed to the colonized people the black people were considered to be impossible to civilize and therefore meant for slavery (Durst Johnson, 108). From this perspective, it is clear that in order to remain true to reality of the 1840s, Twain had to depict Jim, and all the other slaves as well, as 'other' and outside of white American civilization. Furthermore, as opposed to Huck, who is white, Jim can never be a part of this society. As a matter of fact, a law prohibited slaves to learn to read and write or receive religious instructions (Durst Johnson, 118). In this way the law made sure that the black people stayed in their position as 'other' and outside of society.

Jim's way of being 'othered' and his oppositional thinking can be exemplified by Jim's and Huck's discussion about King Solomon. Jim's exclusion from and ignorance about white American civilization comes forth from the very beginning of the episode when Jim asks how much they get in salary and what they do to earn their living (H.F. 71). Despite this it might look as if Jim and the other slaves are a part of the Christian religion when it for example is described how the Widow and Miss Watson "fetched the niggers in and had prayers" (H.F. 4). Jim also comments that he has heard about King Solomon before (H.F. 71). However, in the discussion with Huck it becomes clear that Jim has the same kind of difference in his way of thinking about the biblical scriptures as Huck himself made proof of in his discussion with the Widow and Miss Watson. According to the bible King Solomon was the wisest man on earth, but Jim questions this wisdom with the arguments that a wise man would make sure not to have so many wives and furthermore not solving a dispute by suggesting cutting the child in two parts (H.F. 72). At this time Jim shows the same kind of questioning of authorities and oppositional thinking as Huck does in his discussions with Tom Sawyer and the Widow. By his way of questioning the authority of the bible, he proves to be outside of Christianity as it was practiced in this white American society. Even though the Widow and Miss Watson had prayers with the slaves and possibly told them about the tales in the bible, Jim's attitude shows that nobody had included them for real in the Christian religion. However, with their similar way of arguing in opposition towards the bible, Huck and Jim at the same time exclude themselves from the white Christian religion and society.

The King Solomon scene is also a good example of Huck's way of being in between two cultures that was commented on above. As Poirier comments, Huck imitates Tom and his way of behaving and thinking when he is with Jim, but takes Jim's place as the person who is disparate when he is with Tom (Poirier, 99). This behavior symbolizes Huck's ambivalent relation to the civilization that Tom represents. In the character of Huck, this "conflict between vernacular values and dominant culture" is personified (Smith, 80). On the one hand,

he is proved to have an oppositional way of thinking towards the bible himself; on the other hand, he follows the Widow's way of interpreting the bible when he speaks with Jim. Huck is "the victim of the socializing process" that was never finished but well started so therefore the opposing values within him clash against each other in a way neither Tom nor Jim experience (Powers, 84). This means that he has a part of his identity outside of white American civilization; he lives in between two world views and two ways of living. Their way of thinking oppositional in relation to the attitudes and moral notions of white American civilization is what combines Huck and Jim and what set them on their way to find freedom.

The Pretense and Cruelty of the White American Christian Civilization

The encounter with the Grangerfords makes Huck see the really dark side of the white American civilization. The Grangerfords at the same time represent the cruelty of this civilization, and the extreme pretense of it. From the description of their house one understands that this is a rich white family and from their behavior, manners and rituals one understands that they represent the supposedly highest form of white American civilization. An element that exemplifies this so called civilized behavior is their morning ritual when everyone stands up for Col. Grangerford and the old lady, bows before them, says their duty to them and drinks together (H.F. 97-98). More examples can be seen when Huck describes their lives: "Sometimes a stack of people would come there... and stay for five or six days, and have such junketings round about and on the river, and dances and picnics in the woods, day-times, and balls at the house, nights (H.F. 98). Except the supposedly civilized culture and behavior, the Grangerfords are also very serious in their belief and practice of Christianity. Huck comments on the Sunday he spends with them in the following manner "it did seem to me to be one of the roughest Sundays I had run across yet" since a big part of the Sunday was spent in conversation about the sermon (H.F. 101). However, from the very beginning it is clear that this is just one side of them, since they are in a deadly feud with the Shepherdson family and take every opportunity to kill members of them. As is the case with the people of Tom's and Miss Watson's world, "forms, rules, manners, physical appearance" is all that matters to the Grangerfords, "no matter that what is underneath is something else entirely" (Durst Johnson, 185). Compared with that of the people of Huck's home town the Grangerford's pretense might seem deeper since the gap between the façade and the truth is even wider. The pretense of society as well as the "code of honor" that still existed in the South is of course drawn to the extreme in the characterization of the Grangerfords (Durst

Johnson, 178). The raw cruelty that is portrayed in the Grangerfords is the difference between them and Miss Watson or Tom Sawyer. The picture is clear – in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* the apparently most civilized and religious people are “the people most lacking in brotherly love” (Durst Johnson, 19). This is extra bizarre since these very characters are those who in their talk and game playing focus the most on “brotherly love ... good works... free grace” and other Christian virtues of that kind (H.F. 101). The Grangerfords’ hypocritical version of Christianity, where they claim to follow the Christian doctrines but are not doing so, can, as will be discussed below, be juxtaposed with another version of Christianity. The ‘other’ people, who are outside of the white American civilization and not claim any belonging to Christianity, together with Huck, are those who prove to follow the teachings of “brotherly love” from the sermon. By portraying this kind of extreme double standard and hypocrisy, that the characters of white American civilization are guilty of, Twain demonstrates the inaccuracy of the notion of white supremacy.

The Grangerfords is an example of a family where the belonging to that family is the only sense of belonging that matters and where the notion of brotherly love is only valid within that group. Among all types of groups or settings of people where the bond between the members is strong, it can appear “a strong sense of belonging to *them*, with a weak sense of belonging to the larger “thing”” (Cowburn, 98). For example the people of a town can have a strong sense of belonging to this town but only have a weak bond to the larger district. Or the people of a tribe can have a strong sense of belonging to the tribe but a weak sense of belonging to the nation. A problem with these kind of strong bonds to a specific group is that “loyalty to a definite group can lead people to do things which seem to them to be entirely justified but which are in fact immoral, and harmful to the larger community” (Cowburn, 99). Moreover, Cowburn states that “great families” who live “at a high social level” sometimes tend to develop these kind of bonds where the family always has to come first (Cowburn, 95). The notions of families at a “high social level” who tend to develop loyalty bonds that make them engage in immoral actions seem to apply well to the Grangerford family. To continue this line of arguing one can say that the group of their own family and relatives shapes a small society of their own and the belonging to this society is the one that really matters to these people. From this narrow-minded perspective everyone else is excluded in relation to this group or society of people. In their minds, the Christian message about brotherly love etc is only valid within the borders of this group. On this point the Grangerfords represent the civilization in general since this way of thinking seems to have been the attitude of the rest of the white American society depicted in the novel as well. Back in Huck’s home town for

example, the Widow and Miss Watson could serve their God with good deeds and be considered as good Christians despite the fact that they had slaves. This was possible since the slaves were excluded from these “civilized” people’s society and thus, the white people did not consider themselves to have the same obligations towards the black people³.

In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, there are several examples of characters belonging to the white American civilization that apply the Christian notions of brotherly love only on the people they considered belonging to their own society. The Widow and Miss Watson are two people who try to follow the Christian notions and help other people and think about others rather than themselves (H.F. 12). They also attempt to follow this notion by taking care of Huck who does not have any parent to care for him. Despite this fact, Jim describes how Miss Watson “pecks on me all the time en treats me pooty rough” (H.F. 40). On top of this she decides to sell Jim even though she had promised not to do so. This is an example of how the people of the white American civilization in the novel applied the notions of love and care only to those who they saw as included in their society. This becomes especially clear when the person who is excluded is a slave, since a slave was a piece of property to be owned in the same way as an animal. This is of course connected to the notion that black people were considered inferior compared to white people (Durst Johnson, 116). The people of the white American civilization did not consider their animals to be in need of “brotherly love” and it would be absurd for someone to state how much s/he loved his/her cow for example. Neither animals, nor slaves, were considered to be in need of any brotherly love or equality. From this colonial perspective it would be impossible to actually love a black person in the same way as a white, and treat them justly. In Miss Watson’s treatment of Jim it is also worth noticing how, despite the fact that he is excluded because of his race, he is not allowed to be a part of any family or society either. To sell and force them to move far away is built upon the assumption that this person does not have any sense of belonging at all since this action destroys every kind of social group one might belong to. In this way the people of the white American civilization shut the black people out of their white American society and actively hindered them in their pursuit to create their own families or groups of belonging outside of the white society. As stated earlier, every nation has an exclusionary function in that the sense of belonging to the nation is built upon the notion that there exists a perceived ‘other’ that is different and thus excluded (McLeod, 89). The white American civilization in the 19th century

³ As was described earlier the slaves were for example prohibited from learning to read and write as well as receiving religious instructions (Durst Johnson, 118). This shows both that the slaves were excluded from the white American civilization and that the white people did not consider themselves as having the same obligations towards them.

was built upon the notion that the black Americans were inferior, and therefore different and 'other'. However, another kind of social exclusion also can be found in the text, this time within the seemingly united white American society.

The rich Colonel Sherburn's killing of the town drunkard Boggs proves how differently he treats people who in his mind are included in his own society compared to those who are not. The scene begins with Colonel Sherburn killing Boggs in the street in the middle of the day after getting irritated with his manners. The people of the town become upset with Colonel Sherburn for his cold-hearted way of murdering the innocent Boggs and thus they all decide to kill him. When the group arrive at his house, Colonel Sherburn holds an interesting speech. He scolds the men for not having brought a *real* man with them. Whereas he considers himself to be a man, he says of the crowd that "a *man's* safe in the hands of ten thousand of your kind" (H.F. 133). Even though it can be discussed what Colonel Sherburn means with a real man, it is clear that he puts himself in another category compared to the other men of that town. It is also obvious that he did not consider Boggs to be a real man either. When Sherburn polarizes what "a man" is towards "your kinds" or "cowards" he makes the same type of distinction as the white Western colonizers made between themselves and the colonized peoples. Himself, and other people who fall into his category of "real men", are clearly seen as superior compared to all the other men. These other men are in the Colonel's opinion in need of help to learn to behave as real men in the same way as the colonized peoples were considered to be in need of help to learn to be civilized. In this light it is clear that Boggs is excluded from and different in relation to the group where Sherburn has his sense of belonging. Interestingly, this is despite the fact that Boggs is both white and an actual member amongst the people of that town. Possibly this could be because of Boggs's low socio-economic status together with the fact that he is an alcoholic. Furthermore, Colonel Sherburn goes on by stating that "If any real lynching's going to be done, it will be done in the dark, Southern fashion" (H.F. 134). This is said despite the fact that he himself just killed Boggs in bright daylight for not following his order to go home. To Colonel Sherburn, his killing of Boggs could not be compared to lynching. Since Boggs is so far outside of the group where the Colonel has his sense of belonging, he considers killing Boggs in bright daylight to be completely acceptable even though it was for nothing more than a small trifle. Once again we see the notion that the people who are outside from a certain society are considered worth less. In the same way as the Grangerfords could speak about brotherly love and still attempt to kill every member of the Shephardsons, Colonel Sherburn can have a high standing in his town and still kill Boggs for nothing more than a small trifle. This kind of hypocrisy proves

that the characters of the white American civilization were not actually as superior as they claimed. Another example where the inclusion versus exclusion from a social group of belonging is crucial is when the King visits the Christian camp meeting.

The focus of the discussion above has been to show how different characters are ill-treated for being excluded from a certain society. However, when Huck and the King attend a Christian camp meeting, the King secures benefits by pretending to be included in a group he in reality is excluded from. One part of the focus here is to show how much the people of the white American civilization depicted in the novel could do for someone who was, or who they thought was, included in their group of people. It is not a matter of whether the characters love or care for real, only of whether someone is included in the group or not. The King takes advantage of the great importance white people attach to group inclusion and acts as to make them believe that he is one of them. This time the people of this religious group are those who are fooled since the King in fact is not a part of this religious group at all. The people at this meeting were “shouting and crying... and flung themselves down on the straw, just crazy and wild” (H.F. 121). The King starts to behave in the same way, just more extreme than the others, “you could hear him over everybody” (H.F. 121). When he enters the platform he tells a fictitious story of how he is a pirate who was saved during this meeting. By claiming that he wants to return to these pirates to preach for them he makes the people take up a collection for him and so the King goes away with a large amount of money. In this way the King fools the people into believing that he is included in their religious group and thus gets to reap the benefits of this imaginary belonging. To make the people believe that he is one of them is crucial, since the alleged purpose of the money is to spread their faith. This scene describes that people can be very generous, as long as the money benefits their own group. Something else that can be seen in this event is how the people judge only by appearance and behavior and do not care about what is going on underneath the surface. The people of the crowd see that he behaves similarly to them and are thus quick to trust him, but no one feels the need or want to know more about him.

Both Colonel Sherburn and the Grangerfords are hypocrites. This is especially evident in the case with the Grangerfords since they focus so much on “brotherly love... and good works, and free grace” (H.F. 101). However, Colonel Sherburn on his side is a highly respected member of his town that the other people look up to. In both cases these people prove to be cold-hearted murderers at the same time. This means that their so-called civilized behavior and Christian notions of love are just pretense. Words, manners and behavior are one thing and the actual truth is something completely different. This kind of pretended civilized

or religious behavior is used by the King in order to gain advantages. Especially the King and the Duke's repeated way of using pretense to fool people of their money exemplifies the existing pretense of the white, American, Christian civilization. The actual truth does not seem to be of any great importance in this society, what matters are that looks and behavior are correct. This is of interest since the truth is held high by the Christian church; "thou shalt not bear false witness" is one of the Ten Commandments (Exodus, 20:16). Twain obviously opposes how undervalued the truth is; when Huck presents himself in the very beginning he does so by referring back to *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and in this presentation he manages to repeat the importance of truth in that book three times. Mark Twain in that book had "told the truth mainly", "mainly he told the truth", and it was "mostly a true book" (H.F. 3). In this way Twain creates the picture of Huck, a young boy, not yet adult, that sits down to tell his own story, just as it happened without having any agenda. He tries to give the picture of the most honest writing situation as opposed to all pretense and fraud that Huck will encounter in the novel. The very language of the novel, by the choice to write the novel the way people actually spoke instead of putting other words and grammar in their mouths, at the same time criticize the authorities by breaking language conventions as well as the pretense of society (see Cox, 83 and Durst Johnson, 3).

One episode that exemplifies the supposedly civilized people's relation to truth is the chapter where the Widow and Miss Watson's teachings of God's answer to prayer is juxtaposed with Tom Sawyer's teachings of genies fulfilling one's wish. It begins with Miss Watson teaching Huck to "pray every day, and whatever I asked for I would get it" (H.F.12). Huck's reaction to this is to simply try and see if he will get everything he prays for. When he tells her about this failure she calls him a fool without explaining why. Afterwards the Widow explains it by saying that it is only spiritual gifts that one can get. In the end of the same chapter, Tom and Huck discuss how magicians can "call up a lot of genies" by rubbing "an old tin lamp or an iron ring" (H.F. 14). Tom tells Huck that "everything they're told to do they up and do it" (H.F. 14). Huck's approach is the same this time – he goes out in the woods with a tin lamp and an iron ring and tries to see if it works. There are several parallels between these events. Firstly, in that both the Widow and Miss Watson and Tom believe in what they tell Huck but neither of them can explain to him the reason behind it. Secondly, in that both of these stories have the same message – that whatever one wishes, it will be given, and thirdly in that Huck finds both notions to be false. The Widow and Miss Watson claim to believe in the biblical notions but as they are unable to explain this notion to Huck one can question whether this biblical notion really is true to them or not. They never seem to ask themselves

what they actually believe in, what they think is true or not, as Henry Nash Smith writes: “[t]he inhabitants can hardly be said to live a conscious life of their own; their actions, their thoughts, even their emotions are controlled by an outworn Calvinism, and by a residue of the eighteenth-century cult of sensibility” (Smith, 75). The notions about praying is taken from the bible and thus taken for holy truth for the Christians, yet neither the Widow nor Miss Watson manages to give a satisfying answer to Huck’s questions. By juxtaposing this biblical teaching with parts from a fairytale Twain turns the notions of superiority of the bible and Christianity upside down as well as pinpointing people’s hypocrisy. While making the claim of trusting the Christian’s assurance of the bible’s truth, in reality the Widow and Miss Watson prove to be unable to explain their own belief.

Huck’s Moral Dilemma

There are two different parts of the text that together could be considered as being the very kernel of the novel – the occasions when Huck experiences his moral dilemma over the question whether he should turn Jim in or not. The other events of the novel lead up to these two occasions by the strong emphasis that is put on the characterization of the white American civilization in relation to Jim’s excluded ‘otherness’ and Huck’s oppositional thinking. The first part of the novel describes how both Huck and Jim differ in thought as well as action, in relation to the people of the white American Christian civilization. Furthermore, both this beginning of the novel and the continuation describe the cruelty and falseness of the white American civilization and religion while the goodness and compassion of the excluded people are foregrounded. At Huck’s inner struggles, the two opposing world views and ways of living clash against each other.

The close connection between white American civilization and Christian religion is depicted especially clearly on these occasions. Huck is convinced that the moral of society is his own conscience telling him the will of God. Similarly, he is convinced that helping a slave to freedom is the deepest sin anyone can commit. It is interesting to see that society has not only taught him that helping a slave to freedom is *a* sin, but “the biggest one of all” (H.F. 192). In white people’s minds in the middle of the 19th century, it was obvious that a crime against society’s law was not just simply a crime but moreover a sin, in the same way as a crime against the bible’s law was. This has to do with the notion of the white western civilization’s supremacy. As Durst Johnson puts it the “[l]aw [...] was sacred. It was the only thing that lifted mankind and civilization itself above savagery” (Durst Johnson, 123). In other

words, the law of society was as important to keep as the words in the bible, which were regarded as God's words, since the people considered this law to be the very thing that distinguished them from the colonized people. The ethics and laws of society and the ethics of Christianity were seen as one and the same thing. When Huck for example tries to defend himself against the ethics of society, he puts his alleged weakness in wanting to help Jim in relation to the fact that he never went to Sunday school and thus never learned to be a good Christian (H.F. 192). This shows how he defends his way of acting towards Jim, which includes breaking the white American society's law, with his way of not being a part of Christianity. The novel exemplifies how the ethics of society and Christianity were seen as one and the same thing with the fact that Huck has been taught that he will be condemned for helping a black man to freedom. Thus, by breaking the law of society one automatically opposes God's will as well. In this way Twain describes how deeply related the Christian religion was to the holding on to slavery and how the church in the South supported the slavery⁴. Once again the notion that one cannot be a good Christian without holding on to the ethics and laws of society is foregrounded in Twain's novel. The relation between society and Christianity is commented by on Norris W. Yates in the following way: Huck's "inner tormentor is not yet so much concerned with religion as with the property rights of Miss Watson" (Yates, 5). To Huck, the property rights of Miss Watson become a religious question because of the southern churches' support of the institution of slavery. Except breaking the white American society's law, the church teaches that Huck is also sinning against God by helping the black slave Jim to freedom. In this way the already supreme law of white American civilization was supported by the most superior notion of all – the will of God.

Huck's moral fight becomes so hard because of the notion of white American civilization's and Christianity's supremacy. The characters are not considered able to decide for themselves what kind of life they want to live, or what their attitude towards religion is, but the white American civilization and Christianity have the supreme answer. Huck's "conscience" asks him several times what Miss Watson has done to deserve such bad behavior from him. He thinks about all the good things she has done for him: "she tried to learn you your book, she tried to learn you your manners, she tried to learn you every way she knowed how" (H.F. 82). The good things she has done for him is trying to civilize him – the very thing that he disliked so much. Even though Huck did not like being civilized yet, he still considered it a good act of the Widow and Miss Watson to try, and even though he did not want to live a civilized life

⁴ (See for example, Durst Johnson, 117 ff for more information on how Christianity supported the slavery).

himself, he was convinced that it was the right, correct way of living. The life he himself preferred, outside of the white American civilization, different and considered an inferior way of life and the wrong choice. In Huck's mind, the white American way of life appears flawless, so the fault must be with him. The underlying notion is that the individual cannot decide for oneself what kind of life to live but the white American civilization has already decided it for you. The Christian religion has the same kind of supremacy – even though Huck did not understand the commandments and did not have any desire to follow them he still became convinced that it was the right religion with the only truth. Although he does not understand the point with heaven at the opening of the story, he finds it really hard to definitively give up the idea of it later. Through Huck's thoughts a society is depicted where the authorities are always right and never should be questioned, both when it comes to religion and society.

Huck's moral dilemma is a fight against both Southern Christianity and white American civilization and is built upon the fact that Huck is in-between two different world views. He goes through two inner struggles in the novel. In the first moral dilemma Huck's internal debate is focused on how the white American civilization's law criminalized the act of helping a slave to freedom, and more precisely how Huck can help Jim to flee from Miss Watson, despite the fact that she has "tried to be good" by civilizing Huck (H.F. 82). During the second moral dilemma, the focus of the debate is on Christianity and the notion of sin in relation to helping Jim to freedom. This shows that this moral fight of Huck is two-sided; he fights against both the law of white American civilization as well as their version of Christianity.

Huck's first fight occurs when Huck and Jim are convinced that they are soon to be in Cairo, where the Mississippi river meets the Ohio river and thus Huck and Jim have the possibility to follow the Ohio river to the northern states where slavery was outlawed. The fact that Jim might soon be a free man triggers the moral dilemma for Huck. He becomes more and more acutely aware of the fact that he breaks the law by helping Jim to reach the free states and so his conscience gets troubled. The second time the reason behind the moral fight is completely reversed compared to the first time – on this occasion Jim has been sold by the King and the Duke and is now a slave again, this time Jim is far away from home where he does not know anyone. This situation also works as a trigger for the moral dilemma in Huck's conscience. The fact that these two situations, Jim being close to freedom as well as Jim being caught and being a slave again, both work as triggers that start this inner struggle for Huck, exemplifies the fact that Huck is so to say living in between two worlds. He is

partly socialized into the white American civilization and partly 'other' and outside of this civilization. For a moral fight like this one to take place the person in question needs to be somehow different or at least be questioning the ethics of society and religion, something the characters of the white American civilization did not seem to be doing, as was discussed above. During the first moral fight of Huck, the words from chapter one are repeated once again, "I most wished I was dead" (H.F. 5, 82). Huck is depressed by having to live in society and follow society's rules, but he is equally depressed at the thought of breaking the same laws. He is on the run from civilization but the ethics and ideas of it still haunt him. Even though he comes to the decision to protect Jim both times, he is not completely free from these haunting ethics of white American civilization and religion until he consciously decides that he will go to hell. This is also the reason why the whole argument comes back the second time. Huck himself is at least partly aware of himself being in between two different world views in that he comments on how he would feel equally bad no matter what decision he took (H.F. 85).

When the novel begins, Huck is partly outside of white American civilization since he has not learned this civilization's notions and way of life, but by the end of the story he is outside of it because of a conscious decision. Durst Johnson describes how in Huck's case "outcast" goes together with being "outlaw" (Durst Johnson, 5). Throughout the whole novel Huck keeps breaking the law of society as well as the social code in different situations, in other words he is "continually at war with society and with society's values" (Durst Johnson, 6). All people who are excluded from society or have chosen to live outside by themselves, have in common that they have other values than the white American society of their time. For some of them this is because they have not learned the hegemonic cultural values and laws; for others it is because they have consciously rejected them. In the beginning of the novel Huck is in the first category, but towards the end he has moved to the second one. This is the actual subject of Huck's both moral fights, whether he should break the law or not. When he decides to do so it is "in order to obey a higher, contradictory law, though he is not aware that it is a higher law" (Durst Johnson, 123). Huck and Jim reject the ethic "of the small town represented by Miss Watson and Pap" and create a better one (Sloane, 46). When Huck in the end consciously decides to break both the law of society as well as what he thinks is the will of God, he at the same time decides to stay outside of both white American civilization and Christianity. Moreover, this becomes an act of condemning both these phenomena, since he rejects the morals and ethics of society as well as the Southern Christian church's doctrine of heaven and hell and its concept of sin (though Huck himself is not aware of this). The latter

one is of course rejected by Huck's conscious choice to "go to hell" instead of heaven in order to free Jim. Once again it is evident how rejecting society and religion go hand in hand in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Instead of being a part of the Christian belief system, both Huck and Jim have a belief in folk wisdom that can be traced back to African religious beliefs. It has been discussed above how Huck and Jim reject the ethics of the white American civilization. One way of rejecting Christianity is by engaging in other kind of belief-systems. This includes beliefs about ghosts as well as notions that killing a spider means "bad luck", and hearing the wind speak (H.F. 5). The lengthiest example is when Huck asks Jim and his hairball for help to predict the future. Fertel comments on the so called superstition by saying that it "fails as an alternative to religion because it betrays elements of childish irresponsibility and passivity" (Fertel, p. 169-170). Jennifer Hildebrand on the other hand, shows in her article how these different beliefs and practices all can be traced back to "an Atlantic African worldview" (Hildebrand, p. 153). Her point seem to be the opposite from Fertel's in that she tries to show how all the practices can be said to be founded in African religious beliefs and cultural practices. In this point of view folk wisdom becomes an alternative to the Christian religious beliefs. In the same way, exclusion from the Western civilized society and belief in folk wisdom as religious form go hand in hand.

Huck's final decision "to light out for the Territory" has to be the logical continuation from Huck's decision to break the law and the only logical way to go once he has rejected civilization (H.F. 262). The quoted words are some of the last words from Huck and the decision is taken in order to prevent Aunt Sally from civilizing him (H.F. 262). It makes the rejection final. Fertel states that Huck "must see his way into society or become like Pap" (Fertel, 170). However, there is nothing that indicates that Huck will become like his Pap in the end of the novel. Even though Huck does not find his way into this society, he still does not become like Pap. Rather, while Pap Finn follows a lower law Huck, as stated earlier, follows a higher one. Furthermore, what would the message of the novel be if Huck does not come to this decision in the end? It is for example a great part of the novel that focus on how the characters of white American society, though claiming to be civilized, actually are full of cruelty, pretense and recklessness – the very same behavior they claim to protect the people outside of their civilization from. In a similar way, white American Christians in the novel only seem to be Christians to the name; they actually do not follow the teachings from their own sermons. If Huck did not choose to reject and leave such a civilization and religion, the notion that would be left with the reader in the end would be that there is no other opportunity

or choices in how to lead your life. As it is now, the novel contradicts the western nineteenth century colonizers' view that their civilization is the only right way of living, a doctrine that everyone needs to follow. It shows that there can be alternative ways of living that can be even better; in the same way as the traditional Christian faith that comes along with this society is not the only correct faith or religious system. "Otherness" does not need to be something negative, but can be something positive. At the same time the reader is left with an acute awareness of how both the supposedly civilized behavior and the Christian moral are characterized by pretense in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The characters representing white American Christian civilization claim to follow both but in reality they practice neither of them, but rather prove to behave in the complete opposite way.

McLeod describes how fighting colonialism necessarily involves changing the colonial way of thinking (McLeod, 38, 40). Without a changed way of thinking, colonialism is never really over. This shows how important it is to dare to think differently, because without it no change will come. From this perspective, one sees the importance of Huck's character in the fight against the unrighteous white American civilization. Powers comments on how Huck "is seeking a place in society where he can exist free of [...] tyranny" (Powers, 83). What Huck has learned in the end is that he can never find this place in the white American civilization – it is too narrow for such a place to exist.

There are different opinions on the character of Huck's moral fight. Smith writes, "The conflict in which Huck is involved is not that of a lower against an upper class or of an alienated fringe of outcasts against a cultivated elite" (Smith, 80). Although the novel is open for different interpretations, the focus of the analysis here has been on how one cannot disregard the fact that an important part of his moral dilemma is between the behavior and belief system of Southern civilization and Christianity on the one hand and the behavior, thoughts and beliefs of alienated people on the other. Twain's way of overturning the colonialism's ideas by portraying Southern Christian civilization as being truly savage and "the other" people as being truly honest and caring is too important to be disregarded.

Characters That Follow the Christian Teachings

As have been discussed earlier, many characters that in the novel belong to white American civilization and Christian religion, though pretending to be filled with brotherly love, prove to be false and cruel in different ways. It is interesting to see this double-life or feigned Christian life portrayed by Twain, in relation to the Western colonizers' way of looking upon

themselves and the colonized “other” people. In their way of thinking the white western civilization was supreme whereas the Orient, or “other” was thought upon as being the opposite of the colonizers themselves and they were thus only described in negative terms in need of the western civilization (McLeod, 24). In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Twain overturns this line of reasoning by instead using negative terms to describe the white American civilization and their practice of Christian religion, while the ‘other’ are depicted in a more favorable light. As Leo Marx comments “evil in Huckleberry Finn is the product of civilization” (Marx, 36). Although the people of white American civilization have learned a lot about how to behave according to what the bible teaches in different questions, they do not have any inner voice that guides them, instead they lean fully on the notions and preconceived ideas of society. On the other hand, neither Huck, nor Jim, has the same knowledge about what society or the bible teaches in different questions but instead they have the true biblical values about “brotherly love” inside themselves. They do not try to do good deeds to be accepted by any God or society, as sometimes is the case among the characters representing the white American civilization, but instead they do it because they actually care about other people for real. In Huck’s case this is especially clear since he from the beginning “couldn’t see no advantage” about helping others and doing good deeds (H.F. 12). Instead he decides not to “worry about it any more, but just let it go” (H.F. 12). In other words, he opposes the Christian doctrine when the Widow teaches him, but unconsciously he ends up following the teaching anyway. The problem was not the Christian doctrine in itself, but the white American’s practicing of the doctrine. Firstly the fact that that Huck is not even aware of himself helping other people and secondly the fact that he has already consciously rejected the notion prove that Huck is acting out of a real compassion in his heart rather than for the purpose of being seen in a more favorable light by other people. In line with this Durst Johnson describes how Huck and Jim are driven by “compassion and common sense” whereas the people of civilization are “the most insensitive, brutal, and senseless” (Durst Johnson, 16-17).

There are several examples of Huck’s compassion throughout the novel, for example his feelings for the Wilks’ girls and the struggles he has to make sure that they get their money back. The Wilks’ girls’ father has just died and the King and the Duke are just about to steal their inheritance by pretending to be a relation of theirs. When Huck steals the money back from the King and the Duke’s possession he has nothing to gain himself, only something to lose. If anyone had seen him they would have caught him for stealing since no one knew that the King and the Duke lied about being the Wilk’s girls’ uncles. Moreover he knew that he

risked getting the King and the Duke themselves against him if something went wrong and they did not get caught, which also happened. Huck knows that they can be dangerous since he comments “it’s a rough gang, them two frauds” when he is speaking to Mary Jane (H.F. 170). In other words, this is an example of a completely unselfish act of compassion. Other examples are of course his various efforts to make sure Jim does not get caught on their journey and his final decision to free him. An example of excluded and ‘othered’ people who prove to have an honest compassion for others are the Grangerford slaves who help Jim to a place where he can hide and give him food every day. Jim says himself about them that “Dey’s mighty good to me, dese niggers is, en whatever I wants ‘m to do fur me, I doan’ have to ast ‘m twice” (H.F. 103). One occasion when Jim himself shows compassion and “brotherly love” is when he assists the doctor in the treatment of Tom Sawyer even though he risks his freedom by doing so. Though Jim was hidden from the beginning, he comes forth immediately when the doctor says out loud that he needs help, even though he knows that the chance that he himself will be able to escape to freedom after this is very small. Furthermore, this scene takes place down in the South where the conditions for the slaves were much worse (Durst Johnson, 109, 113). In other words, Jim had good reasons for being more cautious and not revealing himself. Despite this fact, Jim does not seem to think of himself at all, but his sole focus was to help Tom survive. As opposed to the Widow and Miss Watson, the Grangerfords and Colonel Sherburn that all proved to treat people who did not belong to their own society differently, Jim treats Tom without respect of persons. Even though Tom is white and represents the slaveholding society, Jim still imagines himself in Tom’s situation and shows mercy. In this way, Jim acts in a morally superior way compared to many of the people belonging to white American civilization. The slaveholding society considered the black people to be both morally and intellectually as animals (Durst Johnson, 116). By his way of portraying Jim, as well as the characters belonging to the white American civilization, Twain overturns these notions of inequality between races that slavery was built on. His text demonstrates that a black person can be not just as morally aware as a white person, but also having a higher moral conscious. A similar example that serves to overturn the notions of inequality of white American civilization and colonialism is when Pap Finn describes a free black man who behaves like a civilized man. The black man has a white shirt, “a gold watch and a chain”, is professor at a college, can speak several languages and is allowed to vote (H.F. 26). Pap Finn himself is an alcoholic who lives outside of the white American civilization, beats Huck, and is barely able to take care of himself. When these two characters are juxtaposed it is evident that the notion that colored people had low intelligence and were

unable to be a part of the white American civilization was simply not true. It is evident from the description that this black man is better shaped for a life in this civilization than Pap Finn is. In this way Twain proves both the notions of white supremacy as well as the one of ‘otherness’ of the white American civilization to be invalid.

In Twain’s novel, the characters who are “other”, together with Huck who does not have a strong sense of belonging neither to white American civilization nor to Christianity, are those who prove to follow the Christian message for real, as opposed to those who have the knowledge but still does not live after the religious teachings. According to Fertel, “there are two versions of religion in the novel”; these two versions would be the Widow’s and Miss Watson’s (Fertel, 169). However, in my reading of the novel the two different versions of Christian religion are firstly the one represented by civilized people who claim to be Christians but in reality are not, and secondly the one represented by black Americans and Huck, who do not claim to be Christians but in reality are those who follow the teachings of brotherly love from the sermon. Perhaps the clearest example of this is when Huck after having his moral fight comes to the conclusion that it is worth having to go to hell in order to not turn Jim in. As James M. Cox has commented “what for Huck is the worst action – refusing to turn Jim in to Miss Watson – is for the reader his best” (Cox, 84). Huck believes that he is committing the worst of all sins but the actual case is that he has reached the very core of Christianity. One of the most important doctrines of faith in Christianity is that Jesus offered his life in order to save mankind. This act is considered to be the outmost evidence of God’s love. Huck is in a similar position when he is willing to offer his eternal life in order to save Jim from slavery. The reader knows of course that he does not actually have to do that, but in Huck’s mind it is real enough. The notion behind is the same – one person who out of love offers the most important thing he has in order to save someone else. There could not be a clearer example of the alienated people being depicted as those who in real life act out the teachings of the Christian faith.

It should be stated though, that not all the characters that live outside of civilization and Christianity are described as good in this way. Examples of characters that instead show a low moral consciousness and behave as criminals are Pap Finn and the King and the Duke. However, those characters have not been excluded from society by others, but have rather chosen to be excluded themselves. Furthermore, they would not need to be excluded but could be included in the civilization if they wanted to.

Conclusion

The focus of this essay has been to prove how Twain uses the description of white American Christian civilization and its relation to alienated and ‘other’ people, in order to overturn the colonial notion of white supremacy. The Grangerford family exemplifies the hypocrisy of white American civilization and how the supposedly Christian people depicted in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* do not follow their own notions of “brotherly love” but are extremely brutal and cold hearted. Furthermore, the Grangerfords, Colonel Sherburn, and the Widow and Miss Watson serve as examples of how people of Twain’s white American civilization treated people different depending on whether or not they were included in the group where they had their sense of belonging. To these characters of the white American civilization, the Christian notion of brotherly love proved to be valid only towards the people who were included in their society. As opposed to this, the people depicted as outside of the white American civilization are those who actually follow the Christian notion of brotherly love towards all kinds of people no matter what society they have their sense of belonging in. Through Huck’s moral fights the irony of the supposedly supremacy of a highly immoral law, becomes clear. In Huck’s final decision “to light out for the Territory” and consciously reject the white American civilization, the notion of white supremacy is also definitely turned down.

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