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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**Narrative Point of View and Romantic Irony in Melville's "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids"**

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**ABSTRACT**

The short fiction "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" is written in first-person narration as a diptych in which Melville ponders the human spiritual crisis in the industrialized world. This article explores the contradiction of the narrator's spiritual liberation and others' exclusion employing the narrator's shifting experiencing and retrospective viewpoints, with the engagement of Romantic Irony. Through the dual viewpoints, the subjectivity and uncertainty of the first-person Romantic ironist manifest the uncertainty of the human spiritual crisis in industrialization. Melville questions human spirits and technology to elevate his ambiguous narration and philosophical concerns.

**KEYWORDS**

Herman Melville, "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," Narrative point of view, Romantic Irony, Uncertainty

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**1. Introduction**

The short fiction "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" was written by Herman Melville and published in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* in 1855. As a diptych told in first-person retrospective narration, the story presents the narrator's successive experiences: an extravagant feast with bachelors in England and a visit to a paper mill in New England to purchase paper for a seed business. In this story, the narrator's practices come from a dinner party Melville attended while traveling London in 1849 and a visit Melville paid to a paper mill in Dolton in late 1851.

Scholars criticize this short fiction mainly from gender, narrative, symbolic, and spatial criticism focused on foreign studies. In exploring Melville's narrative shock in this fiction, M. Fisher (2006) examines "the stratagem of parallel contrasts" (442) in the Old and New Worlds of this fiction. In terms of narrative structures, including separated textual spaces and geographic spaces, S. S. Radoulska (2013) explores the loneliness of men and women as a result of gender alienation. Nevertheless, previous critics have paid little attention to echoes of the narrative point of view and the narrative stance of Romantic irony in this fiction. Shen D. (2005) believes that Melville would like to express his philosophy by narrating "as a result of the paradox of the author and the first narrator" (93) with the ambiguity of his narration. This ambiguity mirrors the uncertainty of Romantic irony as a unique characteristic of Melville's narration.

Romantic irony, originated by Friedrich Schlegel, is elevated into philosophy instead of a rhetorical figure in the traditional Augustan definition. As A. K. Mellor defines in her work *English Romantic irony* (2013), Romantic irony is "a mode of consciousness or a way of thinking about the world that finds a corresponding literary mode" (24). Romantic irony as a literary mode, presents a unique narration. L. R. Furst (1988) classifies three types of narration of irony in his essay "Romantic Irony and Narrative Stance" and clarifies the difference between the traditional and the Romantic ironists. The traditional ironic viewpoint is steady, while the Romantic ironic one is unstable and ambiguous. As for the third narrative stance of Romantic irony, "previously the prerogative of

the author-narrator is passed to the protagonist-narrator who builds and demolishes his own successive, or at times simultaneous roles" (Furst 305). The observer's identification with the observed enables the narrator to achieve self-attachment and erase the omniscience due to the limitation of the narrator's stances. When the two roles of the narrator separate, self-detachment serves to explore the characters' inner confusion.

More significant functions of Romantic irony's third narrative stance work out the shift of self-attachment and self-detachment. Firstly, the change in two viewpoints delivers liberation to narrate, even with the narrator's spiritual forces. Secondly, the dual viewpoints highlight subjectivity and uncertainty of the observer and the observed in that "with the Romantic ironist, and even more with the new ironist from within, it is the questioning, the shifting, the disorientation that are in the forefront" (Furst 308). Combining the concept of Romantic irony with the theory of Shen D.'s classification of first-person retrospective narration, this paper attempts to identify first-person retrospective viewpoints in this fiction with the third narrative stance of Romantic irony. By shifting dual viewpoints, this paper analyzes the narrator's freedom and other characters' physical and spiritual exclusion; the description in experiencing and retrospective viewpoints discusses the narrator's subjectivity and uncertainty of the narrator's self-retrospection. Furthermore, it presents how Melville adopts Romantic irony to criticize the uncertainty of the human spiritual crisis and the future of industrialization.

## **2. Shift of Dual Viewpoints: Liberation and Exclusion**

The shift of experiencing and retrospective viewpoints resembles the change of self-attachment and self-detachment in Romantic irony's narrative, rendering the narrator the freedom to narrate and create the story. It delivers the narrator's spiritual liberation to highlight Bachelors and Maids' physical and spiritual exclusion in industrialization.

### **2.1 Physical Liberation and Exclusion**

By shifting experiencing and retrospective viewpoints, the narrator receives physical freedom to narrate beyond the physical boundaries of the diptych. Ordinarily, first-person retrospective narration consists of two viewpoints: "the one that the narrator 'I' is recollecting stories; the other that the narrator 'I' is experiencing previous events" (Shen, *Western* 106). Characterized as the single traveler, the narrator receives absolute freedom beyond the boundary of Paradise and Tartarus; his viewpoints present a liberated voice different from Bachelors and Maids. When the narrator darts through Black Notch in "The Tartarus of Maids" which reminds him of "the ancient arch of Wren" (Melville 323), designed by the architect Wren signifies Temple Bar appeared in "The Paradise of Bachelors". Connecting the same place in the shift of dual viewpoints, the narrator receives the freedom to recollect and connect the physical spaces of Paradise and Tartarus, just as "he is the bridge between these two worlds of the masculine and the feminine" (Gilman 198). In a disordered world, the narrator escapes restraints and achieves idealistic liberation in this fiction, compared with the ruled worlds of Bachelors and Maids.

The shift of viewpoints presents the narrator's description of Bachelors' physical exclusion, revealing the narrator's criticism of their self-exclusion. As the narrator describes the bachelor's apartment as "snug cells" (Melville 315) by retrospective viewpoint, he also inserts an overall description of it as "the apartment was well up toward heaven" and "the ceiling of the room was low" (316-17) through experiencing viewpoint. The height of the apartment reveals Bachelors' conceit to superficial luxury while the shortness presents their physical exclusion. This intrusive spatial description manifests in "bewildering strategies that disrupt the expected narrative process: the teasing questions...the comments on the comments, etc." (Furst 303), embodying the narrator as a Romantic ironist. The teasing questions and comments on the comments of Bachelors' physical exclusion include, "Who wants to dine under the dome of St. Peter's? High ceilings! If that is your demand, and the higher, the better, and you be so very tall, then go dine out with the topping giraffe in the open air" (Melville 317). It highlights the narrator's criticism of Bachelors' self-isolation as a Romantic ironist in the experiencing viewpoint.

The experiencing viewpoint drives the retrospective viewpoint to compare the narrator's absolute liberation with the isolation of Paradise and Tartarus. When the narrator journeys to the mill, the present tour reveals him as a free man different from other excluded characters. With the subjective description of the narrator, the mill transforms into "some great whited sepulcher" (Melville 321). The retrospective viewpoint changes it into "the Devil's Dungeon paper-mill" (322). These two portrayals represent death and hell, relating to Tartarus; moreover, the narrator identifies it as "the very counterpart of the Paradise of Bachelors, but snowed upon, and frost-pained to a sepulcher" (324) through the shift of two viewpoints. The narrator echoes the sepulchers as exclusions of Paradise and Tartarus. Another change in viewpoints presents the very counterpart of two spaces as the narrator gazes the Notch's wall on the back of his horse Black, "I" "remembered being in a runaway London omnibus" (323). From the experiencing viewpoint, the narrator recollects the omnibus in London with the retrospection of a runaway omnibus, which illustrates the disordered narrative distance driving the narrator's liberation to relate these two excluded spaces.

## **2.2 Spiritual Liberation and Exclusion**

The shift of self-detachment in describing previous Templar-Knights and self-attachment in modern Templars renders the narrator the freedom to create and narrate. Remaining the name of Templar-Knights and becoming lawyers, Bachelors are modern Templars. The narrator describes past Templar-Knights in the past tense as "their proud, ambitious, monkish souls clasped shut, like horn-book missals; their very faces clapped in bomb-shells" (Melville 314-15). As a commenter, the narrator satirizes past Templar-Knights' isolated souls and their lack of spirit in the retrospective viewpoint. "I" expresses self-knowledge to this identity and describes the descendants' sterile souls in the modern age based on the experiencing viewpoint in the retrospective narration. Modern Templars are the ones whose "wit and wine are both of sparkling brands" (314), with "fuller minds and fuller cellars" (315). The narrator portrays them in the present tense with superficial positive comments. The description embodies materials represented by wine and their wit, which reveals an ironic reflection of their exclusion of minds and souls in that "the first-person narrator reflects on previous experience in most cases" (Shen, *Studies* 61). In the diner with Bachelors, the narrator becomes one of them with no narrative distance, indulges in the desire satisfying, and the experiencing viewpoint deeply ironizes the bleak spirits.

The narrator exhibits his spiritual liberation and highlights Maids' imposing spiritual exclusion through the shift of viewpoints. After visiting the mill, the narrator experiences the maids' physical space from the retrospective viewpoint. He senses "all-stiffening influence" (Melville 322) in the space outside the mill and "the unfeeling earth" "as if laden with lost spirits bound to the unhappy world" (322). This world is unhappy without spirits so the readers are keen to recognize why the narrator portrays this melancholic spot. When the narrator visits the mill, the viewpoint shifts to the experiencing one, revealing the fresh feeling directly presented to the readers. Maids in the mill resemble lost spirits in the previous retrospective description as "at rows of blank-looking counters sat rows of blank-looking girls, with blank, white folders in their blank hands, all blankly folding blank paper" (325). Six "blank" illustrates the unfeeling Maids and the cause of their spiritual sterility – the machine which shadows the tragedy of Maids – "they represent all people who lack the power to have any degree of influence over their own destiny" (Reel 18). When the narrator witnesses the iron animal machine, "I seemed to see, glued to the pallid incipience of the pulp, the yet more pallid faces of all the pallid girls I had eyed that heavy day" (Melville 331). "That heavy day" reveals this description as a retrospection that still hovers as the narrator recollects the sorrowful scene. "Pallid" caused by industrialization erases the souls of Maids and imposes both physical and spiritual exclusions in the mill.

Unlike Bachelors and Maids, only the narrator presents emotional and spiritual freedom as a man. Another man appears in the second part, "The Tartarus of Maids", Cupid, "who was rather impudently, I thought, gliding about among the passive-looking girls—like a gold fish through hueless waves" (Melville 326). Cupid is free in the mill as a goldfish but with "the strange innocence of cruel-heartedness in this usage-hardened boy" (328). Cupid has no feelings for pallid Maids with "only minimal interaction between the two worlds" (Gilman 199). However, the narrator is the bridge between male and female worlds with more connection. The narrator receives more liberation than Cupid, who only feels free in the mill. Significantly, liberation garners the narrator's right to express himself freely beyond the boundaries of Paradise and Tartarus. Every time the narrator is amazed at the mystery of the machine, he expresses his feelings externally like "Bless my soul!" (Melville 329) in dialogue and "the strange emotion filled me" (332). These signify the narrator's subjectivity of the characters' suffering in the limited worlds.

## **3. Experiencing Viewpoint: Subjectivity of the First-person Narrator**

By the experiencing viewpoint, the narrator illustrates his limited perception of bachelors' indulgence, deceased heroism in Paradise, and dynamic balance of self-creation and self-destruction, which shows the subjective romantic-ironic self.

### **3.1 Limitation of the Narrator's Perception**

From the experiencing viewpoint, the narrator identifies himself as one of Bachelors to satirize "our" desire for indulgence, echoing romantic irony's self-attachment. The narrator is not omniscient with self-attachment, which "presents the limitation of the narrator's stances in form and context" (Zhang 68). The narrator describes the diner from cuisines in his experiencing viewpoint with a subjective and limited perception to modern Templars. First, the appetizer "ox-tail soup" leads the narrator to believe that it consists of a teamster's gads; the "gads" represent male strength, and the knight's training, all of which are portrayed exactly from Bachelors' viewpoints to reminisce their decayed glory. As a protagonist-narrator, "I" present the diner in this subjective viewpoint, which ironizes the irresistible indulgence of Bachelors, in which "Their cloistered retreat from painful reality also marks their degeneration from monkish austerity and a militant sense of purpose into decadent luxury" (Fisher, "Melville's" 84). The description of food domination in adopting Bachelors' viewpoint echoes the glorious history of the Templars while satirizing the decadence of contemporary Templars fleeing from the reality that their glory is no more, reached by self-attachment of Romantic irony.

The limitation of the narrator's self-attachment implies heroism destruction of Bachelors in the feast. The description of the diner with a mock-heroic metaphor as military engagement "is an exercise in Rabelaisian comedy evoking the mock heroic male

banqueting of Pantagrue and his companions, a motif that exerted a strong influence on Melville's earlier novel *Mardi*" (Arsić 83). Melville follows heroism in *Mardi* and transforms it into Knight's writing creation in "The Paradise of Bachelors" as the narrator generalizes, "It was the very perfection of quiet absorption of good living, good drinking, good feeling, and good talk" (Melville 319). This comment ironizes directly to the luxury indulgence of modern Templars. The narrator's description of desire satisfaction from the experiencing viewpoint as one of Bachelors illustrates how deceased heroism is "in that human lives in a world with subjective repression and objective restraints" (Luo 206). Subjective repression and objective restraints embody Bachelors' paradoxical propriety all along with the feast.

The narrator's limited perception manifests the ironic paradox of Bachelors' propriety as modern Templars. The narrator labels the waiter as "Socrates" in his experiencing viewpoint, "to remind us of an inquiring mode of discourse often accompanied by a special kind of irony" (Rowland 396) in that S. Kierkegaard believes Socrates as the father of irony. Socrates notes that he knows nothing in Plato's *Apology*, "Socrates's irony" (Quan 123). The narrator expresses his subjective perception in Socrates's restraints on Bachelors' propriety: "I am quite sure" that had Socrates, "perceived aught of indecorum in the company he served, he would have forthwith departed without giving warning" (Melville 319). Socrates signifies irony to Bachelors' pretended decorum to accelerate desire pursuit.

The experiencing viewpoint with the narrator's limited perception illustrates subjective repression of Bachelors: "this was again set in a forcible light to me, by now observing that, though they took snuff very freely, yet not a man so far violated the proprieties" (Melville 320). Once the narrator integrates into Bachelors with no discriminating eye, and "with it his judgment, the polarities of irony erode into perplexities; there is no longer any way – at least within the narrative – to distinguish between the meaningful and the absurd" (Furst 305). The subjective repression and objective restraints embody Bachelors' paradox as modern Templars in industrialization. They abandon the true heroism of Templar-Knights but preserve the luxury desire indulgence without spirits. The narrator's experiencing viewpoint focuses on the desired pursuit of Bachelors, highlighting the paradox the narrator and author would like to ironize.

### **3.2 Dynamic Balance of the Narrator's Experiences**

In "The Tartarus of Maids", the narrator's identity as a seed-seller hovers between life-creation and self-destruction of Maids. Before the narrator arrives at the paper mill, he confesses the purpose of the visit for his extensive seedsman's business. His occupation presents opposite to the women signifying death, which "is metaphorically entering the womb of nature, the center of creation" (Fisher, "Melville's" 85). The narrator serves as an agent to spread seed as life to the world, just like "the agency of the wind, water, and animals" (Thoreau 24) to plant seeds. The narrator is "profoundly involved in the process of self-creation and self-destruction, always moving, never stagnating, always learning" (Mellor 188), which manifests the aesthetical and philosophical concepts of Romantic irony. As for the narrator, "his very presence, his very consciousness, has become the diptych itself: the ideological see-saw by which Melville's two stories have been alternately conveyed" (Serlin 86). The narrator's mill experiences dwell in the dynamic process with several circles of paper creation and destruction of the virgin Maids.

The narrator illustrates the mechanical Maids and the produced paper as self-destruction and self-creation, as part of his experiences in this fiction. In the experiencing viewpoint, the narrator witnesses the girls becoming "their own executioners; themselves whetting the very swords that slay them; meditated I" (Melville 328), and concludes, "So, through consumptive pallors of this blank, raggy life, go these white girls to death" (328). The labor in the rag room kills the Maids, and their young, vibrant lives are curtailed as they labor suicidally in the factory to stay alive, with their lives denied in the process. Their being denied life produces only blank white paper, "the women, who are both virginal and ghostly, symbolize Melville's fears about the destructiveness of the coming industrial age" (Gilman 199). The self-destruction of Maids and the creation of paper in the narrator's eyes manifest the dynamic balance with complexities in the world.

The moving circle of paper's functional creation and Maids' self-destruction is connected by the narrator's experiencing viewpoint, reaching dynamic balance. The self-creation of paper's function is that "all sorts of writings would be writ on those now vacant things," including "registers of births, death-warrants" (Melville 330). This creation of the blank paper signifies human life issues that Maids cannot have in that the narrator questions the host of the mill, Bach, about why Maids are all called "girls". The narrator cites the rule of steady labor directly to reveal the cruelty of maids' suffering to industrialization. As for their virginity sacrifice and Bach's desire for maximum interests, "woman's labors are exchanged as commodities, the production of her body bereft of value unless superscribed by the masculine" (Wiegman 746). As an agent to spread life to the world, compared with Maids' creation, "some pained homage to their pale virginity made me involuntarily bow" (Melville 332).

In the narrator's experiencing viewpoint, the self-destructed fate of maids mirrors the self-created eternal paper of wheeling cylinders to manifest the narrator's empathy to their suffering. The narrator identifies himself with maids to witness their fragile and painful inner space: "Before my eyes – there, passing in slow procession along with the wheeling cylindered, I seemed to see,

glued to the pallid incipience of the pulp, the yet more pallid faces of all the pallid girls I had eyed that heavy day" (Melville 331). The narrator's experiencing viewpoint presents "no choice but to be sucked into the victim's swirling inner space. So we are plunged into the persona's paradoxes, ambivalences, ironies and schizophrenic dualisms without any prospect of escapes to *terra firma*" (Furst 305). Readers receive the dynamic complexities of self-creation and self-destruction in the subjective romantic-ironic narration.

#### **4. Retrospective Viewpoint: Uncertainty of Self-retrospection**

The narrator's self-detachment viewpoint hovers over his uncertain perception of the human spiritual predicament and future in industrialization as a result of the reader's inaccessibility to truth and the narrator's confusion about the relationship between human spirits and machines.

##### **4.1 Inaccessibility to Truth**

The narrator illustrates his doubts about the existence of modern Templars in the questions of retrospective viewpoint to reveal the uncertainty of his irony to Bachelors' indulgence. When the narrator discusses the history of Templars in the opening passages, he raises plenty of questions concerning whether the Templars are deceased or not. These questions all imply the narrator's objection to their existence, including "do we understand you to insinuate that those famous Templars still survive in modern London?" (Melville 313). The narrative voice separates from the narrator to "we" to discuss this question as a group of people with more reliability. Instead, later the uncertain narrative viewpoint answers "No. The genuine Templar is long since departed" (314) with enough historical evidence to support his statement. Till now, the reader tends to believe bold Templars are no more. However, the narrator follows that "Nevertheless, the name remains" (314), beginning another complex of modern Templars. "His comments, his interruptions of the plot and of the illusion, his questions are concrete incarnations of his own doubts" (Furst 308). The narrator's doubts about Bachelors echo his dynamic complexities of self-creation and self-destruction in Tartarus world. B. Rowland mentions that Melville's motive for choosing the subject of Templars, governed by his artistic purpose: "the equivocal nature of the Knights; mode of life made the subject uniquely suited to the experience which he wished to convey" (395). This equivocal nature of the Knights mirrors the ambiguity of the narrator's retrospective viewpoint and the uncertainty of the Romantic ironist's questioning about Templars.

The narrator ironizes the paradox of Bachelors' fall and Paradise through self-detachment viewpoint, achieving the untouchable truth of Romantic irony. The narrator illustrates the fall of Bachelors in the retrospective viewpoint: "But, like many others tumbled from proud glory's height – like the apple, hard on the bough but mellow on the ground – the Templar's fall has but made him all the finer fellow" (Melville 314). Ironically, this comment of Templar's fall is made after the narrator's experience in Bachelors' feast when the narrator admires the Temple as the very Paradise of Bachelors. The ambiguity of narration "due to the paradox of the author and the first narrator" (Shen, *Studies* 93) manifests the uncertainty of the narrator's retrospective viewpoint. The inconsistency of the narrator's illustration of Bachelors' life reveals his ironic uncertainty and doubts about their indulgence. "All that exists is flux, doubt, the unanswerable question. In this state of negativity, contradiction and paradox are accepted as the normal human condition" (Furst 306), echoing the ambiguity of Melville's narration. The narrator's ironic retrospection testifies complexity which mirrors the world view of Romantic irony – "a universe founded in chaos and incomprehensibility rather than a divinely ordained teleology" (Mellor vii) as a result of the critical irony to Bachelors' downfall.

Retrospective complexities embody the narrator's disorientation in nature and his revealing confusion and puzzle to the suffering and plight of Bachelors and Maids. Disorientation is iconic to Romantic irony "in that it reflects the acceptance of a world dominated not by order but by paradox" (Furst 303). The narrator gets lost "at first I could not discover the paper-mill" (Melville 323) and travels through the disordered nature of Tartarus. This physical disorientation presents the disorder of nature and his confusion as he narrates in the later visit. B. Noll explores the core of life, which Schlegel and Melville insist on "on recognizing tension, contradiction, oscillation" (126). Melville adopts this subjective narrator speaking for him and his concept of the chaotic world. The last passage suggests: "At the Black Notch I paused, and once more bethought me of Temple-Bar. Then, shooting through the pass, all alone with inscrutable nature, I exclaimed—Oh! Paradise of Bachelors! And oh! Tartarus of Maids" (Melville 332). The narrator becomes confused the first by the juxtaposition of the two spots, still, in the second time, "this solitary deviate can only acknowledge that the complexities governing man's strongest impulses are unfathomable" (Rowland 405). By focusing on Romantic irony's darker side, "*Pierre* reflects Melville's concern that too much questioning and uncertainty can lead to nothingness, to a void" (Noll 143). Similarly, "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" echoes Melville's uncertainty of industrialization and inaccessibility to truth in the narrator's last retrospective viewpoint with no end but keeps exploring.

##### **4.2 Confusion about Humans and Machines**

The decay of human spirits in the advanced technology highlights the narrator's ironical criticism to guide Cupid through the narrator's self-detachment viewpoint. The Romantic critics believe humans as the complete embodiment of spirits instead of tatters of technology and rationality. However, the narrator recollects the indifference of Cupid: "More tragical and more inscrutably

mysterious than any mystic sight, human or machine, throughout the factory, was the strange innocence of cruel-heartedness in this usage-hardened boy" (Melville 328). The narrator illustrates his ironic criticism of the technology crisis upon human spirits, considering the boy as more inscrutably mysterious than human and machine. William Blake deplors that "the spiritual element, which had become petrified due to human degeneration and the wicked work of unimaginative killers of the human spirit such as mathematicians and scientists" (Berlin 50). The narrator regards machine or technology as a paradox with spiritual devastation and uncertain destiny in this development. Through the retrospective viewpoint, "the first-person narrator reflects on previous experience in most cases" (Shen, *Studies* 61) and reaches the self-consciousness of uncertainty after the climax of irony.

The retrospective viewpoint drives the narrator to reconsider the paradoxical relationship between humans and machines. The narrator transforms the Maids into the servant of the machine: before the machine, "its tame minister — stood a tall girl, feeding the iron animal with half-quires of rose-hued note-paper" (Melville 325). A host of images mentioned by the narrator to further illustrate this transformation include the detailed description of two girls' brows ruled by the machine: "it was ruled and wrinkled" (325). This reversion of subject and object between human and machine, on the one hand, manifests the narrator's doubts about the future of humans and technology. The narrator speaks for Melville, who has enthusiasm in technology with the creation of *Moby Dick* and holds the paradox of the conflicted domination of machines to human spirits. J. A. Cook also illustrates the machines' domination: "A related critique of the new factory system was that the industrial machines had been transformed into living creatures – sometimes even monsters – even as the operatives became de facto machines" (90). In the narrator's visit, "I" am amazed at the "unvarying punctuality and precision" (Melville 330) of a mere machine but feel sympathetic to the suffering of zombie-like Maids with no spirits. When the narrator amazes at one's fulfilled prophecy: "For a moment a curious emotion filled me, not wholly unlike that which one might experience at the fulfillment of some mysterious prophecy" (330). Then he comes to rethink the absurdity of machine: "But how absurd, thought I again; the thing is a mere machine, the essence of which is unvarying punctuality and precision" (330). The unvarying punctuality and precision of the machine is a very surprise to the narrator, which consists of the critical issue of his retrospection. Cupid's worship and complete understanding of the "great" machine fulfill his prophecy; machines' punctuality originates from humans' idea of replacing the humans' unstable labor. This ironic polarity of the machine's creation evolves into the uncertainty of the narrator's stance on this issue "as the spiritual and mental agility of irony is modulated into a kinesis of shifting uncertainties" (Furst 305). From the narrator's retrospective viewpoint, the reader receives the narrator's uncertain attitudes and reconsiders the relationship between humans and machines in his era.

## 5. Conclusion

In "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," Melville explores the human crisis in the industrialized world. Often with concerns about irony and a dark future, this fiction is considered to be the clash between female fertility and greater reliance on technology. Instead, the narration of this story can focus on some neglected considerations. Identifying the narrative point of view and Romantic irony's narrative stance manifests the questions and doubts rooted in the first-person narrator to the worlds he experiences and recollects. The narrator mirrors a Romantic ironist and receives narrative and spiritual freedom by shifting dual viewpoints. His experiencing and retrospective viewpoints suggest the subjectivity and uncertainty that perceive the chaotic universe. The ambiguous narration and Romantic irony deepen his paradoxical perception of the human spiritual crisis and the relationship between humans and technology in industrialization. As a Romantic writer, Melville confronts the dynamic balance of doubts and certainty in the disordered world. He questions human spirits and technology in the concept of subjectivity and uncertainty in Romantic irony to elevate his ambiguous narration and philosophical concerns.

Although this article has explored narrative viewpoints in Melville's short fiction "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" through the lens of Romantic Irony, it ignores the functions of the narrative structure of this story as a diptych. Along with this short story, "The Two Temples" and "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" are also diptychs. The narrative pattern of these three diptychs needs more attention to contribute to Melville's magazine writings. Notwithstanding the limitations, this article signifies a departure for further studies of more narrative strategies in Melville's short fiction. It is also significant to develop the transition of genre and thoughts in short fiction during Melville's middle career.

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