

**The Necessity for Reading with “Colored Glasses” in
“The Paradise of Bachelors and Tartarus of Maids”**

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Herman Melville is a storyteller who places great emphasis on color expressions. When discussing Melville’s sense of color, we need to reexamine the contrastive or dualistic characteristic in his short story, “The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids.”

In “The Paradise of Bachelors,” the narrator uses a number of gaudy color expressions, but once the expression “snowy surcoat” appears to describe one of the bachelors’ white coats to connote death. Conversely, the color “white” is used in many scenes of “The Tararus of Maids,” where factory girls are forced to work without a break. The narrator means to imply the bachelors will also perish in the future, which is why he says he feels “inverted similitude” in the latter story, and also why the stories are not clearly contrastive.

We can argue that Melville wishes to paint a tragic world with the colors “white,” “red” and “black” as a means of expression, and uses the diptych from as a framework, and is thereby warning us that the real world is too hard a place for us without looking at it with “colored and coloring glasses.”