

**Introduction to World Literature**  
**Indian Institute of Technology Madras**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Bartleby The Scrivener**  
**Herman Melville**

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Welcome to a new session of introduction to world literature, today we will be reading the short story Bartleby the Scrivener written by Herman Melville.

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Herman Melville was born in New York in 1819, he is known as American novelists and has also written short stories and poems, his novels are mostly known for expressions of sea

voyages and expeditions as a sailor because at a young age his family was not in a very well of situation, so his elder brother finds for him a job as a cabin boy in a merchant ship, later he also finds work as a cabin crew in several whaler ship such as Acushnet and Lucian.

So in during this sea voyages in this whaling ships, he has got several experiences and has also spent construable amount of time in the Marquesas Islands with the Polynesian types there. So on his way back a with his family members he used to share all these experiences and they found considerable interesting these stories, so these gives in the idea of putting these expeditions and adventures in the form of novels and that is how it is start writing.

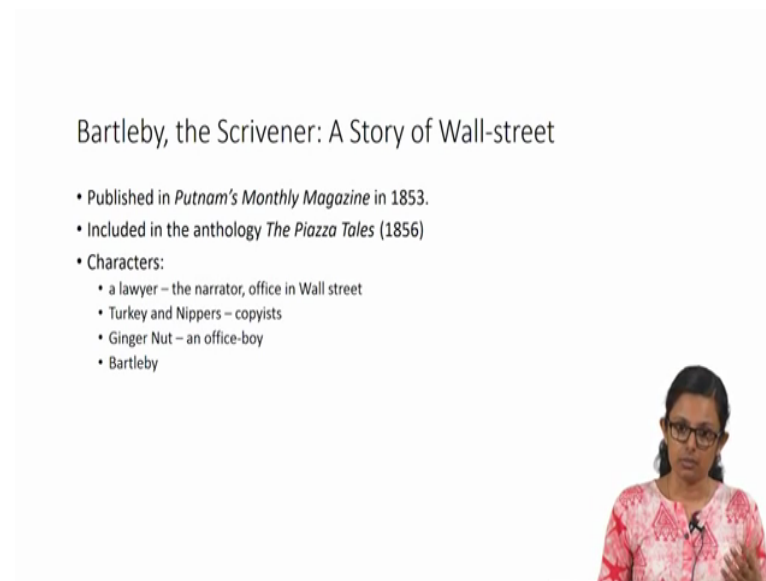
Novels based on this sea experience and the first one being Typee which is based on his experiences on the Marquesas islands and this becomes a very popular work and he becomes very successful as a writer with this work, following this he also writes others works such as Omoo, Mardi, Redburn, White-Jacket, Moby Dick, Pierre and Confidence-Man, this is some of his well-known works of which Moby-Dick is known as a classic in American Literature.

This a story of the white whale Moby-Dick and the fight between this white whale Moby-Dick and the captain of the ship Pequod, captain Ahab and through this story of the conflict between Moby-Dick and a Ahab which seems to be at the outset story of sea voyage agency expedition Herman Melville talks in detail about the conflicts of vice and virtue and he goes into the philosophical broodings and he explores deep into the human mind and the extent to which revenge and urge can take man too.

Apart from these novels he has also written short stories like Bartleby the Scrivener, The Encantadas, Benito Cereno etcetera and also he has tried his hands in poetry with collection such as John Marr, and Other Sailors with some Sea-Pieces etcetera. He was tremendously influenced by the Transcendental Philosophy and the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson and also the work in a by Nathaniel Hawthorne, the novel The Scarlet Letter has been a terrific influenced on him.


And during his stay in his farm house in Massachusetts that is the Arrowhead, he got an opportunity to have a close interaction with the author Nathaniel Hawthorne and this interaction has been an influenced on him, so much so that it is even reflected on his kind of writings which also deals with question of wise, virtues in novel etcetera and apart from this works the last work to be written by him was Billy Bud which is an unfinished novella and it was published posthumously in 1924.

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Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-street

- Published in *Putnam's Monthly Magazine* in 1853.
- Included in the anthology *The Piazza Tales* (1856)
- Characters:
  - a lawyer – the narrator, office in Wall street
  - Turkey and Nippers – copyists
  - Ginger Nut – an office-boy
  - Bartleby




Now coming to the story for today is class which is Bartleby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-Street. It was published originally in 1853 in the Putnam is Monthly Magazine and later it was included in the anthology The Piazza Tales publishing in 1856, the main characters of this story are a lawyer who is unnamed and he is the narrator, who has not office in the Wall street and the employees in (hi) this work in this work space, in his office Turkey and Nippers, Ginger Nut an office boy and Bartleby from the major characters of the story.

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Characters

- All the employees of the Lawyer's office have unique character traits
- Narrator about himself: "All who know me, consider me an eminently *safe* man."
- Not very ambitious but he has good clients and is secure in his profession
- Turkey, in his sixties, works very efficiently in the morning but has a bad temper in the afternoon, careless and leaves stains of ink on the papers.
- Nippers is aged twenty five – in contrast to Turkey – ambitious  
very slow at unsteady in the morning, but works well in the afternoon
- Ginger Nut - twelve years – sent to the lawyer to study law – works as a sweeper, cleaner and an errand boy  
– is named by Turkey and Nippers as he buys ginger nut cakes for them.
- Bartleby – quiet, reserved and strange – talks to no one in the office  
hardworking, works day and night



Now all these characters are presented from the point of view of the narrator, the lawyer and they all have very unique character traits. The narrator begins the story by saying that he himself is a interesting character because All who know me, consider me as an eminently safe

man, he considers himself to be not an ambitious person but he has a very secure professional reputation because he has got good clients, he is not the kind of person who wants to be a successful by hook or by crook, he follows the Christian values in morality so strongly in his life and that is the way he present himself throughout the story.

And it is through his point of view we get to know about other employees at his office space, the first one is Turkey, Turkey is a copyist, he is an old Englishman in his 60s and the character interesting fact about this Turkey is that he works very efficiently in the morning but he has a very bad temper in the afternoon, so he is very careless and he leaves stains of ink on the papers, so this is the character to write of Turkey.

On the other hand the second copyist that is office space is Nippers, he is a young and ambitious man of 25 and in contrast to Turkey he is good at working in the afternoons, in the morning he has he is (off) he often has issue of indigestion, so this makes him very restless, so he what he does is, he (cons) he keeps on adjusting the height of his table and he spends his morning hours mostly on this kind of unwanted or unnecessary issues but in the afternoon he becomes stable.

So this very contrasting working preferences of Turkey and Nippers is quite amusing to the lawyer what the lawyer does is, he gives all the important work, paper works to Turkey in the morning hours and he gives him minor work or less important legal document in the afternoon, so on the other hand Nippers as given all the important work in the afternoon hours and Nippers are so much ambitious that apart from his copy writing business he also tries to write original legal documents which the lawyer knows but he tries to kind of ignore all those aspects or ignore such atoms by Nippers.

Apart from this two copyist there is one more character which is a 12 year old boy called Ginger Nut and originally he was sent to the lawyer by his father, so that he would he could get an opportunity to study law with this narrator but that never really materializes instead he works as a sweeper, cleaner and an errand boy and his common errand is to buy Ginger Nut cakes for both Nippers and Turkey and that is how he hence ends up getting the name Ginger Nut.

And the last character and perhaps the most important character of this story is Bartleby, he is a very quiet and reserved and strange person, he talks to no one in the office but he is a very hardworking and he works day in and day out.

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### Plot

- "the life of Bartleby, who was a scrivener of the strangest I ever saw or heard of."
- A lawyer narrating the strange case of his employee, Bartleby
- As his business prospers, the lawyer decides to hire one more scrivener
- Bartleby is appointed as the new copyist.

"At first Bartleby did an extraordinary quantity of writing. As if long famishing for something to copy, he seemed to gorge himself on my documents. There was no pause for digestion. He ran a day and night line, copying by sun-light and by candle-light. I should have been quite delighted with his application, had he been cheerfully industrious. But he wrote on *silently, palely, mechanically.*"



Now to the coming to the plot of the story, the entire story is the narrator, the lawyer is perspective about Bartleby and his strange life and in the words of the narrator this story is the life of Bartleby who is the scrivener of the strangest kind he has ever seen or heard of. And he begins the story initially by giving as an idea about all these other characters at his office space been Gingers or Turkey or Nippers and there interesting character traits and what they normally do in the office space and how he eventually comes to hire Bartleby in this office.

So he has as hi mentions in the beginning of the story he has a very good reputation and he has immense a very good number of clients and as his business prospers it is not enough to have just Turkey and Nippers at his office space because they are good at work good at their work only at one time of the day, so it is necessary for him to hire 1 more person, so he floats an advertisement and newspaper and in responds Bartleby appears and Bartleby is the thus appointed as the new copyist in the office space, and this is what he states the narrator says about Bartleby and his performance in the story.

I read at first Bartleby did an extraordinary quantity of writing as if long famishing for something to copy, he seemed to gorge himself on my documents. There was no pause for digestion. He ran a day and night line copying by sun-light and candle-light. I should have been quite delighted with his application, had he been cheerfully industrious. But he wrote on silently, palely, mechanically.

So this impression that Bartleby has on the lawyer it is quite interesting because he is quite happy that he hired Bartleby as a his copyist because unlike Nippers and Turkey this is someone who works whole day without even taking a break, the only problem that he finds with Bartleby is that he does not do his work cheerfully rather he is very silent, pale and mechanical at his job which is quite paradoxical because he is doing something which does not require any amount of creative spirit, he is just copying legal documents, he is just a working a human photocopy machine if we can see so and then strangely the lawyer expects him to be very cheerful at his work but there is nothing strange given the fact that he has to do a mechanical job like this that he is very silent and pale.

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- One day the lawyer asks Bartleby to proof read the copies he scribed
- without moving from his privacy, Bartleby in a singularly mild, firm voice, replied, "I would prefer not to."
- Bartleby's resistance to his employer is not an expression of anger, impatience or impertinence
- He refuses to proof-read with a sense of composure
- The Lawyer is unable to dismiss him
- The refusal continues and the lawyer fails to reason with Bartleby
- He "prefers not to do" any work other than copy-writing



One day he calls Bartleby to his office for the purpose of proof reading the copies he himself has scribed but this is what happens without moving from his privacy Bartleby in a singularly mild, firm voice replies I prefer not to, so this comes in as a surprise for the lawyer because he never expected Bartleby to deny a work that he was ask to do, he was not ask to a proof reading of somebody else as a copies but rather the copies that he himself made but he refuses and this resistance to his employer was not an expression of anger, impatience or impertinence rather he refuses to proof read with a sense of composure.

So this makes it all the more difficult for the lawyer to scold the Bartleby because this refusal is not an expression of anger, he is not rebellious he just says with a sense of composure that I am not ready to and in Bartleby is word I am I would not prefer to do anything but copywriting. So the refusal makes him a little irritated, so the lawyer tries to reason out with Bartleby saying that he is expected to proof read the copies that he himself made, so that it

will be easy for the work to go efficiently and smoothly but there is no point in reasoning out with Bartleby because he completely refuses to listen to or to accept the explanations made by the lawyer.

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"Some days passed, the scrivener being employed upon another lengthy work. His late remarkable conduct led me to regard his ways narrowly. **I observed that he never went to dinner; indeed that he never went any where. As yet I had never of my personal knowledge known him to be outside of my office. He was a perpetual sentry in the corner.** At about eleven o'clock though, in the morning, I noticed that Ginger Nut would advance toward the opening in Bartleby's screen, as if silently beckoned thither by a gesture invisible to me where I sat. The boy would then leave the office jingling a few pence, and reappear with a **handful of ginger-nuts** which he delivered in the hermitage, receiving two of the cakes for his trouble."



And after this he also notices that apart from say keeps apart from the fact that Bartleby refuses or prefers not to do any other job than copy writing there also several other interesting aspects to his life for example the lawyer observes that he never went to dinner as an Bartleby never went to dinner indeed he never even went anywhere. As yet I had never of my personal knowledge known him to be outside my office.

He was a perceptual sentry in the corner and all that he had for his dinner was a handful of Ginger Nuts with the which the boy would buy for him and he would in return give the cakes back to the boy. So slowly the lawyer starts observing Bartleby more.

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- The lawyer attempts to befriend Bartleby, but the response is passive.
- The narrator cares for Bartleby, and worries that if he dismisses this "poor fellow", other employers may not behave well with him.
- After multiple attempts to be kind and compassionate to him, the lawyer, gets irritated
- Asks Bartleby to go to the post office which he denies. The lawyer shouts at him, but the response is the same: "I prefer not to"



The strange case of Bartleby amuses the lawyer so much, so that he even tries to or make some attempt different Bartleby but the attempt is a failure because the responds from Bartleby side is very passive he does not open up even when the lawyer asked him some questions a personal question he the he is answer is I prefer not to share all these things with you but the lawyer worries that if he dismisses Bartleby then other employers may not behave well with him and he might end up jobless.

So there is a sense of compassion or there is a sense of concerned that the lawyer expresses towards Bartleby and he realize that Bartleby is strange because there is something wrong about him but he is not able to realize what exactly is wrong with him because Bartleby is not ready to open up or share his personal life with anybody. So there are several such attempts of kind to be kind and compassionate to him by the lawyer but finally one day he gets irritated and this is the instance he asked the lawyer asks Bartleby to go to the post office because Ginger Nut is not around and as usual the staple reply comes which is I prefer not to.

So this is completely irritates the lawyer and he shouts at him but the response is the same.



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"The conclusion of this whole business was, that it soon became a fixed fact of my chambers, that a pale young scrivener, by the name of Bartleby, had a desk there; that he copied for me at the usual rate of four cents a folio (one hundred words); but he was permanently exempt from examining the work done by him, that duty being transferred to Turkey and Nippers, one of compliment doubtless to their superior acuteness; moreover, said Bartleby was never on any account to be dispatched on the most trivial errand of any sort; and that even if entreated to take upon him such a matter, it was generally understood that he would prefer not to—in other words, that he would refuse point blank."



So as I said this response in not in a tone of anger there is no sense of rebellion in his voice and it is difficult for the lawyer to retaliate or to push him and force him in any means and all at every instance when he denies any form of job, the lawyer is not ready to push the argument further because he has got another important works to do, so he keeps those arguments abrupt he ends it abruptly and realizes that there is no point in arguing out with him further and he leaves it to the way it is and finally the situation becomes such that everybody in the office realizes that this is how Bartleby is, so this is the excerpt from the text.

The conclusion of the whole business was that, it soon became a fixed fact of my chambers that a pale young scrivener by the name of Bartleby had a desk there that he copied for me at the usual rate of four cents a folio but he was permanently exempt from examining the work done by him that duty being transferred to Turkey and Nippers, so the only solution that lawyer has in front of him is to give the duty of proof reading this (ta) these copies made by Bartleby to Turkey and Nippers, so that they would also think themselves to be superior to Bartleby and he even ask them for opinion about Bartleby to both Turkey and Nippers and even to Ginger Nut and they all said he is a very strange man, he is a lonely person, he is a mad man.

So there is nothing more than that even these other colleagues of Bartleby has to say about him and finally the conclusion is that Bartleby was never on any account to be dispatched on the most trivial errand of any sort and that even if entreated to take upon him such a matter it

was a generally understood that he would prefer not to in other words that he would refuse point blank.

So everybody realizes in the office that this is how Bartleby is, there is no point in arguing out with him, he even refuse everything point blank and he would only do the job of copy writing because that is why he was hired or that is why he had accepted the job.

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- Bartleby lives in the office.
- "Upon more closely examining the place, I surmised that for an indefinite period Bartleby must have ate, dressed, and slept in my office, and that too without plate, mirror, or bed. The cushioned seat of a rickety old sofa in one corner bore the faint impress of a lean, reclining form. Rolled away under his desk, I found a blanket; under the empty grate, a blacking box and brush; on a chair, a tin basin, with soap and a ragged towel; in a newspaper a few crumbs of ginger-nuts and a morsel of cheese. Yes, thought I, it is evident enough that Bartleby has been making his home here, keeping bachelor's hall all by himself."
- The narrator thinks of the solitary life of Bartleby
- a sort of innocent and transformed Marius brooding among the ruins of Carthage!
- A fraternal melancholy



And one day apart from all the strange incidents, the lawyer also comes to know that Bartleby lives in the office space, one (mont) one Sunday morning on his way to church because he is early he decides to go to this office and he surprise to see that the room is locked from inside and it is actually Bartleby and Bartleby asks him to comeback after few minutes because he is occupied, this also surprises the lawyer but he cannot say anything he cannot make an arguments he knows that.

So he goes and comes back after few minutes and see is the room is opened for him and he goes inside and see is that upon (clo) more closely examine the place I summarize that for an indefinite period. Bartleby must have ate, dressed and slept in my office and that too without plate, mirror or bed. The cushioned seat of a rickety old sofa in one corner bore the faint impress of a lean, reclining form. Rolled away under his desk, I found a blanket; under the empty grate, a blacking box and brush; on a chair, a tin basin, with soap and a ragged towel; in a newspaper a few crumbs of ginger-nuts and a mostly of cheese. Yes, thought I, it is evident enough that Bartleby has been making his home here, keeping a bachelors hall all by himself.

So once he closely examines the office space he realizes that he literally lived there, he really lived in the space and nobody knew this and all that he is possessed are perhaps of sheet of blanket, some few ragged towel, soap and he also has a small savings in which is neatly tied in a handkerchief, so this is all the position that Bartleby has. At first it is a sense of shock to the lawyer that he did not even know the Bartleby was occupying that office and making it his living room, his living space as well, that shocks him but later it immediately occurs to him that he lives this way because he is such a solitary person there is nobody else in the world that he is at least familiar or acquainted with.

And he compares this case of Bartleby to that of the general the roman general and (()) (17:08) Marius after his transformation into an innocent man and the reference is to a painting of Marius, brooding among the ruins of the city Carthage which was demolished by the romans, so that fall of the great man and the fall of a great city and the innocent and the transformation that Marius undergoes is compare to and Bartleby is compare to this innocent and transfer Marius by the lawyer.

And he thinks about the fraternal melancholy, so every time and interaction with Bartleby happens this gives the lawyer an opportunity to think about humanity, to think about the strange way in which people live.

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- "happiness courts the light, so we deem the world is gay; but misery hides aloof, so we deem that misery there is none"
- "the scrivener was the victim of innate and incurable disorder. I might give alms to his body; but his body did not pain him; it was his soul that suffered, and his soul I could not reach."
- The lawyers tries to speak to Bartleby but he refrains.
- "Not only did there seem to lurk in it a certain calm disdain, but his perverseness seemed ungrateful, considering the undeniable good usage and indulgence he had received from me."
- The word prefer becomes part of everyone's vocabulary in the office.



And he keeps on brooding over this kind of thoughts in his mind and he states happiness courts the light, so we deem the world is gay; but misery hides aloof, so we deem that misery there is none. So after seeing the way in which Bartleby has been living and the solitariness in

his life he realizes that just because the world around seems to be so happy and it is happiness is visible everywhere does not mean that there is no misery in the world, misery hides aloof and it may not be that visible to us.

So this is the idea that comes to his mind when he thinks about Bartleby and he also realizes that perhaps this scrivener is the victim of innate and incurable disorder, I might give alms to his body but his body did not pain him, it was his soul that suffered and his soul I could not reach, so the lawyer is able to understand that Bartleby is deeply scared or deeply wound at heart, so there is no proper cure to him and the way he behaves there is the strangeness of the peculiarity of his behavior is resulting from the wounds that he has in his the wounds he has the wounds he have got in his heart and his soul is suffering so deeply that it is probably (res) it has probably result in some sort of disorder in him.


Therefore he makes a further attempt to try and speak to Bartleby but again as expected there is a complete denial on Bartleby is side and he is passive, he does not want to open up to anybody, this time the lawyer takes it a little negatively because he believes that this day non Bartleby is part seems to be a little ungrateful considering the undeniable good usage and indulgence he had received from me.

So there is some expectation on the lawyer side from Bartleby because even after constant denial of work even after being so careless or haphazard about other kinds of works that he had been asked to do in the office, he had been here, he was retained by the lawyer and even being so gratefully even being such a understanding employer Bartleby does not seem to be gratefully to the lawyer.

So this makes him a little irritated and he thinks that this is not right on the part of Bartleby to deny even an opportunity to open up with him. Apart from this he also realizes that Bartleby is presence in this office has also influenced others people working there because now everybody is start using the word prefer inadvertently in their vocabulary.

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- Finally Bartleby gives up doing his job.
- Does nothing but stand at his window and stare out to the brick wall in reverie
- Tells the lawyer that he has permanently given up copying.
- The lawyer asks him to leave his office in a period of six days
- But Bartleby doesn't leave.
- Tries to give him money but Bartleby doesn't take it.
- Remembers the the biblical verse: "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another."



So this particular situation in the office keeps on without much change Bartleby just do his work of copying and others do the proof reading job but one fine day Bartleby all together gives up his job of copy writing, he does nothing but he stands at his window and stare out to the brick wall in a reverie and when asked that why he is not doing his job he replies that he has permanently given up copying.

So now the situation becomes really worst and there is no other option left with the lawyer, so he asked him to leave the office in a period of six days but he does not, so he even tries to give Bartleby some money and asks him to leave but nothing helps and Bartleby is in one has decided that he would not leave the place no matter what happens. There is nothing that the lawyer seems helpless but the biblical verse comes to his mind which is everybody should love each other and new commandment give I unto you, that ye love another despite being angry, despite being helpless at the situation he realizes that people should love each other, people should have concerned for each other, so there is no option left with him.

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- Bartleby's presence in the office affects his business
- Lawyer is worried for his reputation
- Finally shifts the office to a new building
- The new tenant complains to the lawyer that Bartleby refuse to quit the premise
- Afraid of a scandal, the lawyer goes to the building at tries persuading Bartleby to leave.
- The landlord moves Bartleby from the building with the help of police to the Tombs (city-run jail in Manhattan) as a vagrant
- The lawyer meets him in the detention centre
- Bartleby dies in the detention centre
- Months later, the lawyer comes to know that, Bartleby worked previously in the Dead Letter Office, at Washington



Push him out of the office and he left him stay without even doing his job but what happens is slowly Bartleby is presence in the office affects his business, his clients are not very happy seeing this person who constantly stairs out of the window and does nothing and this worries the lawyer further because it begins to affect his reputation and he is worried about his own business and therefore no with no other option left the lawyer finally decides to shift the office to a new building and ends this complete interaction with Bartleby and this too take him completely out of his professional life.

But what happens is the new tenant who occupies this building comes to meet the lawyer and he complains that Bartleby is still residing in that office and that he is refusing to quit the premise. So afraid of scandal what he does is he goes to the building and tries to persuading Bartleby to leave but he does not, he says I prefer not to and I would continue to stay here and this finally the landlord of the building who with the help of the police takes Bartleby and he is shifted to Tombs which is the city-run jail in Manhattan and he is taken in as a inmate and he is a considering him as a vagrant.

So as a part of the procedure of police the lawyer is cold and he goes to the detention centre in Manhattan and also gives his verdict for him and say is that Bartleby is in fact an honest man only that he is a little strange with his behavior and he feels very bad for the condition that or the plight of Bartleby, so he asked one of the staff and this detention centre take a good care of him and to provide him with descent facilities.

But there is nothing more that the lawyer can do for him and eventually in a few weeks time the lawyer comes to know that Bartleby has passed away in the detention centre and in a few months time he also comes to know of a rumor which he is not sure about it but somehow comes to know that Bartleby previously worked in the Dead Letter Office at Washington, Dead Letter Office is a place where all those (ta) letters which have no takers are brought together and burned.

So he thinks that probably working in a space like that for a long period might have affected him so deeply and all the positive optimism in (my) in his life might have been completely drained out after working in such a space and thinks thinking about it and thinking about Bartleby he worries and he kind of broods about the strange way in which humans or people live around the world.

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### Themes

- Isolation and solitariness
- The mechanical nature of work in the Wall street
- Compassion and humanity
- Lack of communication and connect



So some of the major themes from the story first of all as first of all isolation and solitariness, we know that the character of Bartleby stands for his metaphorical to the concept of isolation and solitariness someone who works in a very busy space like Wall street, this completely isolated, he is a recluse and there is a no interest in him to even speak to people and this talks a lot about the urban space and the busy world of commerce and business whether it is no human connect or lack there is no a communication possible.

So if you look at the story throughout you do not see these colleagues attempting to even make a conversation possible with Bartleby he refuses it, he someone who has completely lost that hope and humanity and he realizes somehow there is in Bartleby there is a belief that

you know there is no possibility in having a conversation there is no use and having a conversation because after all just like in the Dead Letter Office human emotions are something like those death letters there are no takers for it.

And the second connected to this theme is the theme of mechanical nature of work in the Wall street from Dead Letter Office and the from after working in Dead Letter Office Bartleby actually comes to work in a space like a Lawyer is office and what he does there is to copy make copies of these legal documents, so there is no nothing positive or there is nothing refreshing in this work, it is just mechanical work and as I mentioned in the beginning of the presentation and surfaces something which is where human these people be Turkey or Nippers or even Bartleby they all just human photocopy machines, they just have to sit there and making make copies of existing documents and which are very dry papers.

So there is nothing more that is expected of these employees in Wall Street and their mechanical nature of work and how this affects their life is also shown in a much deeper sense through the characterization of Bartleby. The question of compassion and humanity which is reflects in the work is quite problematic because that at the outset the lawyer comes across as a very compassion person, he cares for people, he has an understanding, he tries to understand all his colleague, all his employees.

So instead of scolding them or instead of (compl) dismissing them for their lack of dedication to their work he tries to understand them and he tries to make a way around all these things, so that work his work is not affected. But the question is he showing this compassion really because he really care for them or is he completely concerned about his business and his profession that he does not want any kind of conflict to arise between him and his employees and is not the reason why he shows this compassion which is very superficial.

The fourth point as I mentioned is about the lack of communication connect, thorough out the story we never get to know the real names of Nippers, Turkey and Ginger Nut, they all are the nick names that they have given to each other based on their strange character and the lawyer who seems to very concerned and care and very compassionate to all these employees do not even he does not even know them personally, he does not know about their family, he does not even mentioned the real names of these his staff.

So there is clear lack of communication and connect that is very visible in the story and he tries to cover up all these things, the lawyer or the narrator the he tries to cover up all these



things through his philosophical broodings or what are the things that he has in his mind or how these people come across to him, so it is very detached point of your detached stand point that the narrator takes.

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Points for discussion

- I *prefer not to* – Bartleby's agency?

his resistance and denial, without being arrogant

Bartleby – a victim of the urban world of commerce and business where there is no space for human emotions?

- The reliability of the narrator's voice

Sense of guilt or genuine compassion?

The lawyer's attitude towards his employees



So and it works in a way of overcoming the problems or the sense of guilt that he has in his mind, so based on all this we can put these two points for discussion first one is I prefer not to which is Bartleby is (step as say) statement thorough out the story and perhaps this is the only thing that you that we ever come to here Bartleby saying, so does it actually speak for Bartleby is agency because yes by saying I prefer not to he is able to refuse, the commands or the request made by his employer.

And there is no sense of (res) rebellion coming across but he clearly states his stand that he will not do anything which he is not interested in and that expresses his agency without being arrogant but does it mean that he is actually an empowered person is the question because at some point he really comes across as a victim of this world of commerce and business where there is no space for human emotions.

So this is a point that we can that is there for you to discuss or to think further as you read the story and the second one is the reliability of the narrator voices, as I mentioned the sense of compassion or the sense of care and concerned that he expresses towards his employ employees are they is it real or is it because some sort of guilt because he knows that it is somewhere he is also responsible for this state of Bartleby and as well as the other character

because they are constantly working for him and for the prosper for his work to be for his dismissed to prosper and this mechanical work is what leads them to the way they are.

So there is a sense of guilt and perhaps that is why he makes multiple attempts to talk to Bartleby but those attempts are also very shallow because what he actually does is to ask him whether he is ready to open up and once he says he is prefers not to he ends his attempt at that, he does not go further, he does not even make any other, he does not even think of any other possibilities to give Bartleby a better space to occupy, he inhabits this complete world of (prof) he is completely immerse in this professional life and he is constantly worried about his reputation as a good lawyer and that is why when Bartleby seems to effect his reputation and when the clients are complaining he is worried about scandal, he is worried about what people would think about him and whether it would affect his profession and that leads him to change the office to a new space.

So he is someone who is clearly not interest in any kind of conflict or any kind of scandal he wants a smooth life as he states in the beginning of the story that he believes that the best way to live life is the easiest way. So this when grey when red when we take all these things about the way the narrator presents the story and his point of view the reliability of the narrator becomes little problematic because he is compassion can also be reduce arising out of his sense of guilt.

And his attitude towards his employees is also a matter of debate it is matter of debate or a contest because the what he what comes across as his understanding about office employees is not really an understanding rather it is his way of dealing with them in such a way that they do not really affect his works and he can make a way with them and circulate all the possible conflicts.

So I hope you can keep these things in mind while you read the story, it is a long story but read it with all these points in mind and I hope you had a clear understanding of the story, thank you.