

Classmate response: Ashley A.

I believe that the whole motive behind Bartleby's choice of words used in the phrase, "I would prefer not to", are all revolving around an idea heavily related to the refusal of conforming to the vast normalcy of an everyday work-loaded routine. The heavily repetitive and forlorn jobs he's worked in order to survive in the harsh society had taken a severe toll to his mental health and his damaged spirit. In order to somehow escape from the confinement he finds himself stuck in, he decides to use a strategic nonviolent action of passive resistance in order to express his refusal of burying himself deeper into the capitalist driven system he's currently trapped in. Unfortunately, seen in the heavy disconnection and hostility that the other employees project onto Bartleby, he is the only protester in the story. Due to lack of collective concordance, Bartleby's solo protest does not end in success, and his death could be representing his only exit from the "imprisonment" at the end of the story. As Jamila Raqib has shown and stated in the TED talk, several people across many countries often perform strikes as a way of "fighting" back against oppression and corruption. All ways shown being completely non-violent ways of refusing doing what they ordinarily be expected to do. In other words, denying what they were being led to believe is conventional which is similarly done by Bartleby.