American Literature Writing Assignment #1 Part I First, read the passages below from Herman Melville’s “Bartleby, The Scrivener”: Poor fellow! thought I, he means no mischief; it is plain he intends no insolence; his aspect sufficiently evinces that his eccentricities are involuntary. He is useful to me. I can get along with him. If I turn him away, the chances are he will fall in with some less indulgent employer, and then he will be rudely treated, and perhaps driven forth miserably to starve. Yes. Here I can cheaply purchase a delicious self-approval. To befriend Bartleby; to humor him in his strange willfulness, will cost me little or nothing, while I lay up in my soul what will eventually prove a sweet morsel for my conscience. […] Aside from higher considerations, charity often operates as a vastly wise and prudent principle -- a great safeguard to its possessor. Men have committed murder for jealousy’s sake, and anger’s sake […]; but no man, that ever I heard of, ever committed a diabolical murder for sweet charity’s sake. Mere self-interest, then, if no better motive can be enlisted should […] prompt all beings to charity and philanthropy. In about 300 words, write about the significance of these passages. What do they tell us about the narrator -- about his motives, desires and world-view? How might his logic be suspect here and there? To make sure your interpretation is grounded in the text, quote a term or phrase from one of these passages in your explanation. Additionally, discuss briefly some other passage in the story, something that you think is relevant to your discussion, explaining why it's relevant. Quote something from this “other” part of the story, even if it’s just a phrase. Your quotations can be longer than a term or phrase. But keep in mind that no quoted text counts toward your 300 words. Part 2 Imagine Bartleby working for a large corporation today. (Not the Bartleby near the end of the story, when he prefers to do nothing at all, but rather Bartleby when he first starts voicing his preference to not do the more tedious office tasks with his workmates.) Imagine that his supervisor has sent him to the Human Resources department to have a discussion with two HR officers there about his “preference” problem. These personnel specialists are trying to be as sympathetic as possible to Bartleby and are trying to work out a plan of action for his improvement and well-being. Write a short dialogue -- as if it were a play, dialogue only -- between Bartleby and these 2 Human Resources specialists of the present day. Show how our 21st-century concerns and ideals might change the way these employees deal with Bartleby (as compared to the 19th-century narrator in the story). Write at least 400 words of this dialogue in a play format, like this: CARL: Welcome, Bartleby… BARTLEBY: […] JENNA: […] BARTLEBY: […] You can name the HR characters whatever you’d like. Keep in mind that the HR people might have to speak to each other as well as to Bartleby. Maybe they have different ideas about how to approach this problem…