An essay of man is a philosophical poem religion essay

An Essay of Man is a philosophical poem by Alexander Pope. It was published in 1734. In this poem the author makes an attempt to explain complex relations between man and God.

The author makes an attempt to explain people their destination and will of God. Pope presents complex philosophical, political and ethical ideas in the form of the poem. This form is unusual for the philosophical content, but Pope accomplishes this task brilliantly. He describes complex ideas in interesting literary form. This manner become more entertaining for the readers and people get an opportunity to perceive complex ideas in more interesting form.

The poem consists of four epistles. Originally they were published separately and the pseudonym, but later Pope collected them into one long poem. An Essay on Man is an attempt to understand the nature of man an to discover things which may help people to become happy. He wants to distinguish the place of man in the society and in the world around him. He speaks about different controversies, which usually influence human life:

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan

The proper study of Mankind is Man.

Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,

A Being darkly wise, and rudely great:

With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,

With too much weakness for the Stoic’s pride,…

Pope speaks about controversial nature of man. He views man as a combination of different moving forces. From this position the man becomes a unique creature who combines in his nature controversial things. From the one side this controversy makes it hard for man to find inner harmony but from the other side it becomes a moving force which helps to discover new things about inner nature and external world.

As states Pope:

He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;

In doubt to deem himself a God, or Beast;

In doubt his mind or body to prefer;

Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;

Alike in ignorance, his reason such,

Whether he thinks too little, or too much;…

The author describes major conflict which is presented in each man. This conflict is a conflict between passion and reason. The author see the way out in controlling passions and using reason in order to get a virtuous life.

Pope makes an attempt to get a deeper understanding of human nature. His views are common for intellectuals of the eighteenth century. In the first part of the poem Pope makes an attempt to show harmonious nature of the universe. He wants his readers to see that the universe has perfect and harmonious order and people also have their special place in this universe.

Pope believes that people can improve their life if they understand this order and their place in the Universe.

In the third pat of the poem Pope speaks about the relations between individual and the society. He explores roles and functions of individual in the society and the relations between personal needs and desires and needs of the society. The author explores the origin of state power and division of social class system.

The fourth part of the poem makes an attempt to answer the main question posted by the author – it makes an attempt to find that mechanism which would help people to become happy. The problem described by the author in this epistle becomes the relation between personal selfish desires and a desire to bring use to other people. Virtuous living and desire to bring use to other people the author regards as the main source of human happiness.

The poem explores many important themes and philosophical questions. The author combines literary genre and philosophical style of the narration. It gives his readers the opportunity to read complex philosophical ideas in easy and interesting style. Pope investigates the theme of existence of Supreme Being or Supreme Power, the structure of the universe and the role and place of people in it. He underlines that God is the strongest power of the universe and people may have happy living only if the follow the will of God:

Yet cry, If Man’s unhappy, God’s unjust;

If Man alone ingross not Heav’n’s high care,

Alone made perfect here, immortal there:

Snatch from his hand the balance(10) and the rod,

Re-judge his justice, be the GOD of GOD!

The poem expresses the most important philosophical, ethical and social concepts of the author. It give a fundamental descriptions of Pope's perception of the world and universal order. These principles were expressed by many outstanding scholars, thinkers and artists, but Pope presents them to the public in unique and interesting manner. Pope turns to universal human values. When he speaks about religion, he does not turn to any specific religious confessions and doctrines. He wants to presents his reader a universal picture of the world order which would be suitable for people of different religious beliefs. The author counts on universal religious and philosophical ideas which underline the common nature of all people. In his work he centers on things which make people alike and help them to find common ground rather on the thing which separate them.

The universal order and perfect structure of the world are among the main themes of the poem. The author wants his readers to understand that the word if perfectly organized and that the understanding of the universal principles of world structure may help people to have a successful and happy living. He regards man as a part of natural order and speaks about his great ability to save and support this universal order:

But ALL subsists by elemental strife;

and Passions are the elements of Life.

The gen'ral ORDER, since the whole began,

Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man.

The author presented complicated and important ideas in his philosophical poem. His style and manner of narration give the readers easy way to understand complicated things. The genre of philosophical poem