Outline: Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man*

**Opening Address:** invites the reader to join the poet-speaker upon the philosophical project of understanding “man” in the “abstract”, and thus “vindicating” the ways of God to the reader (note significant metaphors of explorer, hunter, and mapmaker)

[I] We can only know man's place in God's world by the empirical proof around us; uses the image of the "great chain" (note use of rhetorical questions)

[II] Inaugurates the poem’s emphasis upon pride and presumption (note significant analogies in this section; lines 69-70 particularly important)

[III] Argues from analogies of the "natural" world that man's natural state is one of ignorance and of "Hope" (again analogies are important here; line 95 also significant)

[Sections 4-6 detail the various "sins" of Human Pride]

[IV] Addresses the ultimate presumption; that man yearns to the state of God in critiquing his limited sphere in the world.

[V] The "Argument" informs us that the following section concerns the "absurdity" in believing that Humankind is at the center of the Universe and should operate for our pleasure

[VI] Man's desire to have the best qualities of both the Angel and the Beast; here Pope addresses the "absurdity" of wanting to possess the qualities of both the Angel and the Animal

[VII] Charts out the proper relationships between animal and man; notes the “just gradations” of powers

[VIII] Returns to a description of the Great Chain of Being and concludes with a warning about the dangers of threatening that cosmic “ORDER”

[IX] Analogy between the Great Chain of Being and the human frame; all one harmonious whole with specific powers (note lines 275-280)

[X] Pope concludes by exhorting the reader to "Submission" to the Deity's plan; continues to construct a prayer ending with a dictate: "Whatever is, is RIGHT"
Samuel Johnson, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*

[1-44] Sets out the argument of the poem; a “Survey” of mankind; focus upon pride (and its concomitant ambitions of “gain and grandeur” 45)

[45-99] Begins by calling for the “philosophic eye” (64) of a Democritus for his age; outline what Britain isn’t (55-60) and what it is (73-90); positions his poem as an “appeal” (91)

Throughout most of the poem Johnson provides historical examples of the dangers of ambition

[99-120] the example of Cardinal Wolsey, who prospers by currying favor with the king until he loses it; his fate is that of an unhappy death; a warning about the moral compromises demanded by political ambition

[129-134] Reiterates the danger of depending upon kings

[135-174] **Warnings against intellectual ambition** (examples of Thomas Lydiat and Galileo)

[175-254] Several verse paragraphs warning about the warrior’s pride and desire to wage war; bad for nations (185); example of the ignominious end of Charles XII of Sweden (191-222); Xerxes, who believed that he could tame the seas (223-240) and the Elector of Bavaria, who underestimates Austria (241-254)

[255-290] Outlines the fate of the ordinary greedy man driven by avarice

[291-298] A brief passage on an ideal old age and death

[299-318] Notes that all suffer misfortune and that all die usually with humiliating physical debility; notes the fate of Marlborough and Swift

[319-342] Warns against female ambition exercised through beauty and sexuality

[342-end] “Where then shall Hope and Fear their objects find?” (342); the only answer in this poem is prayer to an almighty God (359-360); and (the poem comes close to promising) you will receive “love, patience, and faith”