Colonial historian David Allen's intensive study of five communities in seventeenth-century Massachusetts is a model of meticulous scholarship on the detailed microcosmic level, and is convincing up to a point. Allen suggests that much more coherence and direct continuity existed between English and colonial agricultural practices and administrative organization than other historians have suggested. However, he overstates his case with the declaration that he has proved "the remarkable extent to which diversity in New England local institutions was directly imitative of regional differences in the mother country.  
  
Such an assertion ignores critical differences between seventeenth—century England and New England. First, England was overcrowded and land-hungry; New England was sparsely populated and labor-hungry. Second, England suffered the normal European rate of mortality; New England, especially in the first generation of English colonists, was virtually free from infectious diseases. Third, England had an all-embracing state church; in New England membership in a church was restricted to the elect. Fourth, a high proportion of English villagers lived under paternalistic resident squires; no such class existed in New England. By narrowing his focus to village institutions and ignoring these critical differences, which studies by Greven, Demos, and Lockridge have shown to be so important, Allen has created a somewhat distorted picture of reality.  
  
Allen's work is a rather extreme example of the "country community" school of seventeenth-century English history whose intemperate excesses in removing all national issues from the history of that period have been exposed by Professor Clive Holmes. What conclusion can be drawn, for example, from Allen's discovery that Puritan clergy who had come to the colonies from East Anglia were one-third to one-half as likely to return to England by 1660 as were Puritan ministers from western and northern England? We are not told in what way, if at all, this discovery illuminates historical understanding. Studies of local history have enormously expanded our horizons, but it is a mistake for their authors to conclude that village institutions are all that mattered, simply because their functions are all that the records of village institutions reveal.

1. The passage suggests that Professor Clive Holmes would most likely agree with which of the following statements?

(A) An understanding of seventeenth-century English local institutions requires a consideration of national issues.

(B) The "country community" school of seventeenth- century English history distorts historical evidence in order to establish continuity between old and new institutions.

(C) Most historians distort reality by focusing on national concerns to the exclusion of local concerns.

(D) National issues are best understood from the perspective of those at the local level.

(E) Local histories of seventeenth-century English villages have contributed little to the understanding of village life.

2. It can be inferred from the passage that the author of the passage considers Allen's "discovery" (see highlighted text) to be

(A) already known to earlier historians

(B) based on a logical fallacy

(C) improbable but nevertheless convincing

(D) an unexplained, isolated fact

(E) a new, insightful observation

3. It can be inferred that the author of the passage considers Allen's research on seventeenth-century Massachusetts colonies to be

(A) inconsequential but interesting

(B) largely derivative

(C) detailed but problematic

(D) highly commendable

(E) overly theoretical

4. According to the passage, which of the following was true of most villages in seventeenth-century England?

(A) The resident squire had significant authority.

(B) Church members were selected on the basis of their social status within the community.

(C) Low population density restricted agricultural and economic growth.

(D) There was little diversity in local institutions from one region to another.

(E) National events had little impact on local customs and administrative organization.

5. The author of the passage is primarily concerned with

(A) substantiating a claim about a historical event

(B) reconciling two opposing ideas about a historical era

(C) disputing evidence a scholar uses to substantiate a claim about a historical event

(D) analyzing two approaches to scholarly research and evaluating their methodologies

(E) criticizing a particular study and the approach to historical scholarship it represents