

Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_

## Verbal Workshop

### Reading comprehension:

The nub of the restorationist critique of preservationism is the claim that it rests on an unhealthy dualism, which conceives nature and humankind as radically distinct and opposed to each other. Dissatisfaction with dualism has for some time figured prominently in the not so happy writings of environmentalists with mainstream industrial society, as in the writings of Carolyn Merchant and Theodore Roszak. However, the writings of the restorationists themselves—particularly, William Jordan and Frederick Turner—offer little evidence to support this indictment. In their view, preservationists are imbued with the same basic mind-set as the industrial mainstream, the only difference being that the latter exalts humans over nature while the former elevates nature over humans. While it is perhaps puzzling that Jordan and Turner do not see that there is no logic that requires dualism as a philosophical underpinning for preservation, more puzzling is the sharpness and relentlessness of their attack on preservationists, accentuated by the fact that they offer little, if any, criticism of those who have plundered the natural world.

The crucial question, however, about the restorationist outlook has to do with the degree to which the restorationist program is itself faithful to the first principle of restoration: that nature and humanity are fundamentally united rather than separate. Rejecting the old domination model, which sees humans as over nature, restoration theory champions a model of community participation. Yet some of the descriptions that Jordan and Turner give of what restorationists are actually up to—for example, Turner's description of humans as "the lords of creation," or Jordan's statement that "the fate and well being of the biosphere depend ultimately on us and our relationship with it"—do not cohere well with the community participation model. Another holistic model—namely, that of nature as an organism—might be more serviceable to the restorationists. As with the community model, the "organic" model pictures nature as a system of interconnected parts. A fundamental difference, however, is that in an organism the parts are wholly subservient to the life of the organism. If we could think of the biosphere as a single living organism and could identify humans with the brain (or the DNA), or control center, we would have a model that more closely fits the restorationists' view.

However, to consider humans as the control center of the living earth is to ascribe to them a dominating role in nature. Is this significantly different from the old-fashioned domination model? In both systems humans hold the place of highest authority and power in the world. Also, neither view recognizes any limits to the scope and range of legitimate human manipulation in the world. This does not mean that there are no constraints; only beneficial manipulation should be undertaken. But it does not mean that nothing is off-limits. A further parallel is that, because the fate of the world rests on humans, they must have a clear idea of what needs to be done.

End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1). The author's primary purpose in the passage is to
  - (A) examine the similarities and differences among models for environmental philosophies
  - (B) formulate a new philosophical model of the relationship between humans and their environment
  - (C) critique a modern-day environmental philosophy
  - (D) argue that one particular environmental philosophy is more workable than competing approaches
  - (E) demonstrate the limited usefulness of models as the basis for environmental philosophies
- 2) Which of the following best expresses the function of the first paragraph in relation to the passage as a whole?
  - (A) to establish the parameters of an ensuing debate
  - (B) to identify problem areas within a school of thought, which are then explored in greater detail
  - (C) to discuss secondary issues as a prelude to a more detailed examination of a primary issue
  - (D) to provide an historical backdrop for a discussion of modern-day issues
  - (E) to introduce opposing viewpoints, which are then evaluated
- 3) Which of the following models would the author most likely agree is least like the other models listed below?
  - (A) domination model (B) holistic model (C) community participation model (D) dualist model (E) organic model

### **GRE Passage 1**

Tocqueville, apparently, was wrong. Jacksonian America was not a fluid, egalitarian society where individual wealth and poverty were ephemeral conditions. At least so argues E. Pessen in his iconoclastic study of the very rich in the United States between 1825 and 1850.

Pessen does present a quantity of examples, together with some refreshingly intelligible statistics, to establish the existence of an inordinately wealthy class. Though active in commerce or the professions, most of the wealthy were not self-made but had inherited family fortunes. In no sense mercurial, these great fortunes survived that financial panic that destroyed lesser ones. Indeed, in several cities the wealthiest one percent constantly increased its share until by 1850 it owned half of the community's wealth. Although these observations are true, Pessen overestimates their importance by concluding from them that the undoubted progress toward inequality in the late eighteenth century continued in the Jacksonian period and that the United States was a class-ridden, plutocratic society even before industrialization.

#### **1. Which of the following best states the author's main point?**

- (a) Pessen's study has overturned the previously established view of the social and economic structure of early-nineteenth-century America
- (b) Tocqueville's analysis of the United States in Jacksonian era remains the definitive account for this period
- (c) Pessen's study is valuable primarily because it shows the continuity of the social system in the United States throughout the nineteenth century
- (d) The social patterns and political power of the extremely wealthy in the United States between 1825 and 1850 are well documented.
- (e) Pessen challenges a view of the social and economic systems in the United States from 1825 to 1850, but he draws conclusions that are incorrect.

### **GRE Passage 2**

Since the Hawaiian Islands have never been connected to other land masses, the great variety of plants in Hawaii must be a result of the long – distance dispersal of seeds, a process that required both a method of transport and an equivalence between the ecology of the source area and that of the recipient area. There is some dispute about the method of transport involved. Some biologists argue that ocean and air currents are responsible for the transport of plant seeds to Hawaii. Yet the results of flotation experiments and the low temperatures of air currents cast doubt on these hypotheses. More probable is bird transport, either externally, by accidental attachment of the seeds to feathers, or internally, by the swallowing of fruit and subsequent excretion of the seeds. While it is likely that fewer varieties of plant seeds have reached Hawaii externally than internally, more varieties are known to be adapted to external than to internal transport.

#### **The author mentions results of flotation experiments on plant seeds (lines 5 – 6) most probably in order to**

- 1. Support the claim that distribution of plants in Hawaii is the result of long distance dispersal of seeds
- 2. Lend credibility to the thesis that air currents provide a method of transport for plant seeds to Hawaii
- 3. Suggest that the long – distance dispersal of seeds is a process that requires long periods of time
- 4. Challenge the claim that ocean currents are responsible for the transport of plant seeds to Hawaii
- 5. Refute the claim that Hawaiian flora evolved independently from flora in other parts of the world.