Standard Questions Asked in CAT VARC

Passage 1

The passage below is accompanied by a set of questions. Choose the best answer to each question.

Stories concerning the Undead have always been with us. From out of the primal darkness of Mankind's earliest years, come whispers of eerie creatures, not quite alive (or alive in a way which we can understand), yet not quite dead either. These may have been ancient and primitive deities who dwelt deep in the surrounding forests and in remote places, or simply those deceased who refused to remain in their tombs and who wandered about the countryside, physically tormenting and frightening those who were still alive. Mostly they were ill-defined—strange sounds in the night beyond the comforting glow of the fire, or a shape, half-glimpsed in the twilight along the edge of an encampment. They were vague and indistinct, but they were always there with the power to terrify and disturb. They had the power to touch the minds of our early ancestors and to fill them with dread. Such fear formed the basis of the earliest tales although the source and exact nature of such terrors still remained very vague. And as Mankind became more sophisticated, leaving the gloom of their caves and forming themselves into recognizable communities—towns, cities, whole cultures—so the Undead travelled with them, inhabiting their folklore just as they had in former times. Now they began to take on more definite shapes. They became walking cadavers; the physical embodiment of former deities and things which had existed alongside Man since the Creation. Some still remained vague and ill-defined but, as Mankind strove to explain the horror which it felt towards them, such creatures emerged more readily into the light. In order to confirm their abnormal status, many of the Undead were often accorded attributes, which defied the natural order of things—the power to transform themselves into other shapes, the ability to sustain themselves by drinking human blood, and the ability to influence human minds across a distance. Such powers—described as supernatural—only [lent] an added dimension to the terror that humans felt regarding them.

And it was only natural, too, that the Undead should become connected with the practice of magic. From very early times, Shamans and witch doctors had claimed at least some power and control over the spirits of departed ancestors, and this has continued down into more "civilized" times. Formerly, the invisible spirits and forces that thronged around men's earliest encampments, had spoken "through" the tribal Shamans but now, as entities in their own right, they were subject to magical control and could be physically summoned by a competent sorcerer. However, the relationship between the magician and an Undead creature was often a very tenuous and uncertain one. Some sorcerers might have even become Undead entities once they died, but they might also have been susceptible to the powers of other magicians when they did. From the Middle Ages and into the Age of Enlightenment, theories of the Undead continued to grow and develop. Their names became more familiar—werewolf, vampire, ghoul—each one certain to strike fear into the hearts of ordinary humans.

Q.1) All of the following statements, if false, could be seen as being in accordance with the passage, EXCEPT:

[1] the transition from the Middle Ages to the Age of Enlightenment saw new theories of the Undead.

[2] the Undead remained vague and ill-defined, even as Mankind strove to understand the horror they inspired.

[3] the relationship between Shamans and the Undead was believed to be a strong and stable one.

[4] the growing sophistication of Mankind meant that humans stopped believing in the Undead.

Q.2) Which one of the following observations is a valid conclusion to draw from the statement, "From out of the primal darkness of Mankind's earliest years, come whispers of eerie creatures, not quite alive (or alive in a way which we can understand), yet not quite dead either."?

[1] Mankind's primal years were marked by creatures alive with eerie whispers, but seen only in the darkness.

[2] We can understand the lives of the eerie creatures in Mankind's early years through their whispers in the darkness.

[3] Mankind's early years were marked by a belief in the existence of eerie creatures that were neither quite alive nor dead.

[4] Long ago, eerie creatures used to whisper in the primal darkness that they were not quite dead.

Q.3) Which one of the following statements best describes what the passage is about?

[1] The passage describes the failure of human beings to fully comprehend their environment.

[2] The writer discusses the transition from primitive thinking to the Age of Enlightenment.

[3] The passage discusses the evolution of theories of the Undead from primitive thinking to the Age of Enlightenment.

[4] The writer describes the ways in which the Undead come to be associated with Shamans and the practice of magic.

Q.4) "In order to confirm their abnormal status, many of the Undead were often accorded attributes, which defied the natural order of things . . ." Which one of the following best expresses the claim made in this statement?

[1] The Undead are deified in nature's order by giving them divine attributes.

[2] Human beings conceptualize the Undead as possessing abnormal features.

[3] According to the Undead an abnormal status is to reject the natural order of things.

[4] The natural attributes of the Undead are rendered abnormal by changing their status.

Passage 2

The passage given below is followed by four alternate summaries. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the passage.

Manipulating information was a feature of history long before modern journalism established rules of integrity. A record dates back to ancient Rome, when Antony met Cleopatra and his

political enemy Octavian launched a smear campaign against him with "short, sharp slogans written upon coins." The perpetrator became the first Roman Emperor and "fake news had allowed Octavian to hack the republican system once and for all". But the 21st century has seen the weaponization of information on an unprecedented scale. Powerful new technology makes the fabrication of content simple, and social networks amplify falsehoods peddled by States, populist politicians, and dishonest corporate entities. The platforms have become fertile ground for computational propaganda, 'trolling' and 'troll armies'.

    A. People need to become critical of what they read, since historically, weaponization of information has led to corruption.

    B. Octavian used fake news to manipulate people and attain power and influence, just as people do today

    C. Disinformation, which is mediated by technology today, is not new and has existed since ancient times.

    D. Use of misinformation for attaining power, a practice that is as old as the Octavian era, is currently fueled by technology.

Passage 3

The passage given below is followed by four alternate summaries. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the passage.

Colonialism is not a modern phenomenon. World history is full of examples of one society gradually expanding by incorporating adjacent territory and settling its people on newly conquered territory. In the sixteenth century, colonialism changed decisively because of technological developments in navigation that began to connect more remote parts of the world. The modern European colonial project emerged when it became possible to move large numbers of people across the ocean and to maintain political control in spite of geographical dispersion. The term colonialism is used to describe the process of European settlement, violent dispossession and political domination over the rest of the world, including the Americas, Australia, and parts of Africa and Asia.

    A. Colonialism surged in the 16th century due to advancements in navigation, enabling British settlements abroad and global dominance.

    B. As a result of developments in navigation technology, European colonialism led to the displacement of indigenous populations and global political changes in the 16th century.

    C. Colonialism, conceptualized in the 16th century, allowed colonizers to expand their territories, establish settlements, and exercise political power.

    D. Technological advancements in navigation in the 16th century, transformed colonialism, enabling Europeans to establish settlements and exert political dominance over distant regions.

Passage 4

For the Maya of the Classic period, who lived in Southern Mexico and Central America between 250 and 900 CE, the category of 'persons' was not coincident with human beings, as it is for us. That is, human beings were persons – but other, nonhuman entities could be persons, too. . . . In order to explore the slippage of categories between 'humans' and

'persons', I examined a very specific category of ancient Maya images, found painted in scenes on ceramic vessels. I sought out instances in which faces (some combination of eyes, nose, and mouth) are shown on inanimate objects. . . . Consider my iPhone, which needs to be fed with electricity every night, swaddled in a protective bumper, and enjoys communicating with other fellow-phone-beings. Does it have personhood (if at all) because it is connected to me, drawing this resource from me as an owner or source? For the Maya (who did have plenty of other communicating objects, if not smartphones), the answer was no. Non Human persons were not tethered to specific humans, and they did not derive their personhood from a connection with a human. . . . It's a profoundly democratizing way of understanding the world. Humans are not more important persons – we are just one of many kinds of persons who inhabit this world. . . .

The Maya saw personhood as 'activated' by experiencing certain bodily needs and through participation in certain social activities. For example, among the faced objects that I examined, persons are marked by personal requirements (such as hunger, tiredness, physical closeness), and by community obligations (communication, interaction, ritual observance). In the images I examined, we see, for instance, faced objects being cradled in humans' arms; we also see them speaking to humans. These core elements of personhood are both turned inward, what the body or self of a person requires, and outward, what a community expects of the persons who are a part of it, underlining the reciprocal nature of community membership.

Personhood was a nonbinary proposition for the Maya. Entities were able to be persons while also being something else. The faced objects I looked at indicate that they continue to be functional, doing what objects do (a stone implement continues to chop, an incense burner continues to do its smoky work). Furthermore, the Maya visually depicted many objects in ways that indicated the material category to which they belonged – drawings of the stone implement shows that a person-tool is still made of stone. One additional complexity: the incense burner (which would have been made of clay, and decorated with spiky appliques representing the sacred ceiba tree found in this region) is categorized as a person – but also as a tree. With these Maya examples, we are challenged to discard the person/nonperson binary that constitutes our basic ontological outlook. . . . The porousness of boundaries that we have seen in the Maya world points towards the possibility of living with a certain uncategorizability of the world.

Q1. Which one of the following best explains the "additional complexity" that the example of the incense burner illustrates regarding personhood for the Classic Maya?
[1] The example adds a new layer to the nonbinary understanding of personhood by bringing in a third category that shares a similar relation with the previous two.
[2] The example provides an exception to the nonbinary understanding of personhood that the passage had hitherto been established.
[3] The example adds a new layer to the nonbinary understanding of personhood by bringing in a third category that shares a dissimilar relation with the previous two.
[4] The example complicates the nonbinary understanding of personhood by bringing in the sacred, establishing the porosity of the divine and the profane.

Q2. Which one of the following, if true about the Classic Maya, would invalidate the purpose of the iPhone example in the passage?
[1] The clay incense burner with spiky appliques was categorised only as a person and not as a tree by the Classic Maya.
[2] Classic Maya songs represent both humans and non-living objects as characters, talking and interacting with each other.
[3] The personhood of the incense burner and the stone chopper was a function of their usefulness to humans.
[4] Unlike modern societies equipped with mobile phones, the Classic Maya did not have any communicating objects.

Q3. On the basis of the passage, which one of the following worldviews can be inferred to be closest to that of the Classic Maya?
[1] A futuristic society that perceives robots to be persons as well as robots because of their similarity to humans.
[2] A tribe that perceives plants as person-plants because they form an ecosystem and are marked by needs of nutrition.
[3] A tribe that perceives its hunting weapons as sacred person-artifacts because of their significance to its survival.
[4] A tribe that perceives its utensils as person-utensils in light of their functionality and bodily needs.

Q4. Which one of the following, if true, would not undermine the democratizing potential of the Classic Maya worldview?
[1] They understood the stone implement and the incense burner in a purely human form.
[2] They believed that animals like cats and dogs that live in proximity to humans have a more clearly articulated personhood.
[3] They depicted their human healers with physical attributes of local medicinal plants.
[4] While they believed in the personhood of objects and plants, they did not believe in the personhood of rivers and animals.

Passage 5

The passage given below is followed by four alternate summaries. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the passage.
Heatwaves are becoming longer, frequent and intense due to climate change. The impacts of extreme heat is unevenly experienced; with older people and young children, those with preexisting medical conditions and on low incomes significantly more vulnerable. Adaptation to heatwaves are a significant public policy concern. Research conducted among at-risk people in the UK reveals that even vulnerable people do not perceive themselves as at risk of extreme heat; therefore, early warnings of extreme heat events do not perform as intended. This suggests that understanding how extreme heat is narrated is very important. The news media play a central role in this process and can help warn people about the potential danger, as well as about impacts on infrastructure and society.

(1) Heatwaves pose an enormous risk; the media plays a pivotal role in alerting people to this danger.
(2) People are vulnerable to heatwaves caused due to climate change, measures taken are ineffective.
(3) Protection from heat waves is important but current reports and public policies seem ineffective.
(4) News stories help in warning about heatwaves, but they have to become more effective.

Passage 6

The passage given below is followed by four alternate summaries. Choose the option that best captures the essence of the passage.

People spontaneously create counterfactual alternatives to reality when they think "if only" or "what if" and imagine how the past could have been different. The mind computes counterfactuals for many reasons. Counterfactuals explain the past and prepare for the future, they implicate various relations including causal ones, and they affect intentions and decisions. They modulate emotions such as regret and relief, and they support moral judgments such as blame. The ability to create counterfactuals develops throughout childhood and contributes to reasoning about other people's beliefs, including their false beliefs.

1. Counterfactuals help people to prepare for the future by understanding intentions and making decisions.
2. People create counterfactual alternatives to reality for various reasons, including reasoning about other people's beliefs.
3. Counterfactual alternatives to reality are created for a variety of reasons and are part of one's developmental process.
4. Counterfactual thinking helps to reverse past and future actions and reason out false beliefs.