



# A Game of Polo with A Headless Goat

## Title Analysis –

It engages the reader and creates curiosity as it is a very strange and unusual game used as the title. The readers are interested in finding out what it is about. It has references to both western (A Game of Polo) and eastern (A Headless Goat) cultures.

## Overview –

The extract is a travelogue, it describes a travel experience. Key elements in a travelogue include;

- Information about culture and life styles of people in the place being visited.
- The writer's opinions and thoughts on his/her experiences.
- The thoughts of the local/native people about their lives and experiences.
- Very vivid descriptions.
- Factual Information about the place being visited.
- Pictures/Photos to provide the audience with a clear idea of the location.

We drove off to find the best viewing spot, which turned out to be the crest of the hill so we could see the approaching race. I asked the lads if we could join in the 'Wacky Races' and follow the donkeys, and they loved the idea. 'We'll open the car boot; you climb inside and point your camera towards the race. As the donkeys overtake us, we'll join the cars.' 'But will you try and get to the front?' 'Oh yes, that's no problem.'

The extract begins in the middle of the story, in the middle of action, "drove off". This creates a **pace** in the story from the beginning.

The writer makes use of western term to describe an eastern game, "Wacky Race". It creates humor as well.

The writer does not immediately tell the reader all the facts and information. The words, "We" and "lads" show that the reader needs to read further on to find out who the people in the extract are.

Direct Speech gives a lively atmosphere. Also, as the events are not directly told to the reader, direct speech allows the reader to find out what is happening. Creates sense of excitement and anticipation.

The two lads who had never been interested in this Karachi sport were suddenly fired up with enthusiasm. We waited for eternity on the brow of the hill, me perched in the boot with a zoom lens pointing out. Nearly one hour later I was beginning to feel rather silly when the only action was a villager on a wobbly bicycle, who nearly fell off as he cycled past and gazed around at us

The "two lads" were native, and this is shown by their lack of interest in the Karachi sport.

The hyperbole, "eternity" emphasizes on the slow passing of time. It shows that time stretches out.

There is a hint of humor, as she reports the locals' reaction towards her.

There is a sense of anticipation, even though there is a lack of excitement.

Several vehicles went past, and some donkey-carts carrying spectators. 'Are they coming?' we called out to them. 'Coming, coming,' came the reply. I was beginning to lose faith in its happening, but the lads remained confident.

The "lads" are further shown to be native/local by their faith in the occurrence of the race.

The excitement that the second paragraph lacked, is being built up again.

Just as I was assuming that the race had been cancelled, we spotted two approaching donkey-carts in front of a cloud of fumes and dust created by some fifty vehicles roaring up in their wake. As they drew nearer, Yaqoob revved up the engine and began to inch the car out of the lay-by. The two donkeys were almost dwarfed by their entourage; but there was no denying their speed — the Kibla donkey is said to achieve speeds of up to 40 kph, and this looked close. The two were neck-and-neck, their jockeys perched on top of the tiny carts using their whips energetically, although not cruelly.

Very vivid descriptions and use of imagery is created. Pictures are painted in the minds of the reader with the use of Visual Imagery.

Facts are given with hyphens or brackets. Facts are an important aspect of Travelogues. Here, a hyphen is used to give extra information. Known as parenthetical information.

Auditory Imagery is also used to allow the reader to picture the event in their minds.

This paragraph creates a very chaotic atmosphere, it also has a sense of excitement.

Verbs, "revved" and adverbs, "Energetically" are very strong and powerful verbs and add to the imagery created.

The words, "although not cruelly" expresses the writer's opinion on the situation. It lets the readers know that the animals weren't treated cruelly. The writer's thoughts and opinions are also a very important aspect of Travelogues.

Comparative to the first three paragraphs, the sentence structures in paragraph 4 are more complex and compound to convey the sense of chaos and excitement to the reader.

- Use of variety of Punctuation.
- Use of many embedded clauses.

The noise of the approaching vehicles grew; horns tooting, bells ringing, and the special rattles used just for this purpose (like maracas, a metal container filled with dried beans). Men standing on top of their cars and vans, hanging out of taxis and perched on lorries, all cheered and shouted, while the vehicles jostled to get to the front of the convoy

The word, "Jostled" adds to the sense of chaos and energy created.

Auditory imagery, increases the chaotic atmosphere and sense of excitement.

Parenthetical Information given within brackets (Factual Information is an important aspect of Travelogues).

Yaqoob chose exactly the right moment to edge out of the road and swerve in front of the nearest car, finding the perfect place to see the two donkeys and at the front of the vehicles. This was Formula One without rules, or a city-centre rush hour gone anarchic; a complete flouting of every type of traffic rule and common sense.

Anarchic - Lawless

The reader is given more detailed information as the story unfolds.

Lexical choice conveys the chaotic and exciting atmosphere.

The writer uses terms of the western world to describe an eastern game, "Formula One", "City-Centre rush hour". This shows the contrast between the western and eastern world. This further adds to the chaos as the game is said to be lawless, "A complete flouting of every type of traffic rule and common sense".

Our young driver relished this unusual test of driving skills. It was survival of the fittest, and depended upon the ability to cut in front of a vehicle with a sharp flick of the steering wheel (no lane discipline here); quick reflexes to spot a gap in the traffic for a couple of seconds; nerves of steel, and an effective horn. There were two races — the motorized spectators at the back; in front, the two donkeys, still running close and amazingly not put off by the uproar just behind them. Ahead of the donkeys, oncoming traffic — for it was a main road — had to dive into the ditch and wait there until we had passed. Yaqoob loved it. We stayed near to the front, his hand permanently on the horn and his language growing more colourful with every vehicle that tried to cut in front.

Irony and Humor — "colourful"

Short sentence — "Yaqoob loved it", shows the excitement building up

Parenthetical Information, Variety of Punctuation, Complex sentences, Descriptive Writing, can be seen.

The road straightened and levelled, and everyone picked up speed as we neared the end of the race. But just as they were reaching the finishing line, the hospital gate, there was a near pile-up as the leading donkey swerved, lost his footing and he and the cart tumbled over. The race was over.

With the Short sentence, a drop in all the excitement and chaos is shown, and a sense of disappointment takes over. It is an Anticlimax.

And then the trouble began. I assumed the winner was the one who completed the race but it was not seen that way by everyone. Apart from the two jockeys and 'officials' (who, it turned out, were actually monitoring the race) there were over a hundred punters who had all staked money on the race, and therefore had strong opinions. Some were claiming that the donkey had fallen because the other one had been ridden too close to him. Voices were raised, fists were out and tempers rising. Everyone gathered around one jockey and official, while the bookmakers were trying to insist that the race should be re-run.

The reason for the abrupt change in atmosphere is shown - It's because a lot of people have been betting a lot of money on the winners of the race, and they weren't ready to lose their bets.

There is irony in 'officials', as the race is very chaotic and anarchic but it still had certain officials to overlook it. This is followed by parenthetical information, which further emphasizes on the irony and adds a sense of humor as well.

Short sentence creates tension and a sense of foreboding and danger.

There is a listing of actions to show the tense and dangerous atmosphere.

Yaqoob and Iqbal were nervous of hanging around a volatile situation. They agreed to find out for me what was happening ordering me to stay inside the car as they were swallowed up by the crowd. They emerged sometime later. 'It's still not resolved,' said Iqbal, 'but it's starting to get nasty. I think we should leave.' As we drove away, Yaqoob reflected on his driving skills. 'I really enjoyed that,' he said as we drove off at a more sedate pace. 'But I don't even have my license yet because I'm underage!'

The word “ordering” emphasizes on the danger, as the two “lads” hadn’t yet refused anything the writer had asked of them, but now they were being very stern which shows that the situation was really “nasty”.

It also shows a bit of the eastern culture, as men in the eastern world strongly believe it their responsibility to take care of the women.

Shows the lack of law enforcement in the country as people take pride in breaking the laws. Shows that people are very open about them breaking the rules and regulations. Exclamation mark shows pride and excitement.

Increases the tension built.

They both found this hilarious, but I was glad he hadn’t told me before; an inexperienced, underage driver causing a massive pile-up in the middle of the high- stakes donkey race could have caused problems.

- **Despite all the chaos and tension at the end, the writer manages to end the extract in the same light – hearted and humorous tone in which she began the extract in the beginning.**