The provided extract from Earl Lovelace’s book, *The Dragon Can’t Dance*, is a prosaic passage that tells the story of the inhabitants of Cavalry Hill, and the strong sense of self perpetrated ancestral culture that the community maintains through its struggles and Monday morning celebrations. The passage uses many prosaic and language devices, and is very much a lyrical piece of literature.

The passage begins with the exultant account of the “Little boys, costumed in old dresses, their heads tied, holding brooms made from the ribs of coconut palm leaves, blowing whistles and beating kerosene tins for drums, move across the face of the awakening hill.” The mood is exultant as the narrator speaks of this tradition, born out of their isolation from a “home land that never was their home,” and how they were keeping alive their spirits by nurturing their inner warriors. The description of these practices is inherently African, and the narrator speaks of their beginnings, “from the middle passage, back to Mali and to the Guinea and Dahomey and Congo, back to Africa where the maskers were sacred and revered. The mood however shifts to darkness as they speak in the second paragraph of a disrespect, and a betrayal of the carnivals true identity, and the narrator speaks of the carnival that “once upon a time the entire carnival was a symbol of Rebellion”. The mood continues to decline as the narrator hints that the Carnival has lost its true nature, no longer the menacing “black,” and had instead been replaced with “satin silks and the beads and feathers and Rhine stones”.

The Poem uses many prosaic devices; primarily Lovelace uses the punctuation to achieve a certain mood and reading style that supports the mood of those passages. In the first paragraph the punctuation is sparse which forces the reader to read quickly and sharply. This stands in stark contrast to the second paragraph, where the punctuation becomes more frequent, causing the reader to read at a slower pace, reflecting the building anger and frustration at the adoption of more modern and temperate customs, in lieu of the traditional more warrior like carnival. In addition to Lovelace’s use of punctuation, Lovelace uses diction to heighten the effect of his narrative. In the case of his depiction of the “old carnival” he uses drawn out vowel sounds to accentuate the menacing effect, “men who blackened themselves further with black grease to make of their very blackness a menace”, this example of lyrical language is a common within the passage.

The above quote is also a good example of the imagery used in the passage, it is primal and basic, serving to reinforce the traditional warrior background that the narrator speaks of. This stands in contrast to the imagery further in the paragraph which describes the betrayal and homogenisation of the Carnival, which has light and joyful imagery, and is not grounded in the fore mentioned image of rebellion, it is light and unburdened, “satin silks and the beads and feathers and Rhine stones”.

The Extract from Lovelace’s book, *The Dragon Cannot Dance* is an expression of dismay at a changing world, its narrator speaks repeatedly of the homogenisation of the once rebellious and ancestral tradition of his carnival in a modern Trinidad and Tobago. The prosaic piece uses many literary devices to accentuate and achieve the desired effect on the reader, primarily it utilises imagery and diction to accentuate the feelings of the narrator.

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