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Q1 Rewrite

AP English Literature

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In Olive Senior's poem "Plants," the speaker provides a cynical and dark view that plants are dominating the world without humans fully being aware of the plants' sinister motives of conquering them. Senior's use of connotative diction and figurative language gives the speaker a cynical and cautious outlook on the relationship between plants and humans, as if the speaker is directly speaking to an audience and warning them of plants' invasive nature.

First, Senior's use of diction in the poem brings connotation of domination and invasion by plants over humans. For example, the speaker's choice of words in lines 10, "armies of mangrove on the march..." paint an image of large pack of mangroves invading human's personal space and bothering human's daily life. The speaker depicts these harmless images of mangroves and uses diction like, "armies of mangroves" to personify mangroves as militant armies to achieve conquest and taking over the natural world.

Another example of diction is on line 12 "clinging tendrils anchoring themselves everywhere," to represent sinister ways in which plants invade and are clinging to every part of human life and slowly, but surely, conquering them. Further examples of diction is on line 13 where the speaker states, "the world...full of shoots bent on conquest.../ invasive seedlings seeking wide open spaces..." showing that plants will ultimately conquer human spaces and make it their own without humans realizing the consequences. By using harsh words like "invade" or "conquest," plants in the poem take on human forms where the speaker personify plants as conquerors, and are able to dominate humans in subtle ways that they are unaware. Furthermore, the word in line 18 "colonizing," is associated with taking over land and domination over people. This is another way in which the speaker's

word choice seems to show plants' harmless yet sinister way of domination over humans. That plants proliferate to survive and outlive the entire human population. Moreover, in lines 33-34 "They'll outlast us, they were always there/one step ahead of us...generating the original profligate..." meaning that plants' ability to proliferate is what makes plants live on forever.

Second, Senior's use of figurative language, such as metaphors and similes are used to personify plants' invasion into human life. For example, "hitchhiking burrs" and "parachuting seeds," are forms of figurative language providing imagery of what the future may look when plants show up everywhere in human's daily life. Not only that, but these "burrs" and "seeds," are plants personified as humans and performing human actions. Senior also uses this personification to show the audience that these plants' intentions are not innocent in nature. In lines 17 "Maybe you haven't quite taken in the colonizing ambitions..." proves that the ambitions of plants are to conquer and to dominate in subtle ways which will outlast humans. Moreover, in lines 24-25 the speaker is speaking directly to the reader, acknowledging that readers naively indulge themselves in plants, yet not fully understanding the motives of plants. For example, in lines 25 the speaker directly addresses the audience, "-- don't deny it my dear, I've seen you sniff and exclaim." This line is expressing the speaker's unapologetic way of calling out the audience who are mindless and deceived by the innocence of sweet, pungent plants' rather than of plants' "colonizing ambitions" and sinister motives. The speaker's use of metaphors and similes of plants consistently seem to suggest that plants are going to slowly colonize and conquer the human world without their knowledge as they continue to believe plants are harmless.

The speaker uses words such as "innocent" to acknowledge the audience because humans don't seem to be aware of the sinister and mysterious motives and intentions behind the plants' colonization. The speaker almost has a condescending tone towards the audience throughout the poem as humans are referred to as "Innocent," where the speaker

seems as if he/she is the only person to truly understand the dark and threatening motives of the plants. The word "innocent" has a connotation of "not knowing, or being unaware, or being naive," which is the reason for the speaker's use of diction and figurative language setting the tone to warn and inform the audience to be cautious and be wary of plants.

Therefore, the speaker is warning the audience not to be innocent and ignorant about what plants are planning, which is to colonize and conquer the human world. The audience should stop believing that plants are harmless and they should take immediate action to stop the spread of plants as they continue to interfere in every aspect of human lives.