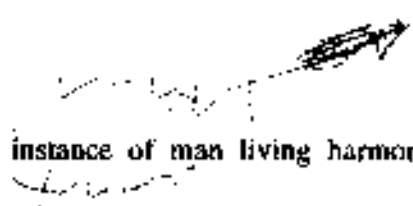


In Edouard Vuillard's *First Fruits*, the viewer is presented with a scene from what appears to be some sort of orchard. The orchard is having the first of its fruit picked by some workers. However, what Edouard Vuillard is really trying to portray to us is that mother nature and humans can and do live harmoniously and in unity. Man tends to nature and lives in it and nature will provide back. Vuillard indicates this harmony of man and nature through the use of contrast of value, line, and brushwork.

When one looks at this painting, three main zones are emphasized and made the focal point through contrast of value. These focal points would have to be the tree in the center and the left and right sides of the painting where the human subjects are found. The tree made of green shades is contrasted by sky which is made of a tonal white. The left and right zones are also contrasted by tonal white. The fact that there are three focal points is important because it shows that these three points are equally important to the viewer. This means man and nature are equally important in this painting. When looking at the painting you draw a sense of unity between the subjects because of their equal importance. This unity through equal focus is the first glimpse of a harmonious connection between the subjects.

Line is another formal element that draws attention to this harmony. There are no actual lines in this painting, but implied line. These implied lines are the rows of the orchard. When one follows these lines they start by the tree, recede back into space, and draw your eyes to two men and one woman nestled in flora and reaping what nature has provided. This is a direct example of humans mutually living with mother nature as they tend to her and she provides for them, and Vuillard made sure that the viewer saw this. He used the implied lines to guarantee the viewer draws a harmonious connection between the two subjects by directing the audience's eyes to an



actual instance of man living harmoniously with nature. The eyes are led to unite nature, represented by the tree, and man, represented by the reapers, through a line that is implied.

The third formal element Vuillard uses to get his point across is brushstroke. The brushstrokes are light and airy and he uses these brushstrokes the same way in both subjects. This use of the same type of brushstroke to depict both man and nature creates unity by showing the viewer that they coexist together peacefully. If one of the two had been depicted with different brushstrokes, then they would have visually clashed due to being represented differently. This treatment would've created a sense of discord between man and nature. Them being depicted in the same way allows the subjects to exist harmoniously. One does not triumph over the other and they are not made separate, clashing entities. Also, since they both have the same brushstrokes, to the viewer they look fairly similar, and if two things look similar, then you can assume that they are related and belong with each other. Vuillard's brushstrokes show the viewer that the two main subjects belong together and that they are akin.

The emphasis on nature and man living together in this painting has a sense of primitivism to it. It romantically depicts nature and the fruit it has to offer, but also includes man in this picture. Different formal elements were employed by Vuillard, but they all have the same outcome. This outcome is one of unity. Both man and nature are united in this picture as they coexist peacefully and equally.

