



ANDROGYNY

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)



Angels at Mamre, Rublev

'Androgyny is the ability to be masculine in a womanly way and to be feminine in a womanly way. (Richard Rohr)

I wonder if maybe the final shape of the soul is principally female? So commented one of the men in our group. Taking our cue from this we ask, What are some of the messages held within the creation of the male/female relationship? Where might we be meant to get to? Questions of harmony & discord, suspicion & trust, openness & guardedness as well as reconciliation, recognition & love arise.

For countless ages, human culture and society have emphasized the differences between men and women rather than their underlying unity.



In Tooker's painting Embrace of Peace II* the protagonists reach out for each other and in so doing acknowledge a commonality (here in facial structure, tones and colouring) and sense of belonging and longing that might be finally, fully and equally rediscovered.

Our society has taught us to regard the opposite sex with suspicion, and our culture has bred in us a spirit of competition for different forms of power... The liberating gospel of Jesus is that salvation is found not in domination but in partnership, not in power-wielding but in power-sharing.

Rohr comments that we are deprived of that healthy wholeness (holiness) which comes from integrating both the masculine and feminine in our lives. He notes that in some cultures the man-woman is considered the wise one, a spiritual seer, an image of Divine wholeness.

If you read classic legends and myths, note how you invariably meet the strong, old woman and the kind old man by the end of the story.

So, messages here of 'underlying unity', of power sharing, of holiness, and a possible end goal!

See Wild man to wise man by Richard Rohr, pp. 15-18. * <http://calitreview.com/2609>

REFLECTION

Henri Nouwen comments on this icon of the Trinity. "The characters tend to exhibit a harmony and elegance of form, 'abnormally' stretched out into tall figures and having a sense of purity and almost languid ease."

I am mindful of the elves in Tolkien's stories—of both physical bravery and their astonishing elegant beauty and deep wisdom. They seem to exhibit together both masculine and feminine.