"The Wayfarer" ("The Pedlar") by Hieronymus Bosch as an Archetypal Image of an 'Other-Stranger'

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Abstract: One of the most important contemporary experiences of European societies is undoubtedly the migration crisis. The resulting social fears of 'strangers,' which have been activated, show how important the archetypical 'other-stranger' pattern still is, and that it can be treated as an example of an 'anthropological constant.'

The aim of the article is to try to look at the painting "The Wayfarer" by Hieronymus Bosch as an illustration of the archetypical 'other-stranger' pattern. It seems that such a reading of this work, rich in symbolic content, on the one hand perfectly justifies the thesis of the archetypical sources of contemporary attitudes towards 'strangers' and, on the other hand, allows one to better understand and explain the current reactions and behaviors of Europeans. This becomes particularly evident when juxtaposing the image of Hieronymus Bosch with the contemporary media images of migrants.

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One[1] of the most important and most traumatic experiences of European societies in the second decade of the 21st century has undoubtedly been the migration crisis. Most often, we tend to look at it very pragmatically, which undoubtedly is a result of the dominance of the sphere of politics and economy in our modern thinking about the world. It may seem that political and economic pragmatism has dominated even ideological and axiological disputes, which is clearly reflected both in the evolution of political programs and in the implemented public policies. Some distinct examples involve the evolution of social attitudes towards immigrants in Europe as well as a clear increase in the popularity of populist and nationalist ideologies (measured, for example, by political support for groups tapping into these ideologies) even where these ideologies have not enjoyed wider social acceptance for the last half of a century (TIMBRO 2019). These changes – which, in turn, resulted in changes in the mentality of Europeans – forced a departure from the previously declared attitudes of openness and solidarity with refugees (notably, clear beneficiaries of these attitudes involved Poles in the 1980s after the declaration of martial law and, later, the Chechens in the period of the Chechen wars 1999-2009) as well as prompted many European governments to introduce various limitations and restrictions in this regard.

The observed transformations of attitudes of Europeans are, of course, justified in the logic of political strategies and economic rules, yet this cannot provide a full explanation; it requires a reference to the anthropological context and, in particular, to the anthropological dimension of the 'our own[2] – stranger' relationship. Social reactions accompanying contemporary migration processes clearly indicate that the image of a 'stranger' is currently undergoing a dynamic dislocation in the minds of Europeans. The last decades of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century were characterized by a rather pronounced dominance of open attitudes, which enabled not only the process of political and economic integration of Eastern and Western Europe, but also constant absorption of relatively small migrations from Asia or the Middle East. Only the threat resulting from the recent economic crisis and the appearance of large waves of Arab refugees – as well as the somewhat earlier tragic terrorist attacks – prompted Europeans to update the usual reflection on the role and place of 'strangers,' thus redefining attitudes towards them. This happened in accordance with the rule formulated by Florian Znaniecki that a 'stranger' becomes the subject of experience only when there occurs a "social contact (with them) on the basis of separate systems of values" (1990:300).

The 'our own – stranger' divide. Theoretical background

However, it should be clearly stressed that the figure of a 'stranger' and the opposition 'our own – stranger' are not new elements shaping the mentality of the Europeans. On the contrary, they are elements that have always been present in social reflection, because it is and was required by each process of

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[1] The paper was written within the statutory research of the Department of Sociology of Cracow University of Economics.

[2] To define the said figure, Zygmunt Bauman, whose words are cited in the article a number of times, uses the term "friends." However, in the age of Facebook this term has altered its meaning and it now defines a completely different dimension of community than it did when Bauman's books first appeared. Therefore – following the translation of publications of Ewa Nowicka by Zbigniew Nadstoga – it has been replaced with "our own."

constructing a collective identity (Bauman 1991:53-55). This means that in order to be able to answer the question about one's own identity, one needs the ability to indicate not only with whom one equates (the aspect of sameness), but also to determine how and from whom one differs (the aspect of distinctiveness) (Bokszański 2008:35-37). The figure of a 'stranger' is, therefore, no less indispensable than the figure of an 'our own' (Bokszański 2001:55-87) and without the 'our own – stranger' opposition one cannot function in a multicultural reality. Yet, one does not need to be clearly made aware of these elements as they can function at the level of obviousness (Mathews 2000:11-16), at least as long as the presence of a 'stranger' is not perceived as a threat. Only the awareness of a threat, anxiety, or fear associated with their presence makes these issues begin to undergo reflexive revision and, as a result, they become a more and more acutely obvious problem, or a challenge that not only encourages reflection, but also demands a response.

All this also proves that the 'our own – stranger' opposition – due to its constant and not temporal presence – is rooted in the social nature of a human being and that it is the core of the objective and theoretical identity in the anthropological dimension. Therefore, it should be seen as "anthropological constant" (Barański 2010:360-361). Another consequence of this fact is that it is also necessary to recognize that the problem of migrants in Europe is not a political and social problem in the strict sense of the word. Of course, the situation we are dealing with is determined by a number of 'here and now' factors. However, neither the problem of 'strangers' nor the crystallizing contemporary mental attitudes towards them are dependent only on current events; they are also a consequence of universal anthropological rules shaping the 'our own – stranger' rela-

tionship. Therefore, the understanding of contemporary processes of mental transformation in Europe – which is a necessary condition for the construction of public policies in this area – becomes truly possible only when one takes into account the role of the anthropological construction of the 'stranger' and the rules underlying it.

In this light, who is a 'stranger' when we see them from this perspective? The anthropological construction of the 'stranger' figure is based primarily on the conviction that the 'stranger' is different and anyone who is different can be seen as a 'stranger.' According to Ewa Nowicka (1990),

> [a] stranger is always a person who is suspected of being different, or this otherness is known, while everything that is unknown – or, more strictly, not yet known, is suspected of being different. (p. 28)

It should be noted, however, that the otherness of a 'stranger' is on the one hand an indispensable tool for identifying them, yet it is precisely the otherness (external or internal) that often allows us to find out who we are dealing with. Nonetheless, it is also a trap: a 'stranger' must be different, because they are not an 'our own.' Therefore, they must differ in some regard. This means that all attempts by the 'stranger' to obliterate their otherness, their efforts to obliterate the difference, their attempts to become one of 'our own' – can be dangerous and thus must be doomed to failure. The recognisability of differences between 'strangers' is the condition of feeling safe by the 'our own.' This is why the 'stranger,' as Sander Gilman notes, falls into a conservative curse, from which there is no good way out:

> The more you are like me, the more I know the true value of my power, which you wish to share, and the

more I am aware that you are but a shoddy counterfeit, an outsider. (as cited in Bauman 1991:71)

The second key anthropological feature of the 'stranger' is that a stranger is a newcomer and not a native. As Georg Simmel (1950) notes,

(…) his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself. (p. 402)

This, in effect, means that being a 'stranger' is incompatible with being an 'our own.' The irreversible 'flaw' of the stranger is that they have not been there "from the very beginning"; it brings in new, different qualities that are not indigenous. The 'stranger' may, of course, try to take on the indigenous values and try to be fully acculturated, but the fact that they have not been there "from the beginning" will always be a part of them, so they can never cease to be a 'stranger.'

The role of a 'stranger'– the newcomer – is connected with another important attribute, which Simmel (1950) points out:

The stranger is (…) the person who comes today and stays tomorrow. He is, so to speak, the potential wanderer: although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going. (p. 402)

The presence of a stranger is, therefore, potentially a temporary state and is an additional source of uncertainty. They do not have to stay here permanently; since they came from somewhere, they can always go back to their place. Or go further. Since they have already become a wayfarer, they can remain one forever, and the right of a wayfarer is to

come and go. Their departure can happen quickly, but it is also possible that they will stay for a longer time. Their presence does not have to be a permanent element, as opposed to the presence of the 'our own.' This means that even though they might try to be similar to 'our own' ones and their stay can even be very beneficial, it is not known how long their presence will last and what can be expected from them in the end. Therefore, the presence of a 'stranger' always means a state of temporariness. Their right to leave, and leave without justification, attributes more anxiety to them, which intensifies their alienation.

Following Simmel's line of thinking, one can notice that the anthropological construction of the figure of a wayfarer is a perfect quintessence of the 'stranger.' The essence of wandering implies movement. The wayfarer is in motion and if they are wandering, they are not at home; they are not in their space and they are not among their 'our owns.' They are a stranger and this means that by definition they become a 'stranger.'

It should be noted, however, that being a wayfarer and the activity of wandering in the anthropological perspective can be considered in three dimensions. First of all, it can be understood literally as moving in geographical space. Secondly, it can be understood metaphorically and then it means not only moving, but also getting to know the world, other societies, and cultures; it can also refer to 'time travel.' A metaphorical journey also describes human life, because we can recognize that each of us is a wayfarer on our individual paths of life. The third dimension of wandering is an archetypical dimension and then the wandering becomes a construct capable of symbolically grasping the specificity of the 'our own – stranger' relationship, which

is a consequence of going on a journey. Archetypically understood, wandering reveals cultural patterns constructed socially towards 'strangers' and symbolically shows all fears towards the wanderer, which are the quintessence of fears about 'strangers.' The figure of a wanderer in this dimension reveals not who a 'stranger' can be, but what the 'our own' fear the most in the presence of a 'stranger.' Therefore, it speaks more of the 'our own' than of the 'strangers.'

Of course, one must also remember that not every wayfarer evokes the same emotions and activates the same attitudes. The figure of the wayfarer is internally differentiated and the wayfarer themselves can have a radically different status in different contexts and, as a result, raise hopes or fears, create opportunities or constitute a threat. Therefore, it is worth mentioning at least several contexts of wandering as they significantly change the meaning of the very notion. One of the contexts makes it possible to distinguish between those who travel voluntarily and those who are forced to travel. Both are strangers who move, but their roles and, above all, their capabilities are significantly different. They also evoke completely different reactions of their hosts. Zygmunt Bauman (1998) calls the former ones tourists and the latter ones vagabonds, and characterizes them as follows:

> The first travel at will, get much fun from their travel (particularly if travelling first class or using private aircraft), are cajoled or bribed to travel and welcomed with smiles and open arms when they do. The second travel surreptitiously, often illegally, sometimes paying more for the crowded steerage of a stinking unseaworthy boat then others pay for business-class gilded luxuries – and are frowned upon, and, if unlucky, arrested and promptly deported, when they arrive. (p. 88)

Bauman emphasizes that "a vagabond is an alter ego of a tourist" and also points out that the two figures do not only contradict each other, but they complement each other perfectly. Therefore, they are needed because a vagabond for a tourist is a warning, and a tourist for a vagabond is a challenge. Owing to this, the tourist is also able to appreciate what they possess, and the vagabond sees that their dream can be realized (Bauman 1998:93-102).

It is worth noting, however, that this distinction is important not only for the traveling 'strangers.' It is especially significant for 'our owns,' because it enables them to distinguish between desirable and undesirable 'strangers.' The former ones are willingly invited and welcomed. They are treated as expected guests and if they are adequately wealthy, they are even offered substitutes of 'homeliness' in the form of a resident status and even civil rights. This class of 'strangers' does not need to be feared; on the contrary, they should be encouraged to stay, because although they will never become 'our own,' their presence can bring various benefits. The latter ones are reluctant to be seen and are informed at every step that they should look for another place to go to. Nothing is offered to them, but additional barriers and difficulties are created for them. However, this is not a consequence of a real threat from vagrants, but, above all, a result of the fears and prejudices of 'our own' towards this kind of 'strangers.'

Another important context for travel is the motif itself, which can justify the meaning of travel in various ways. It is possible to travel with the intention of achieving a specific goal, to arrive at a specific place – it is a journey *to* a place. However, a journey can also be an escape, voluntary or forced, from aspecific place – it will be a journey *from* a place.

Or one may wander for the sake of the wandering itself, without a predetermined goal.

Undoubtedly, the least emotions among the 'our owns' hosts are aroused by a traveler who travels for the sake of traveling itself. They are a tourist who comes for some time and then they will surely come back to their place. Or a globetrotter who is here, but will move on somewhere soon, since for them traveling is a value in itself; therefore, anywhere they are, they are on the way. What is known about them is that since they arrived, they will also leave; they are here for a short while. This type of a wanderer is a 'stranger,' but since their otherness is obvious and predictable, it can be put aside and isolated. As a result, their presence may be discomforting, but it does not disturb the world of 'our owns'; it is not a threat. To such a wanderer we can be hospitable so that they would leave with good memories of us.

The wanderer who knows exactly where they want to go arouses much greater emotions. This wanderer, heading for a specific place, may, for example, be a person coming to the city in search for a job, or an immigrant coming to a country where they would like to find a better life prospects for themselves. In a new environment, they are undoubtedly 'strange,' but it is also known that they want to stay here. Therefore, they are not 'our own,' but one can also expect that they might want to cease being a 'stranger.' Of course, they will fall into the 'conservative curse,' which will make it possible to mark them properly. However, over time they will also become more and more similar to those among whom they ended up. And the emotions associated with their presence will subside over time.

Nevertheless, the greatest emotions are aroused by a wanderer who is moving because they want or have to leave their place. So they are not a wanderer *to* a place, but a wanderer *from* a place. In this situation, the final destination of their travel is often unknown. Their arrival is not a part of any plan, but a result of accidental circumstances. This also means that it is not known whether they will want to stay and – if so – whether they will be willing to change and adapt to the new environment. Or maybe when they stay they will want to change the existing surroundings in which they found themselves as well the rules applicable there? Their presence means nothing but question marks and accompanying frustration that goes with them. And the frustration is mutual. On the one hand, it is the frustration of a wanderer who was forced to leave their place; who was forced to stop being an 'our own' at home and become an unwanted 'stranger' instead; in their case, the nightmare of wandering is compounded by the nightmare of a lack of a chance to settle. On the other hand, it is also the frustration of the hosts who empathically feel the nightmare of such a traveler. At the same time, they fear wanderers of such kind and they would never want to find themselves in their shoes. Undoubtedly, the wanderer about whom nobody knows who they were, why they are wandering, who they are now, and, above all, who they will become in the future, inspires the greatest fears and emotions.

A visual representation of a 'stranger.' A method of analysis

The questions formulated here about the figure of a 'stranger' are of a universal and archetypical character, which is proven above all by their continuous presence and adequacy to each situation. They are not related to any specific context of the appearance of a 'stranger' among 'our owns.' This also means that regardless of the form of a state-

ment – regardless of whether it is a colloquial, scientific or artistic narrative – these questions can be formulated; they can appear and they invariably remain valid up to date. An excellent example of the universality of this problem, which takes the form of an artistic expression, can be the "The Wayfarer" painting[3] by a Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch (ca. 1450-1516). It is a perfect example of a social reflection on the place of a 'stranger' going further beyond the boundaries of a scientific discourse, because it is, in fact, a multi-threaded painter's treatise devoted to the figure of a 'stranger' as well as, undoubtedly, a profound anthropological study.

The iconography-iconological method of examining visual representations of Erwin Panofsky will be used to analyze this painting treatise by Hieronymus Bosch (Panofsky 1955:26-42). This is because it allows one to thoroughly investigate and reconstruct historical interpretations of the whole visual message as well as explore the importance of particular components.

Erwin Panofsky's method involves three levels of analysis and interpretation. The first level of interpretation –the pre-iconographical one – recognizes meanings that are understandable at an elementary level. However, this level is sometimes unreliable, because the identification of meanings here is only based on the observer's colloquial knowledge and does not take into account the specificity and difference of the historical and cultural context in which the creator and recipient of the work are rooted. The second, iconographical level allows for the identification and interpretation

of symbolic meanings, but it requires referring to in-depth knowledge of the significance of specific symbolic forms at the time of creation of the analyzed work. For this reason, specialized studies devoted to the meaning of symbolism in Hieronymus Bosch's paintings were used for the purposes of the analysis. This made it possible to reconstruct the meaning of the visual message, including the symbolic meanings that had been contained in it at the time the work was created and not at the time of its contemporary reception. The third level of interpretation – the iconological one – allows one to recreate the inter-contextual cultural significance of the examined message, which takes into account the specificity of the method of the problematization of the analyzed phenomenon in a specific time and in a specific social space (Rose 2001:144-147; D'Alleva 2005:21-23).

A figure of the 'wayfarer-stranger.' The analysis of Hieronymus Bosch's painting

This particular Hieronymus Bosch's painting is a representation of a man who is in the middle of a journey, but, as we might think, it is not a concrete event that can be placed in a specific time and place, so it is not a genre scene. There are no details that would allow for an identification with a particular place (which was often encountered in the time of the creation of the picture), but it is more important that the picture has the shape of a tondo. This form of a picture suggests that we are dealing with a "mirror of reality" (Bax 1979:303-304) or a "mirror of truth" (Tolnay 1937:46), therefore it is necessary to treat it as an authorial presentation of a problem chosen by the painter, which, according to its intention, should be perceived in a universal and metaphorical dimension. This means that we should perceive the presented scene as a kind of a synecdoche in the

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[3] Also known as "The Pedlar," Museum Boymans – van Beuningen, Rotterdam, oil on wooden board, diameter 710 mm, year 1510 (dating according to Buzzati and Cinotti 1977).

form of *pars pro toto*.[4] This also means that the image is a representation of a specific fragment of reality – subjectively and intentionally composed – which, taking into account the capabilities of an image as a medium, at the same time constructs a message that definitely goes beyond the framework of this particular painting presentation (cf. Hall 1997:15-19), just as contemporary photojournalism does. Thus, it fits perfectly into one of the key social roles of the painting presentations of the Middle Ages, according to the principle already expressed by Pope Gregory the Great (540-604) and confirmed at the Synod in Arras in 1025, which states that:

> To simple people a picture is what writing is to those who can read, because those who do not know how to write see and read in a picture the path they should follow. Therefore, images exist first of all to teach people. (Białostocki 1988:215)

The analysis of the message conveyed by Hieronymus Bosch's painting requires separating out three areas within its framework (Photo 1). By means of representations of deep symbolic meaning, each of these areas provokes reflection on the wandering 'stranger,' but at the same time each of them refers to different dimensions of alienation. The first one touches upon the problem of the presented 'stranger's' past; the second one is an attempt at answering the question about who he is now; whereas the third one is meant to stimulate reflection on his future. These three questions, as already mentioned, describe the key dilemmas upon which the anthropological 'our own – stranger' relationship is constituted.

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[4] The possibility of such an understanding of this stylistic figure was pointed out by A.L.T. Tota in a presentation titled "Pieces of the Past": Visual Culture, Photography and Public Memory," delivered at ESA 10th Midterm Conference of the Sociology of the Arts and Sociology of Culture Research Networks, Malta 2018.

Photo 1. Hieronymus Bosch, "The Wayfarer" (1510)
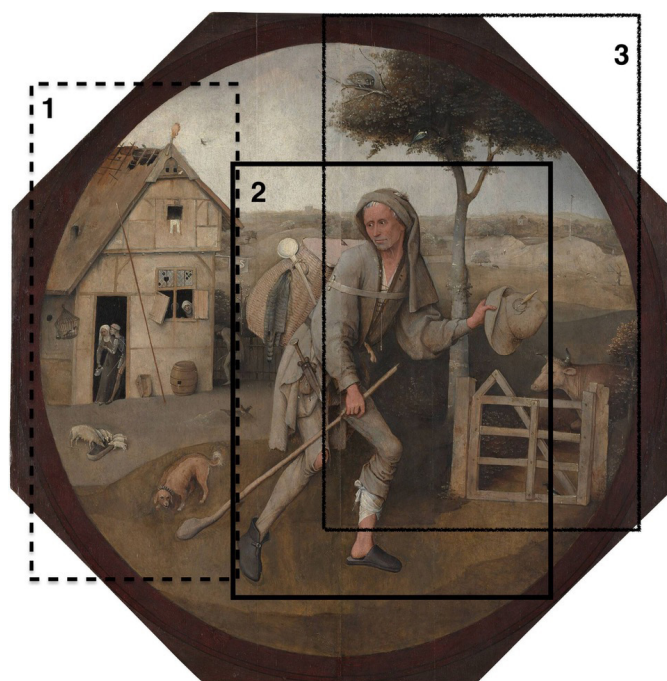
Source: own elaboration based on https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wędrowiec_(obraz_Hieronima_Boscha)#/media/File:Jheronimus_Bosch_112.jpg (Retrieved March 16, 2019).

Let us start with the first fragment of the painting, covering the left side of the work. It depicts a building, whose character, thanks to its rich symbolism, seems to be unambiguously defined (Photo 2). On the right side of the building there is a flag with an image of a goose, which indicates that we are dealing with a tavern. The barrel of leaking beer, the man who satisfies his physiological needs (Photo 3) as well as the jug on top of the roof can be regarded as symbols of drunkenness (Bax 1979:295). However, the identification of the presented building is much richer and reveals that it is not only a tavern, but also a brothel. This is indicated by the presence of a kissing couple (Bax 1979:75) and a clearly visible jug and

sword (Photo 4) – in this case, these attributes clearly refer to sexual symbolism (Bax 1979:295). This interpretation is also confirmed by a cage with a magpie, hanging on the left wall of the building (Fraenger 1987:244) and (Photo 5) man's underwear (Bax 1979:295) visible in the window on the first floor, as well as pigeons flying over the roof of the building (Enklaar 1940:82; Bax 1979:295). This is also evidenced by the image of an elderly woman looking clearly at the rooster visible in the courtyard, which can be treated as a symbolic representation of lust, both bodily and material (Enklaar 1940:83; Bax 1979:190-191). Perhaps she is the owner of the brothel and charges high fees from those interested. An accumulation of these diverse symbolic representations is the trough in the yard and the pigs gathered around it (Photo 6), which clearly refers to the symbolism of shamelessness and impurity (Bax 1979:63, 296). Not without significance is also the number of the pigs, which is a clear allusion to the seven deadly sins; the fact that one of them is much greater than the rest might suggest that one of these sins (impurity?) is emphasized here.

Photos 2-4. Hieronymus Bosch, "The Wayfarer" (details)

Source: own elaboration based on https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wędrowiec_(obraz_Hieronima_Boscha)#/media/File:Jheronimus_Bosch_112.jpg (Retrieved March 16, 2019).

It is purposeful that the depicted building is situated behind the titular character's back. We can clearly see that the man has nothing to do with it now. Perhaps this was his past from which he cuts himself off, because we do not see any clear connections to him here. It is also significant that the man is moving away from this world, and this world behind his back might even be saying goodbye to him, in an unfriendly way. A dog baring its fangs can indicate that the passing man had nothing to do with this building (Bax 1979:297) or that there is no turning back for the wanderer even though he looks back a little, perhaps at what he leaves behind. Everything we know about the wanderer's past – although it is not certain and unambiguous – is disturbing. What he has done in the past, or could have done in the past, tells one to keep their distance and observe him closely, especially who he is now.

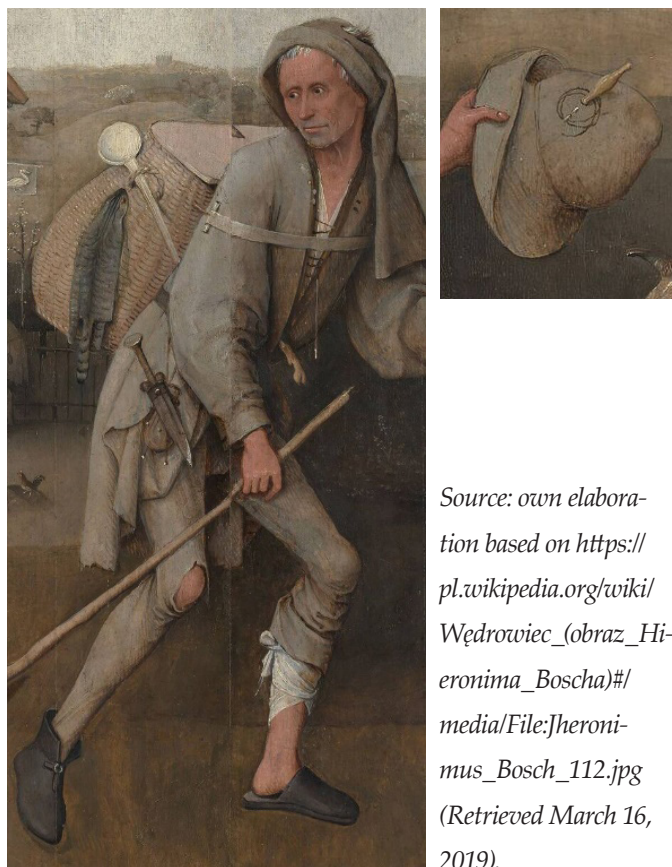**Photos 5-6. Hieronymus Bosch, "The Wayfarer" (details)**

Source: own elaboration based on https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wędrowiec_(obraz_Hieronima_Boscha)#/media/File:Jheronimus_Bosch_112.jpg (Retrieved March 16, 2019).

The second, central fragment of the painting leads one to reflect on the presence of the wayfarer (Photo 7). In the centre of the representation we can see the figure of a man to whom attributes with a complex symbolic meaning are also assigned. Yet, they do not provide an unambiguous identification of the man, since most of these attributes were the regular equipment of the wanderer in the Middle Ages. Thus, once again, it is only possible to make assumptions, which, however, not only do not reduce uncertainty but even deepen it. The presented man is dressed in ragged and torn clothing, which may be a sign of low wealth or even poverty. His economic status can also be confirmed by his mismatched shoes or the barking dog (Tuttle 1981:88-95; Grazziani 1982:211). The bandage on the left leg may be a sign of the hardships of wandering, but it may also be an attribute of evil men (Renger 1969:75; Reutersward 1970:141-146). In his right hand he holds a stick with which he defends himself from the dog, and he has a knife attached to his belt. Both of these elements constitute common equipment of people on the go, but they can also be evidence of brutal and rough nature of a human being (Bax 1979:298). A goat's foot, which can be treated as an amulet against misery, sticks out from the man's bosom (Enklaar 1940:78), although it is more likely to be a symbol of stupidity and insanity (Bax 1979:301). There is a basket visible on the back of the wanderer, which could be something completely typical for a journey. However, it can also be interpreted as a sign of attachment to family tradition and the traveler's honor (Fraenger 1987:243). It is also worth noting that the lid of the basket is faded red, which may indicate the poverty of its owner (Bax 1979:299). A spoon is attached to the basket, which is not only a useful tool for traveling, but may also indicate a tendency to immoderation and extravagance (Tolnay 1937:72; Bax 1979:300) or a proclivity to promis-

cuous love (Fraenger 1987:243). The cat's skin next to the spoon can be interpreted as a symbol of misery (Tolnay 1937:46 and 72) or poverty and drunkenness (Bax 1979:300). In the left hand the man holds a hat, although he already has headgear (Photo 8). It can, therefore, be a manifestation of the affluence of the poor man (Boczkowska 1977:51) or a sign that he is unable to free himself from the sinful life of the past (Bax 1979:297-298). It is also important to note that an awl and a twine are attached to this braw hat. Perhaps they are symbols of male virtue, coming from honest work (Panofsky 1953:42), or a testimony to the brutality and harshness of the depicted man (Bax 1979:298).

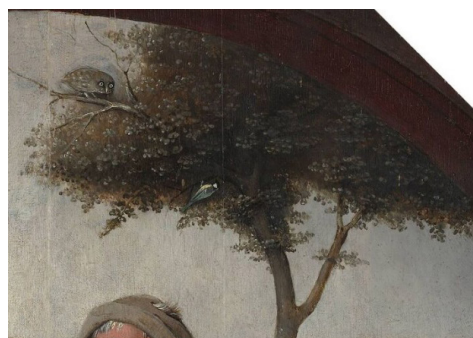**Photos 7-8. Hieronymus Bosch, "The Wayfarer" (details)**

Source: own elaboration based on https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wędrowiec_(obraz_Hieronima_Boscha)#/media/File:Jheronimus_Bosch_112.jpg (Retrieved March 16, 2019).

Analyzing the emerging image of the titular wayfarer, one the one hand one can emphasize the multidimensionality and richness of the created characteristics. On the other hand, we can clearly feel that the created image of the man is unstable, ambiguous, and full of doubts. Perhaps the titular character is a simple, hard-working, and honest man. But since he is a 'stranger,' we do not know him and some of his attributes do not present him in the best light, then we cannot be completely sure. In fact, nothing is certain here and the state of uncertainty is not conducive to an atmosphere of openness and trust. Therefore, fear is predominant, but it is not a fear of a specific threat, because the wayfarer does not directly threaten anyone. Rather, it is a fear of the unknown, of the fact that nothing is certain; it is, in effect, the fear of the fact that the presented man is simply 'strange' and not 'our own.' It is also worth emphasizing that the defects ascribed to the man are not something extraordinary: they can also characterize the 'our own,' who may also be poor, improvident, immoderate, profligate, and promiscuous, rough or brutal. However, among the 'our owns' these defects are not so terrifying. It is different in the case of 'strangers.' In relation to them, all these attributes only deepen fear, because we never know when and how we will find out whether fears were justified. In reality, therefore, the source of the sense of threat is not a 'stranger' appearing and interfering with the world of 'our owns,' but the still uncrystalized fear of 'our owns,' resulting just from the fact that someone 'strange' appears in their space.

The third fragment of the painting symbolically refers to the future of the wayfarer and includes the part of the painting marked by the axis of the tree as well as by the gate (Photo 9). Both these elements form a clear border, thus emphasizing the specific opposition of what is to come (on the right side of the painting) to

what is present and past (on the left side). However, this does not change the way the painter builds his narrative and – just as in the case of the past and the present – no unambiguous diagnoses are formulated in relation to the future. This is already expressed very clearly by the symbolism of the border element: the tree with branches spreading out in the shape of the letter Y, which, in accordance with Pythagorean symbolism, meant two clashing components of the human character, containing both the potential of virtue and vice (Photo 10). It can perfectly illustrate the situation of a man at a crossroads, forced to choose their own path and, to put it more metaphorically, a new path of their own life (Panofsky 1953:39; Boczkowska 1977:49-51). Therefore, the appearance of the wanderer in front of the gate means a situation in which he is forced to make a choice whose consequences are not fully known to anyone.

Photos 9-10. Hieronymus Bosch, "The Wayfarer" (details)

Source: own elaboration based on https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wędrowiec_(obraz_Hieronima_Boscha)#/media/File:Jheronimus_Bosch_112.jpg (Retrieved March 16, 2019).

From this perspective, the wanderer is faced with the necessity to make the key decision to take the side of Good or Evil. The nature of this choice is clearly defined by the symbolism of the depiction. The two separating branches look different in that one is clearly thicker but withering, while the other one clearly symbolizes the rebirth of life. To avoid any doubt, an owl sits on the withering branch, which in this context can be interpreted as a symbol of Evil (Boczkowska 1977:51; Bax 1979:208,302), whereas below it there is also a tit, a symbol of credulity – the victim of Evil (Bax 1979:302). The tree is adjoined by a gateway that crosses the path that the man walks along. Thus, it marks the border and completes the symbolic division into positive and negative space. Such an interpretation is clearly supported by the symbolism of the gate (Photo 11), which is divided into six parts, and the number six is a symbol of Good and Salvation (Fraenger 1987:249). Just behind the gate, however, there is a bull that can be a representation of a holy creature (Fraenger 1987:249), but it can also be a symbol of a human being under the influence of the moon (Boczkowska 1977:48) or a symbol of drunkenness (Bax 1979:301). In addition, it is clear that the gate is closed, so it will depend on a conscious decision and determination of the wanderer if he manages

to find himself on the other side. It is not certain, however, whether this will happen, because there is a magpie sitting at the gate, symbolizing a person tormented by internal doubts, a person marked by indecisiveness (Fraenger 1987:244). What is more, the man does not look straight on, into the future, but looks backwards. So far, only his braw hat is in the Good zone, which only adds to the indication that the final decisions have probably not been made yet. Therefore, the future of the wayfarer depends on how connected he is with his past and whether he is able to free himself from it. The doubt formulated here, however, becomes a fundamental question – one that is important not only to the wayfarer himself, but, above all, to those among whom he will find himself. It is therefore a question that is formulated by the 'our owns' as soon as there appears a 'wayfarer-stranger' among them. However, one needs to realize that no one is able to answer such a question, because it concerns the future. Therefore, neither 'our own' nor the incoming 'strangers' know the answer to this question, for in relation to the future one can only formulate alternative assumptions. Nonetheless, it is precisely this alternative and uncertainty of the future that is a source of fear. It is also important that this fear is created by the 'our owns' experiencing an encounter with a 'stranger' rather than by a 'stranger' actually creating a real threat.

Photo 11. Hieronymus Bosch, "The Wayfarer" (detail)

Source: own elaboration based on https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wędrowiec_(obraz_Hieronima_Boscha)#/media/File:-Jheronimus_Bosch_112.jpg (Retrieved March 16, 2019).

Conclusions

The painting by Hieronymus Bosch, referred to and analyzed above, should not be treated as a study of a specific event, as it has already been pointed out[5]. The exploration has a clearly universal meaning, for it is an attempt to formulate key questions concerning the essence of the presence of a 'stranger-wayfarer,' and as such leads to multi-threaded and alternative answers. It refers to figurative schemes that perfectly illustrate and explain how to construct a 'stranger' figure in the social consciousness of both a human being from the times of Hieronymus Bosch and a contemporary person. As these patterns are clearly archetypical and existing in the contemporary collective consciousness, they are constantly present or at least very often referred to, which is a consequence and confirmation of their universality and timelessness. And it is precisely these patterns that are being activated today, albeit only in relation to those 'stranger-wayfarers' whom we are willing to dislike. They are also to a large extent responsible for the fact that we tend to perceive this category of 'strangers' as poor people, burdened with 'uncertainty' and life baggage that does not inspire trust. The wandering 'strangers,' according to these schemes, are also most often depicted against the background of the traveled road (in a literal and metaphorical sense) as they carry all their belongings (Photo 12). During their travels they do not interact with the observers of their journey, similarly as the passing 'our owns' do not initiate any interactions. They go ahead in a determined way and the unfriendly environment makes them practically completely alienated in their journey (Photo 13).

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[5] It should be noted here that in the works of Hieronymus Bosch there is another image of a wandering man. And although its iconography is different, it has a very similar meaning – "The Path of Life," outside of the "Hay Wagon Tryptych," c.1516, oil on wood, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

Sometimes they can only longingly look back, as if with regret for the lost past (Photo 14). Everyone is aware, however, that their fate is difficult and that their only chance to get to a better ('our') world is to overcome obstacles, barriers, and borders, which are to be a challenge for them (can they overcome them?) as well as – at the same time – a test of their intentions or acceptance of the order of the 'our owns.' Nevertheless, it is worth stressing that these rules of order apply only to 'strangers' (and not the unwanted ones), not to the 'our owns' (Photo 15).

Photo 12. Author – Rujevic Nemanja

Source: https://www.dw.com/pl/szlak-bałkański-i-nowe-trasy-uchodźców-do-ue/a-19054894 (Retrieved March 27, 2019).

Photo 13. Author – Stoyan Nenov

Source: http://wyborcza.pl/1,75398,18720552,ludzie-to-nie-klocki-ktore-mozna-dowolnie-poukladac.html (Retrieved March 27, 2019).

Photo 14. Author – Raziye Akkoc

Source: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/hungary/11869694/Migrants-clash-with-police-as-Hungary-uses-tear-gas-to-defend-EU-frontier.html (Retrieved April 06, 2019).

Photo 15. Author – Bela Szandelszky

Source: https://pl.sputniknews.com/swiat/20150826887149/ (Retrieved April 06, 2019).

Although five centuries have passed since the times of Hieronymus Bosch, still such a 'stranger-wanderer' arouses similar anxiety and fear. This is because the presence of 'strangers' always activates the same questions – who were they?, who are they?, and who will they be? It activates similar associations and figurative schemes in the consciousness. This is what makes contemporary representations and

images illustrating the dangers of the appearance of 'strangers' only slightly different from the scheme used by Hieronymus Bosch. Regardless of whether we are talking about a migration crisis in Europe, witnessing scenes from the expulsion of the Rohingya people, or perhaps watching the march towards the USA, the same iconographic configurations are visible everywhere.

This does not mean, of course, that everyone follows the model of "The Wayfarer" by Hieronymus Bosch. Rather, it proves, first of all, that the problem of the 'our own – stranger' relationship is a permanent component of our identity. Secondly, the way it is shaped has the characteristics of an anthropological constant. And it also reveals that the reflection on this relationship was conducted by Hieronymus Bosch very thoroughly and cor-

rectly. Contemporary thinking about strangers fits into his scheme perfectly, although it had probably been developed much earlier than the image of Hieronymus Bosch.

A very important consequence of the conclusion formulated above is the necessity to recognize that the contemporary attitudes towards migrants in Europe (and not only) can be explained and understood only if we appreciate the anthropological component in them. This means, on the one hand, that all explanations based only on the analysis of economic and political contexts will be insufficient. On the other hand, it will mean that if we want to effectively implement the objectives of social policies in this area, we must reach out not only for political and economic tools, but also for knowledge and instruments from within anthropology.

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Citation

„Wędrowiec" Hieronima Boscha jako archetypiczny obraz „obcego-innego"

Abstrakt: Jednym z najważniejszych współczesnych doświadczeń społeczeństw europejskich jest niewątpliwie kryzys migracyjny. Wywołane przez niego społeczne obawy wobec przybyszów pokazują, jak ważny jest wciąż archetypowy wzór „obcego-innego" i że może on być traktowany jako przykład „stałej antropologicznej".

Celem artykułu jest próba spojrzenia na obraz „Wędrowiec" Hieronima Boscha jak na ilustrację archetypowego wzoru „obcego-innego". Wydaje się, że takie odczytanie tego dzieła, bardzo bogatego w treści symboliczne, z jednej strony doskonale uzasadnia tezę o archetypowych źródłach współczesnych postaw wobec „obcych", z drugiej natomiast strony pozwala lepiej zrozumieć i wyjaśnić współczesne reakcje i zachowania Europejczyków. Staje się to szczególnie widoczne, gdy zestawimy obraz Hieronima Boscha ze współczesnymi medialnymi obrazami migrantów.

Słowa kluczowe: wzorzec „obcego-innego", „Wędrowiec" Hieronima Boscha, obrazy migrantów