
THE REFLECTION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN THE ARTISTIC WORLD MODEL

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Abstract

The artistic world model that reflects reality in a special way is materialized in the human consciousness in the form of definite objects (paintings, architectural buildings) and spiritual images (literature, music, choreography) perceived by people. The aim of our research is to analyse the reflection of the Ten Commandments in the world art and bring to light the value of each Commandment based on that. Numerous pieces of art show the importance of the Ten Commandments as moral rules and civil laws for the humanity in general. The authors make a brief analysis of the interpretation of the Commandments in Judaism and Christianity.

Keywords: world, view, painting, films, music

1. Introduction

The Ten Commandments, as “a privileged expression of the natural law” [*The 10 commandments of God*, <https://strathmore.edu/su-chaplaincy/the-10-commandments-of-god/>] have been in the focus of research not only in Theology. As moral laws of any society, they were discussed by philosophers; they are reflected in numerous paintings, sculptures, films, and music. They embrace principles of relations between people in any society, and thus show a clear connection to Sociology and Psychology.

What are the Ten Commandments and why are they so important to the generations of people all over the world? They are a list of religious precepts that, according to passages in *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*, were “divinely revealed to Moses by Yahweh and engraved on two stone tablets” [<https://strathmore.edu/su-chaplaincy/the-10-commandments-of-god/>]. They are “a set of biblical principles relating to ethics and worship that play a fundamental role in Judaism and Christianity“ [*Ten Commandments*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten_Commandments].

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The Ten Commandments also known as the *Decalogue*, which appear twice in the Hebrew Bible, at *Exodus* 20.2-17 and *Deuteronomy* 5.6-21, have been thoroughly analysed by scholars all over the world [1-3]. The studies mentioned as well as many others mainly highlight the religious aspect of the Commandments. Unlike them, we want to cover other aspects and try to find out how the Ten Commandments are reflected not only in the Old Testament and Gospel, but also in the artistic world model. This term first introduced by Meylakh [4] has several synonyms: artistic image of the world, artistic mental model, and some others.

One of the stages of our analysis is an attempt to build a hierarchy of the meanings of these Commandments for a human being and find their place in this hierarchy. In our opinion, the latter is a reflection of each of these Commandments in art, i.e. how often artists resort to them. Another aspect of our analysis is tracing changes in this hierarchy in the process of human society development, because topics connected with this or that Commandment were more or less popular with artists and musicians from different eras. We explain it by the fact that the psychology of the society was changing and these changes were reflected in art.

2. The Ten Commandments as fundamental moral and civil laws

The analysis of different sources shows that in Judaism, Medieval Roman tradition accepted by Martin Luther, the Greek Orthodox and Protestant Reformed traditions numbering of the Ten Commandments is different [*Ten Commandments. Description, history, text, and facts in Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ten-Commandments>], and not only numbering. They reflect a morality common in the ancient Middle East and accepted by the community of Israel. As the Commandments have been passing from generation to generation for centuries, some modifications became inevitable. Numbering also depends on the version of the Bible and its numerous translations into different languages. Moreover, if we speak about the Bible, “it consists of many books whose authors were prophets, priests, tsars, and apostles” and “[t]he number of books accepted by different confessions (Catholicism, Orthodox Church, Protestantism, and Judaism) as canonic ones is different” [5, p. 192].

If we compare the number of books in different versions of the Bible, we will see that New American Bible (Roman Catholic version) has the largest number of books [6]. As for our research we have chosen a Traditional Catechetical Formula, we find it useful to show in Table 1 the books of the Bible according to Roman Catholic version.

All the examples were borrowed from this version of the Bible on-line [<https://www.bible.com/sk/bible/42/DEU.10.CPDV>]. It is important to present the books of the Bible in a concise way, because in our article we have the traditional citation of the passages: abbreviated name of the book, the chapter number, and the verse number. This table helps better understand the source of

our examples. In the text, we use recommended system of the abbreviations [*Bible Abbreviations*, <https://www.aresearchguide.com/bibleabb.html>].

Now we will make a short excursus into the history and show how the Ten Commandments are reflected in Judaism and Christianity.

Table 1. The Books of the Bible (after Johnson [6]).

Roman Catholic version (New American Bible)		
Pentateuch	Historical books	Wisdom books
Genesis	Joshua, Judges, Ruth	Job, Psalms
Exodus	1 Samuel, 2 Samuel	Proverbs
Leviticus	1 Kings, 2 Kings	Ecclesiastes
Numbers	1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles	Song of Songs
Deuteronomy	Ezra, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther	Wisdom
	1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees	Sirach
		(Ecclesiastus)
Prophets		
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi		
The New Testament		
Gospels	Acts of Apostles	
Matthew Mark Luke John	Letters	
	Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude	
	Revelation	

2.1. The Ten Commandments, their short history and various religious interpretations

The Ten Commandments give room for diverse interpretations, reflecting their role as a summary of fundamental principles. They are not as explicit or as detailed as rules or as many other biblical laws, because “they provide guiding principles that apply universally, across changing circumstances. They do not specify punishments for their violation” [7]. They are most important in Judaism and Christianity: “the greatest obligation (to worship only God), the greatest injury to a person (murder), the greatest injury to family bonds (adultery), the greatest injury to commerce and law (bearing false witness), the greatest inter-generational obligation (honour to parents), the greatest obligation to community (truthfulness), the greatest injury to movable property (theft)” [8]. Here we see distinct subdivision of the Ten Commandments into several groups: attitude to God, other people and their possessions.

2.1.1. Judaism

The Ten Commandments form the basis of Jewish law, stating God's universal and timeless standard of right and wrong. Louis Ginzberg, a Conservative Rabbi, claims that the first five and the last five Commandments are "virtually entwined" [9].

2.1.2. Christianity

Turner writes that most traditions of Christianity hold that the Ten Commandments have divine authority and continue to be valid, though they have different interpretations of and uses for them [10]. Through most of Christian history, the *Decalogue* was considered a summary of God's law and standard of behaviour, central to Christian life, piety, and worship.

2.1.2.1. Catholicism

In Catholic theology, there is an opinion that Jesus freed Christians from the rest of Jewish religious law, but not from their obligation to keep the Ten Commandments [11]. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* - the official exposition of the Catholic Church's Christian beliefs - the Commandments are considered essential for spiritual good health and growth, and serve as the basis for social justice [11].

2.1.2.2. Orthodoxy

The Eastern Orthodox Church holds its moral truths to be chiefly contained in the Ten Commandments. A confession begins with the Confessor reciting the Ten Commandments and asking the penitent which of them (s)he has broken.

Several interpretations of the Commandments seem to be problematic for modern people living in free societies, like "capital punishment for blasphemy, idolatry, adultery, cursing one's own parents, and Sabbath-breaking" [12].

3. Artistic world model and its functions

There are many definitions of the artistic world model. One of them belongs to Demchenko: "it is a system of generalized ideas about a particular historical era, which develops in the process of understanding works of art belonging to a given period" [13, p. 17]. The scholars specify general (global) artistic world model, "which is represented by a huge fund of works of literature, painting, music, cinema, theatre, etc. and is formed on the basis of their perception and under the influence of art studies and critical works" [14]. The main signs of the artistic world model and its structural features are determined by its functions. The main function is usually called the function of catharsis, i.e.

a genuine work of art must morally cleanse a person due to the power of emotional shock resulting from the perception of a masterpiece. Among other functions there are aesthetic, ethical, and emotive-evaluative ones [14].

Topics connected with the Ten Commandments have many a time attracted the attention of painters, sculptors, musicians, and producers. To mention all their masterpieces is hardly possible. Here we will mention several more general items and offer other examples in corresponding paragraphs below.

Many paintings connected with this topic show the succession of events: Moses holding clay tablets (*Moses with the Ten Commandments* by Philippe de Champagne, 1648; *Moses receiving the tablets of law* by Marc Chagall, 1952); *The descent from Mount Sinai* (a fresco in the Sistine Chapel, Rome, created by the Italian Renaissance painter Cosimo Rosselli and his assistants (1481-1482); *The adoration of the golden calf* (by Nicolas Poussin, 1633-1634), *Moses breaking the tablets of the law* (painting by Rembrandt, 1659).

It is interesting to state that the text of the Ten Commandments in different paintings is inconsistent. The scholars still argue about the language, in which the text was written. Taking into account the approximate period of time, when Moses received the tablets, it could be Sumerian cuneiform, Egyptian, Akkadian used by the Babylonians on clay tablets, Ugaritic used by Ugarit, Hittite spoken by the Hittites or Mycenaean Greek popular in Greece. The list of possible versions can be continued. If we compare the painting by Philippe de Champagne (Figure 1 [<https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/01.Paintings/36349/>]) and by Rembrandt (Figure 2 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses_Breaking_the_Tablets_of_the_Law]), we will see that the text on the tables is written in different languages.



Figure 1. A painting by Philippe de Champagne, 1648.



Figure 2. A painting by Rembrandt, 1659 (a fragment).

There are beautiful sculptures of Moses: by Michelangelo (San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome, cca. 1513-1515); Moses as an outdoor bronze sculpture by Croatian artist Josip Turkalj (the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, 1962), by Ivan Mestrovic (Art Institute, Chicago, 1916), and many others.

A film is a work of visual art, which is accompanied by sounds. We have found a long list of films on this topic. Some films are very old, like *The Ten Commandments* (1923), a silent American film, produced and directed by Cecil B. DeMille, or the film by the same producer released in 1956. This list includes musicals (*Les Dix Commandements*, 2000; *The Ten Commandments*, 2004), or miniseries (*The Ten Commandments*, 2006). Among the latest films, we may mention a 2016 Brazilian film *The Ten Commandments* released in Portuguese and later dubbed in other languages.

What concerns musical art, we have many examples of classical music inspired by masterpieces of literature: operas, oratorios, ballets, etc. We will discuss them below and analyse the reflection of each Commandment in the artistic world model.

4. The Ten Commandments and their reflection in the Bible and world art

We will present our material in the following way. We will start with the enumeration of the Commandments using the version we have chosen. Then we will take one Commandment by another, present its interpretation, and, if necessary, show some places in the Old Testament and the Gospel where they are mentioned and illustrate them with some examples of religious art. As the examples are numerous and some extracts from the Bible are very long, in some cases we will present only the precise description where they can be found using the traditional way explained above.

4.1. A traditional catechetical formula

1. I am the LORD your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the LORD'S Day.
4. Honour your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
9. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.

4.1.1. Commandment 1 - I am the LORD your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me

We would like to start with a long citation from the Gospel from Matthew, because it includes the words of Jesus Christ: "*But the Pharisees, hearing that he had caused the Sadducees to be silent, came together as one. And one of them, a doctor of the law, questioned him, to test him: 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?' Jesus said to him: 'You shall love the Lord your*

God from all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind'. This is the greatest and first commandment. But the second is similar to it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. On these two commandments the entire law depends, and also the prophets.” (Matthew 22.34-40)

The part from the *Book of Ezekiel* speaks about God and Israelites. God first rescued them and then they turned away from Him and adored other gods (Ezekiel 16.8-40).

Prophet Isaiah warned about the idolatry in such a way: *“All of those who create idols are nothing, and their most beloved things will not benefit them. These are their witnesses, for they do not see, and they do not understand, so that they might be confounded”* (Isaiah 44.9-11).

Different Christian confessions have specific attitude to the depiction of Jesus Christ, Saint Virgin Mary and the saints. Long time ago Alexander Hugh Hore wrote about the theological importance of the incarnation and explained that “the Orthodox Church encourages the use of icons in church and private devotions, but prefers a two-dimensional depiction as a reminder of this theological aspect. Icons depict the spiritual dimension of their subject rather than attempting a naturalistic portrayal” [15]. Notwithstanding some modern tendencies as a result of Roman Catholic influence, sculptures, i.e. three-dimensional depictions, continue to be banned [15].

Other examples in the Bible where the first Commandment is mentioned can be found here: Deuteronomy 4.16-20, 6.4-5, 11.1; Leviticus 19.4, 26.1; Isaiah 40.18-28; 1 Kings 16.31-33; 1 Corinthians 8.3-6.

4.1.2. Commandment 2 - You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain

In the *Deuteronomy*, the fifth book of the Old Testament, written in the form of a farewell address by Moses to the Israelites before they entered the Promised Land of Canaan we find the following lines: *“You shall fear the Lord your God, and him alone shall you serve. You shall cling to him, and you shall swear by his name”* (Deuteronomy 10.20). One more example from another book: *“You shall not commit perjury in my name, nor shall you pollute the name of your God. I am the Lord.”* (Leviticus 19.12)

4.1.3 Commandment 3 - Remember to keep holy the LORD’S Day

The examples in the Bible are numerous. In the Old Testament, in the *Book of Genesis*, we find the following lines: *“And he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. For in it, he had ceased from all his work: the work whereby God created whatever he should make”* (Genesis 2.3); in the *Book of Leviticus*: *“It is a Sabbath of rest, and you shall afflict your souls beginning on the ninth day of the month: from evening until evening you shall celebrate your Sabbaths”* (Leviticus 23.32) as well as in the *Book of Exodus* (Exodus 16.22-24) and *Numbers* (Numbers 15.2-41).

Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, a priest, also wrote about this Commandment (see Jeremiah 17.21-22). He was chosen by God to be a prophet and is sometimes named a lamenting prophet, which is reflected in the painting of Rembrandt *Prophet Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem*.

In the Gospel we find the following verses: “*And he said to them: ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. And so, the Son of man is Lord, even of the Sabbath’.*” (Mark 2.27-28) Commandment 3 is also mentioned by Apostle Matthew (Matthew 12.1-8).

As Remmers writes, “[t]he Epistle to the Hebrews is one of the most beautiful ones of the New Testament” [A. Remmers, *Book Overview - Hebrews*, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/hebrews.html>]. Who were Hebrews? It is a name for the Israelites and for the descendants of Abraham. The title of this Epistle appeared in the 2nd century with Clemens of Alexandria (around 150-215 AC) [<https://www.studylight.org/commentary/hebrews.html>]. We can find some examples in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “*And so, there remains a Sabbath of rest for the people of God. For whoever has entered into his rest, the same has also rested from his works, just as God did from his.*” (Hebrews 4.9-10) and “*For, in a certain place, he spoke about the seventh day in this manner: ‘And God rested on the seventh day from all his works’*” (Hebrews 4.4).

Though in many examples, which we have found in the Bible, Sabbath, i.e. Saturday is mentioned, we would like to specify that nowadays this day is not strictly observed. In Judaism it continues from dusk to dusk and on Saturday everything is closed, even public transportation is suspended. In some countries and corresponding languages the week starts with Sunday, thus the seventh day is Saturday. In many Slavic Orthodox cults (Russian, Slovak, Czech, etc.) the week starts with Monday and the seventh day is Sunday. Liturgy (in Orthodox Church) or Mess (in Catholic Church) usually take place on Sunday. Observing the Sabbath on Sunday, the day of Resurrection, gradually became the dominant Christian practice.

4.1.4. Commandment 4 - Honour your father and your mother

This Commandment can be found in the Old Testament, in the 19th chapter of the *Book of Leviticus* in the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament of the Christian Bible: “*Let each one fear his father and his mother. Observe my Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God.*” (Leviticus 19.3)

There are several places in the Gospel where this Commandment is mentioned. It can be found in the 10th book of it, in the *Epistle to the Ephesians*, also called the *Letter to the Ephesians*, which authorship has traditionally been attributed to Paul the Apostle: “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just. Honor your father and your mother. This is the first commandment with a promise: so that it may be well with you, and so that you may have a long life upon the Earth.*” (Ephesians 6.1-8) and in the 15th chapter in the Gospel of Matthew: “*‘Honor your father and mother’, and ‘Whoever will have cursed father or mother shall die a death’*” (Matthew 15.4).

While presenting the examples from the Bible we intend not only to cite them, but to make some explanatory notes. Now we will speak about the *Book of Proverbs*, the 3rd section of the Hebrew Bible and a book of the Christian Old Testament. Proverbs do not only relate “to a pattern of life which lasted for more than a millennium” [16], this book also “is an example of the biblical wisdom literature and raises questions of values, moral behaviour, the meaning of human life, and right conduct” [17]. No wonder that love for parents is included into this Book: “*Listen, my son, to the discipline of your father, and forsake not the law of your mother, so that grace may be added to your head and a collar to your neck*” (Proverbs 1.8-9); “*Listen to your father, who conceived you. And do not despise your mother, when she is old*” (Proverbs 23.22).

If we make an attempt to find out how this Commandment is reflected in art, the most popular narrative will be associated with King Lear (after the play by W. Shakespeare). The paintings are numerous: *King Lear in the Storm* by Joshua Reynolds, ca. 1842, by a Scottish painter John Runciman, 1767, and many other masterpieces. In Figure 3 we can see a *King Lear* by an American painter George Frederick Bensell (1837-1879) [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:King_Lear_by_George_Frederick_Bensell.jpg].



Figure 3. ‘King Lear’ by George Frederick Bensell.

This topic is also popular in films and music. Soviet composer Dmitry Shostakovich in 1940 created *King Lear: Incidental music* (op. 58a) to Shakespeare’s tragedy for mezzo, baritone and orchestra.

Based in Wroclaw, *Song of the Goat Theatre Company* painted the tragic stories from *King Lear* in music, movement, and song using folk instruments, a cappella singing, and flawless choreography. *Songs of Lear* had its international premiere during Fringe Festival in Edinburgh in August 2012, where it received three prestigious awards.

As for films, there are eleven film versions of *King Lear*. According to critics, its most famous adaptation was made by Akira Kurosawa. It was released in 1985 and events in it take place in the 14th century Japan. A British-American

television film directed by Richard Eyre and released in 2018 with Antony Hopkins also received many positive reviews.

4.1.5. Commandment 5 - You shall not kill

Killing someone is considered in many religions and cultures a deadly sin. The Hebrew Bible contains numerous prohibitions against unlawful killing, but does not prohibit killing in the context of warfare (1 Kings 2.5-6), capital punishment (Leviticus 20.9-16), or a home invasion during the night (Exodus 22.2-3), which are considered justified. In the Old Testament in the *Book of Numbers* (Numbers 35.16-21) or in *Exodus* we find the lines where punishment for the murder is mentioned: “Whoever strikes a man, intending to murder, shall be put to death. But if he did not lie in wait for him, but God delivered him into his hands, then I will appoint for you a place to which he must flee. If someone murders his neighbour with deliberation, by lying in wait, you shall tear him away from my altar, so that he may die.” (Exodus 21.12-14)

The Gospel is consistent with the Old Testament in that murder is a grave moral evil (Matthew 27.4, Luke 18.20). The verses from Matthew 5.21-26 are long, we will cite only their beginning: “If anyone will have struck someone with iron, and he who was struck will have died, then he shall be guilty of homicide, and he himself shall die. If he will have thrown a stone, and he who has been struck lies dead, then he shall be punished similarly.” In these lines we see the importance of maintaining peaceful relationships and the punishment for this deadly sin.

Killing people is a horrible crime. But what about war conflicts when people have to defend their lives, their families, and their countries? The history of humanity is the history of wars. We have already analysed war conflicts [18] and the essence of confrontation preceding it, like “physical collision, armed opposition, verbal collision, collision of outlooks and interests” [19]. Holmes in his article ‘The attitude of Christians as to peace and war’ published in 1902 specifies that “war is sometimes necessary... for the sake of others” [20, p. 15]. This explanation is directly connected with the war type that can be “characterized positively (sacred, just, liberation war) or negatively (unjust, senseless, predatory, dirty, colonial)” [18, p. 91].

This Commandment is directly connected with moral and civil laws of any society and thus is widely represented in art. In fact, in *Genesis* 4.8, we see the first murder, as Cain killed his brother Abel. World art has many paintings and sculptures devoted to this event: *The First Mourning* by William-Adolphe Bougeureau, 1888 showing the state of Adam and Eve when they have found the body of their beloved son Abel; *Cain murders Abel* by Pietro Novelli, second quarter of the 17th century; *Cain and Abel* by Tintoretto, 1550-53, or beautiful sculptures *Cain and Abel Offer Sacrifice* by Hubert and Jan van Eyck, 1432, in Ghent altarpiece, Belgium.

There are many other places in the Bible where a war conflict or murder is mentioned. We want to analyse one more episode, a specific case, where a murder is justified. We mean the *Book of Judith* that is included into the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christian Old Testament of the Bible, but excluded from the Hebrew canon. In the 6th century B.C. the town of Bethulia in Israel was besieged by the Assyrian troops and the hope for victory was very weak. Then a beautiful Jewish widow named Judith went into the enemy camp to meet with their leader, Holofernes. She predicted him victory and when he lay in drunken sleep cut off his head and brought it to her town. As far as the Assyrian forces were deprived of their leader, Israelites' attack was successful and the Assyrians fled. In fact, due to the murder of Holofernes the town of Bethulia in Israel was saved.

As a strong personality Judith attracted many painters of the Renaissance, because she displayed features not typical of women: the appetite for aggression and the will to win. In pieces of art created by different painters, she is displayed in a different way, see Figures 4a [[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Judith_with_the_Head_of_Holofernes_\(1613\);_Cristofano_Allori.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Judith_with_the_Head_of_Holofernes_(1613);_Cristofano_Allori.jpg)], 4b [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judith_\(Giorgione\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judith_(Giorgione))] and 4c [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sandro_Botticelli_Retour_de_Judith_1.JPG] showing fragments of the paintings with Judith's face.

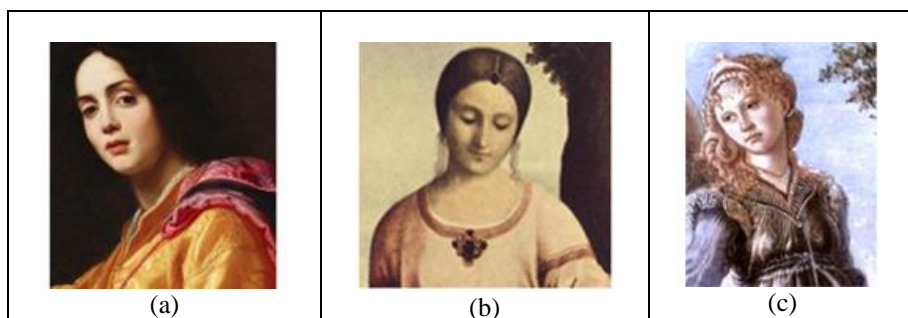


Figure 4. (a) ‘Judith with the head of Holofernes’ by Cristofano Allori, 1613 (a fragment); (b) ‘Judith’ by Giorgione, 1504 (a fragment); (c) ‘The return of Judith to Bethulia’ by Sandro Botticelli, 1467 (a fragment).

We find it important to show the painters' attitude to murder that, in the case of Judith, is not depicted as a deadly sin. It is a sort of moral evaluation of Judith's deed. She violates the Commandment ***You shall not kill***, because she wants to save her people. What did she feel? Allory's Judith is unusually beautiful: her face is sensual and at the same time harsh. Her awe-inspiring look demonstrates the great significance of her act. Giorgione depicts his heroine not warlike, but thoughtful and gentle; her noble appearance is in harmony with her inner soul world. In Botticelli's version, Judith's eyes and facial expression are thoughtful and sad. Though she was a widow, she looks like a young girl, especially in comparison with other pictures.

Judith is also presented in music, which adds nuances, colours, and emotions to the image of this biblical woman. The story of Judith is told by composers from various centuries and many countries: Scarlatti, Vivaldi, Mozart, Parry, Honegger, Serov, von Reznicek, and many others. Interesting information can be found in a recent book *The voice of Judith in 300 years of oratorio and opera* by Leneman [21].

The films about Judith are scarce. We can mention *Judith of Bethulia*, a film of by D.W. Griffith, 1914. As for other films connected with war conflicts or murders, they are so numerous that it is hardly possible to enumerate even the best of them.

4.1.6. Commandment 6 - You shall not commit adultery

Adultery in many countries was and is denounced. We see several verses in the Old Testament that express the attitude to it and specify the punishment: “If anyone will have committed sexual acts with the wife of another, or will have perpetrated adultery with his neighbour’s spouse, they shall die a death, both the adulterer and the adulteress” (Leviticus 20.10). The lines with the same content are found in the *Deuteronomy* (Dt. 22.22-24). In the *Book of Leviticus* incest is condemned (Lv. 18.6-23).

In the *Book of Matthew* (Matt. 5.27-30) we find the same idea of denouncement and punishment, whereas in the *Book of John* a case of woman who was caught in adultery and brought to Pharisees is described. According to the law she had to be stoned to death. People asked Jesus what to do with her. “Then Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the earth. And then, when they persevered in questioning him, he stood upright and said to them, ‘Let whoever is without sin among you be the first to cast a stone at her...’ But upon hearing this, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest. And Jesus alone remained, with the woman standing in front of him. Then Jesus, raising himself up, said to her: ‘Woman, where are those who accused you? Has no one condemned you?’ And she said, ‘No one, Lord’. Then Jesus said: ‘Neither will I condemn you. Go, and now do not choose to sin anymore.’” (John 8.3-11) ‘To be the first to cast a stone at somebody’ became a popular biblical expression. It expresses a call not to condemn a mistaken man. There are no sinless people, all of us in some situations are wrong. Jesus forgave her and asked to sin no more.

If we want to discuss how this Commandment is presented in art, we cannot but mention that the examples are numerous and that a piece of music or a film are usually based on a literary masterpiece.

Among the old publications where adultery is described we want to mention a tragedy by William Shakespeare *Hamlet* written between 1599 and 1601. Claudius, Prince Hamlet’s uncle, murdered Hamlet’s father in order to seize his throne and marry Hamlet’s mother. Shakespeare’s longest play inspired painters: *Hamlet: Act IV, Scene V (Ophelia and Laertes)* by Benjamin West, 1792; *Horatio, Hamlet, and the ghost* by Henry Fuseli, 1789; *The gravedigger scene* by Eugène Delacroix, 1839; *Actors before Hamlet* by Władysław

Czachórski, 1875; musicians: *Tristia* by Berlioz, three songs for choir and orchestra depicting the deaths of Ophelia and Hamlet; *Song of Ophelia* by Dmitry Shostakovich; as well as film producers: black-and-white *Hamlet* by Laurence Olivier, 1948; a Franco Zeffirelli film released in 1990 with outstanding actors in the cast: Mel Gibson as Hamlet, Glenn Close as Gertrude and Paul Scofield as Hamlet's father.

Lady Chatterley's Lover by D.H. Lawrence first published privately in 1928 in Italy, and then in 1929 in France, was banned in many countries: Great Britain, United States, Australia, Canada, Japan, India, etc. Even decades later, in 1960, the publisher Penguin Books in Britain faced a trial under the Obscene Publications Act 1959, which became a major public event and later, in 2006, was dramatized by BBC Wales as *The Chatterley Affair*.

The novel of Lev Tolstoy *Anna Karenina* includes several cases of adultery; moreover, the plot starts with the scandal in the Oblonskys family: Stiva Oblonsky has an affair with their children's former governess. But the main plot of the novel revolves around the adultery of Anna Karenina and her relations with Alexei Vronsky. This novel inspired many painters and musicians, but especially producers. We can mention the portrayals of Anna Karenina by Evelina Lynn (the USA), Ekaterina Pozdniakova (Russia), and Nat ViGa (Mexico). There are three musicals *Anna Karenina* produced in Russia; the last one was written by Julia Shevelkina. We can also mention the opera by David Carlson staged at Florida Grand Opera and a ballet by Ilya Demutsky.

Madame Bovary: Provincial Manners by Gustave Flaubert is another inspiration for visual and musical art forms: an opera by Emmanuel Bondeville premiered at the Opéra-Comique on June 1, 1951; numerous film and television adaptations from 1932 till now in many countries like France, Germany, Russia, Poland, and India.

4.1.7. Commandment 7 - You shall not steal

This Commandment is widely understood as a moral imperative by legal scholars, though its interpretation by Jewish, Catholic, and Post-Reformation scholars is different. On one hand, Jewish doctrine includes prohibition of stealing due to the protection of private property and administration of justice in related cases. On the other hand, there is an opinion that originally it was intended to prohibit stealing people, i.e. abductions and slavery. In the Old Testament we have the lines, which seem to prove the idea: "*Whoever will have stolen a man and sold him, having been convicted of the crime, shall be put to death*" (Exodus 21.16). Other lines connected with the prohibition of theft can be found in the *Book of Leviticus* (Lev. 19.11, 13).

The New Testament contains warnings about spiritual consequences of theft and outlines the basic ideas of private property rights and the ways how thieves can be punished by the authorities. More attention is given to the moral aspect: one should love more God than money: "*the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils*" (1 Timothy 6.6-10). People should pile up treasures not "*on Earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay*

up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Matthew 6.19-24).

In the Catholic teaching, this Commandment is understood as love for neighbor as oneself. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [11] vividly shows that a person should respect one’s neighbor, their goods, and the results of ones work. Among other ethical principles outlining subjects of murder, adultery and Sabbath, this one is directly connected with the judicial system of the society. There are corresponding laws protecting property and the system of punishment for those, who violate these rules.

The attitude of the society to thieves is different in various countries. In some oriental countries a thief’s hands are cut off; in others thieves are imprisoned for life. Though theft is condemned by the society, in some paintings stealing is depicted in a grotesque way; very often the thief’s assistant is also present. See, e.g., the paintings *The Conjurer* by Hieronymus Bosch (between 1496 and 1520) (Figure 5a) [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Conjurer\(painting\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Conjurer(painting))]; *The Fortune Teller* by Georges de La Tour, c. 1630 (Figure 5b) [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fortune_Teller_\(de_La_Tour\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fortune_Teller_(de_La_Tour))]; *The Misanthrope* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1568; *Market Scene with a Pick-pocket* by Louise Moillon, the first half of the 18th c.



Figure 5. (a) ‘The Conjurer’ by Hieronymus Bosch, between 1496 and 1520 (a fragment); (b) ‘The fortune teller’ by Georges de La Tour, c. 1630 (a fragment).

History knows famous pickpockets, real and fictional ones, who were depicted in fiction and correspondingly in films. We would like to mention Artful Dodger and Fagin, characters from Charles Dickens’ novel *Oliver Twist*; Steve Murphy starring as a pickpocket in a silent film *The Circus* written, produced, and directed by Charlie Chaplin, released in 1928; Linus Caldwell from the film series *Ocean’s Trilogy* (2001-2007) played by Matt Damon.

4.1.8. Commandment 8 - You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour

Above we have mentioned *Wisdom books* consisting of several other books. One of them is *The Book of Wisdom*, or *The Wisdom of Solomon*, that

includes Solomon's speech concerning wisdom, wealth, power, and prayer. Some theologians considered this book to be part of the Old Testament, whereas others claimed that it was of disputed canonicity. Notwithstanding these arguments, *The Book of Wisdom* has many interesting ideas associated with righteousness/unrighteousness and death/immortality. We have found the following lines connected with the Commandment 10: "*Therefore, keep yourselves from complaining, which benefits nothing, and refrain your tongue from slander, because secret conversation will not pass into nothingness, and the mouth that deceives kills the soul*" (Wisdom 1.11).

In the New Testament false witnesses against Jesus Christ are mentioned: "*Yet truly, the leaders of the priests and the entire council sought testimony against Jesus, so that they might deliver him to death, and they found none. For many spoke false testimony against him, but their testimony did not agree.*" (Mark 14.55-56) or the lines of more general character: "*But let your word 'Yes' mean 'Yes', and 'No' mean 'No'. For anything beyond that is of evil.*" (Matthew 5.37)

This Commandment is described in the painting by Lucas Cranach the elder *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour*, 1516, which is part of the larger artwork including all the Testaments. Another interesting work is *The False Witnesses* by James Tissot (between 1886 and 1894) that depicts the trial of Jesus Christ before Caiaphas (Matthew 26.57-68) when arrested Jesus was brought to Caiaphas, the high priest. The aim of the chief priests was to obtain false testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death.

4.1.9. Commandment 9 - You shall not covet your neighbour's wife

Samuel, a religious hero in the history of Israel, a military leader and a prophet describes in his book how King David fell in love with Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite. When she became pregnant, he sent her husband to the battle where he was killed (2 Samuel 11). His history is also described in the book of 1 Kings. For the adultery and murder, the prophet curses David's House, and the infant conceived in adultery dies. Yet Bathsheba ensures that their second son, Solomon becomes successor to the throne.

She became a popular object for painters and now we have masterpieces which are gems of any state or private collections: *Bathsheba at her bath* by Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari, ca. 1700; *The toilet of Bathsheba* by Rembrandt, 1643 or *Bathsheba at her bath* by Artemisia Gentileschi, between circa 1640-1645.

Bathsheba sculpted by Eugene Andre Oudine in 1859 can be found in the courtyard of the Louvre. The marble head of Queen Bathsheba by Giusto Le Court (1627-1678) attracts the attention of connoisseurs of art. A life-size sculpture *Bathsheba* by Benjamin Victor (2020) shows a stunning soaked woman.

As any historical event it is reflected in films. Among the best we can name *David and Bathsheba* released in 1951 (20th Century Fox) starring Gregory Peck as King David and Susan Hayward as Bathsheba.

There is also a symphony by Alfred Newman *David and Bathsheba*. The Biblical story of David and Bathsheba, which touches upon fundamental ethical questions, have found its reflection in the Opera-Oratorio by Ståle Kleiberg.

This Commandment is very closely connected with Commandment 6. Adultery is reflected not only in classical music but in folklore, because it “shows repeated signs of particular customs or traditions” [22, p. 357]. One of the customs widespread in the Middle Ages was a donkey ride: a punishment aimed at public humiliation for a number of crimes - perjury, betrayal, deprivation of liberty - but mainly for adultery, either for a man or for a woman. Musical folklore of many countries includes traditional songs, in which adultery is criticized.

4.1.10. Commandment 10 - *You shall not covet your neighbour's goods*

A more complete version of this Commandment looks like this: “*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's*” (Exodus 20.17). “*To covet something*” means to crave for something that does not belong to you.

What precisely can be coveted is mentioned in other parts of the Bible: the *Book of Joshua* (Jos 7.20-23) or *Book of Micah* (Mic 2.2). Namely, some people covet gold and silver: “*Their graven images, you shall burn with fire. You shall not covet the silver or gold from which they have been made. And you shall not take for yourself anything from these, lest you offend, because this is an abomination to the Lord your God.*” (Deuteronomy 7.25).

4.1.11. Combined Commandments

In the Bible as well as in art we have come across the cases when several Commandments are combined. More Commandments in one citation we find in the following examples: “*He said to him, 'Which?' And Jesus said: 'You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony.'*” (Matthew 19.18); “*For example: You shall not commit adultery. You shall not kill. You shall not steal. You shall not speak false testimony. You shall not covet. And if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.*” (Romans 13.9) or “*For he who said, 'You shall not commit adultery', also said, 'You shall not kill'. So if you do not commit adultery, but you kill, you have become a transgressor of the law.*” (James 2.11) or in the historical *Book of Kings* (1 Kings 21) or in the Gospel (Luke 18.20).

A good example of combined Commandments in painting is the panel *Ten Commandments* by Lucas Cranach and his workshop created on behalf of the Wittenberg Council in 1516 (Figure 6) [<https://www.wikiart.org/en/lucas-cranach-the-elder/the-ten-commandments>].

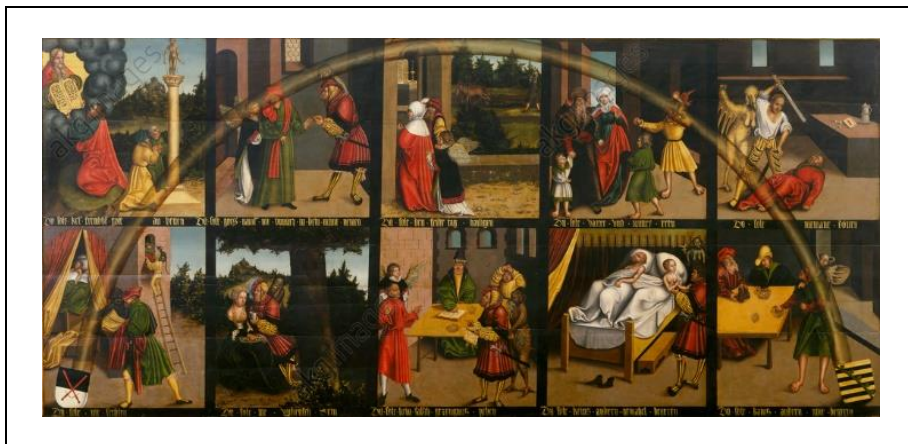


Figure 6. ‘Ten Commandments’ panel by Lucas Cranach and his workshop, 1516.

In this series of paintings we see not only the Commandments but also everyday life details typical of that period of time.

We have already mentioned many musicals under the same title as well as films; there are more than ten on the list. We will restrict ourselves only to one film: *The Devil and the Ten Commandments*, a French film released in 1962 with a stellar cast: Charles Aznavour, Lino Ventura, Fernandel, Alain Delon, Louis de Funès, and other famous French actors and actresses.

5. Conclusions

The Ten Commandments viewed through the prism of the artistic world model, which is based on the most important achievements of world art and culture acquire specific importance. We claim that art is the most vivid reflection in the human society of those moral, ethical, aesthetic, and other values that are the basis of the society and its life. As we have mentioned above, the Ten Commandments form several groups: attitude to God, other people, and their possessions, and their representation in the world art is different. Our attitude to God is very personal, intimate, and even very pious people do not often demonstrate it in their behaviour, not to mention art. We see that more examples are connected with the second group. While mentioning this or that piece of art, we indicate precise or approximate date of its creation. It gives us possibility to trace how the attitude to some Commandments (murder, adultery, idolatry, etc.) has been changing in societies. As for the attitude to possessions, theft is persecuted by civil laws and in many countries thieves are severely punished.

In our paper we do not consider one very important aspect. It is a geographical approach to the reflection of the Commandments in the artistic world model, i.e. attitude of the society to them at the same time but in different countries.

Even the shortest analysis gives grounds to state that the influence of the Ten Commandments for the society nowadays is reduced to a minimum and what was condemned by the society earlier (adultery, murder, theft, etc.) today became an attribute of everyday life. Nowadays the attitude of the society to the Ten Commandments can be considered only as their total denial. It testifies to the fact that the society moves to another era and we can only imagine what sort of an era it will be.

We see that we have not covered all the possible directions in the Ten Commandments analysis. We consider our research as an outline for future studies.

Acknowledgement

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