NOTE: See Orality and Literacy: 107-10. Biblical scholars today maintain that the Book of Proverbs in the Hebrew Bible is a composite of several collections of proverbs from different time periods. In the early modern period, Erasmus (1466?-1536) was one of the more distinguished compilers of proverb-like sayings, as his Adages shows. In television news today, the sound bite carries forward the spirit of the drive to get things summed up crisply and briefly. In addition to finding it handy to recycle familiar proverbs and other well-known figures of speech, orators and writers over the centuries also found it convenient to follow established formulas for organizing extended orations and written essays (e.g., introduction, thesis statement, background material, definition of terms and/or problems, supporting arguments, refutation of real or imagined adversarial positions and possible objections, and conclusion).


(VII.2) Adler, Mortimer J., ed. The Syntopicon. 2nd ed. 2 vols. Great Books of the Western World. 2nd ed. Vol. 1 and 2. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1990. Topic: History of Philosophy. Also see Adler (IX.1; IX.2; IX.3; X.1); Lacy (XII.83b). In The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for cultural and Religious History (III.137: 80-81, 85), Ong distinguishes cumulative commonplaces from analytic commonplaces. Cumulative commonplaces are more or less fixed expressions that can be worked into a speech to provide amplification of certain points. By contrast, analytic commonplaces are used as aid in composing and organizing one’s thoughts. In effect, Mortimer J. Adler’s prodigious Syntopicon is a vast compilation of the 102 “great ideas” that Adler culled from the works collected together in both editions of the Great Books of the Western World show that there was and is a discourse community in Western culture. The great ideas are common conceptual constructs in the Western tradition of thought, which can be subdivided into numerous subtopics and related terms, as Adler and his assistants have subdivided them in the Syntopicon. The great ideas and the subtopics are the conceptual constructs out of which intertextuality is constructed. In effect, they function as what Ong styles analytic commonplaces. In Commonplace Learning: Ramism and Its German Ramifications, 1543-1630 (XII.69), Howard Hotson says that “Ramism is less a ‘system’ than a loose and shifting concatenation of largely commonplace ideas and techniques” (16). In effect, Hotson is describing Ramism as involving the use of what Ong styles analytic commonplaces.


(VII.3e) Borg, Marcus and Ray Riegert, eds. *Jesus and Buddha: The Parallel Sayings*. Berkeley, CA: Ulysses P, 1997. Topic: Religious Studies. Also see Crossan (VII.5b); Dalai Lamai (VII.6a); Erikson (VII.7b).

(VII.4) Bullinger, E. W. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1968 (original London, 1898). In this 1,100-page compilation, E. W. Bullinger (1837-1913) uses the familiar terminology of the commonplace tradition in Western culture to classify and describe numerous passages from the Christian Bible.


(VII.5b) Crossan, John Dominic. *The Essential Jesus: Original Sayings and Earliest Images*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco/ HarperCollins, 1994. Topics: Biblical Studies; Religious Studies; Cultural Studies. Also see Borg and Riegert (VII.3e); Dalai Lamai (VII.6a); Erikson (VII.7b)


(VII.7b) Erikson, Erik H. “The Galilean Sayings [of Jesus] and the Sense of ‘I’.” *Yale Review* 70.3 (1981): 321-62. Topics: Psychoanalytic Theory; Cultural Studies. Also see Borg and Riegert (VII.3e); Crossan (VII.5b); Dalai Lama (VII.6a); de Mello (X.14). This essay is exploratory in spirit. Erik H. Erikson (1902-1994) had planned to incorporate it into a short book about the historical Jesus. But he did not carry out this plan.


(VII.10) ---. *Homer’s Traditional Art*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1999. Topics: Classical Studies; Literary Studies. Also see Foley (I.64; VII.9; IX.26); Horsley, Draper, and Foley (I.86); West (VII.34).

(VII.10a) Hansen, Drew D. *The Dream: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Speech That Inspired a Nation*. New York: Ecco, 2003. Topics: American Studies; History of Rhetoric. Also see King (III.108; III.108a); Mieder (VII.17); K. D. Miller (VII.18; VII.18a).

(VII.11) Jeffrey, David Lyle, ed. *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans, 1992. Topic: Literary Studies. Also see J. Shapiro (XII.152a). For all practical purposes, the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament have been actively mined by literary authors so that biblical stories and biblical expressions have become part a commonplace tradition in literary works. For a


(VII.17) ---. “Making a Way Out of No Way”: *Martin Luther’s King’s Sermonic Proverbial Rhetoric*. New York: Peter Lang, 2010. Topics: American Studies; History of Rhetoric. Also see Burrow (X.9); Farrell (VII.8); Hansen (VII.10a); King (III.108; III.108a); Lechner (VII.14); Lord (VII.15); K. D. Miller (VII.18; VII.18a); Obiechina (I.127); Ong (I.140); Plett (VII.26); Rieder (VII.30a; VII.30b). The German-born American scholar Wolfgang Mieder of the University of Vermont has devoted himself to studying proverbs. Among the many books he has published is a thousand-page bibliography of studies of proverbs, *International
Bibliography of Paremiology and Phraseology, two volumes (VII.16). Now he has published an exhaustive 550-page study of proverbs and proverbial expressions in Martin Luther King’s rhetoric. Each of the sixteen chapters has a chapter title that begins with a suitable proverb in quotation marks followed by the theme addressed in the chapter. On pages 15 to 19, Mieder lists the top ninety-seven of King’s favorite proverbial tag-lines and gives the frequency of each in parentheses after each one. Mieder reports that “King’s repertoire of proverbial quotations, proverbs, proverbial expressions, and proverbial comparisons comprises 436 different texts” (19). On pages 207 to 541, Mieder gives passages from King’s rhetoric, including 1,092 proverbial references in their context that Mieder identified in his examination of around 6,000 pages of published texts of King’s rhetoric. The entries are alphabetized by a key word in the proverbial tag-line at the top of each entry, with the key word in boldface print, followed by the contextualizing passage in which the tag-line occurs, rounded off by the bibliographic reference at the end. Before undertaking his ambitious study of King’s rhetoric, Mieder had published shorter books about proverbs and proverbial expressions used by Abraham Lincoln (2000), Frederick Douglass (2001), and Barack Obama (2009), and Mieder skillfully integrates points from those three books as well as points from his many other books in this book about King. Mieder’s book about King’s sermonic proverbial rhetoric is sui generis among books about King, because of its focus on proverbs and proverbial expressions. Mieder’s study and Keith D. Miller’s study of King’s compositional skills in Voice of Deliverance: The Language of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Its Sources (VII.18a) open the way for us now to understand how orators and writers for centuries used variations on the formulary compositional techniques used by the singers of tales that Albert B. Lord studies in The Singer of Tales (VII.15), a work that Mieder does not mention but should have. With respect to King’s compositional techniques using formulary expressions such as proverbs and proverbial expressions and often employing set themes to compose certain passages, King stands in a long tradition of singers of tales who used formulary expressions and set themes and of orators who used different kinds of commonplaces – cumulative commonplaces that resemble formulary expressions and analytic commonplaces that resemble set themes, to borrow Walter J. Ong’s way of describing those two kinds of commonplaces. Ong discusses these two kinds of commonplaces in his book The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History (I.140: concerning commonplaces, see the index for the term “commonplaces”). For a sense of the life-world of people who have a living tradition of proverbs, see Chinua Achebe’s novels Things Fall Apart (I.2) and No Longer at Ease (XII.1). But don’t make the mistake of thinking that Achebe and King were uneducated because of the fondness for the old oral tradition represented by their fondness for proverbial material. Both Achebe and King were educated and skillful users of oral-
traditional materials. Perhaps Wolfgang Mieder will now undertake to write a book about Chinua Achebe’s use of proverbial material in his different novels. In the meantime, though, I would call attention to Emmanuel Obiechina’s article “Narrative Proverbs in the African Novel” in the journal *Oral Tradition* (I.127), which can be accessed at the journal’s website that the University of Missouri maintains.


(VII.18) Miller, Keith D. *Martin Luther King’s Biblical Epic: His Final, Great Speech*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2012. Topics: American Studies; History of Rhetoric. Also see Burrow (X.9); Farrell (VII.8); Hansen (VII.10a); King (III.108; III.108a); Mieder (VII.17); K. D. Miller (VII.18a); Rieder (VII.30a; VII.30b).

(VII.18a) ---. *Voice of Deliverance: The Language of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Its Sources*. New York: Free P, 1992. Topics: American Studies; History of Rhetoric. Also see Burrow (X.9); Farrell (VII.8); Hansen (VII.10a); King (III.108; III.108a); Mieder (VII.17); K. D. Miller (VII.18); Rieder VII.30a; VII.30b).


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D. Miller (VII.18; VII.18a); Rieder (VII.30b).

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2008. Topics: American Studies; History of Rhetoric. Also see Farrell (VII.8); Mieder (VII.17); K. D. Miller (VII.18; VII.18a); Rieder (VII.30a).


