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*The Syntactic Encoding of the Collaborative Nature of Qohelet’s Experiment*
THE SYNTACTIC ENCODING OF THE COLLABORATIVE NATURE OF QOHELET’S EXPERIMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

The language of the book of Qohelet has long puzzled scholars. After more than three centuries of critical study, terms like ‘aberrant’ (Seow 1997:11) and ‘idiosyncratic’ (Schoors 1992:1) continue to be used to characterize the book’s language. The linguistic profile of the book is indeed unique and appears to be a mix of styles, stages, registers, and dialects. For instance, the orthography has been linked with Phoenician, two words (דָּוָּד and בֵּן) have often been identified as lexical borrowings from Persian, multiple other lexemes or grammatical features have been labeled Phoenicianisms, Aramaisms, and Grecisms, and some items (e.g., the use of the relative element י in addition to the more common ישן) have been associated with ‘late, vernacular’ Hebrew (see Seow 1996 for a concise overview of the linguistic features used in dating the book). With that said, the linguistic profile of every book in the Hebrew Bible is unique, and perpetuating the view that the grammar reflected in Qohelet somehow deviates fundamentally from...
other examples of ancient Hebrew may well keep us from grammatical insight into the book.

In this essay I will address one ‘idiosyncratic’ feature of Qohelet’s language – its use of the subject pronoun after a finite verb – and demonstrate that Qohelet’s pronominal syntax is fundamentally no different than that of any other ancient Hebrew text. Specifically, I will demonstrate how the author of Qohelet has used the post-verbal subject pronoun ילע to formalize grammatically a literary method to describe Qohelet’s thought experiment: he did not do it alone, but with his יָנָה as a partner.

### 2. The Problem of Post-Verbal Pronouns

Certain aspects of the first-person grammar of Qohelet figure prominently in commentary upon the book: the use of the first-person narrative voice and the choice of the first-person pronoun יָנָה over the longer form יִנָּה. One aspect that has not received due attention, however, is the use of a first-person subject pronoun with a finite verb, an example of which is given in (1).

(1) יָדִרְתִּי אָשֶׁר לְבָנֵי אֲלַמָּר אָלַח הָנַה הָנַהַלָּה וְהוֹפָסֹתָה תְכֹמָה עַל

I spoke, I to² my יָנָה: “I – look – I made myself great and added wisdom (to myself) over any who was before me over Jerusalem.” And my יָנָה has (also) seen much wisdom and knowledge (1:16).

Set within the context of the Hebrew Bible, there are two features that distinguish Qohelet’s use of the subject pronoun: its presence and its syntactic placement. The first-person pronoun ילע occurs twenty-one times in conjunction with a finite verb in the book. The book only has eighty-one first-person verbs within its 222 verses, so that more than one out of four verbs has an independent subject pronoun. A quick comparison with the rest of the Hebrew Bible, summarized in Table 1, suggests that Qohelet differs significantly from the Hebrew Bible in its use of the 1cs pronoun.

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² As HALOT (s.v. דָּרַכ) indicates, the verb דָּרַכ allows a number of prepositions to mark its complement, i.e., the person to or with whom the speaking is occurring: לָ, מָ, לָ, וָן, and שָן are the most common, but ב is also used; see, e.g., Num 12:6, 8; 1 Sam 25:39; Hos 1:2; Hab 2:1; Zech 1:9, 13–14; 2:2; 7: 4:1, 4–5; 5:5, 10; 6:4; Song 8:8. Michael V. Fox has suggested (personal correspondence) that since the majority of the דָּרַכ collocations occur in prophetic contexts, it may signal both intimacy and one-way communication rather than a genuine dialogue. A one-sided conversation is precisely what takes place in Qohelet and thus I have translated the preposition as “to” rather than “with.”
The chart highlights a number of striking facts. First, the frequency of first-person pronoun with finite verbs is considerably higher in Qohelet than in the rest of the Hebrew Bible. Second, the position of the pronouns is opposite the dominant pattern elsewhere: Qohelet overwhelmingly places the pronoun after the verb whereas the first-person pronoun in other biblical books typically precedes the verb. The much more common pre-verbal placement of the pronoun in the Hebrew Bible is illustrated in (2).

Because I will be with you and this will be the sign for you that I have sent you: when you take the people out of Egypt you shall honor God upon this mountain' (Exod 3:12).

In summary, while in general the use of the subject pronoun in the Hebrew Bible is a marked grammar feature—relatively rare and used to signal a ‘topic’ or ‘focus’, in Qohelet it is striking-
ly frequent with the first-person verbs. Moreover, the post-verbal placement of the first-person pronoun in Qohelet contrasts both with the pre-verbal placement of second- and third-person subject pronouns in that same book and of all subject pronouns in the Hebrew Bible as a whole. All of this raises two closely-related questions: why is the first-person pronoun used so much in Qohelet and why is it consistently placed post-verbally?

Kautszch notes that the independent pronouns with a finite verb—which is already inflected for person, number, and gender, are ‘used, ... as a rule, only to give express emphasis to the subject’ (1910:§135). On this feature in Qohelet, though, he includes a separate remark:

Different from this is the pleonastic addition of the separate pronoun immediately after the verb (according to Delitzsch on Song 5:5 perhaps a trace of popular language), e.g. 1 S 23:22(?), Ct 5:5, and (like other indications of the very late origin of the book) very frequently in Ecclesiastes, e.g. 1:16, 2:1, 11, 15, 3:17f. and thirteen other places; in Aramaic, Dan 5:16. (1910:§135, Rem. 1)

Why would the independent pronoun “express emphasis” in most cases but be “pleonastic” in a handful of cases, including all the occurrences in Qohelet? The principle of parsimony suggests that if the independent pronoun used with a finite verb has a place within the linguistic system of most biblical books it is unlikely to be superfluous in one book and a few isolated verses elsewhere. Moreover, as Waltke and O’Connor aver, “it is doubtful that any

(e.g., Heb יִתְנָה only”). See Holmstedt 2009a for further discussion.

10 There are only six cases of a second- and third-person pronouns with a finite verb in Qohelet: pre-verbal, see 3:14 (3ms), 7:22 (2ms), 7:29 (3mp), 8:15 (3ms), 10:10 (3ms); post-verbal, see 9:16 (3ms). Although 7:22 includes both an overt subject pronoun and mention of the יִתְנָה, the second-person address makes it clear that Qohelet is not speaking about himself or his יִתְנָה, and thus this verse is not relevant for the “אֶל יִתְנָה” argument. Even so, the function of the subject pronoun in 7:22 is worth examining: the overt, pre-verbal pronoun likely marks focus, communicating a contrast between the addressee and the servant mentioned in the preceding verse, e.g., כִּי מַעֲשֵׂהֲךָ מַעֲשֵׂהֲךָ יִתְנָה. יִתְנָה כִּי מַעֲשֵׂהֲךָ מַעֲשֵׂהֲךָ יִתְנָה אֲנָהּ אֲנָהּ "your יִתְנָה knows that also you [vs. your servant, from v. 21] have cursed others.” In 7:29 the preverbal subject pronoun marks a change in topic—the agent shifts from God to humankind. Thus, 7:22 and 29 both represent typical uses for pre-verbal subject pronouns in biblical Hebrew.

11 Keeping to a purely structural explanation, van der Merwe et al. assert that the ‘independent personal pronoun follows the verb only in cases where a waw consecutive + imperfect or waw consecutive + perfect makes it impossible for the independent pronoun to precede the verb’ (1999:§36.1). This is not descriptively accurate for Qohelet, though, since eight of the twenty cases in the book follow the perfect verb without a 1 on the front: 1:16; 2:1, 15, 24; 3:17, 18; 5:17; 7:25.
major linguistic element can truly be superfluous or redundant" (1990:§16.3.2a). Pleonasm is best used to describe constructions or features that belong to the realm of usage rather than to the formal grammar of a language; for instance, the second, repeated prepositional phrase in Deut 2:27 ( rhetor “on the road, on the road I will walk;” cf. Waltke and O’Connor 1990:§§7.3–4) is formally superfluous even though it likely serves to signal focused

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12 In place of pleonasm as a linguistic explanation, Waltke and O’Connor offer three reasons for the use of the pronoun used with a finite verb. I quote the introductory paragraph here and follow it with a brief critique.

There are three reasons why an independent pronoun is used with a finite verb; in all three cases both possible word orders are found, pronoun + verb and verb + pronoun, although the former is much more common. 

The first reason involves a syntactic hole in the language—this is neither a pleonastic nor an emphatic use. The other two involve logical contrast and psychological focus—both of these may loosely be termed emphatic (1990:§16.3.2b).

The second two of Waltke and O’Connor’s three reasons for the use of the pronoun with a finite verb deserve some comment. Although they distinguish between logical contrast and psychological focus, it is doubtful whether such a distinction is conceptually valid or even descriptively accurate for the examples they cite. Setting up a contrast is one of the functions of the linguistic notion of “focus.” Moreover, many of the examples they provide to illustrate the third reason—psychological focus—present a contrast. In fact, taking together all the examples that Waltke and O’Connor adduce for the second two reasons, it is possible to sort out those that are used to present the referent of the pronoun with focus and those that are used to mark one entity (the referent of the pronoun) among multiple choices as the topic of the ensuing predication. (See Holmstedt 2009a for an information structure model in which focus and topic in biblical narrative are described.)

The first type that Waltke and O’Connor address, the “syntactic hole,” is the use of the independent pronoun in so-called “coordinate subject” phrases; (i) provides an example with a first-person pronoun, which provides a closer parallel to the Qohelet data though it is less common than second- and third-person pronouns in coordinate structures.

(i)

הֵעֵשָׁתוּת אָשָׁר לְבִנְיָמִין אָחָה אֶל יִשְׁנִיָּים לְולָו

to the Gibeah that belongs to Benjamin (I) came, I and my concubine, to spend the night (Judg 20:4; see also Judg 12:2; 1 Kgs 1:21; 2 Chr 32:13).

Waltke and O’Connor are correct that the pronoun in such cases is not pleonastic. The coordinate structure in (i), יִשְׁנִיָּים, would be ill-formed without the pronoun. However, this ill-formedness is due to a requirement for more than one constituent in a coordinate phrase and Waltke and O’Connor are not correct in identifying the pronoun—indeed, the entire coordinate phrase—in such examples as the syntactic subject of the clause (see above § 4, for further discussion).
information (i.e., Moses recounts how he told Sihon, the Ammonite king, that the Israelites would travel *only* on the road through the Ammonite territory). Syntactically, though, the ‘pleonastic’ repetition is an example of apposition. Indeed, since the repetition in Deut 2:27 has syntactic (apposition) and pragmatic (focus) descriptions, it suggests that pleonasm is a useless category.

There have been a number of non-pleonastic proposals for the use of the first-person pronoun in Qohelet. Driver suggests that the post-verbal pronoun highlights major stages in Qohelet’s ‘meditations’ (1892:202, n. 1) while Muraoka argues that in general it expresses emphasis on the subject and that in Qohelet in particular the pronoun expresses the ‘meditating ego of Qohelet, as he observes and meditates upon the world around him and human life in it’ (1985:49; so also Joüon and Muraoka 2006:§146c). Isaksson, in his 1987 study of the verb in Qohelet, denies any ‘emphasis’ on the subject when the pronoun follows the verb in Qohelet (so also Schoors 1992:160–61). Rather, like Driver 1892, he suggests that ‘the pronoun is added in instances of greater importance, where the narrative halts for a moment to make a conclusion or to introduce a new thought’ (Isaksson 1987:171, and also 166–67). And, finally, Fredericks 1988 suggests an analysis quite different from the others:

> When Qoh wished to describe an act or thought as *simple past* (preterite), he added רָאָס to the conjugated perfect, thus referring to his specific quest. This principle would show plausibly how Qoh tried to avoid a confusion in describing past and present acts and thought with only one verbal aspect, when a distinction was necessary. The implication for those first singular perfects without the subsequent pronoun is that they are allowed any tense within the normal scope of the BH perfect, i.e., perfective, pluperfective..., present ..., as well as preterite. With this suggestion comes an intelligible translation with more direct means of determining the time to which Qoh refers when speaking of matters involving his past. Thereby he has expanded the options with which he may clearly indicate his intentions. (1988:69)

Fredericks’ proposal that the pronoun is tied to the semantics of Qohelet’s verbal system finds no parallel in any other book and thus is highly unlikely unless we admit deep systemic—and unique—changes to the grammar of the book of Qohelet, that is, unless we consider Qohelet to have a unique grammar, distinguishing it from any other attested grammar of ancient Hebrew. The structural connection observed by Driver and Isaksson is coincidental since, while post-verbal רָאָס does appear at what are arguably literary transitions or high-points, it does not appear at all such locations in the book (compare the list of occurrences with the structural analyses reflected in, e.g. Seow 1997, Fox 1999, or Krüger 2004). This leaves us with only the emphasis-based proposal, which is essentially correct and could easily be re-cast in terms...
of recent information structure frameworks using the concepts ‘topic’ and ‘focus’ (a la Heimerdinger 1999, Shimasaki 2002, or Lunn 2006). Lacking from any current account of Qohelet’s use of the pronoun with the finite verb, though, is an account of the post-verbal position of the pronoun – and this is, in my opinion, the key to the puzzle.

3. HEBREW AS A PRO-DROP LANGUAGE

Before I address the post-verbal position of the 1cs pronouns in Qohelet, it is necessary to consider some general characteristics of BH pronominal syntax. BH is a prototypical example of what is called a “pro-drop” or “null-subject” language (Naudé 1991, 1993; Holmsteedt 2009b). The finite verbs are inflected with morphologically rich affixes (i.e., the verbal affixes are portmanteau morphs, carrying a bundle of person, number, and gender agreement features).13 In most languages with rich verbal morphology, overt subject noun phrases and pronouns are absent more often than not; that is, they are “dropped.” The way that this is articulated in generative syntax is that subject noun phrases and overt subject pronouns are in complementary distribution with a covert/null pronoun, typically referred to as “little pro.”14 The pro-drop status of BH explains why the Hebrew Bible—from early to late literature—exhibits numerous clauses lacking an overt subject, as in (3) and (4).

13 The pro-drop parameter was formulated within the early Government-and-Binding framework of generative linguistics, although it is now recognized more broadly. The theoretical context of the pro-drop parameter is critical since, contrary to some non-generative linguistic approaches (particularly the early twentieth-century approach of Jespersen, which is sometimes still used within BH studies), the generative view of inflectional affixes on verbs, such as those in Hebrew, is that they differ syntactically and semantically from independent pronouns. That is, inflectional affixes on verbs are taken not as cliticized pronouns, which is sometimes the view in Hebrew studies, but rather as morphologically realized agreement features. The subject pronouns, in contrast, are full syntactic constituents.

14 The null subject pro is present when an overt (pronominal or full noun) subject is absent in order to fulfill the “extended projection principle” (EPP) requirement (i.e., that every clause has a syntactic subject) and to check both person, gender, and number agreement and nominative Case features (see Haegeman 1994:19–25; 454–58; see Gutman, chp. 1).

(3) קַנִּי חָמַתָּה שִׁבְּתוֹ וַאֲלֵיהֶם
thus pro (= Peninah) would vex her and pro (= Hannah) would weep and pro (she = Hannah) would not eat” (1 Sam 1:7).

(4) אֲסֵא אַרְדָּשׁוּר בַּת אֲלֵיהֶם
and *nebucadnezzar* brought them (to) the land of Shinar, (to) the house of his gods (Dan 1:2).

While it is most common for an overt subject noun phrase or pronoun to be dropped when the agent/patient subject of the verb is the most recently used verbal subject, the examples in (3) and (4) illustrate that even a distant subject may be filled by *pro* if the referent is apparent from the context. In (3) the previous agentive subject to be mentioned (in v 6) is Yhwh, but it is contextually clear that Peninah was the agent of vexation for Hannah. It is also clear that Hannah was the one who wept and not Peninah, even though Hannah has not been explicitly identified as an agent since v. 5. In both cases, the identity of the agent is sufficiently easy to reconstruct based on the context that the use of overt subject noun phrases is unnecessary. Similarly, in (4) the last explicit agentive subject in the context is *šō* "the Lord," but it is contextually clear that Nebuchadnezzar is the agent of the exile, making an overt noun phrase or pronoun to mark the shift between agents unnecessary.

The two examples in (3) and (4) demonstrate that an overt subject noun phrase or pronoun is often lacking in BH and yet the lack is syntactically licensed. My explanation of (3) and (4) also illustrates how the identification of *pro* is related to the discourse: in BH *pro* is used when its ability to access its antecedent within the discourse is high, the referring noun phrase subject is used when the accessibility is low, and an overt pronoun is used when the antecedent is marked for topic or focus (see Gutman 1999, 2004 for a similar analysis of modern Israeli Hebrew).

Qohelet exhibits the same *pro*-drop syntax as the rest of the Hebrew Bible, as (5) demonstrates.

15 In generative terms, it is proposed that a syntactically real but phonologically empty pronoun, “little *pro*,” fulfills the general requirement for each clause to contain a syntactic subject. The requirement for a syntactic subject is the EPP (see previous note). I am not here concerned with how null subject *pro* is licensed and identified in BH, but simply that it is licensed and identified. It is of interest, but not directly relevant to this essay, that ancient Hebrew licenses null subject *pro* with both finite verbs and participles, although *pro* with the latter seems constrained to embedded contexts such as small clauses and relative clauses. See Rapoport 1987 for a discussion of small clauses in Israeli Hebrew, which exhibit constraints beyond those of ancient Hebrew. See Gutman 1999 and Sichel 2001 for the licensing of *pro* in Israeli Hebrew.

16 For 1cs finite verbs without accompanying subject pronouns, see 1:13, 14, 17 (2x); 2:1, 2, 3, 4 (3x), 5 (2x), 6, 7, 8 (2x), 9 (2x), 10 (2x), 11, 15, 17, 18, 19 (2x), 20; 3:10, 12, 14, 16, 22; 4:1, 15; 5:12; 6:1, 3; 7:15, 23 (3x), 27, 28 (5x), 29; 8:9, 10, 14, 16, 17; 9:1, 11, 13; 10:5, 7. The same holds true of second- and third-person pronouns: the overt pronouns occur with finite verbs many fewer times (1:13; 3:14; 7:22, 29; 8:15; 9:15; 10:10) than the verb with null *pro* (too many to list).
The point at which Qohelet’s language use does differ is with the verb-pronoun constituent order, which the numbers in Table 1 suggest is a highly marked order.

4. **Pre-verbal, Post-verbal, and Conjoined Subject Pronouns**

By far the dominant order when pronouns are used with finite verbs is pronoun-verb (by at least four-to-one, with all pronouns), not verb-pronoun as we have in Qohelet. Moreover, since an overt pronoun in a pro-drop language marks the subject with topic or focus status, the expected (and statistically dominant) position is initial, i.e., located somewhere in the clausal area preceding the final position of verb, as in (6), repeated from (2).

Because I will be with you and this will be the sign for you that I have sent you: when you take the people out of Egypt you shall honor God upon this mountain (Exod 3:12).

With that said, Hebrew clause structure does allow for post-verbal focus constituents, as the constituents preceded by ב and ב in (7) and (8) demonstrate.

and Judah said to Simon, his brother: Go up with me into my allotment and let us fight against the Canaanite, then ב (I) shall go, I too, with you into your allotment (Judg 1:3).

and Sheba fell (upon the livestock) and took them and they killed the servants by sword and ב (I) escaped, only I alone, to tell you (Job 1:15).
Post-verbal focus on the verbal subject, whether with pronouns or noun phrases, is much less frequent than pre-verbal focus. It is possible that this highly-marked combination of the use of the overt pronoun and the post-verbal placement, which is somewhat syntactically disruptive (with some similarity to interjections and vocatives), is used for an even higher degree of contrast than the more common pre-verbal focus. (Admittedly, though, the precise pragmatic function of post-verbal pronouns in Hebrew has not been investigated adequately and requires further examination.)

Aside from the precise pragmatics of post-verbal subject focus in general, what is significant for this study is that the vast majority of post-verbal subject pronouns in the Hebrew Bible are of the type illustrated in (9) and (10).

(9) יִשָּׁתָה הוא נַחֲלָתָה אֲשֶׁר גֶּדֶר
and pro (they) drank, he and the men that were with him (Gen 24:54).

(10) וַיִּכְבְּרָם לֵבָה הָאָמָה יְבֹאֵבֵיהֶם
and pm (he) hardened his לֵבָה, he and his servants (Exod 9:34).

This type of construction is most often described as a way to highlight some feature of the subject, whether indicating a shift from a singular agent to a group, specified by the coordinate subject, as in (9), or emphasizing the primary agent-hood of the first constituent in the coordinate phrase, as in (10) (Waltke and O’Connor 1990:§16.3.2c; see also Revell 1993). This may be so, but it is not clear that the coordinate phrases are actually the syntactic subjects in these clauses. Naudé 1999 argues cogently that

17 Contrary to Waltke and O’Connor (1990:§16.3.2b), I propose that such examples do contain “emphasis,” since there are ways of expressing accompaniment without using the independent pronoun and coordinate phrase. That is to say, the use of the coordinate structure with the independent personal pronoun is not the only syntactic option and as one among multiple options likely should be associated with a pragmatic function. Consider the unattested but grammatical rewriting of (i) from above in n. 11 to (ii) below, with a comitative prepositional phrase in place of the independent pronoun - coordinate phrase (see 1Kgs 16:17; 2Kgs 8:21; Ruth 1:7, 22; 2Chr 1:3; 12:1 for attested syntactic parallels).

(11) זַבַּת הֲלֹךְ אֶל כְּנֶעָן נַעֲמָה כְּנֵי נַעֲמָה לְבָנָה
11 to the Gibeah that belongs to Benjamin I came, and my concubine with me, to spend the night.

Finally, I agree with Doron 2000 that comitative phrases like that in (ii) are likely “small clause adjuncts of the form [SC and DP with him]” (2000:93, n. 5).
such coordinate phrases are verb phrase adjuncts rather than the subject constituents themselves. He appeals to examples like (11), which contains a similar coordinate phrase but also has an explicit subject noun phrase.

(11) יִתְנָה שְׁנֵי מְלָדָדִים מִלְּשָׁנָה מֵתְיָחֵם מֶלֶךְ יָדָה

and Og, the king of Bashan, went out to meet us, he and all his people, for battle at Edrei (Deut 3:1).

In (11) the coordinate phrase והז אכלים cannot be the syntactic subject since that position is already filled by the overt noun phrase גו ומלד. Nor can the coordinate phrase be right-dislocated, since it is positioned before another prepositional phrase adjunct למתחמה. The phrase והז אכלים is instead “an adjunct that is generated in the position it occupies in overt syntax” (1999:91). By analogy with this type, Naudé suggests that the coordinate “subject” phrases, like those in (9) and (10), are also adjuncts instead of syntactic subjects; the syntactic subject of each clause is the null subject pro, which is resumed either by the entire coordinate phrase (9) or just the first conjunct of the coordinate phrase (10). In other words, verbs may have an overt subject, as in (11), or a covert (pro) subject, as in (9) and (10), and either type of subject may be qualified by a later coordinate phrase that specifies something about the subject.

5. A SYNTAXIC SOLUTION AND A LITERARY EXPLANATION

We may now return to Qohelet and its pronouns. Again, the primary question is, Why is the subject pronoun בָּא used postverbally, particularly if it is not the syntactic subject? If Qohelet wanted simply to emphasize that these are his observations and complaints, then why not use the more typical pre-verbal subject pronoun for focus? The answer lies in a specific contrast that Qohelet establishes and wants to keep in his audience’s mind. To see how this is accomplished, let us start with the data laid out in Table 2, in which I have listed and categorized the relevant clauses in Qohelet.

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18 Right-dislocation, in which a constituent on the edge of a clause is coreferential with an overt constituent within the clause, is identical to left-dislocation except that the dislocated constituent follows, or is on the right edge, of the clause proper, as in (i) below. In the more common left-dislocation, the dislocated constituent precedes, or is on the left edge, of the clause proper, as in (ii).

(i) They came out to meet us, John and James.
(ii) John and James, they came out to meet us.

19 See Holmstedt 2009b for more on coordinate subject examples and the apparent lack of agreement with many of their verbs.
TABLE 2: THE USE OF THE 1CS INDEPENDENT PRONOUNS IN QOHELET

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<th>Col 1: Verb + Pro</th>
<th>Col 2: Verb + Pro-PP</th>
<th>Col 3: Other</th>
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In the first column are the occurrences of the first-person pronoun without any coordinate phrase. In the second column the pronoun is immediately followed by a preposition and the word “heart, mind.” The third column presents what I consider to be the two linguistic and interpretive keys to the syntax and use of the first-person pronoun in Qohelet: the first example shows the pronoun coordinated with the simple conjunction, the second example shows as an accusative complement following a finite verb and the first-person pronoun.

Interestingly, at the center of the pronoun puzzle stands the _I_. In Qohelet the _I_ is used differently than elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. Rather than _I_ used with verbs of speaking to express the idiom for internal speech, i.e., someone thinking or speaking to himself, it is used as a full-fledged character in Qohelet. The second-person imperative instead of the expected first-person cohortative in 2:1 suggests strongly that Qohelet treats his _I_ as a

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20 The noun _I_ occurs forty-one times in the book of Qohelet: 1:13, 16 (2x), 17; 2:1, 3 (2x), 10 (2x), 15 (2x), 20, 22, 23; 3:11, 17, 18; 5:1, 19; 7:2, 3, 4 (2x), 7, 21, 22, 25, 26; 8:5, 9, 11, 16; 9:1, 3, 7; 10:2 (2x), 3; 11:9 (2x), 10. It is used as a syntactic subject (1:16, 2:3, 10, 23; 5:1; 7:3, 4 [2x], 22; 8:5, 11; 9:3, 10:2 [2x]; 3; 11:9), accusative complement (1:13, 17; 2:10, 20; 7:7, 21; 8:9, 16), oblique complement (3:11; 7:2; 9:1), within a non-complement prepositional phrase (1:16; 2:1, 3, 15 [2x]; 3:17, 18; 9:7; 11:10), as a genitive/nomen rectum of a construct phrase (2:22; 5:19; 7:26; 11:9), and as a conjunct in an adverbial adjunct phrase (7:25). There are clear cases in which _I_ is used in its more typical sense as one’s inner self; notably these are all in reference to a _I_ that is not Qohelet’s specific one: 2:22, 23; 3:11; 5:1, 19; 7:2, 3, 4 (2x), 7, 21, 22, 26; 8:5, 11; 9:3, 7; 10:2 (2x), 3; 11:9 (2x), 10. There are also verses in which Qohelet references his partner _I_ but does not include the _Ics_ pronoun, since he apparently intends no contrast or does not need to highlight the collaborative nature of the experiment: 1:13, 17; 2:3, 10, 15; 8:9, 16; 9:1.
external conversation partner. Thus, there is no internal monologue in Qohelet (contra Christianson 1998:195–97, Salyer 2002:175, and many others); Qohelet does use the הל to observe himself exploring (contra Fox 1999:78), and he does not “invite the reader to explore and observe his inner person” (Christianson 1998:195). Rather, the הל here is personified as an experiment partner distinct from himself (so also Fox 1999:267): two investigators can pursue different, even opposing, lines of inquiry better than one, thereby strengthening the conclusions that are ultimately drawn.

Let us now consider individual verses to see how the author has used the grammar of pronoun syntax for his rhetorical ends. The example in 7:25, given in full in (12), suggests in particular that neither the pronoun אני nor the noun הל, with which אני is coordinated, is the syntactic subject.

(12) פסחתי אני הלעתי ולתיו וזכתי חכמה והושבתי

ְ(I) turned around, I and my הל, to understand and to investigate and seek wisdom and accounting (7:25).

Just as with the evidence adduced in Naudé 1999 and illustrated above in (9)–(11), the lack of agreement between the first-person-singular verb הבתי and the first-person-plural coordinate phrase אני הל makes the coordinate phraseallee indicate the non-subject status of the coordinate phrase: אני picks up and resumes the null pronoun syntactic subject of the verb and adds the information הל. Here we see most clearly Qohelet highlighting that while he was the instigator and is the primary reporter of the experiment, he was not alone in his quest. The coordinate phrase אני הל must reside in a post-verbal focus phrase.21

The examples in the middle column in Table 2 add a syntactic complexity since the nominative pronoun and prepositional phrase are not coordinated; indeed, the prepositional phrase in these examples, illustrated in (13), should be taken as the indirect object (oblique complement) for the verbs of speakingدور andاور.

(13)sparתי אני_SP הלל אלמר אני לחנה כלמה וחוסמת חכמה על

לךארשיךיהו לכו של תורשה המריא גם להב חכמה והושבתי

ְ(I) spoke, I, with my הל: “I – look – I made myself great and added wisdom (to myself) over all who were before me

21 To elaborate briefly within a generative framework, the focus phrase (FocP) is likely adjoined to the “tense” phrase (TP), which would place it above (and in front) of the verb. Thus, the verb must have raised out of TP into the complementizer phrase (CP) domain, resulting in the post-verbal placement of the focus phrase with אני הל. It is as of yet unclear to me how to motivate the raising of the verb into the CP.
over Jerusalem.” And my בָּלָה has (also) seen much wisdom and knowledge (1:16).

Following basic generative linguistic theory, I make the assumption that a verb and its modifiers (whether complements or adjuncts) are adjacent at some point in the derivation of a clause. The implication for examples like (13), in which the subject pronoun intervenes between the verb בָּלָה and its complement, is that the verb has raised higher than the subject pronoun. This verb-raising allows the pronoun and indirect object prepositional phrase to be combined into a single, complex constituent that may be marked for focus.22

The final set of examples, in the left column in Table 2, are to be explained similarly. They reflect verb-raising and the subsequent placement of the subject pronoun in a post-verbal focus phrase, although they do not have a conjunct or a prepositional phrase with בָּלָה as do the previous two sets of examples.23 Even so, what is important to recognize in all three constructions is the use of the pronoun within a post-verbal focus phrase. When the pronoun is alone in the focus phrase, Qohelet is asserting that the following observations or conclusions are his alone; when the pronoun is accompanied in the focus phrase by a conjunct or a prepositional phrase Qohelet is emphasizing the collaborative nature of his investigation.

To see how this works out, consider 1:13, given in (14), Qohelet introduces his experiment partner, indicating in the first half of the verse that he commissioned his בָּלָה. Moreover, I suggest that the second half of the verse is actually Qohelet’s preview of his בָּלָה’s conclusion for the project.

(14) המִשְׁמַר הָאוֹא | עַמִּי (I) set my בָּלָה to seek and to investigate with wisdom concerning all that happens under the heavens: it is an unfor-

22 In generative terms, this construction exhibits verb-raising to the head of the CP, followed by the indirect object preposition phrase raising to merge with subject pronoun in the Specifier position of TP, and finally this complex then raises to FocP above the TP but below the verb residing in C.

23 Syntactically the post-verbal pronoun shares features with non-canonical constituents such as vocatives and interjections. It is a non-argument constituent merged into the clause at the end of the derivation. Its pragmatic function is to mark the first-person subject of the verb, the speaker, with focus, viz. to contrast the first-person referent with the other participant in the investigation, the בָּלָה. In this way, Qohelet is able to distinguish his actions and conclusions from that of his בָּלָה.
tunate task (that) God has given to men to be occupied with (1:13).

In the following two verses, given in (15), Qohelet notes his own participation and, I suggest, his ultimate conclusion.

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provided in (18), that he tried to influence the conclusions that his ול was drawing.

(18) וַיֶּפֶשׁ אוֹתָם אֶת־הָאָדָם ילַי לְלוֹכָלָם שָׁמַעְתָּם. וַיִּשְׁמַע וַיִּשְׁמַע.

And וַיַּנֵּא (I) turned around, I, to put my ול in a state of despair about all the acquisition(s) for which I have exerted myself under the sun. (2:20).

Here the pronoun יָרָא is used (without a prepositional phrase or second conjunct) in order to contrast Qohelet’s actions from that of his ול. Qohelet describes how he tried to convince his ול that his toil was מִצְלָנָם enjoyable, apparently in response to the positive conclusion that the ול had already drawn: כִּי־לִבְּךָ שָׁמַעְתָּם מִצְלָנָם (2:10).

With the Qohelet-and-his-וַיַּנֵּא framework in mind, the statements in 1:17 and 2:3, given in (19) and (20), make much better sense than they are typically credited with.

(19) וַיִּשְׁמַע לְלֻכָּלָם וַיִּשְׁמַע לְלֻכָּלָם וַיִּשְׁמַע לְלֻכָּלָם וַיִּשְׁמַע לְלֻכָּלָם.

I came to recognize that also this was מִצְלָנָם מִצְלָנָם מִצְלָנָם מִצְלָנָם (1:17).

For (19) I suggest that the use of two infinitive phrases indicates two investigative paths (cf. the NJPS translation and also Fox 2004:10).²⁵ Qohelet directs his וַיַּנֵּא “to know” wisdom and for himself he chooses the other—and ultimately unsatisfying—path of “knowing” foolishness. The difficult verse in (20) may be interpreted in a similar vein.

(20) וַיְהִי בְּלִבְּךָ מִצְלָנָם וְלֻכָּלָם וְלֻכָּלָם וְלֻכָּלָם וְלֻכָּלָם.

And וַיַּנֵּא (I) set my ול to know wisdom; and knowing blindness and folly—I came to recognize that also this was מִצְלָנָם מִצְלָנָם מִצְלָנָם מִצְלָנָם (1:17).

²⁵ In (19), לְלֻכָּלָם וַיִּשְׁמַע לְלֻכָּלָם is often subject to emendation. The central question is whether the item מִצְלָנָם is a second occurrence of infinitive “to know” or “knowing,” as I have taken it, or the homophonous noun “knowledge” (so the ancient versions and some modern commentators; see, e.g., Longman 1998:77, 84). For some of those who follow the versions and take מִצְלָנָם as the second in a sequence of four nouns, “wisdom and knowledge, blindness and folly,” the second pair looks like an addition based on 2:12a or 7:25 (Fox 1999:173; cf. Seow 1997:124–25). However, we need not emend or revocalize the conjunctive מִצְלָנָם so that it is understood as the second noun in a word pair.
which they should do under the heavens the number of the
days of their lives (2:3).

The first half of the verse in (20) presents some difficulty. The
problems are what it means to רהו בָּלֵב, what the root לְמַשֵּׁשׁ means
in the context, and how to relate both the infinitive phrase
לְמַשֵּׁשׁ בָּלֵב אֱצוּבָרִים
and following the conjoined participial clause בָּלֵב נַשְׁמַחֵת back to the main clause headed by the verb רהו. The
collocaion of רהו and בָּלֵב is often taken as another way to
express mental activity: “Qoheleth is not examining material plea-
sures so much as his responses to them. Hence he goes about,
meditates, within his heart” (Fox 1999:177, emphasis in original).
Thus, the prepositional phrase בָּלֵב אֱצוּבָרִים is often read as the mental
space, “within my mind” (e.g., Crenshaw 1987:69, 77; Longman
1998:87, 89), or the mental means, “with my mind” (see, e.g., Seow
1997:126–27). But if Qohelet treats his בָּלֵב as his experi-
ment partner, then the ב preposition indicates accompaniment not location
or means.26

The meaning of לְמַשֵּׁשׁ is best kept to its attested range, “pull,
drag, draw,” rather than the guesses that are motivated by the con-
text of this verse (“tempt” NJPS; “cheer” NRSV, Longman
Lohfink 2003:51). After all, the image of “dragging” oneself to do
something is not all that opaque and in the context of Qohelet’s
experiment it suggests that he forced himself to follow paths that
he suspected might result in less than desirable experiences, all for
the sake of determining קג" 4™': ˜ f " - š š š !'—1 ' – +L&!˜$¡' —.

On the final interpretative crux, the relationship of the main
clause to what follows, numerous commentators tak
ʩȥˎʑʬʍʥ ʢʒʤʖʰ ʤʕʮʍʫʕʧʙʔ ˎ ʩʑʸʕˈʍˎʚʺʓʠ  Yapı as a parenthetical clause (see, for example, Barton
1908:77; Lauha 1978:48; and Crenshaw 1987:78) but not the first
infinitival phrase ˂ˣˇʍʮʑʬʯʑʩʔ˕ˎ ʯʑʩʑʸʕˈʍˎʚʺʓʠ, as I do. I suggest that the
more general intellectual nature of ʦ४ʖʧʎ ʠʓʬʍʥ ʺ˒ड़ʬʍʫʑʱʍˎ makes better

26 The root רהו is used only twenty-four times according to HALOT:
Num 10:33; 13:2, 16, 17, 21, 25, 32; 14:6; 7, 34, 36, 38; 15:39; Deut 1:33;
Judg 1:23; 1Kgs 10:15; Ezek 20:6; Job 39:8; Prov 12:26; Qoh 1:13; 2:3;
7:25; 2 Chr 9:14. Used as a verb it selects an accusative complement,
typically marked with תָּה, and rarely occurs with prepositional phrases: ָּ to mark the indirect object in Num 10:33, Deut 1:33, and Ezek 20:6, קָו to mark
an oblique complement in Num 15:13, ָּ to mark the spatial confines of the activity in Judg 1:23, and ָּ to mark the means in Qoh
1:13.

27 The conjunction ־ on the front of the infinitival complement
phrase is not an obstacle. Indeed, if it were not preceded by a ־ it might
be mistakenly taken with the immediately preceding material rather than
with the initial finite verb רהו. This example is a case of the ־ simply
marking the front edge of a phrase or clause; when the ־ functions in
such ways, it serves a syntactic role alone (i.e., it is semantically vacuous).
sense as the complement of \( \text{גח'ח} \) and also that the contrast between how Qohelet induces his “flesh” to behave and the steadfast behavior of his \( \text{גח'ח} \) fits the dual nature of the experiment. Rather than a statement of “youthful bravado” (Seow 1997:127), this verse indicates that Qohelet was accompanied by his \( \text{גח'ח} \) in his investigation of foolishness, although in accordance with the division of labor in 1:17, he admits that his \( \text{גח'ח} \) continued to be a source of wisdom even while he used wine to induce himself (lit. his “flesh”) to explore the darker side.

Notably, Qohelet does not use the pronoun \( \text{גח'ח} \) after the verb \( \text{גח'ח} \) in (20). As I have already demonstrated, the pronoun is syntactically optional and thus Qohelet is not compelled to use it to produce well-formed statements. Instead, as Table 2 helps to show, Qohelet's pattern is to use the \( \text{גח'ח}-\text{plus-גח'ח} \) construction when he engages his \( \text{גח'ח} \) in conversation (1:16, 2:1, 15; 3:17, 18) or when he and his \( \text{גח'ח} \) take action together (7:25). He omits the pronoun more often than not, which is expected.\(^{28}\) After the first instance of the \( \text{גח'ח}-\text{plus-גח'ח} \) construction in 1:16, Qohelet repeats it to remind his audience that the experiment was carried out by the twosome. When he does not want to emphasize that the pair were engaged together, he omits the pronoun.

The final set that needs explanation is the type in the left column in Table 2: the thirteen that exhibit the subject pronoun following the finite verb but no mention of the \( \text{גח'ח} \). These are simple cases of the overt subject pronoun used to mark focus. Once he has established that he and his \( \text{גח'ח} \) carried out the experiment together, he is able to use the first-person pronoun alone to identify the majority of experiences and conclusions as his rather than his partner's. In other words, when he states in (21) that

\[
\text{גח'ח} (\text{I saw, I}, \text{all the acquisition(s) and all the skill of the work – that it is (out of) a man's jealousy of his neighbor (4:4).}
\]

he indicates by the grammar – by the use of \( \text{גח'ח} \) by itself following the verb – that this was his experience and conclusion, not that of his \( \text{גח'ח} \). The preference for the post-verbal position for the pronoun over the pre-verbal position that is more common in BH makes sense only in the context of the \( \text{גח'ח}-\text{plus-גח'ח} \) pattern: the post-verbal

With this understanding of the infinitive phrase, I do not need to emend \( \text{גח'ח} \) to \( \text{גח'ח} \), a change BHS suggests and Seow (1997:127) follows.\(^{28}\) For a main clause finite verb without the post-verbal pronoun \( \text{גח'ח} \) and collocated with \( \text{גח'ח} \) as a complement or adjunct, see 1:13, 17; 2:3, 10, 15; 8:9, 16; 9:1. For a main clause finite verb without the post-verbal pronoun \( \text{גח'ח} \) or \( \text{גח'ח} \) as a complement or adjunct, see 1:12, 14, 16; 2:2, 4–9, 17; 3:10, 12, 14, 16, 22; 4:15; 6:3; 7:15, 23; 8:9–10, 14, 17; 9:11, 13; 10:5, 7.
evokes the fuller construction and ensures that the audience interprets the contrast appropriately: יַעַל (not my בע) did this.

6. CONCLUSION

Does Qohelet really exhibit a “peculiar use of the pronouns,” as Schoors asserts (1988:82)? Not at all. Qohelet’s use of pronouns reflects syntactic options that are well-represented throughout the biblical corpus of ancient Hebrew. The post-verbal pronoun allows the book’s author to present this structure, establish that Qohelet and his בע work together but do not always share experiences or draw similar conclusions, and then manipulate the association created between the grammar and the rhetorical structure to present certain observations and conclusions as only Qohelet’s, not those of his בע. The I-and-my בע strategy appears mostly in the first two chapters of the book and while the basic cooperative nature of the experiment is not jettisoned, the author invokes it infrequently in the rest of the book. As a literary convenience this differs little from the monarchic-Solomonic persona that is also dropped after chapter two: once well-established as a part of the audience’s reception filter, the continued mention of such literary strategies is often uneconomical and even a distraction.

Why is Qohelet, the character (and perhaps the implied and real authors behind Qohelet) so interested in establishing that experiment was a cooperative venture? Because it allows Qohelet the character both to experience the wilder, seedier, even debauched side of life and keep himself, by virtue of the counter experiences of his בע, from becoming thoroughly distasteful to the audience. Without both sides of the experiment, Qohelet’s argument would be transparently facile. The post-verbal pronoun strategy reflects the author’s rhetorical skill and linguistic ingenuity; it is masterful use of language, neither odd nor ungrammatical.

APPENDIX A: THE HEBREW 1CS SUBJECT PRONOUN DATA

This appendix does not include the hundreds of cases of second- and third-person pronouns with finite verbs. Preliminary study indicates that the pre-verbal position with these pronouns outnumbers the post-verbal position by four-to-one in the Hebrew Bible. There is no clear reason that the syntax and pragmatics of the pronouns should differ depending on the person (first, second, third) and so the analysis of the first-person singular pronoun presented in this essay should apply to all other subject pronouns (see above, n. 9, for a list of the second- and third-person pronouns in Qohelet).
SUBJECT PRONOUN (1CS) – VERB: 412X


There are another 108 cases in which an element intervenes. Of these, 29 cases have a negative between the pronoun and verb: Gen 19:19; 28:16; 31:52; Exod 10:26; Num 18:8; Deut 1:41; 10:10; Judg 11:27; 21:18; 1Sam 25:25; Isa 49:15; 50:5; Jer 8:20; 14:15; 17:16; 23:24, 32; 29:31; Ezek 13:7, 22; Jon 4:11; Ps 18:23, 119:70, 87; Ruth 2:13; Esth 4:11; Neh 4:4; 5:15; 2Chr 20:12. The remaining 77 cases have some other elements, such as appositional proper names or raised object noun phrases: Gen 24:45; 43:14; Exod 31:6; Num 3:12; 14:35; 18:6, 8; Deut 31:18; 1Sam 4:16; 20:5, 20; 2Sam 13:13; 15:34; 1Kgs 20:34; Isa 41:17; 45:2; Jer 1:18; Ezek 5:13, 15, 17; 12:25; 14:5, 9; 16:43; 17:21, 24; 21:4, 10, 22, 37; 22:14, 22; 24:14; 26:14; 30:12; 34:24; 35:12; 36:36 (2x); 37:14; Hos 12:11; Jon 2:10; Mic 7:7; Hab 3:18; Ps 2:7; 5:8; 13:6; 17:15; 20:8; 26:1, 11; 31:7, 15; 38:14; 55:17; 56:4; 71:14; 75:3; 88:14; 102:10, 12; 116:69, 70; Job 13:3; Prov 8:12, 17; Ruth 1:21; Qoh 1:12, 16; Lam 5:7; Dan 8:27; 9:2; 10:2; Ezr 4:3; Neh 2:20; 5:14; 1Chr 29:17.

Finally, 40 cases include a focusing particle, such as דב or כ preceding the subject pronoun: Gen 20:6; 21:26; 44:9; Exod 6:5; Lev 26:16, 41; Josh 24:18; Judg 2:21; 1Sam 1:28; 2Sam 2:6; 2Kgs 2:3, 5; 22:19; Isa 66:4; Jer 4:12; 7:11; 13:26; 31:37; Ezek 5:11 (2x); 8:18; 9:10; 20:15, 23, 25; 21:22, 24:9; Amos 4:6, 7; Mic 6:13; Mal 2:9; Ps 71:22; 89:28; Job 7:11; 16:4; 40:14; Prov 1:26; Esth 4:16; 2Chr 12:5; 34:27.
There are 23 cases in which the verb and 1cs subject pronoun are immediately adjacent: Lev 20:5; 26:32; Num 11:14; Judg 8:23; 9:28; 2Sam 12:28; 17:15; 2Kgs 10:4; Isa 17:18 (2x); 21:5; Ezek 16:60, 62; 17:22 (2x); Hos 14:9; Job 13:13; Prov 24:32; Ruth 3:13; Song 5:5, 6; Dan 12:5.

There are another 25 cases in which the post-verbal pronoun is accompanied with a focus particle, such as ... 9:9, or ... 5:5: Gen 20:6; 30:3, 30; Lev 26:24, 28; Deut 12:30; Judg 1:3; 1Sam 8:20; 20:42; 2Sam 18:2, 22; 1Kgs 19:10, 14; Hos 4:6; Zech 8:21; Job 1:15, 16, 17, 19; 13:2; 32:10, 17; 33:6; Dan 10:7.

Finally, there are 22 cases in which the subject pronoun is part of a conjoined phrase: Gen 31:44; 34:30; 37:10; 41:11; 43:8; 47:19; Exod 33:16; Num 20:19; Judg 7:18; 11:37; 12:2; 20:4; 1Sam 20:23; 1Kgs 1:21; Jer 3:25; 44:17; Esth 7:4; Ezra 9:7; Neh 2:12; 2Chr 32:13.

**APPENDIX B: QOHELET’S SYNTAX IN COMPARATIVE LITERARY CONTEXT**

The position that the כָּלָה is personified in Qohelet is certainly not a novel one; many students of the book have noted similarities between the use of the כָּלָה in Qohelet and Egyptian wisdom literature:

The personification of the “heart” (Eg. iḥ) or “soul” (Eg. ba) is a literary device used in Egyptian pessimistic literature. So one reads in *The Complaints of Khakhperre-Sons*: “He said to his heart: ‘Come, my heart, that I may speak to you, and that you may answer me ... I speak to you, my heart, answer me! A heart that is approached must not be silent’” (see Gardiner, *Admonitions*, p. 105, line 1; p. 108, lines 5-6). A similar device is found in *The Dispute Between a Man and His Ba* (AEL 1, pp. 163-69). Such texts typically present conflicting positions assumed, respectively, by the physical self and the heart or the soul. So, too, Qohelet speaks “with” (חַיָּה) his heart. Certainly the heart is personified in 2:1-3. (Seow 1997:123; see also Shupak 1997: 104, n. 13; 107, n. 9).

The text *The Dispute Between a Man and His Ba* is particularly worth comparing to Qohelet. Not only does it provide literary themes worth comparing to Qoheleth, the Egyptian text contains a certain repetitive pattern that may provide an analogue for Qohelet’s use of post-verbal pronouns.

The beginning of the *Dispute* is lost, but the existing text apparently starts with a bit of the *ba’s* first speech and then transitions to the man’s first response (see Faulkner 1956:21–22). In the first two exchanges, we expect to have the challenge and response fully introduced, even if the nature of the dialogue was fully specified in the lost narrative introduction. Appropriately, the opening of the man’s first response is, “I opened my mouth to my ba that I might answer what it had said” (Shupak 2002, ln. 4). Consider this first
opening line of a speaker transition as well as all ensuing introductions:

(i) Speaker Transitions in *The Dispute Between a Man and His Ba*

Line 4: iw wpt.n.i r.i n b3.i “I opened my mouth to my ba”
Line 31: ḏ dt.n n.i b3.i “What my ba said to me”
Line 33: ḏ ḏ “I said”
Lines 55–56: iw wpt.n n.i b3.i r.f “My ba opened his mouth to me”
Lines 85–86: iw wpt.n i r i n b3.i “I opened my mouth to my ba”
Line 147: ḏ dt.n n.i b3(i) “What my ba said to me”

Notice that the reader is not allowed to forget who is engaged in this exchange. More to the point, rather than reducing the introductory phrase after the first instance of each to “I said” and “he/it replied,” or something similarly concise, the reader is given the full – repetitive and superfluous – introduction at every transition (ll. 4, 31, 55–56, 85–86, 147) but one (ln. 33). This is similar to Qohelet’s frequent reminder in the first four chapters that he engaged his בָּא to experiment with him. It is possible that the author of Qohelet had picked up from his knowledge of Egyptian literature both a topos in the use of the בָּא parallel to the use of the ba and the textual and rhetorical strategy of repeatedly mentioning both experiment partners lest his audience forget the cooperative nature of his investigation.

**Bibliography**


29 On the use of repetition in another Egyptian text, The Shipwrecked Sailor, see Rendsburg 2000. I am indebted to Ron Leprohon for bringing this to my attention. The lack of the expected, repetitive transition at line 33 in *The Dispute*, even though the context suggests that speaker must change by line 39 (Faulkner 1956, Shupak 2002; cf. Tobin 2003), is also likely a literary device: the omission serves to increase the speed of the text, thereby creating a sense of urgency or anxiety. I am grateful to both Ron Leprohon and Jadranka Bekcic at the University of Toronto for assistance in working with the Egyptian material.

30 On the issue of literary influence, it is perhaps more than coincidence that there is a macro-structural similarity between *The Dispute* and Qohelet. The second half of *The Dispute* contains a long three-poem speech by the man followed by an abbreviated final response by the ba. Qohelet does not mention his בָּא after 3:18 until 7:25, during which Qohelet shifts style, addresses the audience in the second person, and quotes a number of more traditional aphorisms, all starting at 4:17.


