

Possible Topics for a Comprehensive Philosophical Approach to *Qohelet's* Metaphysical Assumptions

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Abstract

Up to now, philosophical approaches to *Qohelet* (Ecclesiastes) have tended to focus mostly on how parts of the book relate to some concepts in ethics and epistemology. By contrast, metaphysical assumptions in the text have received comparatively less attention. Yet while *Qohelet* is not a metaphysical textbook, the language of the author invariably contains many metaphysical assumptions about issues of interest popularly associated with this philosophical discipline (especially in its analytic form) and which still have not been studied in a conceptually nuanced manner. In light of this gap, the present study aims to provide a meta-theoretical prolegomenon to future descriptive metaphysical perspectives on the book. Bracketing controversies regarding the nature and possibility of metaphysics as such, the author offers an introductory overview of those concepts discussed therein and with reference to which *Qohelet* could be read in a comparative-philosophical manner.

Keywords: Hebrew Bible, *Qohelet* (Ecclesiastes), philosophical approaches, descriptive metaphysics

Introduction and research problem

In the study of *Qohelet*, a sub-genre of interpretative methodologies is constituted by philosophical perspectives on the book (see Gericke, 2015a:1-7). The latter is evidenced in scholarly attempts to either reading *Qohelet* as itself a philosophy of sorts or in the emphasis on concepts in *Qohelet* as these relate to issues of interest in a particular philosophical (sub-) discipline (see generally Koprek 2002:283–296). Perhaps the most prominent philosophical fields for comparison with *Qohelet's* thought have been ethics (e.g. Crenshaw, 1974:23–55; Kruger 1994:70–84) and epistemology (e.g.; Fox, 1987:137–155; Crenshaw, 1998:204–224; Lohfink, 1998:41–59; Schellenberg, 2002; O'Dowd, 2007:65–82; Bartholomew, 2009:passim; Gericke, 2015b:1-9). Within this context of discourse, the research problem of the present article is comprised of a two-fold gap.

Firstly, in contrast with the quantity of studies available on *Qohelet's* epistemology and ethics, substantially less overt attention has been paid to the text's metaphysical assumptions. Included in the small number of popular Western 'metaphysical' topics being discussed are 'determinism' (e.g. Kaiser 1989:251–270; Machinist 1995:159–175; Rudman, 2001, 2002:97–106), time (e.g. Lohfink, 1987:236–240; Shefi, 1990/1991:144–151; Wallis, 1995:316–323) and being (Aquino,

1981; Crenshaw, 2009:41–62). In relation to Eastern philosophy, examples of metaphysical perspectives on the text include studies concerned with *Qohelet's* concept of opposites (Horton, 1972:1–21) and compared to Chinese philosophical views on cosmic order (Nigosian 2004:57–67). However, nearly all these inquiries tend to be linguistic and theological (as opposed to philosophical) in nature. In addition, while most mainstream commentaries and specialist studies too numerous to mention invariably have something to say on related matters, it is always only incidentally the case. Within present scholarship the various approaches to *Qohelet's* metaphysical assumptions are never exclusively or comprehensively philosophical and only focused on all the possible issues of interest within such a context.

In this context, *Qohelet's* metaphysical assumptions refer to presuppositions of the primary narrator in the Book of Ecclesiastes who describe some existential problems of the human condition as these arise from both the nature of the world, human cognitive limitations, the inevitability of death, etc. The literary persona is constructed as a generic theist who recognizes that reality inevitably disappoints, yet who through systematic doubt and self-questioning manages to transcend the paradoxes of existence and with qualification seeks to affirm the elusive joys of life. Secondly, regarding the available research on metaphysical concepts in *Qohelet* (for examples additional to those given above, see Gericke 2015a:1-7). As is often the case with research on *Qohelet's* epistemology and ethics, there is a distinct lack of philosophical sophistication and nuance. Often technical (here 'metaphysical') jargon is used in a popular theological as opposed to a technical philosophical sense. The result is a failure to appreciate and consider the intricate and complex variety of conceptual distinctions in taxonomies of theoretical perspectives on particular metaphysical problems as these might relate to *Qohelet's* own assumptions. For example, when discussing whether *Qohelet* assumed determinism or not (e.g. in Ecclesiastes 3:1-9), very little attention is usually being paid to the fact that philosophers consider it important to distinguish many sub-types of the phenomenon (e.g. which Rudman 2001:34 to some extent acknowledges). Or that there are a host of compatibilist and assorted other viewpoints besides the stereotyped extremes of the popular determinism-free will dichotomy (cf. Loader, 1979:38, 41-42; Rudman, 2001:130). Ultimately, even if philosophical rigor and refinement were not the point of most studies on concepts in *Qohelet* related to metaphysical topics, it only makes the need for such research all the more acute.

It is the 1) lack of philosophical comprehensiveness/metaphysical exclusiveness, and 2) absence of philosophical sophistication and nuance, which represent a gap in *Qohelet* studies, the addressing of which constitutes the research problem of this article.

Objectives and methodology

The research context or location of this study can therefore be seen as 1) the ongoing dialogue within philosophical approaches to *Qohelet* (in general), and 2) research on metaphysical concepts in the book (in particular). Yet the present study itself is not to be misunderstood for an attempt at an actual exegetical inquiry into *Qohelet's* metaphysical assumptions. Rather, the scope and objective is limited to providing a meta-theoretical framework as prolegomenon to future comprehensive philosophical research on the metaphysical assumptions in the text.

A caveat is in order though. It is not the place of this inquiry to prescriptively define metaphysics or to limit it to the meta-metaphysical theories of a particular philosopher, school of thought, or historical period. Even so, the genre and the format of the historical outline will tend to be decidedly more 'analytic' than 'continental' in style (for no particular normative reason). Neither will the author seek to enter the fray of controversies concerning the very possibility of metaphysics itself or whether a metaphysical (philosophical) perspective on the Hebrew

Bible/Tanakh is hermeneutically or exegetically legitimate (although some potential concerns will be addressed in the next three paragraphs to follow). Hence any objections that appeal to arguments concerning the opposition of Hebrew/Greek and biblical /philosophical thinking (still prevalent in some circles of Old Testament theology), or to the critiques of Platonic and Aristotelian forms of thought by Hume, Kant, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida, miss the point (on which, cf. respectively Barr, 1963; 1999:146-168, 2000:38-50; McGinn, 1993)

Assuming that a philosophical discipline called metaphysics has existed and still exists (whether considered meaningful or not), and that it has concerned itself (and is still concerned) with certain topics that characterize the field (however these are worded), the methodology opted for here will therefore be what is technically known as descriptive (as opposed to speculative or normative) metaphysics. Moreover, in as much as some point of orientation may be put forward, following Sider (2012), this article will operate with the assumption that the task of a metaphysical perspective on *Qohelet* could be seen as a clarification of the fundamental structure of the world in the text, albeit in non-distortive philosophical language. In addition, what is called for in terms of method is further specified as involving comparative philosophy which will take popular topics in past and present Western (analytic) metaphysics as potentially constitutive of a possible comprehensive theoretical framework for discussing *Qohelet's* own related presuppositions which have yet to be determined based on the outline to follow.

In other words, it is taken for granted that *Qohelet* does not offer us an explicit and systematic work of metaphysics nor was the book ever intended to be such (cf. Whybray, 1989:239). Even so, the text and its discourse of necessity contain metaphysical assumptions, i.e. presuppositions related to some issues typically associated with issues on the agenda of the philosophical discipline in its various formats through the ages. In this way it is very much the same (and equally little distortive of the book's contents) as discussing *Qohelet's* epistemology or ethics (for more on researching metaphysical assumptions in the Hebrew Bible as such both philosophically and historically, see Gericke, 2012:153-155)

Of course, it cannot be assumed that the text of *Qohelet* will contain discernable assumptions related to any particular issue associated with popular concepts in metaphysics. The discourse, taking many related things for granted, might sometimes not seem to offer anything obvious to work with at all. Or it might be unclear as to what exactly the identifiable assumptions might mean, or how these actually compare to known philosophical categories. The exact state-of-affairs regarding compatibility with the entire history of Western metaphysical frameworks is therefore still largely a matter awaiting determination (as opposed to already available discoveries in relation to ancient Greek and modern existentialist philosophies). Appealing to substantial differences in modes of expression between *Qohelet's* discourse and that of Western philosophies – or even a lack of comparable data – is therefore no argument against a metaphysical reading. Rather, it merely challenges us to refine our philosophical descriptions, which in turn might help preventing philosophical eisegesis of the textual data.

A comprehensive philosophical perspective on *Qohelet's* metaphysics

From the point of view of the history of philosophy in general, and from that of metaphysics in particular, the subject matter of a metaphysical approach to *Qohelet* could involve a substantial array of topics. After all, there is much more to the metaphysical assumptions of the book than what only already partially analyzed concepts like being, time and determinism imply. Yet it must be acknowledged that no uniformity or standardization exists in terms of the exact nature and number of possible issues of interest in metaphysics (or on the exact wording of the particular topics/problems/theories). Yet one has to start somewhere. So for the purpose of

providing an introductory outline of a comprehensive array of historical-philosophical interests of potential use in reconstructing Qohelet's own metaphysical assumptions (also in the negative sense of showing what is not the case), this study will adopt and adapt the meta-theoretical framework provided recently by van Inwagen and Meghan (2015:n.p.). Following their outline, we shall distinguish between a number of issues on the agenda in both classical and contemporary perspectives.

Qohelet in relation to issues in classical metaphysics

As van Inwagen & Meghan (2015:n.p.) remind us, the term 'metaphysics' comes from a collective title ('*Ta meta ta phusika*' or 'After *The Physics*') later inserted as title of fourteen books of Aristotle (for a detailed introduction to Aristotle's metaphysics, see also Politis, 2004.). Should we assume that Qohelet's 'metaphysics' is whatever Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (see Aristotle 1953) was about, it will involve looking at textual assumptions related to the following topics.

Qohelet's and the concepts of being as such, first causes and unchanging things

The first possible topic for future research would be Qohelet's assumptions, if any, regarding 'being as such' (and, if distinguishable, 'existence as such'). Secondly, one might inquire as to Qohelet's presuppositions, if any, about 'the first causes of things'. Thirdly, of interest to a classical perspective would be the textual construction of 'unchanging things'. Up until the seventeenth century, all three of these topics would have been considered the subject-matter of Qohelet's metaphysics (see Inwagen & Meghan, 2015:n.p.) Any future philosophical inquiry into Qohelet's metaphysics would therefore do well to start with paying some attention to how the text by implication constructs these particular concepts.

Qohelet and the concept of the categories of being

An intermediate position between Aristotelian and post-Aristotelian perspectives on Qohelet's metaphysical assumptions would be possible presuppositions in the text related to the so-called categories of being (see Aristotle, 1963). Alien as it may sound, we may start by noting that even in Qohelet things in the world of the text appear to be sorted into various classes, e.g. humans, animals, etc. (cf. Russell, 1901:83-101). And surely the text also supposes that an internal unity characterizes these classes. This in turn could mean that Qohelet presupposed the existence of so-called 'natural kinds' (on which, see Quine 1969). Where it gets interesting is in the realization that some of the classes into which Qohelet's discourse sorted things were inevitably be more comprehensive than others, e.g. all humans were assumed to be dust but not all things dusty were believed to be human. The less comprehensive classes represent what the text assumed with reference to the 'categories of being' (also called 'ontological categories'). In this manner an inquiry into such categories constitute what is intermediate between research into Qohelet's assumptions about 'the nature of being' and about those topics that came to fall under the post-Medieval conception of metaphysics to be discussed below (developed by Kant, 1958 and Husserl, 1962 & 2000)

Qohelet and the concepts of properties and universals

Prima facie, the text of Qohelet seems void of explicitly packaged information as far as the classic philosophical problem of universals is concerned (on which, see Armstrong, 1989). Universals, in this context, would be what the text took to be properties or qualities or attributes (i.e., 'humanity' or 'hbl-ness') in some ways always 'present in' the members of particular

classes of things and relations. Classic philosophical perspectives with which potentially present assumptions related to this topic in *Qohelet* might be compared to include so-called extreme, strong and moderate versions of realism. For example, if *Qohelet* presupposed that universals existed or ‘subsisted’ or ‘had being’, we may start by asking how the metaphysics implicit in the text can be seen to relate to Platonic (*ante res*) or Aristotelian (*in rebus*) versions of realism. Did the universal or the particular have ontological priority in *Qohelet*? Alternatively, how did *Qohelet*’s metaphysical assumptions agree with or differ from anti-realist or predicate nominalist views, including resemblance nominalism, trope nominalism, and conceptualism? (cf. Macleod & Rubenstein, 2006:n.p.)

***Qohelet* and the ontological/mereological structure of particulars**

Next one might investigate as to what *Qohelet* might have assumed about which stood over and against universals, namely particulars (see van Inwagen & Meghan, 2015:n.p.). While the jargon might seem problematic, in this case it simply refers to what *Qohelet* thought were things that underwent change. *Qohelet*’s views on this matter are likely to involve the presence of what might be called a folk-philosophical theory regarding the ‘ontological structure’ of non-universals. As such it can be contrasted with its presuppositions in the text about the mereological structure of particulars, which would also be of interest. The latter includes any presuppositions in the text, if present, concerning the relation between an object and its constituent parts belonging to the same ontological category (see Varzi, 2015:n.p.) For example, did *Qohelet* assume that particulars fell under universals by somehow incorporating them into their ontological structure? Alternatively, does the text imply that the ontological structure of a particular incorporated individual properties or accidents just in virtue of being its constituent part? (On these issues, see Lowe, 2006).

***Qohelet* and the concept of substance**

As van Inwagen & Meghan (2015:n.p.) remind us, there is no universally accepted and precise definition of ‘substance’. In other words, how the reader understands the word will determine whether or not it would appear to be the case that *Qohelet* assumed the existence of substances. For present purposes, suffice it to note that in *Qohelet* there are implied to be subjects of predication that cannot themselves be predicated of things (that is, they are not universals). *Qohelet* thus assumed that things exist ‘in’ them, but that they do not exist ‘in’ things (e.g., they are not accidents like *Qohelet*’s wisdom or God’s anger). Did *Qohelet* also assume that such things have determinate identities (essences)? If so, *Qohelet* could be constructed as having presupposed the existence of substances in the classic metaphysical sense (see Aristotle 1953, 1963). But if so, how precisely should the concept of substance implicit in *Qohelet* be understood? Did *Qohelet* presuppose a distinction between different kinds of substances, e.g. immaterial substances, eternal substances, necessarily existent substances? Though the topic of substance might also be located within ‘the categories of being’, it can also be treated separately in light of its constituting one of the central questions of classic metaphysics.

***Qohelet* and the problems of contemporary metaphysics**

A number of issues of interest in Ancient and Medieval metaphysics differ somewhat from related themes in contemporary research in the subject (especially since the 1960’s revival of metaphysics in analytic philosophy; see van Inwagen & Meghan, 2015:n.p.) We now turn to

potential topics in the study of the metaphysical assumptions in *Qohelet* that belong to an analytic metaphysics in the post-Medieval sense.

***Qohelet* and the concepts of modality and possible worlds**

Medieval metaphysics might suggest that propositions in *Qohelet* were assumed to be either 'necessarily' or 'contingently' true/false (the latter, for example, if quotations are assumed to be present in the text). The combined 'modes' of contingency and necessity would be what was meant by 'modality'. As van Inwagen & Meghan (2015:n.p.) argue, however, currently the term 'modality' in the context of our inquiry would mean no more than what, according to *Qohelet*, pertained to possibility and necessity. Moreover, two types of modality in *Qohelet's* discourse may be distinguished: modality *de re* (of things) and modality *de dicto* (of propositions). Additionally, two types of modality *de re* can be identified in *Qohelet*. The first would concern what *Qohelet* assumed about the existence of things, the second involves *Qohelet's* assumptions about the properties of things. One might also try to discern the presence of essentialism or anti-essentialism regarding properties in the world of the text. Moreover, a metaphysical perspective on *Qohelet* and modality can also make extensive use of the concept of a possible world in discerning various related ideas implicit in the book's language (following the various senses of the concept in Kripke, 1972, Plantinga, 1974 and Lewis, 1986).

***Qohelet* and the concepts of space and time**

Studies on these concepts available in the research on *Qohelet* hardly philosophical in general and metaphysical in particular (being more linguistic and comparatively-religious orientated and focused on 'cosmology' in a non-technical sense, see e.g. Lohfink, 1987:236-240; Perdue, 1994: passim; Kamano, 2002; Bundvad, 2015). Yet any future comprehensive metaphysical perspective might also like to attend to typically philosophical questions (adapting the generic list provided by van Inwagen & Meghan 2015:n.p.) For example, how far were space and time assumed to extend, according to *Qohelet's* construction of the world in the text? One can also ask whether for *Qohelet* there could be two extended objects/events that were believed to be spatially or temporarily not related to each other. One can further inquire as to whether for *Qohelet* space/time was assumed to be a real thing that existed independently of its inhabitants, or instead a mere system of relations among those inhabitants. Other philosophical questions about time in *Qohelet* would have no obvious and uncontroversial spatial analogues, e.g. about the taken-for-granted grounds in *Qohelet* for various asymmetries between the past and the future, such as why knowledge of the past was assumed to be better than knowledge of the future, or why causation in *Qohelet* was constructed to have a privileged temporal direction. There is also the question of whether the apparent 'movement' of time in *Qohelet's* discourse was assumed to be a real feature of the world in the text or some sort of illusion (i.e. a manner of speaking). In other words, did *Qohelet* conceive of time in a way similar to so-called A-theorists (time is fundamentally structured in terms of a past/present/future distinction) or B-theorists (for who some events and times are merely earlier or later relative to others)? (cf. McTaggart, 1908)

***Qohelet* and the concepts of persistence and constitution**

Related to the previous topic in *Qohelet's* metaphysics are inquiries into the assumed nature of objects present in the world of the text that are constructed to take up space and persist through time. (cf. van Inwagen & Meghan, 2015:n.p.). For example, were some or all objects featured in that world assumed by *Qohelet* to be composed of proper parts? Moreover, did *Qohelet* think an object have to have proper parts in order to 'fill up' a region of space in the world of the text—or

were there also assumed to be what is called 'extended simples'? According to *Qohelet's* presuppositions, could more than one object be located in exactly the same region? Does the text suggest that objects persist through change by having temporal parts? Work on *Qohelet's* possible views regarding persistence and constitution might also focus on puzzles of coincidence, i.e. on questions about what the text presupposed concerning the identities of spatially coincident objects (which may or may not share all their proper parts). Can these relations potentially nascent in *Qohelet's* metaphysical assumptions be meaningfully expressed via modern concepts like parthood and (non-) identity? Or are they in need of an additional non-mereological concept, e.g., 'constitution'. (cf. Rea, 1997)

***Qohelet* and the concept of causation**

Throughout the history of philosophy, various types of causes have been postulated (see Paul & Hall, 2013). From a contemporary perspective, a major issue of potential interest in researching *Qohelet's* own metaphysical assumptions about causation might involve specifying the relata of causal relations presupposed in the text (cf. van Inwagen & Meghan, 2015:n.p.). For example, was a causal relation assumed to hold between two events, two states of affairs or between two substances (in the technical philosophical sense of these terms)? Also, could it be that in *Qohelet's* thought, causal relations were assumed to be triadic or otherwise polyadic? And were such relations presupposed to be objective and irreducible features of reality, or not? Whatever the case, inquiries into this topic might wish to determine how *Qohelet's* assumptions agree with and differ from various theories of causation, e.g. manipulation theories, counterfactual theories, probabilistic theories, process theories, instrumental theories, singularist theories, etc. In the language of philosophy of religion, one might also wish to determine if *Qohelet's* view of divine causation can be best related to occasionalism, conservationism or concurrentism? (for a metaphysical introduction, see Schaffer, 2014)

***Qohelet* and the concepts of freedom and determinism**

As the outline of van Inwagen & Meghan (2015:n.p.) implies, the afore-going issue gives rise to a related set of pressing philosophical questions concerning *Qohelet's* assumptions about freedom. In this regard, recent debate on the free-will problem in philosophy proper uses a taxonomy of positions that has not yet been adequately attended to in discussions of determinism in *Qohelet*. For example, at the top level, the two mutually exclusive positions are determinism and indeterminism. But it does not end here. Under determinism, two more positions conflict, namely compatibilism and incompatibilism. And under indeterminism, libertarians take three different possible views, namely non-causal, agent-causal, and event-causal. Which of these most accurately approximates *Qohelet's* own assumptions regarding the nature of reality? Also, in relation to *Qohelet's* ethics, one might wish to distinguish categories like broad and narrow incompatibilism, semi-compatibilism, hard incompatibilism, and illusionism. Such refined and nuanced ways of classifying positions are seldom if ever part of discussions of *Qohelet's* assumptions on the matter (cf. Rudman, 2001; 2002:97-106)

***Qohelet* and the concepts of the mental and the physical**

The next topic, based on our adaptation of the outline provided by Van Inwagen & Meghan (2015:n.p.), is *Qohelet's* metaphysical assumptions in relation to the problem of the mental and the physical (various wordings of this puzzle exist). Modern identity theory holds that all mental events or states are a special sort of physical event or state. If we assumed *Qohelet* took this

view of things, one might ask how, according to *Qohelet*, one might account for mental causation. If in *Qohelet*'s metaphysical assumptions thoughts and sensations of the heart were assumed to belong to an immaterial or non-physical portion of reality, how were they thought to have effects in the physical world? Here a wide range of metaphysical theories can be compared with *Qohelet*'s own nascent presuppositions on the matter, if discernable at all. For example, there is 'dualistic interactionism' which would not, of itself, have anything to say about the problem. Alternatively, *Qohelet*'s thought can be compared to occasionalism, pre-established harmony, or epiphenomenalism. In addition to possible relations with these dualistic theories, *Qohelet*'s ideas may be restated along the lines of or vis-à-vis monistic theories which attempt to solve the interaction problem by denying the existence of either the physical or the non-physical: idealism and physicalism. Alternatively, *Qohelet*, it could be asked whether *Qohelet* did not perhaps deny the reality of the mental (that is, via an 'eliminativist' theory), and presupposed a place for the mental in a wholly physical world of the text (see Robinson, 2003a:527-555; 2003b:85-101).

***Qohelet* and the concept of identity**

A final neglected topic, amongst others, concerns *Qohelet*'s assumptions about identity in the metaphysical (as opposed to social-scientific) sense. Included would be textual presuppositions about identity generally, personal identity, identity over time, identity across possible worlds and so on (see Hawthorne, 2003:199-130) Alternatively, did *Qohelet* believe in absolute or relative identity? And what about *Qohelet*'s metaphysical assumptions in connection to additional related concepts, such as distinctions between numerical and qualitative identity? (cf. Noonan & Curtis, 2014:n.p.). Lastly, did *Qohelet* assume there to be a criterion of identity, whether somatic, psychological or even narrative-based? The answers to these questions still await us in future research.

Conclusion

To this day, no research exists exclusively concerned with a comprehensive philosophical perspective on the metaphysical assumptions of *Qohelet*. While a few metaphysical concepts have been attended to (mostly from linguistic and theological perspectives), many others have not. Those topics that are being discussed still lack philosophical nuance and rigor. To fill this gap, this article offered the first meta-theoretical prolegomenon to future research by identifying some of the issues of interest that specialists in philosophical approaches to *Qohelet* might wish to attend.

Irrespective of whether or not we assume *Qohelet* speaks the language of Western metaphysics, ever intended to answer metaphysical questions, or whether metaphysics in itself is possible at all, it cannot be denied that the textual discourse contains assumptions about topics that have been popularly associated with what has been done in the name of metaphysics through the ages. Thus bracketing questions of truth and reality as part of a purely descriptive, comparative and historical perspective on the fundamental structure of the world in the text, the task of any future comprehensive philosophical approach to *Qohelet*'s metaphysics could be to show comparatively and with precision what the textual discourse presupposed in relation various classic and contemporary concepts in that discipline.

While no consensus exists as regards the exact nature and number of issues of interest in (analytic) metaphysics, future research on the metaphysical assumptions in *Qohelet* was shown as potentially involving an array of possible topics. These include, in theory, the text's assumptions, if any, related to classic notions like first causes, being itself, and unchanging

things, the categories of being, the ontological structure of universals and particulars, and substances, In the context of contemporary metaphysics, the philosophical task might involve clarifying *Qohelet's* presuppositions related to modality and possible worlds, time and space, persistence and constitution, causation, the physical and the mental, freedom and determinism, and identity.

Whether *Qohelet's* metaphysical assumptions on the relevant issues are (in)coherent, or perhaps too vague to be identified, or whether the available language of all philosophical eras or topics is not merely anachronistic but also of necessity distortive of the world in the text, is yet to be determined (something which would be in itself a significant finding). Whatever the case may be, the need for a comprehensive approach will remain for as long as *Qohelet* specialists neglect the task of clarifying how textual presuppositions agree with and/or differ from the various issues and theories in the history of philosophical metaphysics proper.

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