QOHELET’S PHILOSOPHIES OF DEATH

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Murdoch University, 2009.
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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(Kathryn Imray)
ABSTRACT

This thesis arises at the meeting place of a philosophical and a thanatological treatment of the book of Qohelet. A philosophical treatment is defended on the grounds of previous studies of the type of thinking evidenced in the text, as well as a comparison with ancient notions of philosophy which suggest that philosophy concerns the type of questions asked, the method of answering the questions, the answers to the questions, and the purpose of the endeavour. A thanatological treatment is defended both on the grounds of previous studies of the text as well as on the grounds of clear evidence that the text is very concerned with the issue of death. From a philosophical perspective it is assumed the book says something about such themes as beauty, knowledge, states of being, ethics, and the benefits of a philosophical outlook. These philosophical categories are combined with the text’s thanatology. The thesis therefore presents: a death aesthetic, in which death can be beautiful; an epistemology of death, in which we are shown to possess certain knowledge of our own mortality in contrast to the lack of understanding we possess about the events of life; a phenomenology of death, or a study of the state of being dead, in which it is seen that death can only ever be the object of our gaze, and we can never experience our own death; an ethics of death, or more precisely an ethics of suicide, in which it is asked, if suicide is appropriate, under what conditions it is better to be dead than alive; and, finally, the death-based nature of the philosophy itself, in which it is seen that one cannot be wise without thinking on death, and that such thoughts confer a particular sort of life on the wise person.
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References
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# ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AnBib</td>
<td>Analecta biblica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABR</td>
<td>Australian Biblical Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANETS</td>
<td>Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETL</td>
<td>Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniesium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bib</td>
<td>Biblica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BibInt</td>
<td>Biblical Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLS</td>
<td>Bible and Literature Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>BN</td>
<td>Biblische Notizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSS</td>
<td>Biblical Seminar Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BZAW</td>
<td>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HB</td>
<td>Hebrew Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUCA</td>
<td>Hebrew Union College Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>International Theological Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>JANES</td>
<td>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</td>
</tr>
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<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature</td>
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<td>JNES</td>
<td>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>JPS</td>
<td>Jewish Publication Society</td>
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<td>JQR</td>
<td>Jewish Quarterly Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSOT</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSOTSup</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>KJV</td>
<td>King James Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>LXX</td>
<td>Septuagint</td>
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<tr>
<td>MBPS</td>
<td>Mellin Biblical Press Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>Masoretic Text</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAB</td>
<td>New American Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEB</td>
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<tr>
<td>NICOT</td>
<td>The New International Commentary on the Old Testament</td>
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<td>NJB</td>
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<td>NJPS</td>
<td>New Jewish Publication Society Translation</td>
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<td>RB</td>
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<td>REB</td>
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<td>SBLDS</td>
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<td>SJT</td>
<td>Scottish Journal of Theology</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSU</td>
<td>Studia Semitica Upsalensia</td>
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<td>UF</td>
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<td>VT</td>
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