

Moral educators have been increasingly looking back to Aristotle (Kristjansson, Sanderse) and Plato (Jonas, Nakazawa) for inspiration on how to educate students in the virtues. These classical Greek sources are, to be sure, rich repositories of insights into how to develop the cardinal virtues of courage, temperance, wisdom, and justice, as well as subordinate virtues like generosity, magnanimity, and patience. According to Aristotle and Plato, living according to these virtues allows one to achieve *eudaimoneia* or happiness — which is to say human flourishing.

The Greeks are not alone in their virtue ethics, however. The Ancient Hebraic tradition similarly believes that the virtues are essential to human flourishing. The Hebraic wisdom tradition offers a vision akin to *phronesis*, but uniquely frames as part of their wisdom paradigm a vision of human flourishing in relationship to the environment. In addition to promoting the virtues such as those listed above, the ancient Hebrews promoted what we might call an “ecological wisdom.” This wisdom highlighted the need for a proper relationship and activity between humanity and nature.

It may seem odd at first glance that the Hebraic tradition advances a conception of ecological wisdom given that the Hebrew scriptures often seem to suggest that our relationship to nature should be one of dominion. Indeed these texts have, at times, been used to justify actions that have caused great environmental harm to the land and human society.

Any such environmentally-destructive, exploitative view of dominion is to be rejected in favor of what we might call a stewardship paradigm that seeks environmental preservation and responsible modification for the greater good of the land and society. Such a view has been recently articulated by Wendell Berry but it can also be found in much older sources like the Hebraic tradition. The Hebraic understanding is one in which humans exist in *covenant* relationship with the divine, each other, and the natural world. Such a covenantal view acknowledges that human existence is so intimately tied to the natural world that environmental and societal flourishing is inextricably connected to the flourishing of human beings (and the obverse). According to the Hebraic tradition, a human was to recognize this intimate connection, and as regards the environment, exercise a *skilled mastery* (“dominion”) of nature for the goal of preserving and promoting *Shalom*. This Hebrew term is often translated as, “peace”, but can be more broadly conceived as a holistic human flourishing in relationship with the wider world.

In this paper, I examine how such an Ancient Hebraic wisdom paradigm augments the Greek with its unique element of an ecological wisdom and virtue. While its metaphysical framework would need to be carefully contextualized for pluralistic classrooms, I argue that the Hebraic conception of environmental stewardship could be a potential resource for moral and citizenship educators committed to environmental literacy. The relationship between humans and the natural world continues to be one of the most important issues facing contemporary society. The holism of the Hebraic wisdom paradigm envisions human flourishing as intrinsically tied to ecological and societal flourishing.