Topçu, Nurettin. *Ahlak*. İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2005, 205pp.

**ABSTRACT**

**Morality**

*Ahlak*

This book combines two textbooks by Nurettin Topçu, *Lessons in Morality for Lyceum Year 1* and *Year 2*, both of which were published by Inkılap-Aka in 1976.

The book has two parts: “Year 1” and “Year 2”. In the first part, Topçu points out that the study of morality began with the rise of civilisation. He explains that the transition from an understanding of the material world to the spiritual one has been elemental in the development of a concept of morality. Throughout this book, Topçu evaluates morality as a science. He argues that morals and art seek the ideal in an altruistic way, and he emphasises the links between the origins and aims of religion and morals.

The second part, “Year 2”, has three sections. The first deals with the psychological attributes of morality and explores concepts such as personality, individuality, character, conscience and performing good deeds. According to Topçu, the concepts of personality and individuality provide a framework for the psychological and sociological attributes of morality. These attributes determine the attainability of good deeds and rely on the human capacity for fair and conscious acts.

The second section explores mainstream arguments on morality and philosophy, and also discusses systems of morality. Moral philosophy deals with the inner world of individuals. While morality focuses on ideals, ethics is more objective. Topçu explores viewpoints that have led to various systems of morality, including empirical morality, biological morality rationalistic morality, morality of the heart and religious morality.

In the third section, Topçu studies the social basis for morality by drawing attention to its sociological dimensions. Topics listed in this section include “Sociological Morality”, “Customs and Mores”, “Morality and the Law”, “National Life and Morality”, “The State and Democracy”, and “Civilisations of the Machine Age and Morality”.

*Ahlak* has been presented for the general reader; however, its chapter summaries and evaluation questionnaires regard the reader as a student. One could criticise the fact that Topçu does not see morality as separate from religion, and that he evaluates all sociological phenomena within this framework; however, his book is useful to those seeking basic knowledge of morality.

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Translated by Aysu Dincer