



27.10.07

SATURDAY

## In Defence of Universal Ethical Values and Principles

by Ali Paya

**Panel:**  
Ethics, Universal Values  
and Pluralism in Gülen's  
Thought

**Venue:**  
Old Theatre,  
LSE

27.10.07 Panels	Parallel Session 1	Parallel Session 2
9:30-11:30		
13:00-15:00	<b>Presentation: 09</b>	
15:10-17:00		

In the past few decades a new approach to ethical principles known as 'particularism' has become fashionable among moral philosophers. According to the particularist the progress in the field of ethics, is from monism (the view that there is only one moral principle), through pluralism (the view that there are many), to particularism (the view that there are none). Jonathan Dancy advocates a radical particularist theory: arguing against a variety of universalist-pluralist doctrines, he maintains that there are no moral principles; and, even if there are, our ethical decisions are highly context-dependent, made case by case, without the support of such principles.

In this paper, drawing on a number of theoretical concepts used in science as well as the philosophy of science, and making use of Fethullah Gülen's insights, I try to develop a moderate universalist-pluralist model in defence of universal ethical values and principles. This model, I argue, is less vulnerable to Dancy's criticisms and better equipped, in comparison to Dancy's own model, to deal with particular moral cases. While particularism in ethics leads to relativism and leaves moral agents with no clear guidelines, the model developed here could serve all moral agents, regardless of credal or cultural association and socio-political outlook, in making sound and commendable moral judgements.

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Among recent/forthcoming papers: *Two Treatises on Culture, Technology and Ethics* (Tehran: National Research Institute for Science Policy, 2007); *Iraq, Democracy, and the Future of Muslim World*, (eds.) Ali Paya & John Esposito, (Oxford University Press) (forthcoming, 2007); 'Popper in Iran' in Ian Jarvie et al. (eds.) *Karl Popper: A Centenary Assessment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).