

Paper Proposal for **The Second International Conference on Multicultural Discourses,**

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**Grace Feuerverger**, Associate Professor  
OISE/University of Toronto, CANADA

**Title: Building Bridges to Peace and Social Justice: An Emancipatory Discourse in a Jewish-Palestinian Village in Israel**

**Abstract**

This proposed paper presentation is based on a nine-year study that Professor Grace Feuerverger carried out as an educational ethnographer in the cooperative Jewish-Palestinian village of *Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam* in Israel and it is about hope in the midst of deadly conflict. *Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam* (the Hebrew and Arabic words for "Oasis of Peace") is a village that began as an intercultural experiment. There, Israeli Jews and Arabs founded a community aimed at demonstrating the possibilities for living in peace based on the emancipatory ideals of dialogue, negotiation and problem-solving - while maintaining their respective cultural heritages and languages. Their daily search for a better world is both overwhelming and fascinating. Feuerverger's purpose here is to engage the discourse of peaceful co-existence in this cooperative Jewish-Palestinian village and in its two bilingual (Hebrew-Arabic) schools, as it relates to difference, sense of 'otherness', and conflict between two peoples yearning for home and safety. Feuerverger offers insights into the extraordinary landscape of this cooperative village with its cultural and social encounters, educational innovations, moral dilemmas, traumas and reconciliations, which form the basis for creating the spirit of this community against all odds.

Dr. Feuerverger explores the social and psychological dimensions of this educational odyssey towards peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution, and discusses the sites of struggle and negotiation in the "border dialogues" that the participants have gradually created for themselves in their search to give equal expression to their national identities and thereby cultivating new cultural spaces, new realms of discourse and new modes of thought. This paper therefore is an exploration into the complex psychological landscape that Jews and Arabs must navigate, and into their emotional journey towards breaking down the barriers of fear and mistrust that have saturated their daily existence. Feuerverger studies the implications of understanding this peace education project as a dialogical relation. It also provides a window to investigate international issues of war and violence, social justice and human rights, and their implications for our culturally diverse world. One of the most important contributions we can make as academics is to use the vehicle of our research work as a means of forwarding the cause of peace and equality within a multicultural, multilingual, multiracial educational context for all societies and to unequivocally support an inclusive curriculum wherein all forms of difference can be addressed with knowledge and compassion. The ultimate goal of this

research work is to bear witness to the power of what these villagers are trying to accomplish in this place. Their educational enterprise is an exchange; a relationship that involves giving and receiving -- the dream of a more just society and the promise of hope.