

## **Christine Jarvis: Exploring Globalisation: The Public Pedagogy of Joss Whedon**

This paper will examine how Whedon teaches audiences about globalisation and resistance in *Firefly/Serenity*. It argues that Whedon operates as a teacher, by presenting what the influential adult educator, Stephen Brookfield, called 'imagining alternatives'. Whedon creates worlds in which he shows that those aspects of human existence so profoundly entrenched as to appear inevitable and unchallengeable can be resisted and alternative ways of being developed.

The paper draws on educational scholarship, such as that promoted by Luke, Sandlin, Wright and Giroux, which argues that important educational processes, 'public pedagogies', increasingly take place outside institutions. Such scholars have critiqued assumptions that popular/mass culture is a monolithic process, engaged in reinforcing hegemony, offering instead more nuanced accounts of the way popular fictions teach us about the world.

It will also build on the work done by Whedon scholars who have explored the complexity of the *Firefly* Universe, and its capacity to subvert and represent contemporary hierarchies, injustices and power relations. Scholars such as Huff and Davidson consider how Whedon's imaginary universe creates spaces in which alternative gender hierarchies can be presented. Brown considers the complex ways in which *Firefly* addresses the 'othering' of oriental cultures; conversely, Curry suggest that these texts may have reinforced racial stereotypes with respect to American Indians. Jencson notes the prominence of human rights issues in the texts and makes connections with political activism. This activism is also addressed by Wilcox and Cochran.

The paper's contribution to these discussions will be its demonstration that 'the imaginary' is an educational space, in which Whedon uses all the resources at his command, to promote critical reflection on globalisation and resistance in ways that enable audiences to recognise possibilities for change, and their own complicity in the maintenance of the status quo.