

Heather M. Porter: Cuppa Tea, Cuppa Tea or Something Stronger: Images of Tea in the Whedonverse

The drinking, making and serving of tea are images that are often seen in the works of Joss Whedon. From Giles with his porcelain teacup and saucer in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and the tea ceremonies of the Companion in *Firefly* to Adelle serving tea to both clients and newly recruited Dolls and the ever-present tea set in her office in *Dollhouse*, tea often appears in both the foreground and the background. This paper seeks to examine these images of tea and how they are used throughout these series, including the history of tea and how tea is utilized to show both British and Chinese culture and how those associations are used to code certain characters and relationships. This project will also examine the ideas of tea as a ceremony or ritual and how tea is used to include and exclude people using In Group/Out Group theories and social identity theories. This presentation will examine these aspects of tea across Whedon's works including his television series, comic books and feature films.