The Slayer Studies by buffy.de Online

Katrina Blasingame

"I Can't Believe I'm Saying It Twice in the Same Century. . . but 'Duh . . .'"1 The Evolution of Buffy the Vampire Slayer Sub-Culture Language through the Medium of Fanfiction

[1] I became interested in the evolution of fan language due to the story from which the title of this article derives, *Chocolaty Goodness* by Mad Poetess. Mad Poetess appropriates canonical language constructions from the *Buffy* mythos, changes them into something completely her own yet still recognizably from *Buffy*. Reading Mad Poetess led me to speculate that fanfiction writers are internalizing *Buffy*'s language and style for their own ends, their fanfiction, and especially for characterization within their fanfictional worlds. As a fanfiction writer, I find myself applying the playfulness I witnessed in *Buffy*, and later *Angel* and *Firefly*, to non-Whedon texts like *Stargate: Atlantis*.2 I also find other writers, whether familiar with Whedon-texts or not, who use language with a Whedonesque flair. Fanfiction is copious on the Internet, so I have chosen to illustrate the *Buffy* influence on fanfiction language from a small and admittedly personal selection. Though not a comprehensive reading of fanfiction language, this article is an introduction, a place to start that can be applied to all *Buffy* fanfiction and, potentially, further afield and applied to other fanfiction appropriated universes, perhaps even further, in the course of history, to mainstream English.

[2] The idea of an evolving fan language is a bit confounding. Admittedly, language constructions in fanfiction are difficult to track from fanfiction's modern origins in series like *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, and *Blake's 7*, to current fan creations related to series like *Stargate: SG-1*, *Andromeda*, *X-Files*, or *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. We cannot assume that current fanfiction has more blends or compounds or other linguistic constructions than the fic of pre-Internet generations. Nor can we easily analyze the fanfiction produced by the pre-Internet communities. There would be too much material to manage, and there is a problem of access, since pre-Internet fanfiction was shared through friends, zines, and conventions, but not generally available—much of the original material exists only in hard copy. However, we CAN analyze Internet accessible fanfiction, the appropriation of *Buffy*'s language constructions within that fanfiction, and how those constructions evolve into something vastly different from the source language, while still bearing the source's mark.

[3] It is even more difficult to show the evolution of fan language in fanfiction when few scholars have looked at ACTUAL fan language rather than concentrating on ethnographic studies of fan interaction. Such studies occasionally refer to the liveliness of fan language but do not explore it further. They also overlook distinctions between insider and outsider communities, the differences between which have as much to do with recognizing information from the source as with language used among acknowledged members of a community. There have been several articles written about *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* fanfiction, as well as the construction of its slang via the mediums of the *Buffy* and *Angel* series,

novels, graphic novels, and the *Bronze* and *Bronze: Beta* posting boards.[3] Yet there is a noticeable lack of attention paid to the continuation and evolution of slayer style through fanfiction. One of the few to look thoroughly at the source language, as well as fan appropriate message boards, is Michael Adams, author of the seminal work *Slayer Slang: A* Buffy the Vampire Slayer *Lexicon* (2003). Jane Espenson, co-executive producer and writer on *Buffy*, writes that "With so many of us laboring over so many years and with so many fans writing about the show, and indulging in creative fanfic, together we have extended the language of the Buffyverse" (Adams 2003, ix). Espenson seems to be stating that slayer slang, or Buffyspeak, is a continually evolving subculture language partly due to fanfiction, even though academics tend to dismiss fanfiction as inherently non-canonical.

[4] An intrepid few have dared to write about fan communities. Camille Bacon-Smith (1992, 2000) has worked extensively with fan community interaction and initiation but she is not primarily concerned with linguistic fluidity in fanfiction. Bacon-Smith's appendix to *Enterprising Women* (1992), titled "An Introduction to the Language of the Fan Community: Glossary," is more or less a who's who of the *Blake's 7* and *Star Trek* universes and also includes some very general references to *Star Wars* and other, less well known, series, like *Doctor Who* and *Alien Nation*. There are also entries for some fan specific creations, from the letterzine and genres like slash, but, ultimately, the suggestion that the appendix is an introduction to fan language is misleading.

[5] Bacon-Smith's *Enterprising Women* (1992) hearkens back to pre-Internet fan communities that relied upon ink and paper production of their fanfiction and snail mailing (traditional postal delivery) of their zines; it is historically interesting but less relevant to study of current fanfiction language. Fanzines still exist, but many have become Web-based or Web-accessible, and fanfiction is no longer limited to small groups of people and initiated-by-the-community participants. Internet access has broadened fan activity across social, economic, ethnic, age, gender, and national backgrounds; as a result, fanfiction and its creators have flourished, crossed genres and universes. Online archives have also promoted diversity.[4] Archives open up the insider/outsider communities of fandom, blurring divisions between participatory and non-participatory involvement and promoting mythos inclusion and crossing. For instance, James Walkswithwind writes fanfiction across a multitude of series, including *Angel*, *Buffy*, *Forever Knight*, *Harry Potter*, *The Sentinel*, *Stargate: SG-1*, *Stargate: Atlantis*, and *Firefly*.

[6] Bury (2005) takes some salient technological changes into account, but, like Bacon-Smith, Bury focuses on language that appears primarily in message boards and listservs, rather than in fanfiction, and is overly invested in the idea that members of fan communities are female, university educated, and share a "middle-class aesthetic." This may have been true of the few lists in the few fandoms she studied, but it does not consider the changing faces of fan communities, which are becoming more diverse and inclusive due to the accessibility of computers, the anonymity of pseudonyms, and the identities that one can CHOOSE to put forth by means of style.

[7] Mice, who writes fanfiction in the *Stargate: Atlantis*, *Lone Gunmen*, and *X-Files* universes, exemplifies such multiple identity. Mice identifies himself as a "retired iconoclast and rabble rouser" who likes guys and writes fanfiction. Mice also identifies himself with the Emperor penguins that raised

him, Buddhists who (also) raised him, Hillary Rodham Clinton in disguise, and Sir Edmund Hillary in disguise. He claims that, "Some of this might be true on alternate Thursdays. Maybe. Except the walruses. That's all true" (www.squidge.org/mice/). While Mice does present a "true" identification, he also creates other identities for himself that one can accept as utter silliness or as an association that means something to the chooser. Identity implies style; multiple identities imply complex style, the sort of style as yet undiscovered by academic discourse on Web communities and fanfiction.

[8] Fanfiction is, quite literally, fiction written by the fans of a particular TV show, book, movie, etc., which changes or modifies the source in some way. There is a long tradition in literature of adapting someone else's work. An apocryphal set of stories was based upon the character of Quixote during the ten-year hiatus between Parts 1 and 2 of *Don Quixote* (Cervantes 1957). These non-canonical stories, acknowledged as apocryphal, are early fanfiction, similar to later exemplars like Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), which imagines the story of Rochester's insane, caged wife from *Jane Eyre*. Rhys's need to write Rochester's wife's story was the same sort of need that prompts many fanfiction writers to create their tales.

[9] Discussing fanfiction in a modern context, Henry Jenkins (1992), director of Media Studies at MIT, wrote that "fan fiction is the way of culture repairing the damage done in a system where contemporary myths are owned by corporations instead of owned by the folk" (23). Given the number of fanfiction writers and readers that have it up on their sites, this statement has become a rallying cry for fanfiction, which gains legitimacy by its presence within the carnivalesque space of the Internet and its opposition to corporate exploitation and traditionally accepted projections of self.5 According to Kristina Busse (2002), "Generating their own version of the Buffyverse, these fans use fiction to emotionally respond to the show, comment on its plot, and character development, and most important, interpret and analyze the series, thereby teasing out its subtext" (207). Fanfic writers oriented toward the Buffyverse pick up on the subtleties of the texts and utilize them to create a version of the Buffyverse that most accurately projects who they are as individuals, especially their perceived status as outsiders within society.

[10] The phenomenon of fanfiction is not restricted to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, nor is it restricted to recent TV shows or books. Yet, the Buffyverse is among the few fandoms that encourages flexible play with the conventions of a mythos in which fans' efforts participate in the canonical Buffyverse (Larbalestier 2002, Rust 2003). Erik Davis (2001) asks,

What does it mean to own culture? For media companies, ownership means an exclusive right to squeeze dollars out of materials gripped by the ever-growing tentacles of copyright. But fandom is essentially an open source culture, even as it feeds on corporate media. Fan ownership is really stewardship, a commitment that does not center on individual control but on shared imagination and collective process—one that includes passionate consumers alongside actors, directors, bean counters, and PR flacks. In a sense, fans have always been preparing for today's more participatory and open-ended media universe: It's no accident that Trekkers and Deadheads were among the first to colonize the Internet. But it's equally true that

fandom harks back to a time when we sat around the campfire and swapped the old, untrademarked tales of heroes and gods.

Davis's reference to fanfiction as stewardship seems to echo the self-perceptions of fanfiction writers who see themselves, not defilers of the text, but as creators of potential readings generated by the text's possibilities. As C. S. Lewis wrote, "Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become" (quoted in Holmer 1976, 76). Even if it is non-canonical, fanfiction could be seen as a way to illuminate the human experience. The language of fanfiction contributes to culture and to personal discovery and bears looking into. Fan language challenges language restrictions and the role of Standard English. What does it mean that fanfiction writers feel both compelled and entitled to manipulate language conventions to develop new forms of old types, create completely new types, and to play at the margins of Standard English?

[11] The power of fanfiction lies in its language, language in flux, because it incorporates popular culture references that change meaning from moment to moment and from person to person. Yet the language of fanfiction also depends on textual stability rather than the permeability of visual media. Fanfiction construction of language, particularly in the Buffyverse, is even more transgressive and subversive than the language of *Buffy* itself, partially due to the method of presentation, that of TEXT. Fanfiction is stable because it is printed and typed. In other words, fanfiction exists in a regimented letter form, but, because the text is housed on the Internet, it is also, paradoxically ephemeral. The fic could disappear or be removed at any moment. Fanfiction language also can be subversive and transgressive because it is not censored. Writers can say what they mean rather then dance linguistically around the subject as writers of a TV series often must do.

[12] The subversive and transgressive constructions of canonical and non-canonical Buffyspeak are similar to those of Early Modern English; some are reminiscent of Old English or Middle English. Early Modern English was still in a state of flux and did not have a conventional grammar *per se* (Baugh and Cable 2002, 250). Of course, English in any period operates according to structural rules, but the sense that some English is better than the rest is more or less a Modern attitude. In Early Modern English, there was little grammatical correctness, little consistency of spelling, and new words were constantly being introduced from other languages, which increased the fluidity and hybridity of the language. Today, youthful exuberance and ready changeability of language have been relegated to slang and sub-culture languages.

[13] Slang and sub-culture languages have a bad reputation, because they bend generally accepted English. Slang and sub-culture languages express alienation, but really they are more about self-identification. By contrast, jargon is alienating because it belongs to those of a particular profession or craft. Many times with spoken slang or sub-culture language, and particularly with the written language of *Buffy* fanfic, meaning is a matter of subtext. When the subtext is overlooked, the text loses the potency of its meaning, and when the reader attends to frequency of forms rather than fluency in the style, misunderstandings occur.

[14] Michael Adams, author of *Slayer Slang,* often notes that frequent exposure to a subculture's language does not necessarily result in fluency; in fact, he urges that view onto potential students of slayer slang. Yet even a careful student of sub-cultural language like Adams can misapprehend intentions behind what insiders say and write. For example, Adams seems to misunderstand the context and subtext of the sub-culture language of *Buffy* in his treatment of the terms *overshare* and *overthink*. Adams (2003) writes of *overthink* that "I suppose that one can think too much or too often about a particular subject at a particular time, yet I am unconvinced that *overthinking* is possible in general, rather, I suspect that the word reflects a frequent adolescent concern, sometimes recovered by adults, an unwillingness to think as hard as certain situations in life demand or deserve" (32).

[15] Based upon the prefix construction of *overthink* and *overshare*, *over-* is defined as "1: so as to exceed or surpass <*over*achieve> 2: EXCESSIVE <*over*stimulation> 3: to an excessive degree <*over*thin>" (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* 2005), so *overthink* means exactly what it sounds like. Adams's comment shows how someone from outside a subculture may interpret the subculture's style without fully grasping subtleties of meaning apparent to an insider. Within the subculture, *overthink* means pretty much the opposite of what Adams proposes: one can think about a topic for so long and so hard that the thought lacks clarity, thinking breaks down completely, and any actual meaning becomes lost, or even interferes with the thinker's functionality. Adams (2003) explains *overshare* along the same lines as *overthink* and suggests that it "compactly and neutrally expresses the act of being stingy (with things or information, etc.)" (32), but it simply means that one person gives too much information (TMI in the colloquial) to another. Adams defines *overshare* lexically as "Share generously or in excess," but stylistically he evaluates it from an outsider's perspective (203).

[16] The example of *overshare* cited in *Slayer Slang* is from "Halloween" (2006), in which Buffy says of Angel, "If you haven't noticed, he's not exactly one to overshare." Buffy says this with a self-deprecating irony about Angel's inability to share anything with her, let alone potentially *overshare* (or give Buffy too much information), and none of this is lost to the general audience. The context lends itself to Adams's suggestions of stinginess, yet *overshare* still retains its TMI meaning. *Overshare* and *overthink* are not idiolectic: they are straightforward prefixations used frequently among gen-X-ers and younger generations; within those generations, they have taken on connotations beyond dictionary definitions and speakers outside the subculture, but generally agreed upon within it.

[17] Adams's criticism of each of these terms depends on a single citation. In the case of *overthinking*, he refers only to Lisa Loeb's song "I Do," and, in the case of *overshare*, he refers only to the line from "Halloween" (2006), a single instance spoken by the one and only Slayer, regarding a single undead person. Adams defines as though the meaning in each case were idiolectal, when he should understand them as sociolectal for a particular sub-cultural group of speakers. Without a broader array of citational evidence from within the appropriate sub-cultures, Adams, like many outside of them, finds it difficult to identify subcultural meaning.

[18] In spite of the occasional misunderstanding, Adams compiles an admirable lexicon of the slang used in the Buffyverse. He subdivides his discussion of Buffyspeak into sections about slayer jargon, slayer slang,

slayer style, and about modes of word formation, such as prefixing, suffixing, and functional shifting from one part of speech to another. Many slayer slang items, such as *Angel-angsty*, *chocolate vampire crispies*, and *Mr. I Freeload Off Everyone* are nicknames for people, places, products, emotions, etc. These not-quite-nicknames or, as I refer to them in honor of Michael Adams, Slayer Pseudonyms, encapsulate complex concepts in a minimum of space.

[19] Slayer jargon includes the professional terms of a vampire slayer, or other pursuits specific to the Buffyverse, like *stake*, *dust*, *Bronze*, and *Hellmouth*. Many of these slayer-specific words move from jargon to actual slang. The most interesting example of this is the word *Hellmouth*. Although *Hellmouth* is a very specific place name or word for a type of place in the Buffyverse (see, for example, "The Wish," 3009 and "Chosen," 7022), the noun *Hellmouth* becomes the adjective *hellmouthy* (Mad Poetess *Chocolaty Goodness* and James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Small Fry*) in *Buffy* fanfiction. Actually, *hellmouthy* appeared in fanfiction several years before it appeared in Season Seven of *Buffy*. Whether fanfiction use of *hellmouthy* prompted the term's later appearance in the series is unclear.

[20] Although slang is generally thought of as singular words in a sub-cultural lexicon, much *Buffy*-inspired slang in fanfiction is more in line with Adams's idea of slayer style. Slayer style is created by compounding, suffixing and prefixing, and functional shifting, certainly, but also by combination of these traditional word-formative practices with pop cultural references and promotion of parallel constructions. For instance, the Xanderism *chocolatey goodness* ("Nightmares," 1010) is later echoed in Season Seven's *contracty goodness* ("Lessons," 7001), but also in fanfictional contexts, as in *cocoa goodness* (*Chocolate Hurricane*); *Peter Paul goodness*, *doughnutty goodness*, *calorie-laden goodness*, *dirty goodness*, and *fannish goodness* (*Chocolaty Goodness*); *frozen goodness* and *blueberry-banana goodness* (*Domestic Piranha*); and *malty goodness* (*Skelping*). Many forms created in fanfiction that depend on slayer style are difficult to categorize, since many cross word-formative categories. Some are long, self-explaining compounds yet blends at the same time. Others are explicit popular culture references but are also compounded statements borrowed (at least in part or pattern) from *Buffy*. In this blurring of categories, fanfiction invigorates slayer style but only because it owes its stylistic opportunities to *Buffy*.

[21] Richard W. Bailey (2004) points out in his review of *Slayer Slang* that some techniques of slang formation are rarely used within the canonical Buffyverse like, for instance, acronyms (like *MASH*), noun-noun or verb-verb compounds (such as *warp-speed* or *slam dunk*), infixing (as *The Simpsons'* Ned Flanders's *mur-diddly-urderer*), and distinctive exclamations (for instance, Homer Simpson's *doh!*) (96). Bailey's assessment is not exactly accurate, but words from *Buffy*'s Season Seven were not included in *Slayer Slang*; and Adams (2005) admits that he overlooked a few earlier infixings and syntactic interposings. A noteworthy example of such omissions is Buffy's *muhuh*? ("Lessons," 7001) response to the job offered by Principal Wood in Season Seven. Although some constructions for which Bailey checked are not frequent within the canonical Buffyverse, they do thrive in fanfiction: you'll find noun-noun and/or verb-verb constructions like *Sally Jessy questions* and *hell-vibes*, infixings like *box of pop—well, store-brand Frozen Fruit Pops, but they tasted the same, and more importantly were just as COLD—sicles*, and distinctive exclamations like *blurble*. The distinctive exclamations are

omnipresent in facial expressions, the astonishing variety of Spike pouts, Cordelia glares, Gilesy quirks, Buffy Frenchisms, patented Willow babble, and Xander-speak.

[22] Abbreviations, such as initialisms, clippings, blends, and factitious forms, the origins of which can be traced back to the 1830s (Crystal 1996, 120), are all formed in slayer slang, but the most frequent in Buffyverse fanfiction are blends. A prime example is *Count Bloodula*, which is a blend of *Count Chocula*, the trademarked name of brand of sugary cereal that, ironically, has a cartoon vampire on the box; another is *Scoobyriffic*, which blends *Scooby* and *terrific*. *Scooby*, aside from being a cultural reference to the cartoon *Scooby Doo*, is also the term by which Xander, Willow, and whoever else has joined Buffy in defending the world from the evil-of-the-week each refers to him or herself; it derives from *Scooby Gang*, which refers to Buffy's colleagues collectively. Besides *Scooby*, there are an extraordinary number of constructions formed on *Scooby Gang* in canonical slayer slang, such as *Scoobies*, *Scoobs*, *Scoobycentric*, *Scoobyganger*, and *Scooby-sense* (also indebted to *slayer sense*; see Adams 2003, 208-212 and 237).

[23] Some fanfiction forms ultimately from *Scooby Gang* are extravagant compounds, clippings, clipped compounds, or pop-cultural blends, such as *of the Scoob*, *Scoobathon*, *late-night Scooby sessions*, *Scooby-related*, *Scooby Snack* (which directly parodies the Scooby Snacks fed to Scooby in the cartoon series *Scooby Doo* and which, in the fic, are made from Count Chocula cereal), *gone all Scooby*, *Scooby togetherness*, *Scooby peer facilitator*, *extended Scooby family*, *emergency of the Scooby variety*, *Scooby Jeopardy*, *Scooby Maturity Squad*, *Scooby-boy* (meaning Xander) (Mad Poetess, *Chocolaty Goodness*); *Scooby looks* (Cicircisso, *Chocolate Hurricane*); *Scooby meeting* (James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Small Fry*); *Scooby habits* and *Slayer Scoob* (James Walkswithwind and Wolfling, *Sands of Time*).

[24] Popular culture references inundate *Buffy*, from Spike's comment before the Scoobies go into battle to square off with Glory in "The Gift" (5022), "We band of buggered," which is obviously a take on King Henry's pre-battle speech in Shakespeare's *Henry V* (4.3.60) and is quoted in *Renaissance Man*, "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers," to Buffy's quip in response to Xander's dismal attempt at a Yoda-like pep-talk in "The Freshman" (4001), "Thanks for the Dadaist pep talk. I feel much more abstract," a reference to the Dadaist movement of the early twentieth century which, by its abstraction, criticized contemporary culture. The presence of an overt Dadist reference within *Buffy* is rather ironic since much of the subtext in the Buffyverse either criticizes or questions the culture that gave it birth. In fanfiction, pop-cultural reference is both more prevalent and more obscure than in the canonical Buffyverse, and it is not always deferential to its source.

[25] Fanfiction writers exploit the obscurity of popular culture references. Lexical items they create reflect the diversity of writers and their interests, but the writers disseminate their work over the Internet, where they will find readers reader sure to understand even their most obscure creations, as the following list illustrates:

> *Powerpuff Princess' Pad* (a blend of *Pony Puff Princess* from *Dexter's Laboratory* and *Powerpuff Girls*) and *Angel and his Zoobilee Zoo* (a reference to a mid to late '80s children's show

that becomes a slayer pseudonym) (James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Domestic Pirahna*);

evil-dead stare (referring to Sam Raimi's *Evil Dead* movies) (Cicirossi, *Chocolate Hurricane*);

Or should he be checking the empties, to see if they were really full of undead amber joy? (referring to the cartoon *The Last Unicorn*, in which a literally, and celluloidly, animated skeleton gets drunk off of the memory, the ghost, of wine [Mad Poetess, *Skelping*], a reference even more oblique than at first appears, since *skelping* refers to the ghost movie *High Spirits*, 1988, starring Darryl Hanna, Peter O'Toole, Liam Neeson, and Steve Guttenburg);

Ives St. Laurent of Sunnydale (referring to the fashion and beauty maven Yves St. Laurent, Mad Poetess, *Chocolaty Goodness*);

Hair Dyers Anonymous (reminiscent of *Alcoholics Anonymous*); and *Come out of the follicle closet* (referring to non-heterosexuals "coming out of the closet") (Mad Poetess, *Dyeing Young*);

Like Daniel Boone said, he was just bewildered; *ask the Sally Jessy questions*; *anime eyes* (a reference to the popularity of anime and the way the characters seem to all possess very large, very round, guilt-inducing eyes); and *unrealistic grassy knoll* (referring to the assassination of JFK) (James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Domestic Piranha*);

How could the rest of his body be subzero when his face was Mr. Heat Miser? (referring to the character Mr. Heat Miser [Mr. Green Christmas] in the Rankin Bass claymation, *The Year Without Santa Claus*); *The movement set off a chain reaction of tremors that would make Acme Earthquake pills proud* (recalling the Warner Brothers cartoons, in which Acme is god of the product market); and *with an Eliza Doolittle squeal* (referring to the musical *My Fair Lady*, based on George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*) (Cicirossi, *Chocolate Hurricane*);

lack of white light at the end of a long tunnel and other new-age bollocks notwithstanding (referring to the supposed light-at-the-end-of-the-tunnel), *a veritable E. M. Forster on the subject of pining* (referring to a twentieth century novelist who wrote *A Room with a View*), and *the Matt Damon of Bracken Demons or not* (Mad Poetess, *Skelping*);

Creature of the Night and all (referring, not only to *Dracula* and all the subsequent movies based on Bram Stoker's book, but also to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*), *Peter Paul goodness* (referring to the company that made Almond Joy and Mounds bars), *that wasn't meant to be a Chandler Bing moment* (referring to a character on *Friends*), and *if you want to play Tom Bodette to Chip-boy* (referring to the author and radio personality from *All Things Considered* who was the narrator for the recent Motel 6 commercials) (Mad Poetess, *Chocolaty Goodness*).

[26] Compounding, especially self-explanatory compounding, whether long or short, is rampant in slayer style. Compounding in *Buffy*,

but especially in *Buffy* fanfiction, results in phrases from short to very, very long. Examples from the canonical Buffyverse include *Cave Slayer*, *Net Girl*, *Prophecy Girl*, *Edge Girl*, *Destructo Girl*, *Disco Dave*, *Exorcist twist*, *Hacker Girl*, and *inner Slayer* (Adams 2003, 82-83), all of them short, most of them noun plus noun. In fanfiction, however, proper name compounds mix freely with long explanatory compounds, and the result epitomizes slayer fanfiction style, as in the following:

> *come out all "swoony-gothic heroine"*, *cocoa-gods*, *Not To Think Of It box*, *sanity-giving-milk-chocolate-happiness*, *Discovery-channel-voice*, *looked all action-woman again*, *And it made sense in a twisted "ever since the chocolate came in the mail" kind of way*, *the "possessive vampire" growl*, and *have a babbling-question-answer-hug-fest, okay?* (Circirossi, *Chocolate Hurricane*);
>
> *a bigger-meaner-sadder-woefuller-pout*; *Angel and his crew-staff-gang-sewing-circle*; and *the familiar thunderous "I am going to slay you and your little dog Toto, too" expression* (James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Domestic Pirahna*);
>
> *all one big-concussion-induced-dream* (Jessamyn, 2001, *All Dressed Up in Big Sister's Clothes*);
>
> *khaki Dockers-wanna-be uniform pants*, *a "who do you think you're fooling?" look*, *wiggins-inducing* (versus *dream-induced wiggins* [Adams 2003, 280]), and *Uncle Rory's repaired-for-the-moment car* (Mad Poetess, *Chocolaty Goodness*);
>
> *box of pop—well, store-brand-Frozen-Fruit-Pops-but-they-tasted-the-same-and-more-importantly-were-just-as-cold—sicles*; *Spike-logic*; *the same mind-numbing, kill-me-now-and-let-me-go-to-hell-where-it's-cool heat*; *boyfriend-slaying-implements-of-death*; *like some big "Here, find your hopeless, pathetic vampire here' spotlight*; *"can't let it touch the ground or it might get contaminated" kind of hop*; *with a "Come on, argue with me, I'm actually telling the truth for once" challenge*; *Filing that one—again—under Things We Do Not Talk About*; *giving him the "you're the insane one, no matter what anybody says" look*; *Spike's chip-allowed-parameters*; *Mr. I Freeload Off Everyone* (reminiscent of *Mr. I-Loved*-The English Patient (see Adams 2003, 198); and *Angel-I-have-friends-in-the-police-department-this-week-Investigations* (James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Domestic Piranha*);
>
> *plain old dump-it-over-your-head peroxide*, *Five-foot-and-not-much-more of Chosen One*, *weirdness-meter*, and *the mousse-master* (Mad Poetess, *Dyeing Young*);
>
> *ever-flowing-beer-keg*, *slept the exhausted sleep of the too-knowing-to-be-innocent*, and *Angel-angsty* (Mad Poetess, *Skelping*);
>
> *it's a "he doth protest too much" approach* and *Only without the whole principal-making-it-bad sorta thing* (Kirasmommy, *The Key of the Dragon Witch*); and
>
> *parking-gods* (James Walkswithwind and Wolfling, *Sands of Time*).

[27] Compounds are combinations of words that inevitably extend meanings of those combinations, yet nothing can compact subcultural

meaning like a compound. *Angel-angsty* is a compound of *Angel* and *angsty*, a noun and adjective compound, which signals complication from the outset. In fanfiction, the suffix *–y* is usually an intensifier, and *angsty* is a common colloquialism within the fanfiction subculture. *Angel-angsty* occurs in Mad Poetess's *Skelping*, as follows:

> … he wanted that now, and he wanted to *touch*, and that was all that was really bothering him. Odd. He wasn't sad, or really frightened, or depressed, or Angel-angsty. He was hanging about, getting to know another sort of crowd, and waiting, waiting for whatever he was here for to reveal itself to him.

Angel-angsty expresses concepts well known in the *Buffy* subculture, that Angel cannot have a moment of true happiness without losing his soul and that he lives with guilt that constantly recalls the horrid things he did when he was Angelus. This little compound compresses seven seasons of *Buffy* and five seasons of *Angel*, all of the pain, torment, guilt, and regret of all of those seasons of both of those shows in one compact package.

[28] Another compound that captures complex sub-cultural understanding is *Spike's chip-allowed-parameters*. This type of compound depends heavily on conventions within the fanfiction subculture. Spike, a once soulless demon, was caught by the Initiative. The Initiative put a computer chip it had created in Spike's head so that he would no longer be able to bite, feed from, or harm humans. In much of the fanfiction, Spike is involved in relationships with various and sundry Scoobies much as he is involved with Buffy during the last two seasons of *Buffy*. The only difference is that, whereas in Season Seven, Spike's chip malfunctions and is removed after he is ensouled, Spike is generally unensouled with an operational chip. Willow and Spike find ways to ensure that the chip causes a limited amount of pain for pleasure.

[29] This type of motif within fanfiction is referred to as "hurt/comfort": one partner cares for a suffering partner. This does not automatically imply a "slash" relationship (that is, a relationship between unorthodox partners, such as Kirk/Spock), though the item depends on slash conventions. The term also embeds a "get" convention in which the hero suffers yet receives no comfort. A version of the hurt/comfort motif within fanfiction, psychological torment, is a recent occurrence and may have direct connections with *Buffy*: character turmoil and insecurity can be addressed more completely than a series can accommodate, and psychological turmoil comes out (no pun intended) in queer readings of the series, particularly in *Buffy* slash fiction. The most common form of this specific type of slash fiction is the love/hate relationship based upon improbable but plausible pairings of Buffy and Angel, and on other oppositional relationships (Saxey 2001, 199-202). These phrases are so multi-layered that it is hard to explain all of the different implications. A few examples that illustrate such slash include:

> *Daddy's socially correct princess* (Mad Poetess, *Skelping*);
> *Spike-logic*, *non-Gilesy*, *the mousse-master*, and *Watcherish* (Mad Poetess, *Dyeing Young*);
> *personal ad in the school newspaper gayness*; *Anne Rice family togetherness thing*; *Grown Up Ripper*; *manlike, even*; and *Prozac for the poor* (Mad Poetess, *Chocolaty Goodness*);

his Poofiness and *fake-cheese* (James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Domestic Piranha*);

hell-vibes (Jessamyn, *All Dressed Up in Big Sister's Clothes*);

the Giles (Boxerman, *Pirates of the Hellmouth*); and

un-Xanderlike, *witched*, and *the mosquito* (Cicirossi, *Chocolate Hurricane*).

[30] As was mentioned before, many of the constructions discussed in this article overlap into one another; some words and phrases that carry fanfiction style combine several word-formative processes in a single form. The multi-use items of fanfiction multi-textually intensify terms from the canonical Buffyverse. As Adams (2003) illustrates in *Slayer Slang*, and as Mark Peters continues to illustrate in this issue of *Slayage*, the series and the other canonical works, by means of lexical diffusion and appropriation, have projected potentially disposable nonce words unique to the Buffyverse into broader literary contexts and linguistic communities. Fanfiction extends their use and development into sub-cultures otherwise unrelated to *Buffy*, including *Firefly*, *Stargate SG1*, *Stargate Atlantis*, *Harry Potter*, *Andromeda*, *Sentinal*, and *The West Wing* fanverses, to name a few. There even seems to be some influence into the areas of anime and manga fanfiction. The influence is sometimes lexical—that is, a word is borrowed or adapted from slayer slang, for instance *mathy* (see below; cf. Adams 2003, 196)—but usually it is structural, as word and phrase formative patterns typical of slayer slang are introduced in new contexts, for new stylistic purposes.

[31] Examples of this cross-pollenization include the following:

from *ANDROMEDA* FANFICTION

Holo-Rommie (maryavatar, *Beer and Sympathy*);

Mr. Hot Shot (Harper's, *Choices Given, Choices Taken*);

adrenaline-sharpened sweat (maryavatar, *Hunting Harper*);

Will-to-Power aphorisms; *Miss Gold-and-Shiny*; *making-friends-'n-influencing-people department*; *making-foes-'n-extinguishing-people schtick*; *"give Harper a bell and treat him like a leper" bit*; *the full one hour "who-the-hell-does-he-think-he-is-Captain-Rebecca-Valentine-is-way-too-good-for-him-thank-god-I-didn't-notch-up-yet-another-loser-boyfriend-my-taste-in-men-really-sucks' rant"*; and

patented Harper Outraged Squeak (tosca's kiss, *Hypothermia*);

FROM *STARGATE: ATLANTIS* FANFICTION

ancient underwater Hoovers; *the director's cut of Wes Craven's* The Little Mermaid; *little crystal-wire-pen-thingy*; *The Secret Life of Sushi*; and

not post-coital tickling-level annoyed (Merry, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea (give or take)*);

mathy; Buffy *part of my brain*; and *new and improved teddy bear Rodney, complete with kung fu grip* (Amireal, *Breaking Up Is Hard To Do*);

the anti-kryptonite; *big porny slide show complete with prime numbers*; *with the sort of horror the new Skeptical Inquirer*

usually inspires; *Something is rotten in the state of Atlantis*; *starting to put irrational number and irrational number together and coming up with the square root of five*; and *he imagines a neon sign above them that flashes "big gay Lieutenant Colonel here!"* (Amireal, *Chaos Theory*);

We're not in Flowers for Algernon; and "*gone through the McKay-related stages of irritation followed by loathing and hit the unwilling respect, and they took it as the compliment he meant it to be* (shallot, *Proof by Contradiction*).

FROM *FIREFLY* FANFICTION

Simple Simon, shattered Simon ... (Rebecca, *The Glue Series*); *and a ghost in the wings, keeping track of scenes I'm not in* (Nicole Clevenger, *A Butterfly Pinned*), which seems to be a direct reference to the *Angel* episode, "Waiting in the Wings" (3013), where Summer Glau plays a time-loop trapped ballerina;

FROM HARRY POTTER FANFICTION

non-Apparating relatives; *It was the fact that she was equally cheerful when informing him of the daily impending catastrophe. Or possibly Impending Catastrophe. It happened so often that it deserved an official title*; *Everybody to the dinner table on the gallop, trouble*; *Ron looked at his extended hand as if it were a haddock, or perhaps a shrieking eel…*; *grovelly*; and *It didn't help that her braids—long, black, leather-wrapped, "I am the dominatrix who ate your mother for breakfast" cornrows—were gathered at the ends with yellow children's duck barrettes* (James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Price of Wisdom*);

FROM *THE SENTINEL* FANFICTION

James—my, is that your night-stick or are you just pleased to see me?–Ellison; *Capt. Simon—I own your ass Sandburg so shut up and follow orders—Banks*; *Kermit the Twit*; *Kermie the Love Newt*; *the original model for the Elbeews—Weebles, only the version where they fall down but don't get up again*; *Oh God. Thursday. I could never get the hang of them*; *Kermit—the Bog of Eternal Stench—Holt*; and *If he is an example of the elder statesmen of homicide, then bring back Columbo* (Dangermouse, *End of Term Report*);

FROM *STARGATE*: *SG-1*

I know these things. I have a sixth sense. I see dead relationships; *Dust to dust. Ashes to ashes. Copies to copies*; *I found myself craving a smoke for the first time in almost thirty years; Xerox and original time combined that is*; and

suffering from some residual effects of savetheworlditis (Danvers, *Bring in the Clones*);

his little-archaeologist-lost, *sex-in-waiting substitute*, and *0-Goddamn Livid in Sixty Seconds flat* (Anais, *Daniel's Journal*);

dumbfounded land; *with the kind of voice you use on children and mental patients*; *Only question left was whether it was General Hammond or himself who'd been "podded"*; *He sighed his patented, "I'm such a jerk" sigh*; and *bookboy* (Sideburns, *A Lifetime*);

FROM *THE WEST WING* FANFICTION

yankee jackass self (Cat, *Josh Lyman Best Friend Files*);

and the look on her face says "if you hurt Josh I will destroy you" and *happy-Toby* (Sophia, *500 Dollars*); and

It does have a distinctive Randy Spears/Savannah kind of feel to it (Sophia, *3 Hour Tour*).

[32] Of course, these are just a few isolated examples, but they demonstrate something of the variety of fanfiction "universes" and their intertextuality. Together, these universes contribute to the (admittedly) loose parameters of fanfiction style, the results of which are patterned and somewhat predictable, though expressive, too, of each author's stylistic objectives. Whether the allusions to Buffyspeak in other ficverses are coincidental or are connected to fan cross-interests is often difficult to assess. Some of the writers quoted in this article have written *Buffy* fanfiction, and stylistic similarities in their fics from universe to universe may originate in Buffyspeak. Others among the writers have no clear connection to *Buffy*: they contribute to fanfiction style by appropriating marginal tendencies of American speech and emphasizing them as central to the discourse of fanfiction. While patterns of discourse hold across fanverses, many of the examples in the previous paragraph, compared to those presented earlier in the article, demonstrate the increasingly tenuous connection of fanfic language and slayer slang—fanfiction has subsumed slayer slang as one influence among many on a sub-cultural discourse with its own identifiable character.

[33] Though sub-cultural, fanfiction is one among many universes of discourse affiliated with Buffyspeak, a few items and patterns of which may, given the unexpected reach of its influence, someday enter mainstream English, perhaps even (a long time from now) Standard English. Though the medium is constantly in flux, and thus unremittingly inventive, fanfiction also draws on familiar, mainstream patterns as it negotiates the limits of its own style. This stylistic hybridity allows sub-cultural outsiders to attain the edginess associated with outsider status, without entirely (or even mostly) leaving the comfort-zone of the mainstream. The story is not new; outsider sub-cultures are continually appropriated by the mainstream in media that cross boundaries between the two. Consider the development of punk into corporate punk and emo, metal into hair metal and cheese metal, and goth sub-culture on sale at your local mall. In a commercial culture, such appropriation is unavoidable, because markets play on the antagonism between margin and mainstream.

[34] Fanfiction represents the outsideness of sub-culture, and its language the outsideness of sub-cultural style. Slayer slang depends on its role as one element of fanfiction style for its participation in language beyond the Buffyverse, though, of course, fanfiction is only one medium of dissemination. But looking at fanfiction style reminds us that, in order to gain general currency, a sub-culture's language must get outside of itself. Inside the Buffyverse, slayer slang is one thing; at large in the world, in fanfiction or any other site of hybrid style, it's something else.

Notes

1. Quoted from Mad Poetess, *Chocolaty Goodness* (2001).

2. I write under the pseudonyms squid and trie_squid in the *Stargate: Atlantis* mythos, and my fics are archived at Wraithbait (www.wraithbait.com).

3. Among these, Saxey (2001), Overbey and Preston-Matto (2002), Busse (2002), Larbalestier (2002), and Zweerink and Gatson (2002), are most prominent, but Jowett (2005), Wilcox (2005), and Williamson (2005) also comment on fans and fanfiction, *passim*.

4. Online archives include the multimedia *fanfiction.net* (www.fanfiction.net), which includes books, music video games, etc, as well as television series); the visual media archive, *The Wonderful World of Makebelieve* (www.squidge.org/~peja/cgi-bin/index.php); the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* archive, *The Slayer's Fanfic Archive* (slayerfanfic.com/); the *Stargate: SG-1* and *Stargate: Atlantis* archive, *Area 52: The HKH Standard* (www.area52hkh.net); the *Stargate: Atlantis* archive, *Wraithbait* (www.wraithbait.com); the *Firefly* recommendation archive, *The Cortex* (fireflyrecs.diaryland.com); the *West Wing* archive, *The National Library* (library.westwingstories.com/index-02.shtml), and the Harry Potter archives, Ink Stained Fingers (inkstain.inkquill.net) and Fiction Alley (fictionalley.org).

5. Rachel Shave (2004) makes a compelling argument that the subversive nature of slash in conjunction with the permanent-impermanence of the Internet creates a modern site for Bakhtinian carnivalesque resistence.

Works Cited

Adams, Michael. 2003. *Slayer Slang:* A Buffy the Vampire Slayer *Lexicon*. New York: Oxford UP.

___. 2005. "Meaningful interposing: A countervalent form." *American Speech* 80.4: 437-441.

Amireal. 1 October 2005. *Breaking Up is Hard To Do*. stargateslash.com/asa/amireal/breakingup.php.

___. 1 October 2005. *Chaos Theory*. stargateslash.com/asa/amireal/chaos.php.

Anais. 1 October 2005. *Daniel's Journal*. www.versaphile.com/anais/January.shtml.

Arnold, Jamie Marie. 16 November 2003. *BuffyGuide.com: The Complete Buffy Episode Guide*. www.buffyguide.com/.

Bacon-Smith, Camille. 1992. *Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the Creation of Popular Myth*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P.

___. 2000. *Science Fiction Culture*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P.

Bailey, Richard W. 2004. "Review of *Slayer Slang: A* Buffy the Vampire Slayer *Lexicon*, by Michael Adams." *American Speech* 79.1: 92-97.

Baugh, Albert C., and Thomas Cable. 2002. *A History of the English Language*. Fifth edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Boxer Man. 14 August 2003. *Pirates of the Hellmouth*. www.fanfiction.net/read.php?storyid=1477294.
Bury, Rhiannon. 2005. *Cyberspaces of Their Own: Female Fandoms Online*. New York: Peter Lang.
Busse, Kristina. 2002. "Crossing the Final Taboo: Family, Sexuality, and Incest in Buffyverse Fan Fiction." In *Fighting the Forces: What's at Stake in* Buffy the Vampire Slayer, edited by Rhonda V. Wilcox and David Lavery, 207-217. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
Cat. 1 October 2005. *Josh Lyman Best Friend Files*. archive.westwingstories.com/stories/c-e/cs_JoshLymanBestFriendFiles.htm.
Cervantes, Miguel. 1957. *Don Quixote*. Edited and translated by Walter Stark. New York: Penguin.
Cicirossi. 3 November 2003. *Chocolate hurricane*. www.thegates.net/hurricane/. **
Crystal, David. 1996. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. New York: Cambridge UP.
Dangermouse. 1 October 2005. *End of Term Report*. myweb.tiscali.co.uk/dmouse/endofterm.htm.
Danvers. 1 October 2005. *Send in theClones*. d4nvers.users.btopenworld.com/fanfiction/fragilebalance.shtml.
Davis, Erik. 2001. "The Fellowship of the Ring." *Wired Magazine*. www.wired.com/wired/archive/9.10/lotr_pr.html.
Harper's. 1 October 2005. *Choices Given, Chances Taken*. anzwers.org/free/dromarchive/choicesgivenchancestaken.html.
hgh. 3 November 2003. *Doppelganged Again*. home2.worldonline.nl/~twikkie/stories/wishverse1.htm. *
Holmer, Paul. 1976. *C. S. Lewis: The Shape of His Faith and Thought*. New York: Harper & Row.
James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess. 13 November 2003. *Domestic Piranha*. www.hawksong.com/users/mpoetess/piranhas/. **
___. 1 October 2005. *Price of Wisdom*. www.hawksong.com/~mpoetess/sticks/wisdom.html.
___. 13 November 2003. *Small Fry*. www.hawksong.com/users/mpoetess/stakes/fic/fry.html. **
___. 13 November 2003. *Son of Small Fry*. www.hawksong.com/users/mpoetess/stakes/fic/fry2.html. **
James Walkswithwind and Wolfling. 3 November 2003. *Sands of Time*. perian.slashcity.org/gila/sandstime.html. **
Jenkins, Henry. 1992. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*. New York: Routledge.
Jessamyn. 23 July 2001. *All Dressed Up in Big Sister's Clothes*. www.fanfiction.net/read.php?storyid=367086.
Jowett, Lorna. 2005. *Sex and the Slayer: A Gender Studies Primer for the* Buffy F*an*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP.
Kirasmommy. 3 November 2003. *The Key of the Dragon Witch*. www.angelfire.com/tv2/tsubame_z/kirasmommy/key.htm. **
Larbalestier, Justine. 2002. "*Buffy*'s Mary Sue is Jonathan: *Buffy* Acknowledges the Fans." In *Fighting the Forces: What's at Stake in* Buffy the Vampire Slayer, edited by Rhonda V. Wilcox and David Lavery, 227-238. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
Mad Poetess. 13 November 2003. *Dyeing Young*. www.hawksong.com/users/mpoetess/stakes/fic/dyeing.html. **

____. 13 November 2003. *Skelping*. www.hawksong.com/users/mpoetess/stakes/fic/skelping.html. **
___. 24 October 2001. *Chocolaty Goodness*. www.hawksong.com/users/mpoetess/stakes/chocogood/index.html.
maryavatar. 1 October 2005. *Beer and Sympathy*. rivatar.com/aa/andromeda/beerandsympathy.html.
___. 1 October 2005. *Hunting Harper*. rivatar.com/aa/andromeda/Hunting.html.
Merry. 1 October 2005. *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea (give or take)*. www.anyroad.org/merry/leagues.html.
Nicole Clevenger. 1 October 2005. *A Butterfly Pinned*. www.loony-archivist.com/firefly/improv/fiction/butterfly.htm.
Overbey, Karen Eileen and Lahney Preston-Matto. 2002. "Staking in Tongues: Speech Act as Weapon in *Buffy*." In *Fighting the Forces: What's at Stake in* Buffy the Vampire Slayer, edited by Rhonda V. Wilcox and David Lavery, 73-84. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
rebecca. 26 July 2004. *The Glue Series*. fireflyrecs.diaryland.com/all.html.
Rhys, Jean. 1966. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. New York: W. W. Norton.
Rust, Linda. 2003. "Welcome to the House of Fun: Buffy Fanfiction as a Hall of Mirrors." *Refractory: A Journal of Entertainment Media* 2. www.refractory.unimelb.edu.au.
Saxey, Esther. 2001. "Staking a Claim: The Series and Its Slash Fan-fiction." In *Reading the Vampire Slayer: An Unofficial Critical Companion to* Buffy *and* Angel, edited by Roz Kaveney, 187-210. London: I. B. Tauris.
Shakespeare, William. 1998. *Henry V*, edited by Gary Taylor. Oxford Classics. New York: Oxford UP.
shalott. 1 October 2005. *Proof by Contradiction*. www.livejournal.com/users/astolat/79130.html.
Shave, Rachael. 2004. "Slash Fandom on the Internet *Or Is* the Carnival Over?" *Refractory: A Journal of Entertainment Media* 6. www.refractory.unimelb.edu.au/journalissues/vol6/RShave.htm.
Sideburns. 1 October 2005. *A Lifetime*. myweb.tiscali.co.uk/feistydanny/alifetime.htm.
Sophia. 1 October 2005. *3 Hour Tour*. library.westwingstories.com/stories/sophia/3-hour-tour.htm.
___. 1 October 2005. *500 Dollars*. library.westwingstories.com/stories/sophia/500dollars.htm.
Tosca's kiss. 1 October 2005. *Hypothermia*. www.toscaskiss.net/hypothermia.htm.
Wilcox, Rhonda V. 2005. *Why Buffy Matters*: *The Art of* Buffy the Vampire Slayer. London: I. B. Tauris.
Williamson, Milly. 2005. *The Lure of the Vampire: Gender, Fiction and Fandom from Bram Stoker to Buffy*. London and New York: Wallflower Press.
Zweerink, Amanda and Sarah N. Gatson. 2002. "www.buffy.com: Cliques, Boundaries, and Hierarchies in an Internet community." In *Fighting the Forces: What's at Stake in* Buffy the Vampire Slayer, edited by Rhonda V. Wilcox and David Lavery, 239-250. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

*These sites did not have published dates or update dates. The date written was when I collected my information from them.

**Although these sites had update dates (excluding *Sands of Times*), these stories, in their current forms, have existed for several years (at least since Season Four of *Buffy*).