

Re: observable language change – "off of" makes it to the NY Times

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Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2008-08/msg00602.html>

- *From:* analyst41@xxxxxxxxxxxx
 - *Date:* Thu, 14 Aug 2008 03:36:23 -0700 (PDT)
-

On Aug 13, 9:44 pm, "benli...@xxxxxxxxxxxx" <benli...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Aug 14, 12:40 pm, analys...@xxxxxxxxxxxx wrote:

On Aug 13, 12:19 pm, "Brian M. Scott" <b.sc...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

On Wed, 13 Aug 2008 09:00:18 -0400, Harlan Messinger
<hmessinger.removet...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in
<news:6gg478Ffnud8U1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> in
sci.lang:

analys...@xxxxxxxxxxxx wrote:

On Aug 12, 3:05 pm, Adam
Funk
<a24...@xxxxxxxxxxxx>
wrote:

On
2008-08-12,
Harlan
Messinger
wrote:

For
crying
out
loud,
do

Re: observable language change – "off of" makes it to the NY Times

you
think
he
made
this
up?
From
the
OED:
?c1450
in
G.
Müller
Aus
mittelengl.
Medizintexten
(1929)
116
Take
a
sponfull
of
{th}e
licour..of
of
{th}e
fyir
and
sette
it
in
good
place
tyl
{th}at
it
be
ny
colde,
soo
as
{th}ou
mayst
suffryn
to
holdyn
{th}er–in
{th}in
hand.
a1616
SHAKESPEARE

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Henry
VI,
Pt.
2
(1623)
II.
i.
98
A
fall
off
of
[1594
Falling
off
on]
a
Tree.
1667
A.
MARVELL
Corr.
in
Wks.
(1875)
II.
224
The
Lords
and
we
cannot
yet
get
off
of
the
difficultyes
risen
betwixt
us.
1678
J.
BUNYAN
Pilgrim's
Progress
49
About
a
furlong
off

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of
the
Porters
Lodge.
1712
R.
STEELE
Spectator
No.
306
{page}6,
I
could
not
keep
my
Eyes
off
of
her.

I had no
idea the
expression
had such a
respectable
pedigree.
Maybe
I'll start
using it in
formal
writing after
all. :-)

Wiily S was only doing
dialect when he used "off
of".

Really? Would you care to provide evidence
for this assertion? Or are
you just decreeing this to be so because it
doesn't fit your theory?

Indeed, one has only to check the other lines spoken by
Saunders Simcox to see that they are not dialect.

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Something must have warned you that all is not kosher with this quote
(witness your "in any case" follow-up below)

From a fascinating source called the American Biblioplist published
in 1875:

start quote:

The expression " off of ; thing," " he was getting off of his horse,"
etc., is often heard, and thought to be exceedingly vulgar. Yet
Shakespeare uses it in // Hen. VI, 3, f. " Cardinal. What, art thou
lame ? Simpcox. Ay, God Almighty help me I Suffolk. How earnest thou
so ? Simpcox. A fall off of J tree. Wife. A plum-tree, master." It is
remarkable that this is the language of the First and second Folios ;
in the Third and Fourth " of " is omitted

end quote.

(This quote is somewhat distorted – "earnest" for "camest" etc.
because I am using the text version of the PDF doc)

If this is correct then OED, Haralan and Ross are guilty of
misinformation. It seems that even contemporaneously with
Shakespeare, there were attempts to edit this solecism out of his
texts.

If you extend "contemporaneously" to include fifty years after his
death....

Just as you studiously avoid actual analysis of your disapprovals, you
will want to avoid looking even fleetingly at the vastness of
Shakespeare textual studies, where thousands of things are edited in,
edited out, and completely rewritten for good reasons, bad reasons and
no apparent reason at all. (OED notes a 1594 text with "fall off on a
tree"!)

No, better to imagine that the Language Police were on the
job in the 17th century, saving poor Will from his "solecism".

And now that you have "solecism" in your right hand and "barbarism" in

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your left, you could set up your own Usage Blog. Pilgrims would flock to hear your judgments, linguists wouldn't bother you, and you could get ahead with your work on the long-sought Panini-Fidditch Synthesis.

Ross Clark

And in any case this wouldn't explain Andrew Marvell's use of the compound preposition in his correspondence, or Bunyan's use in 'Pilgrim's Progress'.

[...]

Brian– Hide quoted text –

– Show quoted text — Hide quoted text –

– Show quoted text — Hide quoted text –

– Show quoted text –

Nice misdirection, might work with linguistics professors.

You put out an unequivocal statement that this usage occurs in Shakespeare.

It is now incumbent on you to either retract it or research the different versions yourself and set the record straight.

Your conduct in this matter has gone from sad to contemptible.

.