

Geoffrey K. Pullum

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(and do you remember *The great Eskimo vocabulary hoax?*)

On *Language Log* (<http://www.language-log.org>) Geoff Pullum once wrote that the authors of *The Elements of Style* were “a shameless, pontificating, ignorant, hypocritical, incompetent, authoritarian pair of old weasels.”

He insists he was in a fairly good mood on that occasion.

But since then his views have hardened, as he has discovered even more gross mistakes and untruths in that famous text on how to write.

In this highly entertaining and accessible lecture he reviews some of the gravest errors in the remarkable array of bad advice about grammar and usage that the book supplies.

He also briefly discusses the issue of why linguists and writing instructors alike should take seriously the notion that bossy and incoherent advice about grammar does actual harm both by wasting resources and by encouraging educated Americans in false beliefs about having an inadequate command of their native language.

The land of the free and *The Elements of Style*



Friday, 16 April

T O D A Y

Boston College

Lyons Hall 202

3.30 pm