

1981 Orwell Award, and 1981 Doublespeak Award Presentation Speech  
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In 1971, the National Council of Teachers of English passed resolutions on the dishonest and inhumane use of language, and on the relation of language to public policy. In 1973 the Committee on Public Doublespeak was established to implement these resolutions; in 1974 the Committee gave its first Doublespeak Award; and in 1975 the Committee gave its first Orwell Award.

This is the seventh annual Orwell Award and the eighth annual Doublespeak Award to be presented by the Committee on Public Doublespeak. The Orwell Award was established to recognize each year a work which has made an outstanding contribution to the critical analysis of public discourse. The winner of the 1981 George Orwell Award for Distinguished Contribution to Honesty and Clarity in Public Language is Dwight Bolinger, Emeritus Professor of Romance Languages and Literature at Harvard University for his book Language-The Loaded Weapon, published by Longman. Bolinger "explains in simple terms the essentials of linguistic form and meaning, and applies them to illuminate questions of correctness, truth, class and dialect, manipulation through advertising and propaganda, sexual and other discrimination, official obfuscation

and the vital maintenance of power, and--most pervasive of all-- language as the vital agent with which we build our worlds."

On behalf of the NCTE Committee on Public Doublespeak, I would like to commend Professor Bolinger for producing a valuable resource for those studying public language. I would also like to congratulate Professor Bolinger, the seventh recipient of our Committee's George Orwell Award for Distinguished Contribution to Honesty and Clarity in Public Language.

The Doublespeak Award is an ironic "tribute" to American public figures who have perpetrated language that is grossly unfactual, deceptive, evasive, euphemistic, confusing, or self-contradictory. Following Orwell's intention of exposing inhumane, propagandistic uses of language, the Committee restricts the Award to misuses of language with pernicious social or political consequences which are more worthy of censure than the kind of garden-variety jargon, gobbledegook, or solecisms emphasized by many current critics of language.