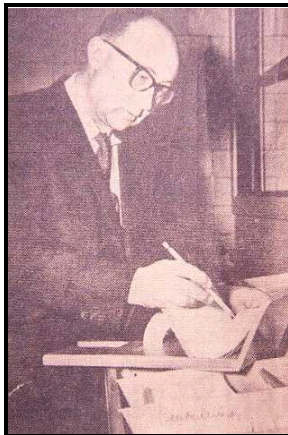


Jean Paul Vinay

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Prof. Jean Paul Vinay is the winner of the 1974 Alexander Gode Award Medal. His acceptance speech was read at the Convention Banquet by Marcel Paré, Directeur de la Banque de Terminologie, Université du Montréal.



Mr. Chairman and Members of ATA,

“On September 17, I received a letter from Kurt Gingold, Chairman of the ATA Committee on Honours and Awards, informing me that I had been chosen to receive the Association’s highest award, the Alexander Gode Medal for the year 1973. It would be difficult to describe my pleasure and my proud reaction to this announcement, which went quickly round the campus, then made the local papers, from the English-speaking *SUN* to the French-speaking *LE SOLEIL*—a fitting bilingual setting for such an Award—then was swiftly born on the wings of microwaves to be echoed from radio stations west and east of Toronto, to finally form ripples in the exalted circles of professional translation in the Province of Quebec, where translation is at home and has been for over 200 years.

“It was my intention to attend this Convention, and only ill-health and the office in Victoria prevented me, much against my dearest wishes, to take the plane across the continent and join your ranks around this friendly table. I have however the great privilege to be represented tonight by my good friend and colleague Marcel Paré, who has been associated with many of my activities “back East”, as they say here, and who will kindly lend me his best microphone voice to read a short message of thanks and of explanation,—for the benefit of the members who were not able to read my *curriculum vitae*. I hope you will thus recognize in me, through the dragomanship of my alter ego, a kindred spirit, one who has always been keenly interested in the development of the translating profession on this continent, one who has followed your efforts and applauded your successes from the rarified air of his Canadian retreat, and who extends his best wishes for the continuing success and

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development of ATA.

“I was born on the shores of the Seine, from a Norman family dating back to William the Conqueror and still proud of having been the only continentals to successfully conquer England. Having thus colonized our neighbors from across the Channel, they retired to Normandy and devoted themselves to churning butter and distilling Calvados, adding thereby two noteworthy artifacts to Western civilization. The third is myself.

“Following the fashion first launched by the Greeks, the English then proceeded to colonize the best minds of the Western world, amongst whom, as I have indicated, I rank myself; and this resulted in my taking courses both in Paris (the Sorbonne) and in London (the University College) in what could be best described as a commuter degree. In this way I have been reared from infancy in a bilingual kingdom where French and English ideas, customs and grammatical structures were waging many wars. It was obviously decreed from the very beginning that I was to spend a good many hours pondering over bilingual problems, chief amongst which was the problem of translation. And just as much as the French only recognize a “tricolore” flag as being blue, white and red, I came to recognize bilingualism as dealing exclusively with French and English. Thus in Canada we never think of a speaker of English and, say, Cowichan, as bilingual: witness the report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which has irritated many a good Canadian citizen of Ukrainian, German, or Italian descent. As I said earlier, it all goes back to William the Conqueror.

“It seems preordained that I was to be called to Canada in order to initiate linguistic studies at the Université de Montréal in 1946. But to get some perspective on French Canada, I chose to spend the summer of 1946 in New York. I worked as a consultant on international auxiliary languages in a research center called IALA, when I first met Alexander Gode. There, together with Blair and Martinet, we happily revised ways of extracting truly international roots for a Western common language. The results of this labor of love were eventually to be known as *INTERLINGUA*, which Alexander Gode published in book form a few years later. Gode was the presiding genius at IALA, on account of the breadth of his linguistic background, his thoroughness, his devotion to his work, and his sense of humour.

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I could not have hoped for a better mentor to North America; we spent a few weeks in the cool retreats of Bar Harbor, at a place called (very aptly) Frenchman Greek, and I got to know him very well. Much later, I was to renew my friendship when visiting the farm near the Hudson where he had escaped to find quiet and happiness; I thus became acquainted with Alison Gode, who kindly called me up on the phone recently to congratulate me on the Alexander Gode medal. You will now realize how dearly I cherish an award which materializes for me the cause of translation and the cause of friendship.

“In due time, I took the train from Central Station back to civilization and arrived at Gare Bonaventure in Montreal. I had thus received a twin blessing from the New World, which was to ripen into a twin development in later years: a study of French in Canada, and a study of international communication, which eventually opened doors for me within ICAO, the UN and IALA. I also got to know the Linguistic Circle of New York pretty well, with people like André Martinet and Eugene Dorfman; and the experts of the Linguistic Society of America.

“I was by then gaining new perspectives from the slopes of the Mont-Royal, next to the famed St. Joseph’s shrine. There, amidst the wilderness of a mountain park, I witnessed the slow emergence of a new seat of learning, the Université de Montréal, standing upright on the top of a bluff 300 feet above my digs, which prompted Gode to write that I had, not only the *chair*, but the *bed* of linguistics.

New developments in linguistics started, interestingly enough, in the field of translation. Montreal was eminently concerned with the problem of forming good translators, and my first Canadian publication was aptly concerned with concrete and theoretical problems of translation, chiefly from English into French (*Traductions, Mélanges offerts en Mémoire de Georges Panneton, Montréal, Institut de Traduction, 1952*). Thus, while the Department of Linguistics started on its own, a school of translation slowly took shape, which culminated in the present Ecole de Traduction, now under the able leadership of Professor André Clas, which turns out 100 new translators every year, a good many of whom opt for a career in Federal or Provincial Public Service. Throughout the years 1955 to 1965, this effort in favor of better theoretical and practical courses for translators (and interpreters)

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was helped by the various societies and associations of translators, which eventually unified under the neutral umbrella of the *Journal des Traducteurs! Translators' Journal*, a quarterly devoted to problems of bilingual translation which now appears under the somewhat enigmatic title *META* (Presses de l'Université de Montréal). During that period also, theoretical problems of translations were envisaged in a book, co-authored with Jean Darbelnet, and which has since gained some repute in translators' circles: the *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais*, first published in 1958, reprinted several times in France, in England and in Canada, and augmented with two *Workbooks* for the private delight of students of comparative stylistics and translation. We were lucky enough to interest other researchers in delving a little more deeply into the field, and books have since appeared on the comparative stylistics of German and French, Spanish and French, and lately (in the USSR) of Russian and French.

“In the meantime, French in Canada was becoming the cynosure of linguists and the body politic; normative studies, long enjoying the favor of the reading public, began to invade radio programs. I was honored by an invitation from the CBC to join a panel of experts discussing problems of French vocabulary and syntax every week under the cover-all title: “La Langue bien pendue”. After a few years, Marcel Paré joined the team of Langue bien pendue linguists, and thus earned at least half of the medal which is tonight presented to me.

“Normative studies spell dictionaries, and soon we began to work on a first bilingual Canadian dictionary, which appeared in 1962. The Center which was opened for the purpose of collecting information on Canadian-French and Canadian-English eventually gave rise to a research center for collecting and disseminating information on technical translations. This has now been made a reality, thanks to the unceasing efforts of Marcel Paré, and Montreal boasts a Banque de Terminologie or Word Data Bank, which is entirely computerized and already helping hundreds of translators with terminological problems.

“As I indicated earlier, the development of translation studies was prompted by the need for translators; and the need for translators eventually translated itself into Associations for translators, several of which were in Quebec, competing for public recognition. We were

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lucky to be able to unite our efforts under the flag of the Société des Traducteurs et Interprètes du Canada (STIC), and both Marcel and myself were presidents at some time of this federally-inclined association. I am happy to note that now there is only one association in Quebec, the Société des Traducteurs du Québec, and one in Ontario. The old STIC, its usefulness perhaps spent, is now representing Canada on the international scene. Both Marcel and I were at some time delegates to the F. I. T., in Bonn, or in Brussels, or in France; we worked hand in hand with Jumpelt and J. F. Caillé, and *Babel* was our delight. This brought us in contact with Fischback, Gingold, Bertrand and others, and we would certainly like to join forces with ATA to support the work of FIT and the development of *Babel*; we opened the pages of *META* to the various committees of ATA in order to publicize the work of our sister association in the States, and as you know, both Marcel Paré and myself were members of ATA ever since its inception, and members in good standing, as the phrase goes. There is a clear need for a closer collaboration between the two associations, on both sides of the border; you can rest assured that as far as I am able, I shall endeavour to support the work of ATA not only in Canada, but also in Europe, where a large part of the translation work is being done.

“My very best wishes, therefore, for the future of a great association, in a great executive to steer towards your goals of excellence and full recognition:

Meilleurs voeux de votre Canadien de l’ouest, Jean Paul Vinay.”

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