



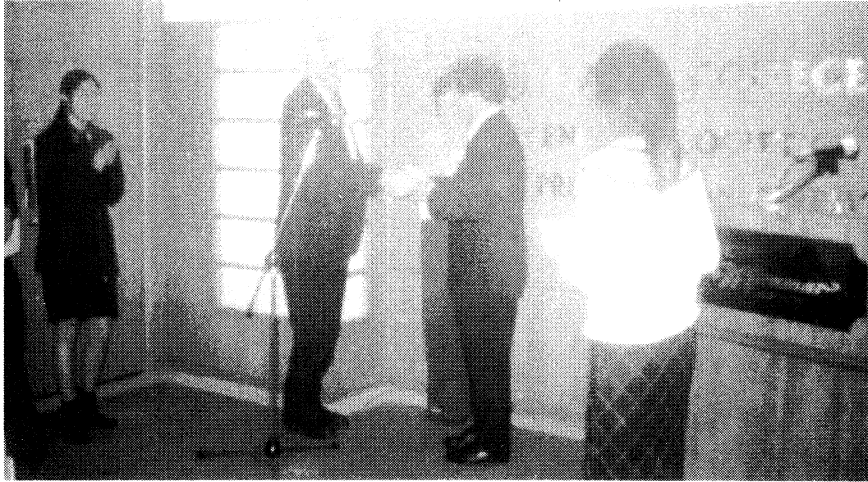
# English Society of Maria College

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## ESSAY CRITICISM CONTEST

### AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY

由瑪利亞書院贊助之英文學會，剛結束『評論林肯的總統宣言』比賽。參加是項比賽者約五十餘位，而獲獎者約十位，均為專業人士、大學教授及英文作家等。此篇名作之優點，因是次比賽而真正及徹底地披露出來！日前該會假座酒店舉行隆重頒獎儀式。由香港成人教育協會副會長兼秘書長張民炳先生主禮。



Picture above: One of the winners, Mr. G. James, receiving his award from the special guest, Mr. Man-Ping Cheung

#### Finishing Touches to the Results of Essay Criticism Contest

- "A Dedication" has the power of manifold presentation. The illiterates admire it; the educated praise it; a limited few marvel at its perfection in thought, in expression, and in the use of standard English. Lincoln showed himself a real master in the field of grammar and punctuation, clause analysis and figures of speech, ways of emphasis and various devices for casting the passage. The Address comes to the apex of all similar writings of standard English in that it contains the chief best things from the language in only 266 words.
- Lincoln's final consummate performance is seen in the use of two demerits of decreasing force in repetitions he made on purpose: the second "devotion" and the seventh "here" (1.14) were tacitly gathered closely for a twofold anticlimax to help boost up the last climax of the powerful parallel structure – of the people, by the people, for the people. In this respect, the two demerits are no longer its weaknesses, but its supreme virtues.
- Lincoln as a literary artist lived up to the theory of "art lies in concealing art":
  - a. Resurrection, the theme of the Address, was concealed in the use of the reviving archaic word "fourscore" at the start.
  - b. Democracy, the spirit of the Nation, was concealed in the phrases – of the people, by the people, for the people at the end.
- Through this contest we hope to bring some comfort to Lincoln in Heaven by laying bare the long hidden treasures in his Dedication which he carved for several weeks and in which he underwent some changes even after it was delivered. He would be glad to see that people in general can now praise the Address not just with a single word "good" which is not a compliment to but an abuse of his noble mind and superb writing.
- The results can be a yardstick to find out one's English level. The more points you spot, the closer you come to Lincoln's position.