UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

School of English

Sophister Examinations
English Studies &
Two Subject Moderatorship

Trinity Term 2008

Tragic Patterns in Ancient Drama

Wednesday 21st May  Arts Building, Room 4050A  09.30-12.30

Dr Andrew Power

Answer three questions.
Your answers must deal substantially with three of the four dramatists on the course.
Be careful not substantially to repeat material.
1. 'The Chorus is the chief actor in Aeschylus' *Supplices.*' Do you agree with this statement?

2. To what extent can Aeschylus' *Persai* be seen as a patriotic Athenian play?

3. Does the city of Thebes have a fate separate to that of Eteocles in Aeschylus' *Septem Contra Thebas*?

4. Do the characters of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* truly exercise personal choice or are they all merely pawns of the Zeus' will?

5. Is Orestes' revenge in *Choephoroi* an uncomplicated obligation?

6. In a way, the *Oresteia* ends with a reversal of the traditional *deus ex machina*; man decides the outcome. Is *Eumenides* about the justice of the gods or about human justice?

7. Write about *philanthropia* [love of humankind] in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Vinctus*.

8. Is Ajax's suicide an act of moral cowardice or a heroic (albeit futile) gesture?

9. *Antigone* is a play about the dead. Discuss.

10. Sophocles' protagonists are often referred to as *deinos* [wonderful / terrible]. How is this true for the Hercules of *Trachiniae*?

11. 'Olistha pou?' [What do you know?] Write about knowledge in *Oedipus Tyrranus.*
12. Write about the conflict between honour and guile in Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*.

13. ‘Sophoclean women are only defined, and can only achieve heroic status, in the contexts of their relationships with men.’ (Hall) Discuss.

14. Write about the role of Kypris (Aphrodite) in Euripides’ *Hippolytus* and/or *Heracles*.

15. Write about supplication in Euripides’ *Medea*.

16. Euripides’ *Orestes* has been described as ‘grotesquely violent.’ What do the ‘grotesque’ aspects contribute to this drama?

17. ‘The horror of the matricide is enhanced by removing it from heroic surroundings and placing it in an environment of everyday life.’ Why does Euripides shift the location of his *Electra* away from the palace of Sophocles’ *Electra* & Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*?

18. Is the representation of the gods in Euripides’ *Ion* inherently comic?

19. Can you reconcile the beauty and the terror of Dionysus’ mysteries as Euripides presents them in *Bacchae*?

20. Write about cult worship with reference to any play/plays by Euripides.

21. Seneca’s tragedies are uncompromisingly dark. Discuss.

22. In what way can Seneca’s protagonists be referred to as ‘self-fashioning’?
23. Write about any one of the following in any play(s) that you have read for this course: nostos [the homecoming motif], philia [friendship], ekthroi [enemies], tímê [shame/honor], public speech, madness.