UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

School of English

Sophister Examinations
English Studies &
Two Subject Moderatorship

Trinity Term 2010

Tragic Patterns in Ancient Drama

Thursday 6th May Sports Centre 14.00-17.00

Dr Andrew Power

Visiting students must answer two questions, your answers must deal substantially with two of the four dramatists on the course. (2 hour exam)

Junior Sophister students must answer two questions, your answers must deal substantially with two of the four dramatists on the course. (2 hour exam)

Senior Sophister students must answer three questions, your answers must deal substantially with three of the four dramatists on the course. (3 hour exam)

Be careful not substantially to repeat material.
All questions carry equal weight.
Please use separate answer books for each question.

2. “The constant preoccupation of the poet with guilt and retribution creates a strong impression in the hearer’s mind that the exact assessment of Agamemnon’s guilt must be important for the understanding of the play” (Hugh Lloyd-Jones). Write about guilt and retribution in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*.

3. Write about the relationship between vengeance and purification in Aeschylus’ *Choephoroe*.

4. *Aeschylus’ Eumenides* is “engaged in the political present as well as in the heroic past” (K.J. Dover). Discuss.

5. “For the urn is a surrogate-Orestes, an Orestes by sham, a fiction posing as fact” (T.M. Woodard). Write about surrogates and/or substitutes in Sophocles’ *Electra*.

6. How does Euripides portray Orestes and Electra in an “unheroic manner” in his *Electra*?

7. How useful is it to think of Euripides’ *Orestes* as an “anti-*Eumenides*”?

8. “Aeschylus’ *Persae* is a patriotic celebration of the defeat of a hubristic and impious enemy.” Discuss.

9. “[T]he Zeus of the *Prometheus Vinctus* violently conflicts with the religious message that Aeschylus strives to convey in his other works” (L.R. Farnell). Discuss.

10. Is Sophocles’ Ajax responsible for his own unhappiness?
11. Write about *tîmê* (honour) in Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*.

12. Is Euripides’ *Heracles* more about the image of a hero than about a man who suffers a tragic fate?

13. Write about the comic and the tragic in Euripides’ *Bacchae*.

14. “The result of the great test of Oedipus’ life appears to be a defeat, but the issue is neither defeat nor victory, but understanding and strength.” Discuss.

15. Can the Eteocles of Aeschylus’ *Septem Contra Thebas* be seen as a heroic and self-sacrificing king?

16. “The contrast between the two cities [Thebes and Athens] ... is essential to an understanding of [Sophocles’ *Oedipus Coloneus]*” (Charles Segal). Discuss.

17. Is Sophocles’ *Antigone* a play about resistance to tyranny?

18. Is Aeschylus’ *Supplices* about the tragic circumstance of the Danaids or of Palasgus?

19. Write about the domestic and the wild in Sophocles’ *Tracchiniae*.

20. Euripides’ Medea is “a foreigner, who carries with her the added taint of being a *barbaros*, a non-Greek” (R.B. Palmer). Discuss.

21. Write about purity in Euripides’ *Hippolytus*.

22. Write about love and wrath in Seneca’s *Phaedra* and/or *Medea*.
23. Write about either Thebes as an "anti-Athens" (Froma Zeitlin), or Argos as "a city without a firm identity [able] to receive any imprint" (G.W. Bakewell).