



TYPES OF PLAYS

FUNDAMENTALS OF DRAMA

WHY DO WE HAVE DIFFERENT TYPES OF PLAYS?

- Just like in literature we have different types of plays so that we can tell different types of stories.
- Different types and genres of plays/dramas evolved throughout history due to the political and social atmosphere of the time
- The following presentation is in no way a finite list of the different types of plays there are

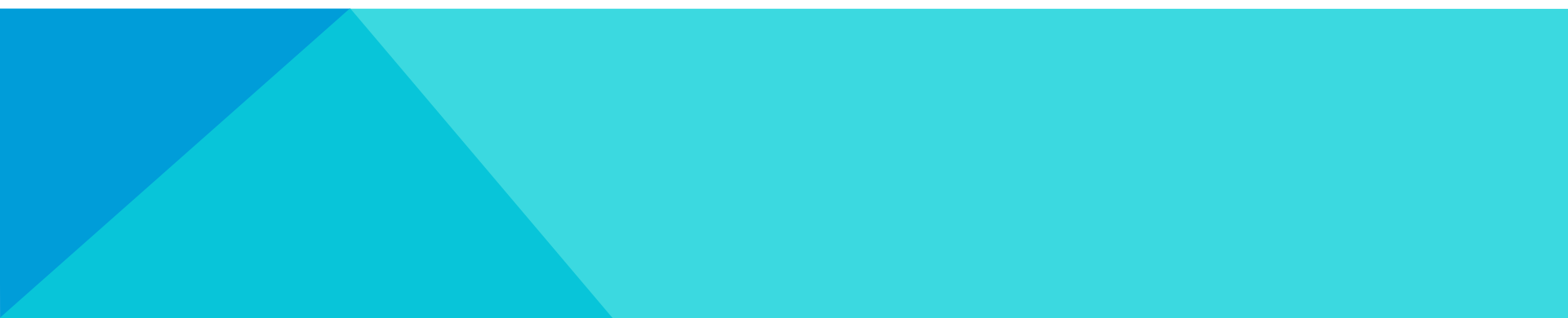
COMEDY

- A work characterized by humor and a happy ending.
- The term komeode (Greek) originally meant a village song
- The tradition of comedy disappeared during the medieval period...
... but it resurfaced in the Renaissance in the form of *commedia dell'arte*
- Comedy reached its “peak” in the 16th & 17th centuries due to artists like Shakespeare & Moliere

EXAMPLES

- **A Midsummer Night's Dream**
- **All's Well that Ends Well**
- **Fools**
- **The Birds**

TRAGEDY

- Tragedies are serious plays with unhappy endings
 - Often said to mean “goatsong” in Greek
 - Aristotle provided the classic definition of tragedy
 - by “pity and terror” at the fall of a great person
 - Characters were drawn from deities, royalty & the upper classes
 - Three great authors of classical tragedy
 - Elizabethan era tragedies were typically violent
 - Shakespearean tragedies are considered the pinnacle of world drama
 - More modern writers include Ibsen, Chekhov, and Eugene O’Neill
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EXAMPLES

- Oedipus Rex
 - Antigone
 - King Lear
 - Hedda Gabler
 - The Seagull
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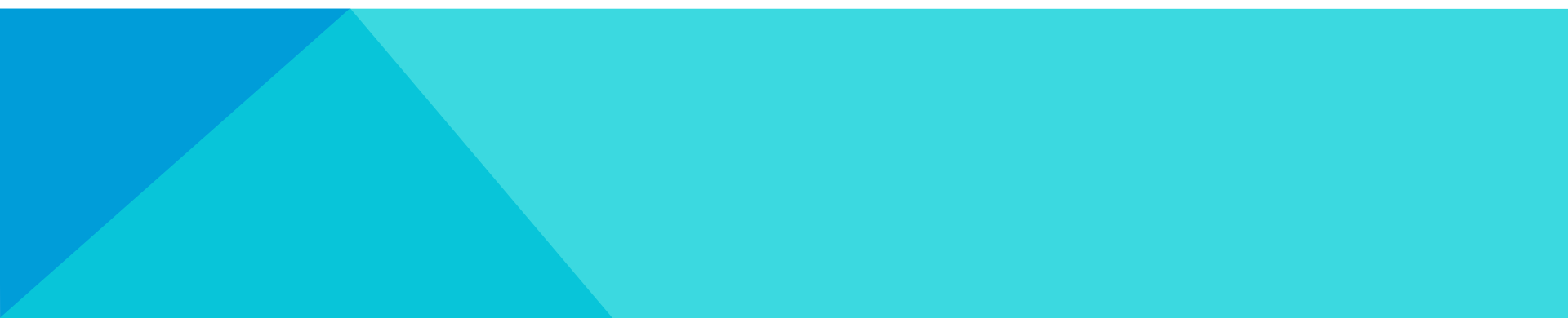
GREEK DRAMA

- Karagiozis
- Epithiteorisi

EXAMPLES

- Medea
- Ajax
- The Persians
- Elektra

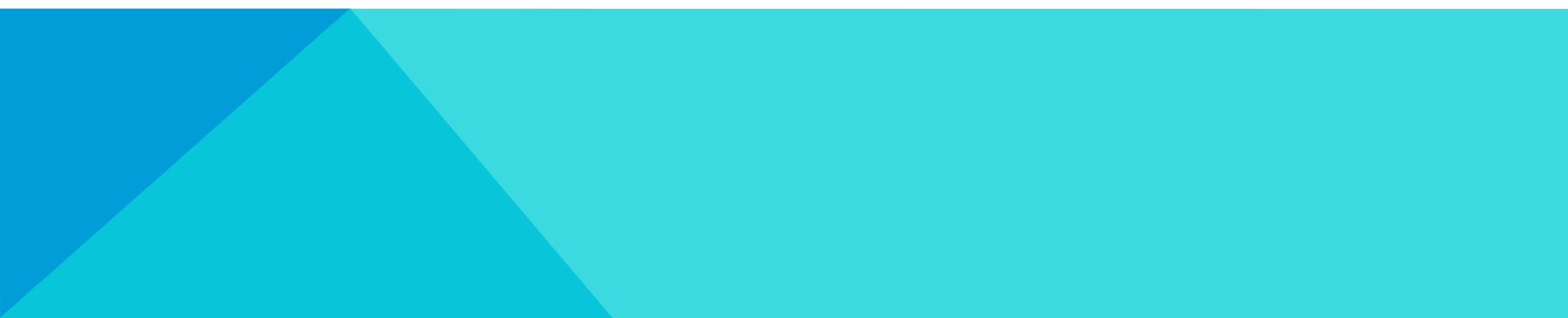
HISTORY PLAY

- History Plays are as old as theatre itself
 - Continues to stay relevant & popular
 - Draws from events that have happened
 - Aristotle's view
 - Had a great revival in the 19th century
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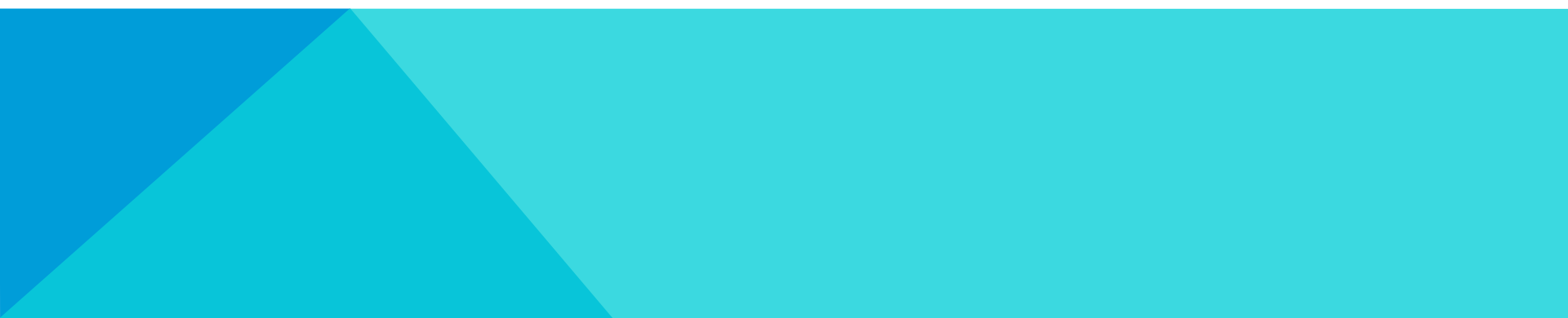
EXAMPLES

- Hamilton
 - 1776
 - The Sound of Music
 - Les Miserables
 - The Diary of Anne Frank
 - These Shining Lives
 - The Radium Girls
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FARCE

- Derived from the Latin for “to stuff”
 - Seldom has been absent during any time period in history
 - Rooted in ancient drama
 - Critics often call it vulgar due to its physicality and ability to shock audiences
 - Provokes instant laughter
 - English farces
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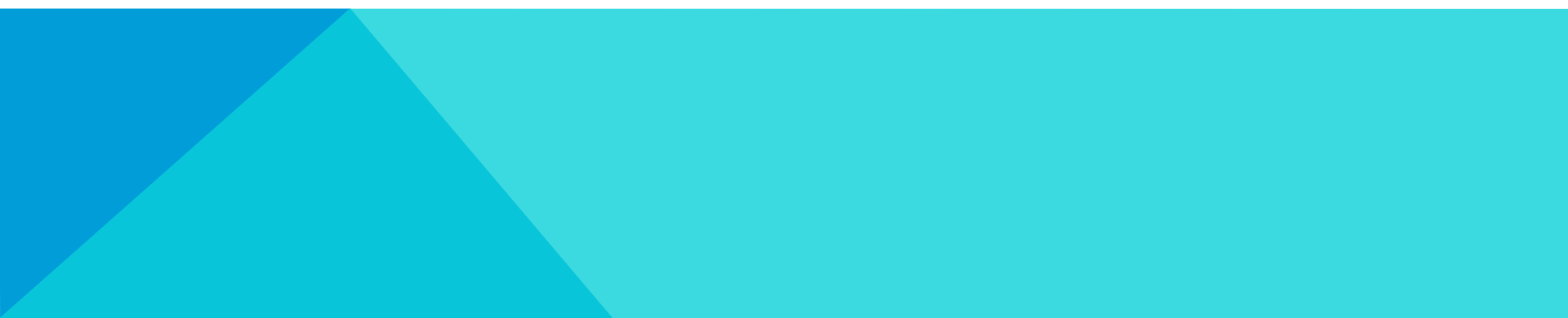
EXAMPLES

- **The Importance of Being Earnest**
 - **The Taming of the Shrew**
 - **She Stoops to Conquer**
 - **Waiting for Godot**
 - **A Flea in her Ear**
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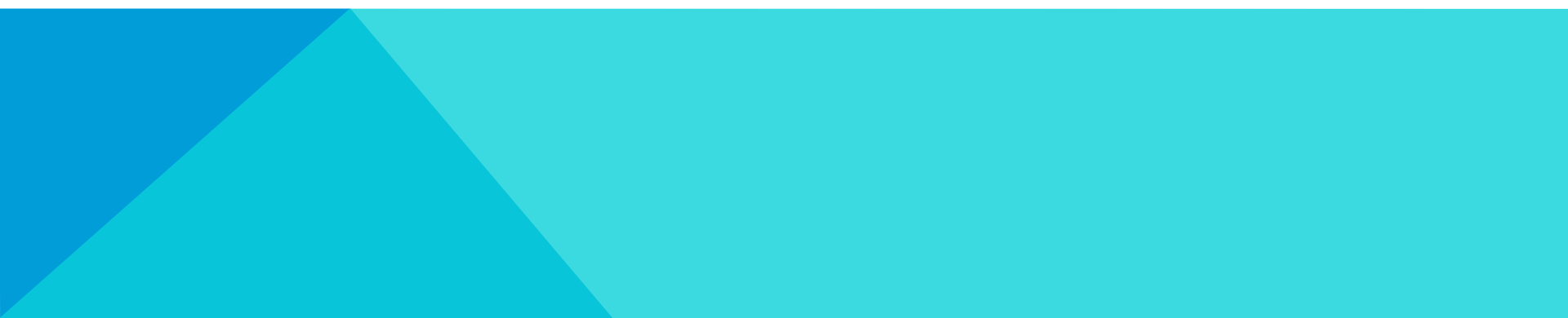
PARODY

- Comes from the Greek word *parodia* (or a song that mocks another song)
- Heroic Dramas of the 17th & 18th centuries were parodied
- Broadway musicals today are parodied under similar names
- Parodies are typically done in good jest & not as a direct jab at the original playwright

EXAMPLES

- The Frogs
 - The Rehearsal by Buckingham
 - The Beggar's Opera
 - The Real Inspector Hound
 - Spamilton
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MYSTERY

- Popular medieval plays based on biblical stories and the lives of the saints
 - These plays could last for days at a time
 - The name derives from mysteries in the sense of miracles
 - Presented in “pageants”
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EXAMPLES

- **Most complete is the the York cycle of 48 different pageants**
- **Towneley plays consist of 32 pageants**

PASSION

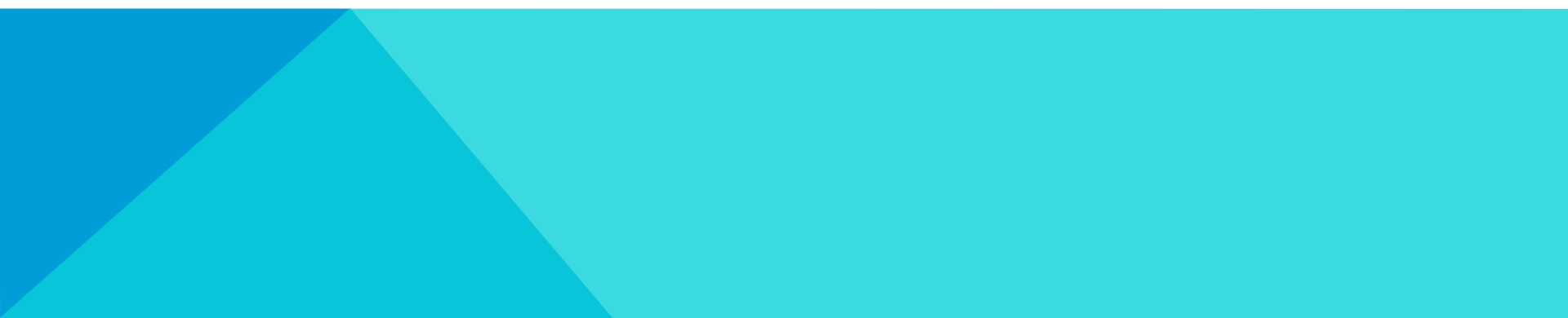
- The Passion Play or Easter Pageant is a dramatic presentation depicting the Passion of Jesus Christ
- Consists of three parts
 - Trial
 - Suffering
 - Death
- Traditionally a part of Lent in several Christian Denominations

EXAMPLES

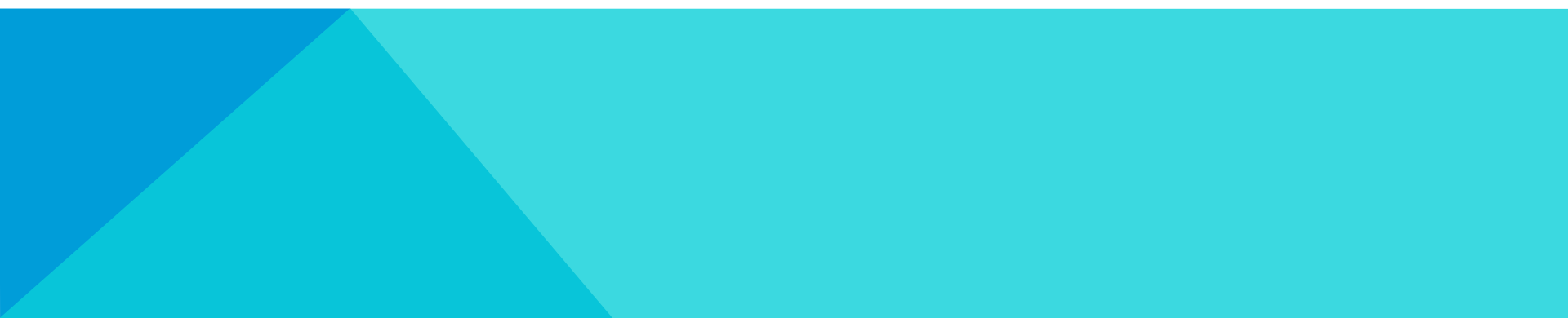
**The Great Passion Play
in Eureka Springs,
Arkansas**



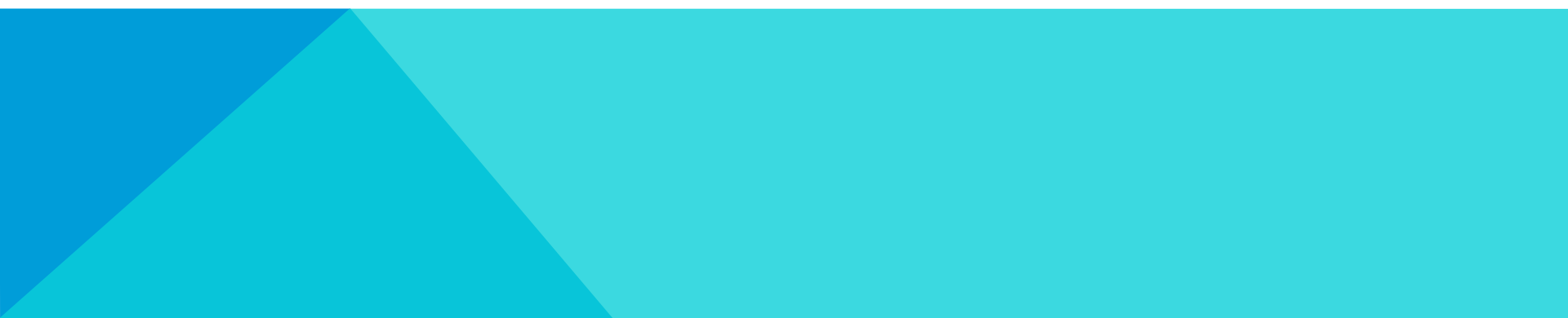
BLACK COMEDY

- Comedic work that makes light of serious, disturbing or taboo subject matter
 - Often controversial
 - Derives from the concept of gallows humor
 - Coined by surrealist Andre Breton in 1935
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EXAMPLES

- Fargo
 - Arsenic and Old Lace
 - Heathers
 - Harold and Maude
 - American Psycho
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SATIRE

- Comes from the Latin for "medley"
 - Satire uses various types of comic exaggeration to ridicule human institutions or behaviors
 - Uses Irony, Parody & Charicature
 - First known dramatic satire was done by Aristophanes
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EXAMPLES

- **Pravda Serious Money**

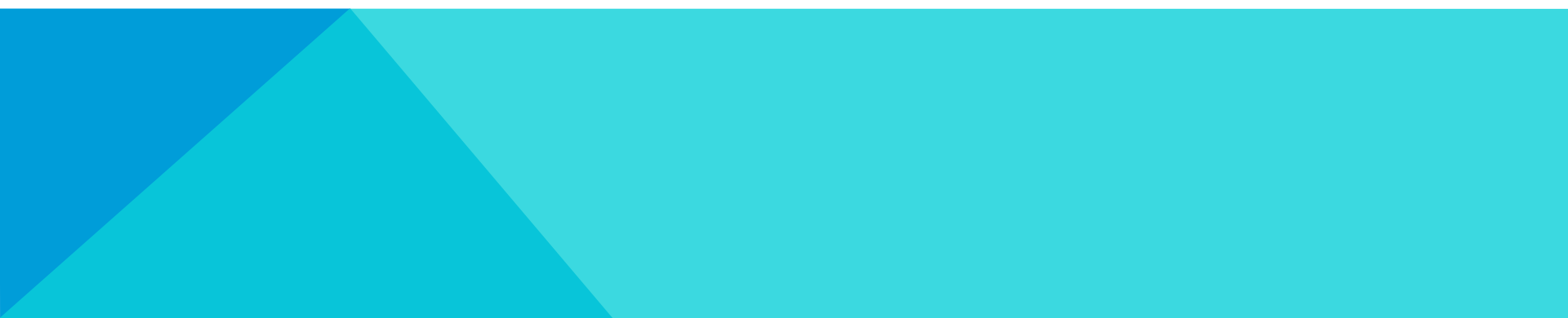
MYTH

- Myth and drama emerge from ancient cultural practices
- Myth's are fictional works with non-linear narratives
- Uses symbols and archetypes for characterisation
Gods and Humans often consort with each other
- Greek Dramatists drew on myths for their subject matter

EXAMPLES

- **The Illiad**
- **The Odyssey**

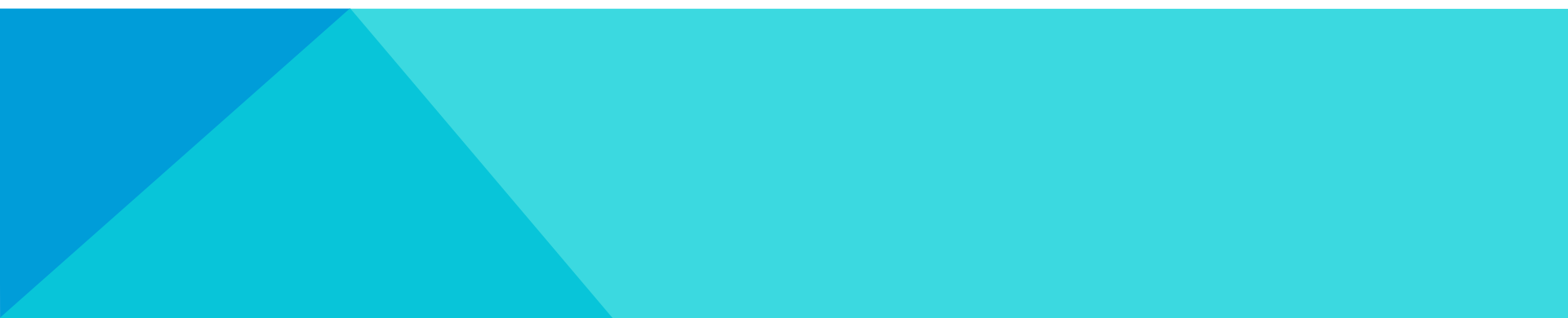
TRAGICOMEDY

- Blends elements of tragedy and comedy
 - Fall into two main categories
 - Can be traced back to Euripedes
 - Though is regarded as first emerging in the Renaissance
 - The works of Chekhov are sometimes regarded as a Tragicomedy
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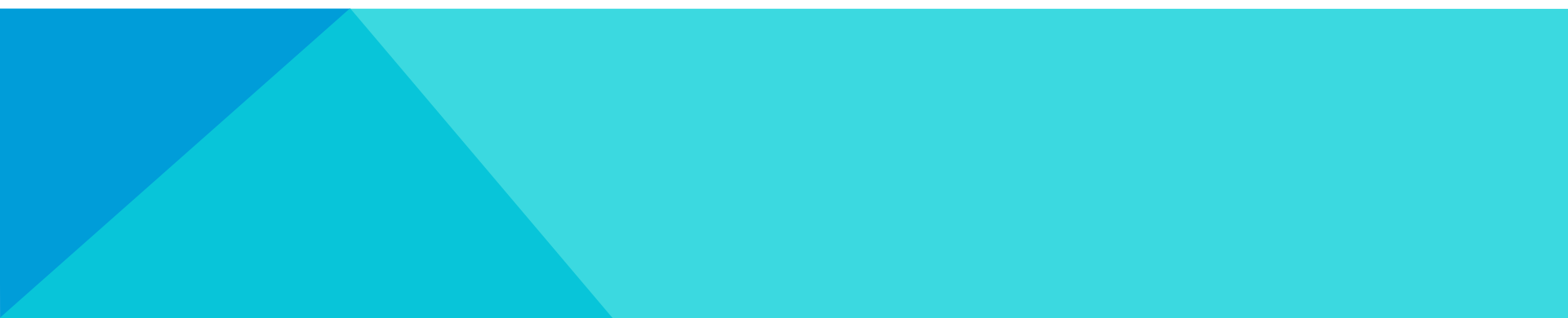
EXAMPLES

- Troilus and Cressida
- The Merchant of Venice
- Secret Love
- Maiden Queen

MELODRAMA

- A genre that is equated with sensationalism and excess
 - Emerged in the 19th century
 - Used Gothic influence of virtue overcoming horror
 - Most original melodramas were translations of novels
 - This genre has lost its influence in the last century
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EXAMPLES

- **Little Women**
 - **Gone With the Wind**
 - **Casablanca**
 - **It's A Wonderful Life**
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MORALITY PLAY

- Shaped in Medieval Europe
- Appeared in 1400
 - The Castle of Perserverance (c. 1405)

Overtook the Mystery Play genre in the late 15th century

EXAMPLES

- **Everyman**
- **Magnyfyence**
- **Ane Pleasant Satyre of the Thre Estaitis**