



An Investigation into Social Roles

The use of characters to subvert social hierarchies in *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Servant of Two Masters*



“No one would ever dream of mentioning Goldoni and Shakespeare in the same context”

- Giuseppe Ortolani, *La Riforma del teatro nel Settocento*, (Venice-Rome, 1962)

The investigation

Commedia Dell' Arte

- Archetypal based comedy
- Situations arise from the interaction of characters (not the other way around)
- Heavily emphasized status as a characteristic of characters

Historical Context

- Early modern European societies (16th - 19th)
- Importance of the wet nurse in English households
- The role of the wife and woman in society

Research Question

To what extent are the characters in Romeo and Juliet and A Servant of Two Masters used to subvert a strict hierarchy of social roles?

The Process

The spark of the idea.

05.03.20

First and second drafts finished.

18.08.20

Preparing the research for TuKoKe.

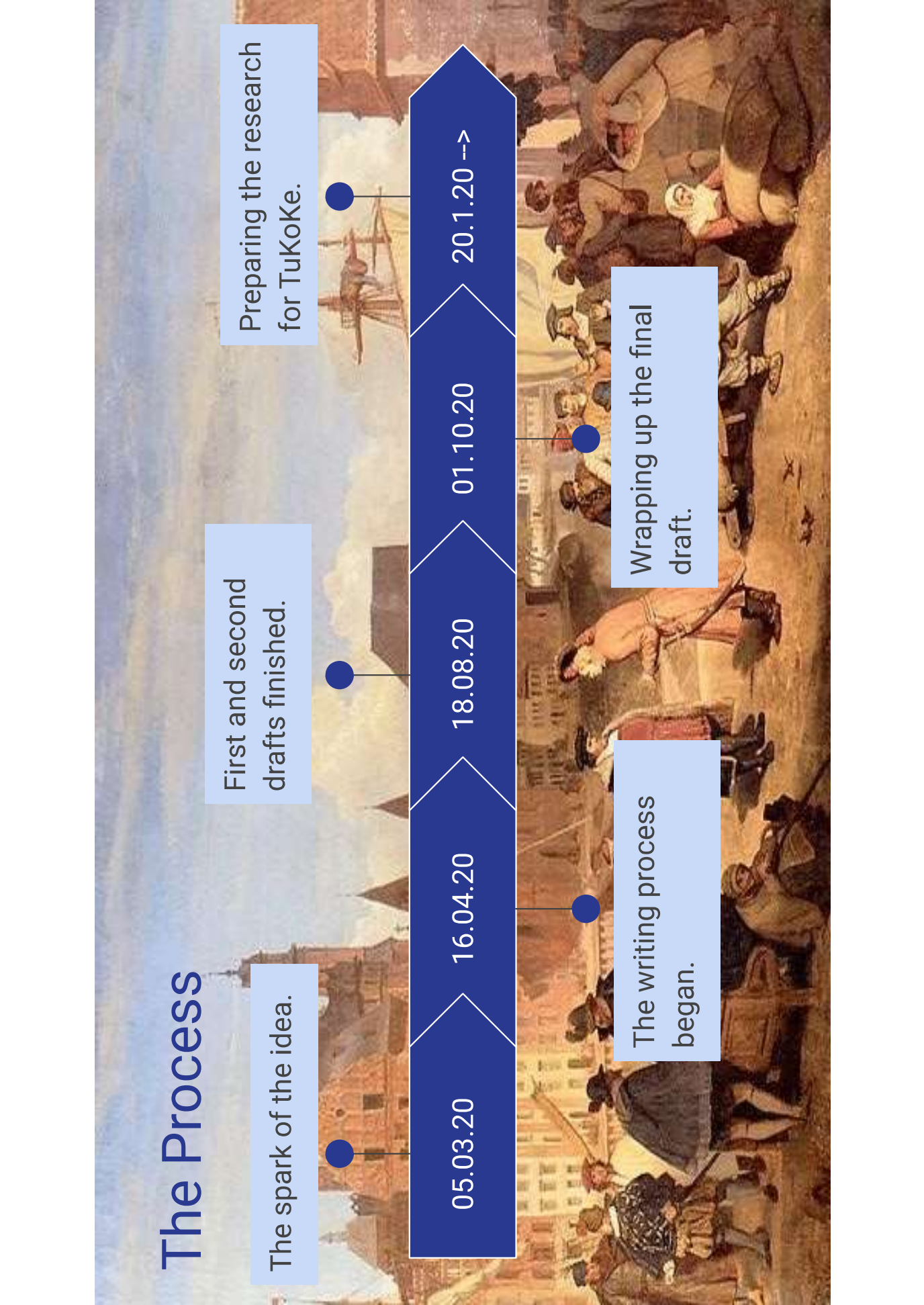
01.10.20

The writing process began.

16.04.20

Wrapping up the final draft.

20.1.20 -->



Challenges faced in the process

Challenge 1

In-depth understanding of the social structure

Finding and applying the research from historical and social investigations.

Challenge 2

Character relevancy

Analysing and breaking down the characters to find the most significant:

1. Brighella and the Nurse
2. Truffaldino and Sampson
3. Juliet and Smeraldina
4. Lady Capulet and Clarice

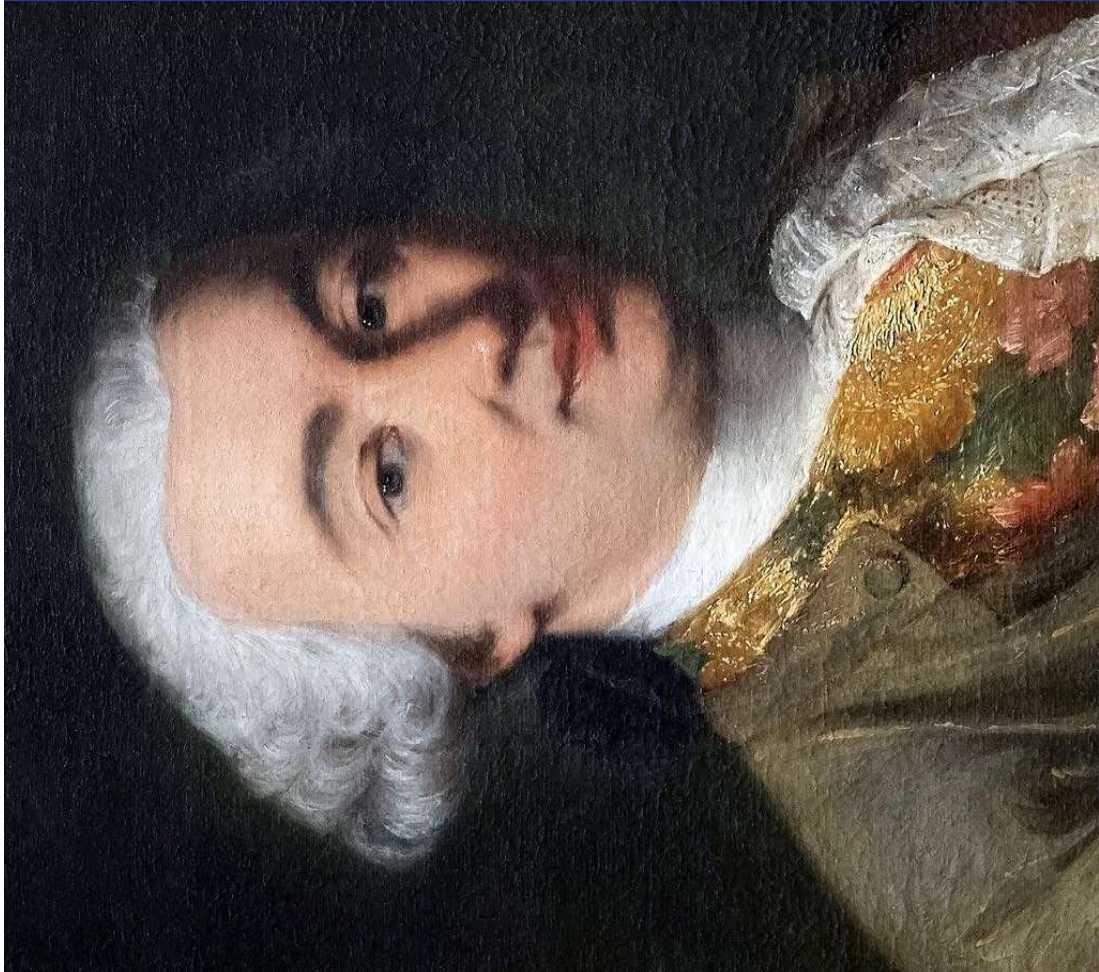
Challenge 3

Developing the argument

Finding the right structure to present the research.

The method:

- Compare/contrast approach is most fitting for a literary analysis:
 - Presents the two works side-by-side but still develops one work equally well.
 - Fitting when comparing two translated works:
 - Each section features the English view followed by the Italian perspective (or vice-versa)
- Mannerisms vs. Language:
 - Since these are both plays, the theatrical perspective is equally important in the analysis
 - This includes audience interactions, entrances and exits, and other stage directions.



Conclusion

While each playwright featured strict social systems, they did so for humour and for a comparison. Therefore, it can be concluded that the works do subvert social hierarchies.

Impact

The narratives told in these two plays are timeless, and so are their themes. That's why when two playwrights oppose this system of a hierarchical society, it will influence the views of people towards society.

