

This version of this essay contains errors in possessives.

Juan de Pareja, by Diego Velazquez
Zinaida Kitaychik

This is a portrait by Diego Velazquez, who was one of the most famous portraitists of the 17th century. It is a portrait of Juan de Pareja, a man who had had a very close relationship with the Spanish painter for many years.

Juan de Pareja had been a slave, had lived in the house of Velazquez and had served Velazquez for many years. Juan secretly learned to paint from Velazquez, his master, and remained in his master's home until Velazquez gave him his freedom.

Velazquez had painted Juan several times, but this portrait that you see was the best of all.

The entire work is done in pastel colors, mostly dark tones, except for the face of Juan, for which Velazquez utilized all of his skills trying to express the character of Juan. The work is unique and done masterfully. Every detail has been painted with great delicacy: the buttons and the folds in the clothing, even the lace of the collar. The right hand of Juan, which is placed near his waist, was painted so briskly that we can sense the shape of it.

I especially like the way the artist painted Juan's face: The skin is dark, the lips are plump, the hair is black and curly, the forehead is tall, and the face is round. Juan has kind, brown eyes with a concerned look. He seems intelligent, noble, curious, and proud. In addition, Juan has a piercing look. It seems like he is studying and measuring the viewer's personal qualities!

I like this portrait very much; there is no doubt that it is a masterpiece of artwork.