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Velázquez, *ingenioso*: Intertextuality and Biographical Artifice in Early Modern Spanish Artistic Writing*

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Y por ti el gran Velázquez ha podido,
diestro, cuanto ingenioso,
ansí animar lo hermoso,
ansí dar a lo mórbido sentido
con las manchas distantes,
que son verdad en él, no semejantes [...]

Y, así, el muchacho que con la pluma supiere dibujar un caballo muy bien sacado, y un hombre con buena figura, y hiciere unos buenos lazos y rasgos, no hay que ponerle en ningún género de letras, sino con un buen pintor que le facilite su naturaleza con el arte.¹

Written accounts on the arts in the early modern Spanish context are filled with passages that address, and celebrate, instances of individual talent and exceptionality. A fixture of the language through which these

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1 The first epigraph is from Francisco de Quevedo, *El pincel*, quoted in Rodrigo Cacho Casal, 'Quevedo y la filología de autor. Edición de la silva "El pincel"', in *Poesía y pintura en el*

references are articulated is the family of terms and expressions centred around the Spanish word *ingenio*: *ingenioso*, *agudo de ingenio*, *natural ingenio* and *ingenio peregrino* among others. The case of the painter Diego Velázquez (1599–1660) illustrates this rhetoric of praise and appreciation well. While numerous allusions to the artist's *ingenio* appear to be merely formulaic, other instances, like the well-known verses in Francisco de Quevedo's poem *El pincel* quoted above, have attracted extensive attention for the way they capture aspects of the early modern understanding and reception of Velázquez's art.² Focusing on Velázquez as a case study, the aim of this article is to explore in greater detail how, and for what purposes, this rhetoric of *ingenio* was deployed. In doing so, this article revisits well-known materials in the scholarship on the artist, while also drawing attention to lesser-studied sources and perspectives.

Scholars have long wondered and argued about the decidedly *ingenious* nature of Velázquez's endeavours as an artist and a figure of his time. In the case of the genre paintings created during his early career in Seville, for instance, much attention has been paid to Velázquez's astute appropriation of Northern European prototypes for compositional and narrative purposes—a strategy to which he would return later in his work.³ Researchers have also highlighted the attentive and subtle exploration of materials, textures and light effects that these works display—an early manifestation of Velázquez's technical dexterity and discernment.⁴ Lastly, some of these paintings disclose how the art of this

Siglo de Oro, ed. Jesús Ponce Cárdenas, *Criticón*, 114 (2012), 179–212 (p. 201); the second is from Juan Huarte de San Juan, *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias* (1575), ed., con intro. de Guillermo Serés (Madrid: Cátedra, 1989), 407. When quoting from early modern sources, I have preserved the original spelling, capitalization, italicization and punctuation. When quoting from modern editions of these sources, I have preserved the format used in these editions. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

2 See, for example, the allusion to Velázquez's 'ingenio peregrino' and 'ingenio raro' in Manuel de Gallegos' 'Silva topográfica al Buen Retiro' (1637), in *Corpus Velazqueño: documentos y textos*, ed. Ángel Aterido, con prefacio de José Manuel Pita Andrade, 2 vols (Madrid: Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, 2000), I, 121–26 (pp. 124 & 125). On Quevedo's verses, see Gridley McKim-Smith, 'Writing and Painting in the Age of Velázquez', in *Examining Velázquez*, ed. Gridley McKim-Smith, Greta Andersen-Bergdoll & Richard Newman (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1988), 1–33; and Rodrigo Cacho Casal, *La esfera del ingenio: las silvas de Quevedo y la tradición europea* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2012), 89–127.

3 See, among others, Victor I. Stoichita, *The Self-Aware Image: An Insight into Early Modern Metapainting*, trans. Anne-Marie Glasheen, rev. Lorenzo Pericolo (London: Harvey Miller, 2015 [1st French ed. 1993]), 39–51; and Peter Cherry, 'Los bodegones de Velázquez y la verdadera imitación del natural', in *Velázquez y Sevilla*, ed. Juan Miguel Serrera & Alfredo J. Morales (Sevilla: Junta de Andalucía, 1999), 77–91.

4 See, among others, Zahira Véliz, 'Velázquez's Early Technique', in *Velázquez in Seville*, ed. Michael Clarke, David Davies & Enriqueta Harris (Edinburgh: National Gallery of Scotland, 1996), 79–84.

period is deeply interconnected with the cultivation and celebration of wit through language, as manifested by the predilection for visual puns, wordplay and other forms of conceit in the circle of Velázquez's master Francisco Pacheco. A well-known example is *El aguador de Sevilla* (Figure 1), where the abundance of water and the *motif* of a fig inside the glass have been interpreted as witty puns on the family names of Juan de Fonseca ['dry fountain'] y Figueroa [i.e., fig], an important art collector and connoisseur, member of Pacheco's group and early supporter of Velázquez at court.⁵ As William B. Jordan and Peter Cherry have put it, these early works 'clearly reveal the extent to which Velázquez used the *bodegón* as a vehicle for experiment, as a challenge to his creative imagination (*ingenio*) and his mimetic powers as a painter'.⁶ Indeed, as Tanya J. Tiffany has written, 'Velázquez kept alive the vibrant cultural *milieu* of his youth through the brilliant ingenuity of his late works'.⁷ Thus, with regard to Velázquez's production during his successful career at the court in Madrid, scholars have discussed at length the wide range of ingenious pictorial strategies and social manoeuvres underlying his works, from matters of invention and learnedness to issues of technique and courtly performance.⁸

Drawing on these studies as well as modern scholarship on the languages and cultures of ingenuity in the early modern Spanish context, this article places emphasis on the centrality of *ingenio* as an artistic term, presenting it as one of the notions that would best capture not only the multifaceted nature of Velázquez's art but also his contemporaries' responses to it.⁹ My account, therefore, pays special attention to the categories (sets of terms and ideas around a given question) current in Velázquez's time, and to

5 See Manuel Pérez Lozano, 'Velázquez y los gustos conceptistas: el aguador y su destinatario', *Boletín del Museo e Instituto Camón Aznar*, 54 (1993), 25–48; Tanya J. Tiffany, 'Velázquez's Bodegones and the Art of Emulation', *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte*, 18 (2006), 79–95, and also her *Diego Velázquez's Early Paintings and the Culture of Seventeenth-Century Seville* (University Park: Pennsylvania State U. P., 2012), 77–102.

6 William B. Jordan & Peter Cherry, *Spanish Still Life from Velázquez to Goya* (London: National Gallery, 1995), 40.

7 Tiffany, *Diego Velázquez's Early Paintings*, 149.

8 See, for example, Jonathan Brown, *Velázquez: Painter and Courtier* (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1986); José Antonio Maravall, *Velázquez y el espíritu de la modernidad* (Madrid: Alianza, 1987); Fernando Marías, *Velázquez: pintor y criado del rey* (Hondarribia: Nerea, 1999); Jonathan Brown & María del Carmen Garrido, *Velázquez: The Technique of Genius* (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1998); and Giles Knox, *The Late Paintings of Velázquez: Theorizing Painterly Performance* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

9 On the notion of ingenuity in the early modern European context, see, Mercedes Blanco, *Les Rhétoriques de la pointe: Baltasar Gracián et le conceptisme en Europe* (Genève: Slatkine, 1992), and Alexander Marr, Raphaële Garrod, José Ramón Marcaida & Richard J. Oosterhoff, *Logodaedalus: Word Histories of Ingenuity in Early Modern Europe* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 2018) along with their bibliographies.



Figure 1

Diego Velázquez, *El aguador de Sevilla* (c.1620).

Oil on canvas. 107.7 × 81.3 cm. London, Apsley House.

© The Wellington Collection, Apsley House, English Heritage.

contemporary articulations and readings of these categories. In the first part of the article, I consider the relevance of the term *ingenio* within the Spanish art theoretical discourse in the age of Velázquez, particularly in the context of discussions about natural talent. In the second part, I look at the adoption of *ingenio* as a *motif* in two early modern biographical texts on Velázquez: Francisco Pacheco's writings on Velázquez's life, featured in his book *Arte de la pintura* (1649), and the biography of the artist included in the third volume of *El museo pictórico y escala óptica* (1724), by the artist and theorist Antonio Palomino.¹⁰ More specifically, I consider the deployment of a rhetoric of *ingenio* as a means to construct a cleverly contrived narrative about the young Velázquez, one that would privilege his natural giftedness for painting as well as his learnedness, inventiveness and independence. In the third part, I briefly address other articulations of this rhetoric of *ingenio* in relation to Velázquez's art, particularly with regard to matters of practice and skill.

1 *Ingenio* and the Art of Painting in Early Modern Spain

By the time Quevedo's verses on Velázquez were written (c.1630–1640), *ingenio* was a well-established term in contemporary Spanish debates on creativity and culture, though its prevalence and use extended well beyond these discussions.¹¹ The Spanish word itself, *ingenio*, together with a range of cognate terms, encapsulated a number of interconnected meanings.¹² Most commonly, *ingenio* referred to an individual's mental prowess and was used to denote or qualify capacities like a powerful understanding, mental sharpness (*agudeza de ingenio*), the capacity for invention or the ability to develop clever solutions to problems. This sense of *ingenio*—and, by extension, a number of related terms, such as *habilidad* or *maña*—tended to be linked to attributes like dexterity, skill in contriving and

10 I have used the following editions: Francisco Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura*, ed. Bonaventura Bassegoda i Hugas (Madrid: Cátedra, 1990), and Antonio Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El museo pictórico y escala óptica*, 3 vols (Madrid: Lucas Antonio de Bedmar, 1715–1724), III (1724), *El Parnaso Español Pintoresco Laureado*.

11 The literature on this topic is large. See, for example, Aurora Egido, 'La fuerza del ingenio y las lecciones cervantinas', *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, 96:314 (2016), 771–94. For the chronology of *El pincel*, see Cacho Casal, 'Quevedo y la filología de autor'.

12 My account of *ingenio* in this article draws on the word history of this term presented in Marr *et al.*, *Logodaedalus*, 87–119, but my argument here develops a wide range of new art-historical content not covered there. This article also examines in greater depth a number of points that I touch on in my article '*Ingenio* and *Artimaña*. Technique and the Art of Painting in Early Modern Spain', in *The Making of Technique in the Arts: Concepts and Practice from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Marieke Hendriksen & Sven Dupré (forthcoming), although the focus on matters of biographical writing, the emphasis on the question of natural talent and the depth of intertextual analysis through the close reading of primary sources are unique to the present discussion.

workmanship, associated with deft artisans and engineers but also with *pícaros* and tricksters. *Ingenio* could also denote a natural inclination or propensity for certain tasks, a kind of innate talent. Linked to the Latin word *ingenium*—which in the classical tradition referred, primarily, to the *nature* of an individual or a thing—this sense was also often expressed by early modern Spanish terms like *natural* and *genio*. This meaning was tied to widespread natural philosophical and medical views on how an individual's nature could be shaped by factors such as physical constitution, diet or climate, thus determining their temperament as well as their natural disposition towards certain endeavours and behaviours.¹³ In addition to these senses, *ingenio* could metonymically denote an individual, or the products resulting from the above-mentioned capacities, such as a contraption or a machine. The entry for *ingenio* published in Sebastián de Covarrubias' *Tesoro de la lengua castellana, o española* (1611) captures these aspects of the word's semantic range. Among references to celebrated machines and the work of engineers, the entry defines *ingenio* as:

[...] vna fuerça natural de entendimiento, inestigadora de lo que por razon y discurso se puede alcançar en todo genero de ciencias, diciplinas, artes liberales, y mecanicas, sutilezas, invenciones y engaños [...] qualquiera cosa que se fabrica con entendimiento, y facilita el executar lo que con fuerças era dificultoso y costoso.¹⁴

Last but not least, *ingenio* carried important social connotations, since there was a close link between the condition and status of individuals involved in certain tasks, and the nature and demands of the tasks themselves. These considerations lay at the heart of early modern debates on the social standing of artists and the status of painting as a noble and liberal art—via, for example, the notion of *ingenuidad*—to name a well-known trope.¹⁵

Closely connected to these senses of *ingenio* was the intricate debate—which dated back to the classical tradition—on to what extent these attributes were indeed innate or could be acquired and perfected through

13 Hence the long-held association between creativity and the melancholic temperament. For the Spanish context, see Roger Bartra, *El Siglo de Oro de la melancolía: textos españoles y novohispanos sobre las enfermedades del alma* (México D.F.: Univ. Iberoamericana, 1998), and Felice Gambin, *Azabache: el debate sobre la melancolía en la España de los Siglos de Oro* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2008).

14 Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana, o española* (Madrid: Luis Sánchez, 1611), 504^v.

15 See, *Siete memoriales españoles en defensa del arte de la pintura*, ed. Antonio Sánchez Jiménez & Adrián J. Sáez, con estudios y notas complementarios de Juan Luis González García & Antonio Urquizar (Madrid: Iberoamericana/Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2018), in particular Antonio Urquizar, 'La ingenuidad de la pintura y la teoría jurídica y social de los clásicos', 15–28 along with their bibliographies.

learning and practice. This question was of key importance, not least for its pedagogic consequences. Did one have to be born a poet or a painter, or could one be trained to become one? Was natural talent alone enough to excel in a given task, or was certain guidance necessary? The predominantly accepted view—as conveyed, for instance, by Horace in his *Ars Poetica* (*The Art of Poetry*)—was that a certain natural disposition (*natura*, *ingenium*) was an essential prerequisite in the creative process, but so were rules and method (*ars*), in so far as they served to temper and perfect natural talent.¹⁶

As Michael Baxandall, Martin Kemp and David Summers, among other scholars, have shown, the notion of ingenuity had played a key role in earlier theoretical accounts on the process of artistic creation and the nature of the artist, particularly those developed in Italy throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.¹⁷ From then on, ingenuity would remain central to early modern discussions on the rise and the cult of the individual artist, as well as to theoretical articulations of such critical notions as ‘style’ or ‘taste’.¹⁸

In the case of the Spanish versions of these debates, authors largely drew on their Italian predecessors while also extending and adapting their arguments to the particular circumstances of the Spanish context.¹⁹ A

16 ‘Often it is asked whether a praiseworthy poem be due to Nature [*natura*] or to art [*arte*]. For my part, I do not see of what avail is either study, when not enriched by Nature’s vein, or native wit [*ingenium*], if untrained; so truly does each claim the other’s aid, and make with it a friendly league’ (Horace, *Ars Poetica*, in *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, trans. Henry Rushton Fairclough [Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. P., 1942], 484–85 [ll. 408–11]). For a discussion of *ars* and *ingenium* in the Spanish cultural context, see, along with their bibliographies, Antonio García Berrio, ‘Poética literaria y creación artística en el Siglo de Oro’, in *El Siglo de Oro de la pintura española*, coord. Javier Portús Pérez (Madrid: Mondadori, 1991), 297–330; and Aurora Egido, ‘Estudio preliminar’, in Baltasar Gracián, *Arte de ingenio. Tratado de la agudeza. Edición facsimilar* (Madrid, Juan Sánchez, 1642), con estudio preliminar de Aurora Egido (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2005), vii–cxlviii.

17 Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition, 1350–1450* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Martin Kemp, ‘From “Mimesis” to “Fantasia”: The Quattrocento Vocabulary of Creation, Inspiration and Genius in the Visual Arts’, *Viator*, 8 (1977), 347–98; David Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (Princeton: Princeton U. P., 1981); and Martin Kemp, ‘The “Super-Artist” As Genius: The Sixteenth-Century View’, in *Genius: History of an Idea*, ed. Penelope Murray (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 32–53.

18 See Philip L. Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2001), and Patricia A. Emison, *Creating the ‘Divine’ Artist from Dante to Michelangelo* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); see also Marr *et al.*, *Logodaedalus*.

19 See Nuria Rodríguez Ortega, *Maneras y facultades en los tratados de Francisco Pacheco y Vicente Carducho: tesoro terminológico-conceptual*, con prólogo de Aurora Miró Domínguez (Málaga: Univ. de Málaga, 2005); Francisco Calvo Serraller, *Teoría de la pintura en el Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1981); Karin Hellwig, *La literatura artística*

suggestive example would be the book *Diálogos de la pintura*, published in Madrid in 1633 by the painter and theorist Vicente Carducho.²⁰ Rooted in the Italian critical tradition but clearly committed to the cause of Spanish painting, Carducho's book constitutes a valuable *locus* to explore the development of these ideas and their implications for art theory in the age of Velázquez.²¹ Let us consider, firstly, the significance of *ingenio* in one of the best-known passages in the book: Carducho's somewhat histrionic account of the art of the Italian painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571–1610) and its impact on the practice of painting in the early decades of the seventeenth century:

Quien pintó jamas y llegó a hazer tan bien como este monstruo de ingenio, y natural, casi hizo sin preceptos, sin doctrina, sin estudio, mas solo con la fuerza de su genio, y con el natural delante, a quien simplemente imitava con tanta admiracion? [...] [A]si este AnteMichaelAngel con su afectada y exterior imitacion, admirable modo y viveza, ha podido persuadir a tan grande numero de todo genero de gente, que aquella es la buena pintura, y su modo y doctrina verdadera, que han buuelto las espaldas al verdadero modo de eternizarse, y de saber con evidencia y verdad desta materia [...].²²

In spite of its critical tone and exalted rhetoric, scholars have come to appreciate an expression of praise, on Carducho's part, towards the figure of Caravaggio.²³ Indeed, as Carducho seems to imply, Caravaggio's approach to painting may have exerted a negative influence, but there should not be any question about his exceptional natural abilities, here expressed and appraised through the language of *ingenio*, *natural* and *genio*. Carducho's concerns regarding the unruliness of natural talent are framed by wider considerations, educational as well as intellectual, on the theory and practice of painting, or, as it is called right at the start of his treatise, the 'ingenioso Arte de la Pintura'—its lofty character epitomized by the wings sported by the allegory of Painting featured in some of the book's etchings, including the title page

española del siglo XVII, trad. Jesús Espino Nuño (Madrid: Visor, 1999 [1st German ed. 1996]); and *Sacar de la sombra lumbre: la teoría de la pintura en el Siglo de Oro (1560–1724)*, ed. José Riello (Madrid: Abada, 2012).

20 See Vicente Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura. Su defensa, origen, esencia, definición, modos y diferencias*, ed., prólogo & notas de Francisco Calvo Serraller (Madrid: Turner, 1979).

21 On Carducho, see *On Art and Painting: Vicente Carducho and Baroque Spain*, ed. Jean Andrews, Jeremy Roe & Oliver Noble Wood (Cardiff: Univ. of Wales Press, 2016).

22 Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 270–71.

23 This passage has been discussed at length. See, for instance, Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 271, n. 701, and, more recently, Jeremy Roe, 'Preface', in *On Art and Painting*, ed. Andrews, Roe & Noble Wood, 1–17.

(Figure 2).²⁴ On the one hand, the treatise's pedagogical rationale implies that artistic practice has to be based on a learned and rule-based approach to painting; that is, precepts and practice, rather than 'furor natural', as the *aprobación* states.²⁵ On the other hand, given the ongoing efforts to vindicate the liberal art status of painting in Spain, in which Carducho was actively involved, it makes sense for him to question a style that did without many of the practices on which such demand was grounded.

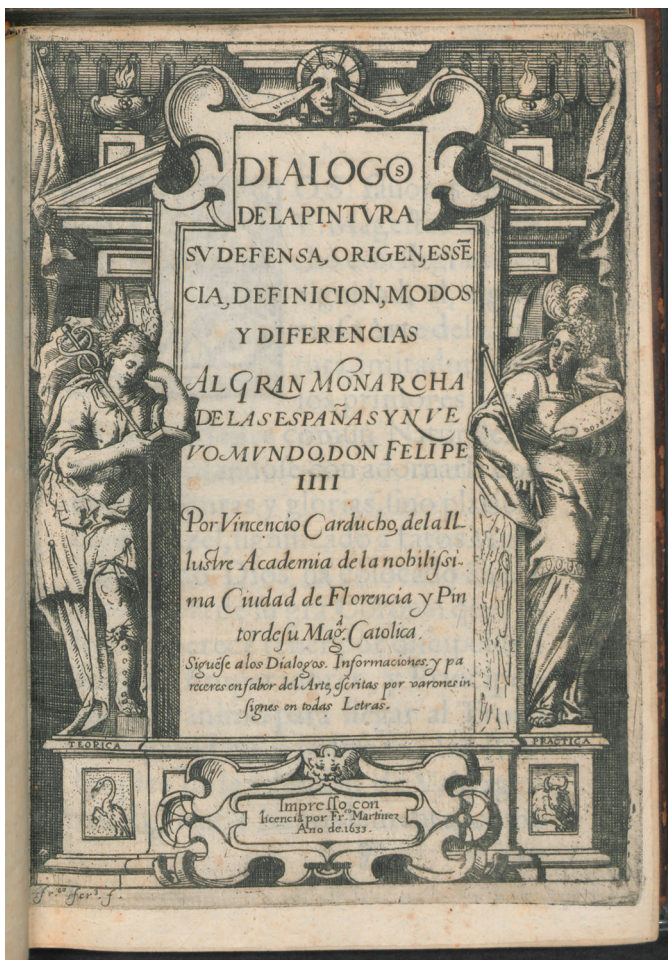


Figure 2

Francisco Fernández. title page of Vicente Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura* (Madrid: Francisco Martínez, 1633). Etching. 20 cm (height).

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

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24 See George Kubler, 'Vicente Carducho's Allegories of Painting', *The Art Bulletin*, 47:4 (1965), 439–45. For the quotation, see Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 3.

25 Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 9.

However, while privileging precepts and method as necessary resources to contain and discipline a young artist's talent, Carducho is also well aware of the prevalence of such notions as natural inclination and temperament in the artistic literature with which he engages. This is particularly clear in the section of his treatise devoted to the 'diferencias de modos de pintar'—featured in the *Diálogo sexto*, which also includes his views on Caravaggio, where the question of the variety of individual styles is addressed.²⁶ Carducho's account largely draws upon ideas that, at the time of his writing, had been around for quite some time, in particular the association between the world's human diversity and the range of artists' temperaments, on the one hand, and the relationship between natural propensity, personal character and individual artistic expression on the other. A matter of interest for most authors in the art theoretical tradition of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, one of the most sophisticated articulations of these views had been offered by Gian Paolo Lomazzo, whose writings—*Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scoltura et architettura* (1584) and *Idea del tempio della pittura* (1590) in particular—stand out as the most likely direct sources for Carducho.²⁷

There are other works with which the well-read Carducho dialogues in connection to these topics, including—as has been noted by scholars—a treatise devoted specifically to the theme of *ingenio*: the *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias* (1575; expurgated edition, 1594), written by the Spanish physician Juan Huarte de San Juan.²⁸ Drawing on a mixed set of medical and philosophical ideas—from the classical theory of humours to contemporary debates on faculty psychology—the *Examen* is an attempt to survey and classify human ingenuity with a particular social and political aim: to organize society in such a manner that individuals are assigned the professions that are best suited to their abilities. Centred on *ingenio* and its relationship with issues like individual character, bodily constitution and natural talent, the book attracted the attention of numerous early modern readers—most famously Miguel de Cervantes—and became one of the most widely-read European treatises on ingenuity of the period.²⁹

Carducho's engagement with the *Examen*—he owned a copy of the book—is detectable in various parts of the *Diálogos*.³⁰ However, his appreciation of

26 See Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 259–76, especially pp. 260–61, and n. 681.

27 Martin Kemp, '“Equal Excellences”: Lomazzo and the Explanation of Individual Style in the Visual Arts', *Renaissance Studies*, 1:1 (1987), 1–26, where the ideas of other relevant authors like Lodovico Dolce are also discussed. See also Francisco Calvo Serraller, 'Introducción', in Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, xx–xxvi.

28 See Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 276, n. 711.

29 See, Guillermo Serés, 'Introducción', in Huarte de San Juan, *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, ed. Serés, 11–131 along with its bibliography.

30 Carducho appears to borrow ideas and expressions from the *Examen*, although these resemblances could be due to both authors engaging with similar sources; in the next section I

this work is explicitly acknowledged in *Diálogo sexto*: Carducho mentions Huarte de San Juan by name, and recommends his book ('mui digno de ser leído') for further reading on issues central to the dialogue, in particular the question of natural talent.³¹ Carducho's direct allusion is prompted by this question from Discípulo, one of the two interlocutors—Maestro being the other—in the *Diálogos*:

Que es la causa, que algunos alcanzan mas felices efectos en sus obras, y en mas breve tiempo, y con menos estudios, que otros que incansablemente continuan largos tiempos en grandes estudios, deviendo los unos mas a la naturaleza, que al arte, y otros lo contrario, desnudos de todo favor della solo están pendientes de la especulacion, y del trabajo?³²

A similar point had been raised in *Diálogo cuarto*, where Discípulo, referring to poets, expresses his envy for 'estos ingenios que dizen quanto quieren con facilidad, y en pocas razones grandes conceptos'. Maestro's response to this comment is telling: 'En la Pintura pasa lo mismo, y en todas las materias' and he refers to those individuals 'que con gran desahogo disponen qualquiera cosa, y sin embarazarse en nada dizen y hazen, con admiración de los que los miran', whereas others 'con trabajo inmenso no aciertan a sacar conceptos sino es a puro fatigar el entendimiento, penando, y trayendo arrastrando qualquiera cosa que ayan de hazer'.³³ To return to Discípulo's question in *Diálogo sexto*, Maestro defends the well-established view that in order to excel in any activity it helps to have a natural

will discuss a specific example. An interesting case, as María Lumbreras has noted, is Carducho's use of the expression 'medicos impiricos' to refer to painters of 'simple imitación' (*Diálogo cuarto*, in Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 200), which seems to have been borrowed from Huarte de San Juan's discussion of *médicos empíricos* in Chapter 12 (Chapter 14 in the 1594 edition), for example *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, ed. Serés, 493–94 (with thanks to María Lumbreras, who is working on this topic, for our conversations about this point). See María Lumbreras, 'Painting, Experience, and Francisco Pacheco's Notion of *Acabado*', paper presented at the 2016 Renaissance Society of America Conference, 1 April 2016. Although he does not discuss the *Examen*, see José María Riello, 'El Greco y Velázquez: afinidades electivas', in *El joven Velázquez: a propósito de 'La educación de la Virgen' de Yale. Actas del Simposio Internacional celebrado en el espacio Santa Clara de Sevilla del 15 al 17 de octubre de 2014*, ed. Benito Navarrete Prieto (Sevilla: Instituto de la Cultura y las Artes, 2015), 364–85. The book *examen de ynjenios* [sic] is listed in a posthumous inventory of Carducho's library (María Luisa Caturla, 'Documentos en torno a Vicencio Carducho', *Arte Español*, 26 [1968–1969], 145–221 [p. 193]).

31 Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 275–76.

32 Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 275. For a discussion of this passage, but without a reference to Huarte de San Juan, see Juan Luis González García, 'Carducho and Sacred Oratory', in *On Art and Painting*, ed. Andrews, Roe & Noble Wood, 149–62 (pp. 152–55).

33 Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 179.

predisposition (*ingenio*, ‘*natural*’) for it.³⁴ The Latin statement by Quintilian that he quotes reads, in translation: ‘There is one point which I must emphasize at the start: without the help of nature, precepts and techniques are powerless’.³⁵ Maestro also warns against devoting oneself to an activity unsuited to one’s *ingenio*—another well-established view at the time. Both points are central to Huarte de San Juan’s project, as stated in the *Proemio* of the *Examen*:

Todos los filósofos antiguos hallaron por experiencia que donde no hay naturaleza que disponga al hombre a saber, por demás es trabajar en las reglas del arte. Pero ninguno ha dicho con distinción ni claridad qué naturaleza es la que hace al hombre hábil para una ciencia y para otra incapaz, ni cuántas diferencias de ingenio se hallan en la especie humana, ni qué artes y ciencias corresponden a cada uno en particular, ni con qué señales se había de conocer, que era lo que más importaba.³⁶

In fact, throughout *Diálogo sexto* one can sense the affinity between Huarte de San Juan’s *examen* of the ‘diferencias de ingenio’—their association with varying human complexions and behaviours—and Carducho’s account—via Lomazzo and other authors—of the ‘diferencias de modos de pintar’ and their correlation with the diversity of human nature.³⁷ Maestro goes on to argue that having natural talent is not enough, and he provides Discípulo with a Spanish translation of the age-old maxim ‘*natura facit habilem, ars facilem, usus autem potentem*’ (‘la naturaleza solo haze habil, y el arte facilita, y el uso haze poderoso’), a maxim that also features prominently in the *Examen*, Carducho’s likely source.³⁸

34 For the sixteenth-century Iberian context, see, for instance, the writings of Francisco de Holanda, who adopts the same view in his *De la pintura antigua*, ed. Elías Tormo, trad. en castellano por Manuel Denis (Madrid: Jaime Ratés, 1921 [1st Portuguese ed. 1548; 1st Spanish ed. 1563]).

35 ‘*Illud tamen in primis testandum est, nihil praecepta atque artes valere nisi adiuvente natura*’. See Quintilian, *The Orator’s Education*, ed., trans. and with an intro. by Donald A. Russell, 5 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. P., 2001), I, *Books 1–2*, 62 (l. 26), for the text in Latin, and p. 63 for the English translation. Carducho’s quotation is a slightly shortened version of the original text by Quintilian: ‘*Testandum est, nihil praecepto, atque arte valere, nisi adiuvente natura*’ (Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 275).

36 Huarte de San Juan, *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, ed. Serés, 153–54.

37 In addition to this thematic affinity, there are expressions in Carducho’s writing (*Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, especially pp. 268–75) that resemble Huarte de San Juan’s text. For instance, see the remarks on Socrates, Aristotle, Hippocrates and Plato (*Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 273), whose wording is very similar to that in Chapter 9 (Chapter 11, 1594 edition) of the *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, ed. Serés, 424–25.

38 See, respectively, Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 275, and the opening lines of Chapter 2 of the *Examen* (Chapter 4, 1594 edition), in Huarte de San Juan, *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, ed. Serés, 234.

As suggested above, Carducho's emphasis on *ars*—and not just the *ingenium*—is justified by his pedagogical mindset. In this regard, he must have found Huarte de San Juan's numerous disquisitions on the *ingenio* of students and the role of the master appealing. We do not know which edition of the *Examen* Carducho owned, but had he read any edition of the expurgated and expanded 1594 text he would have found, in the first chapter of the book, references to various kinds of student *ingenios*, such as those characterized by their *docilitas*, that is, their disposition to learn and be taught by others, and those who do not need a master:

[...] cuya fecundidad es tan grande que con sólo el objeto y su entendimiento, sin ayuda de nadie, paren mil conceptos que jamás se vieron ni oyeron: cuales fueron aquellos que inventaron las artes.³⁹

Among these, Huarte de San Juan points out those individuals driven by the Platonic *mania* (the *Examen* offers an alternative explanation for this):

[...] con la cual dicen los que la alcanzan (sin arte ni estudio) cosas tan delicadas, tan verdaderas y prodigiosas, que jamás se vieron, ni oyeron, ni escribieron, ni para siempre vinieron en consideración de los hombres'.⁴⁰

The academically minded Carducho proves to be well aware of the challenge that this kind of giftedness poses. Earlier in *Diálogo sexto*, Maestro insists—in line with many authors of the past—on the need to control the *natural* with *ciencia*; this is where Carducho—through the voice of Maestro—claims to have known a painter 'tan osado, como favorecido de la pintura, de quien podíamos dezir avia nacido Pintor, segun tenia los pinzeles, y colores obedientes, obrando mas el furor natural, que los estudios'—a remark that many in the past interpreted as a reference to Velázquez.⁴¹ Maestro concludes his answer by stating that 'el arte caminava con dos pies, significados por la razon, y la experiencia, que la una sin la otra no será perfecta', and points the reader to the *Examen* for further discussion on these questions.⁴²

39 Huarte de San Juan, *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, ed. Serés, 194. Alfonso Rodríguez G. de Ceballos refers to this passage in 'Velázquez en la encrucijada: entre la ortodoxia icónica de Pacheco o la libertad del arte', in *El joven Velázquez*, ed. Navarrete Prieto, 410–25 (p. 411).

40 Huarte de San Juan, *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, ed. Serés, 202.

41 Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 275. See Antonio Sánchez Jiménez, 'Lope de Vega y Diego Velázquez (con Caravaggio y Carducho): historia y razones de un silencio', *RILCE. Revista de Filología Hispánica*, 29:3 (2013), 758–75, for a discussion of the 'absence' of Velázquez in the *Diálogos*, and other points relevant to my argument.

42 Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 275–76. Indeed, Maestro's final statement appears to correspond to a passage in Chapter 12 (Chapter 14 in the 1594 edition) of

Carducho's account, in sum, while appreciative of expressions of natural talent—as illustrated by his words on Caravaggio and the 'osado' painter—is committed to an approach to painting where aptitude is to be directed and perfected by learning and precepts. His interest in Huarte de San Juan's arguments demonstrates his awareness, to say the least, of the relevance of medical and natural philosophical accounts of *ingenio* for early modern discussions, not just on painting, but on the arts in general. In fact, it is important to consider the connotations of intellectual prestige associated with Carducho's engagement with these kinds of treatises, especially one as well-known and disseminated as the *Examen*.

Carducho's take on natural talent and *ingenio* resonates with other contributions to the art theoretical discourse produced in Spain in this period, and throughout Velázquez's lifetime. As will be addressed in the next section, in *Arte de la pintura*, Francisco Pacheco acknowledges the significance of natural inclination and *ingenio*, not least for the role that these notions play in his account of the merits and demands of the different pictorial genres (portraiture, for instance) and in the context of his broader argument in defence of the liberal status and nobility of painting.⁴³ The use of the rhetoric of *ingenio* to celebrate both the personal character and the work of his sitters is also prevalent in his *Libro de retratos*, a true *examen de ingenios* in visual and textual form.⁴⁴

The case of El Greco offers an interesting variant. The Greek painter did not publish a treatise on painting like Carducho or Pacheco. However, a series of annotations written in the margins of two publications in his possession—the second edition of Giorgio Vasari's *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori* (1568) and Daniele Barbaro's 1556 Italian edition of Vitruvius' book *De architectura*—demonstrate his active engagement with matters of artistic theory and criticism.⁴⁵ Thanks to these annotations, we know that El Greco

the *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias* (ed. Serés, 494), the same section devoted to the *médicos empíricos*.

43 On Pacheco and the notion of *ingenio*, see Rodríguez Ortega, *Maneras y facultades*, especially pp. 179–84; Charlene Villaseñor Black, 'Pacheco, Velázquez and the Legacy of Leonardo in Spain', in *Re-Reading Leonardo: The Treatise on Painting across Europe, 1550–1900*, ed. Claire J. Farago (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 349–74; and Antonio Urquizar, 'La profesión de pintor (principiante, aprovechado o perfecto) en la teoría artística de Francisco Pacheco', *Studi Ispanici*, 43 (2018), 183–99.

44 I have consulted the following edition: Francisco Pacheco, *Libro de descripción de verdaderos retratos de ilustres y memorables varones* (Sevilla: Rafael Tarasco, 1881).

45 The annotated publications are held at the Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid; signatures R/41689-R/41691 (Vasari) and R/33475 (Vitruvius). On El Greco's annotations, see, among others, Fernando Marías & Agustín Bustamante, *Las ideas artísticas de El Greco (comentarios a un texto inédito)* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1981); Xavier de Salas & Fernando Marías, *El Greco y el arte de su tiempo: las notas de El Greco a Vasari* (Madrid: Real Fundación de Toledo, 1992); and José Riello, 'El Greco, "bizarro" But Not So Much', in *El*

regarded painting as less reliant on *ars* than on the natural talent of the artist. His views, therefore, stood in contrast to Carducho's and Pacheco's emphasis on rules and precepts. Nevertheless, El Greco's celebration of exceptionality and individuality, as conveyed through his informed commentaries, is not at odds with the expressions of praise for certain artists found in the writings of the above-mentioned authors.⁴⁶ A similar rhetoric of praise is apparent in the biographical writings of the chronicler and historian Lázaro Díaz del Valle (1606–1669), particularly in his *Origen E Yllustracion del nobilissimo y Real Arte de la Pintura y Dibuxo* (written c.1656–1662), wherein the language of *ingenio* is ubiquitous.⁴⁷ In his *Discursos practicables del nobilísimo arte de la pintura* (written c.1673), the painter and theorist Jusepe Martínez (1602–1682) regularly invokes the notion of *ingenio* to address issues like the education of young artists, the relationship between natural dispositions and styles, and other matters of painterly performance and aesthetic judgment.⁴⁸ Like his predecessors, Martínez underscores the importance of rules and precepts, and insists on the age-old idea that artists should follow their natural inclinations (he often uses the word *genio* in this context), while claiming the centrality of capacities like *discreción*, *elección*, *gusto* and *resolución*—attributes that, crucially, cannot be taught—to negotiate the adherence to precepts and rules. References to the need to tame the artist's *genio* (again, in the sense of natural disposition) with precepts and study feature also in the poems that open the drawing and painting manual *Principios para estudiar el*

Greco's Visual Poetics, ed. Fernando Marías (Tokyo: NHK Puromōshon, Asahi Shinbunsha, 2012), 259–63.

46 See, in addition to the sources mentioned in the previous note, Fernando Marías & José Riello, 'La idea misma de arte: un texto y un contexto olvidados de Pacheco polemizando con el Greco', in *Teoría y literatura artística en España: revisión historiográfica y estudios contemporáneos*, ed. Nuria Rodríguez Ortega & Miguel Taín Guzmán (Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, 2015), 48–63. See also, on El Greco's library, *La Biblioteca del Greco*, ed. Javier Docampo & José Riello (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2014) along with their bibliographies.

47 Díaz del Valle's *Origen E Yllustracion* remained unpublished during its author's lifetime; see, along with its bibliography, José Riello, 'Un caso singular de la literatura artística española del siglo XVII: Lázaro Díaz del Valle', Doctoral dissertation (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2007).

48 Martínez's *Discursos* remained unpublished during its author's lifetime; the first printed edition of the manuscript dates from 1866 (con intro. & notas de Valentín Carderera y Solano [Madrid: Manuel Tello]). For an excellent discussion of Martínez's writings, including his views on the notion of *ingenio* and the influence of Baltasar Gracián, see María Elena Manrique Ara, 'Teoría e historia del arte según Jusepe Martínez', in Jusepe Martínez, *Discursos practicables del nobilísimo arte de la pintura*, ed., intro. & notas de María Elena Manrique Ara (Madrid: Cátedra, 2006), 17–111.

nobilísimo y real Arte de la Pintura (1693), by the painter José García Hidalgo; for example:

Dichoso aquel que nace con tal genio,
y que sin repugnancia a tal se inclina,
creciendo con estudios el ingenio,
a cuyo fin su inclinación camina.⁴⁹

As will be discussed in the next section, these ideas would find their way into early modern biographical accounts of the young Velázquez, thus contributing to the elaboration and promotion of distinct narratives around the artist's personality and work.

2 Goats and Sheep: The Young Velázquez's *ingenio*

Like a dam bursting: this is how the Portuguese painter and theorist Francisco de Holanda describes the *ingenio* of a young, talented artist.⁵⁰ Largely based on commonplace anecdotes and model figures extracted from classical sources, early modern art theoretical discourse is packed with suggestive similes and narratives that describe the rise of uniquely gifted individuals.⁵¹ The Spanish context is not an exception: early modern biographical accounts of Iberian artists follow a range of established conventions, which vary according to the ideological stances of their authors and their readership.⁵² In this respect, the case of the young Velázquez, understandably, has been scrutinized the most.⁵³

As is well known, references to Velázquez's natural talent occur early in the first biographical account of the artist, penned by Pacheco and

49 Cited from Calvo Serraller, *Teoría de la pintura en el Siglo de Oro*, 599.

50 Holanda, *De la pintura antigua*, ed. Tormo, 38.

51 See Ernst Kris & Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist*, trans. Alastair Laing, rev. Lottie M. Newman, with a preface by E. H. Gombrich (New Haven/London: Yale U. P., 1979 [1st German ed. 1934]); and Emison, *Creating the 'Divine' Artist from Dante to Michelangelo*; Kemp, 'The "Super-Artist" As Genius'.

52 See Javier Portús Pérez, 'Una introducción a la imagen literaria del pintor en la España del Siglo de Oro', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie VII, Historia del Arte*, 12 (1999), 173–97; Hellwig, *La literatura artística española*, trad. Espino Nuño, especially pp. 95–122; and José Riello, 'Entre el pintor pobre y el pintor perfecto. "Vidas" de pintores en la España del Siglo de Oro', in *Sacar de la sombra lumbre*, ed. Riello, 259–71.

53 See, in particular, *Velázquez in Seville*, ed. Clarke, Davies & Harris; *Velázquez y Sevilla*, ed. Serrera & Morales; Hellwig, *La literatura artística*, Chapter 6, 123–44; Luis Méndez Rodríguez, *Velázquez y la cultura sevillana* (Sevilla: Univ. de Sevilla, 2005); Tiffany, *Diego Velázquez's Early Paintings*; *El joven Velázquez*, ed. Navarrete Prieto; and José Riello, 'Las siete vidas de Velázquez (y la penúltima interpretación de *Las Meninas*)', in *Scripta artium in honorem Prof. José Manuel Cruz Valdovinos*, ed. Alejandro Cañestro, 2 vols (Alicante: Univ. de Alicante, 2018), I, 1069–90.

published in his *Arte de la pintura*.⁵⁴ Referring to the end of Velázquez's apprenticeship, Pacheco praises his soon-to-be son in law's 'virtud, limpieza y buenas partes, y de las esperanzas de su natural y grande ingenio'. It is important to consider the framing of these references: they immediately follow Pacheco's biographical account of Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), which ends with a powerful remark on the Flemish painter's *ingenio*:

Bien se ve por este discurso, tan honorífico como (a lo que pude alcanzar) verdadero, que sobre todos los talentos deste insigne pintor, quien le engrandece, quien le acredita, quien inclina a los Reyes y grandes Príncipes a levantar a porfía tan ilustre sugeto, es la grandeza, hermosura y caudal de su ingenio, que resplandece en sus pinturas; y quien le da la mano y le enriquece, es la suya propia, merecedora y justamente de tanta honra.⁵⁵

Further on in *Arte de la pintura*, in the oft-quoted passage on genre painting—which if done 'con valentía y buena manera, entretienen y muestran ingenio en la disposición y en la viveza'—the young Velázquez is said to be excellent at this kind of painting, 'sin dexar lugar a otro'.⁵⁶ These references are complemented by further remarks on the older Velázquez's abilities, some of which allude specifically—although quite formulaically too—to his *ingenio*, 'el cual empleado en otra facultad (sin duda alguna) no llegara a la altura en que hoy se halla'.⁵⁷ For example, in his sonnet dedicated to Velázquez and the success of his now lost equestrian portrait of the king Philip IV (1625–1626)—the sonnet that ends his biographical account of the artist—Pacheco establishes an association between Velázquez's youth and resolve, his *ingenio* and paintbrushes and also his fame:

Vuela, oh joven valiente, en la aventura
de tu raro principio, la privanza
honre la posesión, no la esperanza,
d'el lugar que alcanzaste en la pintura.
[...]
Al calor deste sol tiempla tu vuelo,
y verás cuánto estiende tu memoria
la fama, por tu ingenio y tus pinceles.⁵⁸

54 Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura*, ed. Bassegoda i Hugas, 202–13.

55 Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura*, ed. Bassegoda i Hugas, 202. Riello (in his 'Las siete vidas de Velázquez', 1073), makes this point too. For a recent discussion of Rubens' life and work through the lens of ingenuity, see Alexander Marr, *Rubens' Spirit: From Ingenuity to Genius* (London: Reaktion, 2021).

56 Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura*, ed. Bassegoda i Hugas, 517 & 519.

57 Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura*, ed. Bassegoda i Hugas, 210.

58 Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura*, ed. Bassegoda i Hugas, 212–13.

Appropriately, Pacheco ends the sonnet with a well-known and compelling trope—the close relationship between Apelles and Alexander the Great—in order to pair the success and glory of Velázquez to the eminence and patronage of Philip IV.⁵⁹

Que el planeta benigno a tanto cielo,
tu nombre ilustrará con nueva gloria,
pues es más que Alexandro y tú su Apeles.⁶⁰

Pacheco's remarks strongly resonate with the broader culture of appreciation of ingenuity associated with his circle of learned scholars and connoisseurs, famously described by Palomino as a 'Carcel dorada del Arte, Academia, y Escuela de los mayores Ingenios de Sevilla'.⁶¹ Indeed, as Tanya Tiffany and Luis Méndez Rodríguez have shown, the significance of *ingenio* both as a *motif* and a driving force within this community was a key feature of the young Velázquez's cultural context and early production.⁶² As noted in the previous section, Pacheco's interest in the question of artistic ingenuity is central to his art theoretical and pedagogical projects. His account of the so-called *pintores* 'perfetos' in *Arte de la pintura* illustrates this point well: created 'con solo su ingenio y mano', the work of these masters is characterized by dexterity and quickness as well as independence from other painters' models.⁶³ The matter of *ingenio* is also brought up in the context of Pacheco's discussion of portrait painting or, as he characterizes it, 'la ingeniosa invención de los retratos del natural'. His account places emphasis on the significance of *dibujo* and includes a well-known reference to the young Velázquez's early engagement with this genre, using 'un aldeanillo aprendiz' as the model for his drawn portraits from life. Although he regards the art of portraiture as 'digna de que los buenos ingenios la abracen' and thinks that the portrait-painter 'nace como el poeta', Pacheco's insistence on Velázquez's continuous practice, 'sin perdonar dificultad alguna', shows his commitment to an idea of artistic excellence marked by the cultivation of natural giftedness through *ars*, while underscoring his own role, as master, in the making of the future royal portraitist.⁶⁴ The notion of *ingenio*, in sum, belongs to the conceptual toolkit through which Pacheco connects his ideas on artistic

59 On the relevance of this trope regarding the early modern biographies of Velázquez, see Hellwig, *La literatura artística*, trad. Espino Nuño, 137–44.

60 Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura*, ed. Bassegoda i Hugas, 213.

61 Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El museo pictórico y escala óptica*, III, 322.

62 Tiffany, 'Velázquez's *Bodegones* and the Art of Emulation', in particular, addresses many issues central to my argument; see also her *Diego Velázquez's Early Paintings*; and Méndez Rodríguez, *Velázquez y la cultura sevillana*.

63 Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura*, ed. Bassegoda i Hugas, 272–73.

64 Pacheco, *Arte de la pintura*, ed. Bassegoda i Hugas, 522–33.

theory and practice with his views on genres like the *bodegón* and portrait painting, and with his account of Velázquez's upbringing and rise to fame.⁶⁵

Pacheco's observations on the young Velázquez found a place in later biographical accounts of the artist. In the case of Lázaro Díaz del Valle's writings, the specific allusions to the painter's youth do in fact replicate Pacheco's text almost word for word, such as his reference to the latter's becoming aware of his apprentice's '[v]irtud, limpieza de sangre y buenas partes y de las Grandes esperanças q[ue] prometia su Gran natural y Grande [*sic*] agudo ingenio para esta nobilissima Arte'.⁶⁶ More importantly, Díaz del Valle brings Pacheco's rhetoric of praise to new heights by placing Velázquez at the very centre of his biographical project, as José Riello has argued.⁶⁷ In the case of Jusepe Martínez's *Discursos practicables*, it seems inevitable for one to consider his account of portrait painting and his way of connecting natural talent to notions like *elección*, *prudencia* and *resolución* from the perspective of his good knowledge of Velázquez's trajectory—including his association with Pacheco—and his close relationship with the painter himself.⁶⁸

Pacheco's account of the young Velázquez would receive further amplification in Palomino's biography of the artist—the longest and most elaborate entry in the compilation of 'lives of artists' that makes up the third *tomo* of *El museo pictórico* (1724), entitled *El Parnaso español pintoresco laureado*.⁶⁹ Early on in his biography, Palomino writes that the young Diego 'diò muestras de particular inclinacion a Pintar: y aunque descubrió ingenio, promptitud, y docilidad para qualquiera ciencia, para esta la tenia mayor'.⁷⁰ The fact that, in these opening statements, Palomino also refers to notions like *buen natural* and *propensión natural* (later on he would use the word *genio*), shows an emphasis on framing the narrative around matters of natural disposition. His account of Velázquez's natural capacities, including both his intellectual abilities and his dexterity, has roots in classical and Renaissance artistic literature but also in early modern scholarship on the education of the young. For example, the sixteenth-century scholar Juan Luis Vives, in his treatise *De Tradendis*

65 See, for example, Hellwig, *La literatura artística*, trad. Espino Nuño, 268–70; and Susann Waldmann, *El artista y su retrato en la España del siglo XVII: una aportación al estudio de la pintura retratista española* (Madrid: Alianza, 2007).

66 Riello, 'Un caso singular de la literatura artística española del siglo XVII', 209. I keep the strikethrough on 'Grande' as in Riello's transcription of the manuscript.

67 Riello, 'Un caso singular de la literatura artística española del siglo XVII', 23–38.

68 See Manrique Ara, 'Teoría e historia del arte'.

69 Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El museo pictórico y escala óptica*, III, 321–54. I have also consulted Antonio Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *Vida de don Diego Velázquez de Silva*, ed. José Miguel Morán Turina (Madrid: Akal, 2008).

70 Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El museo pictórico y escala óptica*, III, 322.

Disciplinis (On Education), refers to those students that ‘are exceedingly clever in things which are done by the hands’, who ‘you always see painting, building, weaving, and they do all these things so well’ and those devoted to ‘the more sublime matters of judgment and reason, incited by a greater and higher mental impulse’. Vives highlights the ‘rare quality’ of those students that possess *both* capacities.⁷¹ Further on in the text, in a well-known passage, Palomino provides an account of the young apprentice’s early engagement with some of the most important learned treatises available at the time, where ‘con solitud de abeja, escogia ingeniosamente para su uso, y para provecho de la posteridad, lo mas conveniente, y perfecto’.⁷² When considering this passage, and, in broader terms, Palomino’s version of the painter’s formative years, Velázquez scholars have rightly interpreted this account as the programmatic and stereotypical construction of a particular type of artistic identity marked by intellectual precocity, painterly prowess and acquired learnedness.⁷³ Within this trope-rich narrative, and despite its somewhat indiscriminate use throughout the treatise, Palomino’s recourse to *ingenio* in connection with Velázquez is revealing. The passage describing the young painter’s liking for the style of certain artists, for instance, is largely articulated in such terms, as Tanya Tiffany has shown.⁷⁴ With regard to Caravaggio, Palomino indicates that Velázquez competed against him ‘en la valentia del pintar’, and esteemed him ‘por lo esquisito, y por la agudeza de su Ingenio’, later adding that Velázquez himself was called a ‘segundo Carabagio’. Palomino also notes that Velázquez expressed a special affinity for the work of Luis Tristán, El Greco’s disciple, ‘por tener rumbo semejante a su humor, por lo estraño del pensar, y viveza de los conceptos’. Moreover, Palomino adds, this affinity eventually led Velázquez to imitate Tristán’s manner and abandon Pacheco’s, ‘aviendo conocido, muy desde el principio, no convenirle modo de pintar tan tibio, aunque lleno de erudicion, y dibujo, por ser contrario a su natural altivo, y aficionado a grandeza’.⁷⁵ Palomino is here invoking age-old ideas like the importance of knowing one’s nature

71 Juan Luis Vives, *On Education: A Translation of the ‘De Tradendis Disciplinis’*, trans., with an intro., by Foster Watson (Totowa: Rowman & Littlefield, 1971), 77–78.

72 Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El museo pictórico y escala óptica*, III, 324.

73 See, in particular, Agustín Bustamante & Fernando Marías, ‘Entre práctica y teoría: la formación de Velázquez en Sevilla’, in *Velázquez y Sevilla*, ed. Serrera & Morales, 141–57; Ángel Aterido, ‘The Culture of Velázquez: Reading, Knowledge and Social Connections’, in *Velázquez’s Fables: Mythology and Sacred History in the Golden Age*, ed. Javier Portús (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007), 72–93; Tiffany, *Diego Velázquez’s Early Paintings*, 1–22; and Luis Méndez Rodríguez, ‘La cultura sevillana y la formación de Velázquez’, in *El joven Velázquez*, ed. Navarrete Prieto, 274–92.

74 Tiffany, ‘Velázquez’s *Bodegones* and the Art of Emulation’; see also Bustamante & Marías, ‘Entre práctica y teoría’.

75 Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El museo pictórico y escala óptica*, III, 323.

(*ingenium*) and choosing a style and a master—and, at a broader level, an activity or profession—in accordance with it.

Another passage that has attracted extensive scholarly attention is the following statement concerning the young Velázquez's genre paintings, which, according to Palomino, he painted 'por diferenciarse de todos, y seguir nuevo rumbo'. Palomino writes:

Conociendo, que le avian cogido el barlovento el Ticiano, Alberto, Rafael, y otros, y que estaba mas viva la fama, quando muertos ellos: valióse de su caprichosa inventiva, dando en pintar cosas rusticas à lo valenton, con luzes, y colores estrañas. Objetaronle algunos el no pintar con suavidad, y hermosura assumptos de mas seriedad, en que podia emular à Rafael de Urbino, y satisfizo galantemente, diciendo: *Que mas queria ser primero en aquella groseria, que segundo en la delicadeza.*⁷⁶

Velázquez scholars have long been aware of the contrived nature of this passage: Palomino's text is an adaptation of a well-known cliché, which in the past had been used in relation to other artists, most importantly Titian.⁷⁷ Researchers have also highlighted the likely influence of Baltasar Gracián on Palomino's re-phrasing of this trope, more specifically via this passage in the former's treatise *El héroe*, first published in 1637:

Sin salir del arte, sabe el ingenio salir de lo ordinario, y hallar en la encanecida profession nuevo passo para la eminencia. Cedióle Horacio lo heroico a Virgilio, y Marcial lo lirico a Horacio. Dio por lo Comico Terencio, por lo Satirico Persio, aspirando todos a la vñania de primeros en su genero. Que el alentado capricho nunca, se rindiò a la facil imitacion. Viò el otro galante pintor, que le auian cogido la delantera, el Ticiano, Rafael, y otros. Estaua mas viua la fama quando muertos ellos: valiose de su inuencible inuentiuua. Diò en pintar a lo valenton, objetaronle algunos el no pintar a lo suaue, y pulido, en que podia emular al Ticiano, y satisfizo galantemente, que queria mas ser primero en aquella grosseria, que segundo en la delicadeza.⁷⁸

76 Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El museo pictórico y escala óptica*, III, 323.

77 For a discussion of this passage, see, along with their bibliographies, McKim-Smith, 'Writing and Painting in the Age of Velázquez', 24–33; and, especially, Tiffany, 'Velázquez's *Bodegones* and the Art of Emulation'. For a contextualization of Velázquez's engagement with Titian's art, see Fernando Marías, 'Tiziano y Velázquez, tópicos literarios y milagros del arte', in *Tiziano*, ed. Miguel Falomir, trad. M^a Jesús Gonzalo, M^a Luisa Balseiro & Laura Suffield (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2003), 111–32.

78 Baltasar Gracián, *El héroe. Edición facsímil* (Madrid, Diego Díaz, 1639), intro. de Aurora Egido (Zaragoza: Institución 'Fernando el Católico', 2001), 27^r–27^v; see also notes 78 and 80 in this article for further bibliography on this passage.

Drawing upon this and other passages in Gracián's *oeuvre*, scholars have explored the reverberation of his ideas in Palomino's appropriation of this anecdote—despite the lack of evidence that Velázquez is the 'galante pintor' to whom the Jesuit author is alluding. Furthermore, through the analysis of important terms in Gracián's conceptual apparatus, such as *emulación*, *resolución*, *singularidad*, *elección* or *discreción*, researchers have shed light on the intersection of Gracianesque thought with the reception of Velázquez's work as articulated by the art-critical tradition leading to and including Palomino's treatise.⁷⁹

With this scholarship in mind, let us look into the rhetoric at play in the above-mentioned cliché—in particular the expression 'caprichosa inventiva'—and consider the potential connections with another early modern treatise relevant to my argument: Huarte de San Juan's *Examen de ingenios*. As Fernando Marías has noted, Palomino employs the word *capricho* several times in relation to Velázquez: for example, when alluding to his *bodegones*, painted with 'singularissimo capricho, i notable genio', and, importantly, in his description of *Las Meninas* ('el capricho [es] nuevo').⁸⁰ In addition to the biography of Velázquez, the use of *capricho* throughout the whole of *El museo pictórico* illustrates its currency as a well-established term within Spanish and European art-historical discourse.⁸¹

In what can be regarded as one of the earliest occurrences of the word in Spanish, Huarte de San Juan uses the adjective *caprichoso* in the context of a distinction made in Chapter 5 of the *Examen* (Chapter 8, 1594 edition).⁸² On the one hand, he refers to certain 'ingenios inventivos', whose demeanour he compares to that of a goat:

79 See, in particular, Svetlana Alpers, *The Vexations of Art: Velázquez and Others* (New Haven: Yale U. P., 2005), 155–59 & 161–63; Tiffany, 'Velázquez's *Bodegones* and the Art of Emulation'; and Manrique Ara, 'Teoría e historia del arte'. See also Baltasar Gracián, *El Discreto*, ed., intro. & notas de Aurora Egido (Madrid: Alianza, 1997) and Thomas S. Acker, *The Baroque Vortex: Velázquez, Calderón, and Gracián under Philip IV* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000).

80 Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El museo pictórico y escala óptica*, III, 323 & 343. See Fernando Marías, 'El género de *Las Meninas*: los servicios de la familia', in *Otras meninas*, ed. Fernando Marías Franco (Madrid: Siruela, 1995), 247–78.

81 See, Francesco Paolo Campione, *La regola del Capriccio: alle origini di una idea estetica* (Palermo: Centro Internazionale Studi di Estetica, 2011) along with its bibliography. The word *caprichio* features in the entry for *fantasear* in Covarrubias' *Tesoro de la lengua castellana, o española*: 'Fantasear: imaginar, deuanear, fundar torres de viento, utilizar algun concepto, y subille de punto, al qual el Italiano llama Caprichio' (397°).

82 This passage is well known to scholars. For further discussion, see Christine Orobítg, 'Del *Examen de ingenios* de Huarte a la ficción cervantina, o cómo se forja una revolución literaria', in *Discursos de ruptura y renovación: la formación de la prosa áurea*, ed. Phillippe Rabaté & Francisco Ramírez Santacruz, *Criticón*, 120–21 (2014), 23–39.

A los ingenios inventivos llaman en lengua toscana *caprichosos*, por semejanza que tienen con la cabra en el andar y pacer. Esta jamás huelga por lo llano; siempre es amiga de andar a sus solas por los riscos y alturas, y asomarse a grandes porofundidades [*sic*]; por donde no sigue vereda ninguna ni quiere caminar con compañía.

On the other hand, Huarte de San Juan refers to other individuals:

[...] que jamás salen de una contemplación ni piensan que hay más en el mundo que descubrir. Éstos tienen la propiedad de la oveja, la cual nunca sale de las pisadas del manso, ni se atreve a caminar por lugares desiertos y sin carril, sino por veredas muy holladas y que alguno vaya delante.⁸³

The distinction appears at the very end of the chapter, as part of a brief discussion on education and culture. Commenting on how individuals differ in their ability to learn, Huarte de San Juan gives particular praise to those *ingenios* ‘tan perfectos, que no han menester maestro que los enseñen’. In contrast to these *ingenios inventivos*—whose contributions, added to the contributions of their predecessors, are the motor of progress—there are those lacking inventiveness, who only repeat other authors’ ideas. The *ingenios inventivos/caprichosos*, Huarte de San Juan concludes, are crucial for the advancement of learning in so far as they guide the sheep-like individuals (‘los entendimientos oviles’) through novelty and knowledge.⁸⁴

At play here are at least two interconnected themes. First, there are the long-established tropes of invention and originality as opening new, untrodden paths—epitomized by the free wandering goat—, and the idea of imitation as following the tracks of others—traditionally associated with the ‘slavish herd’, to use Horace’s well-known formulation.⁸⁵ Second, there is a recognition of the worth and exceptional nature of creative individuals, whose personal judgment and independent character are also captured by the simile of the goat. At the time of Huarte de San Juan’s writing these views had wide currency as a consequence of decades-long debates on imitation and originality in treatises on rhetoric and poetics.⁸⁶

83 Huarte de San Juan, *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, ed. Serés, 344–45.

84 Huarte de San Juan, *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, ed. Serés, 343.

85 See Horace, *Epistles*, in his *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, trans. Henry Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. P., 1942), 382–83 (ll. 19–23).

86 The literature on invention and originality in the early modern period is large. Central topics include a reconsideration of the established conception of art as the imitation of nature, and the engagement, on the part of early modern authors, with the legacy of the Classical tradition. For the Spanish context, see David H. Darst, *Imitatio: polémicas sobre la imitación en el Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Editorial Orígenes, 1985), and Ignacio Enrique Navarrete, *Orphans of Petrarch: Poetry and Theory in the Spanish Renaissance* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1994).

The notion of ingenuity was central to these discussions, since it denoted a range of capacities whose nurturing depended on the active engagement with one or several masters and their styles as well as the study of exemplary models, while at the same time being the mark of personal character and individuality. In this regard, a key contribution of Huarte de San Juan's *Examen* is to foreground a notion of ingenuity—as illustrated by the passage on the *ingenios caprichosos*—that celebrates individual talent, creativity, innovation and freedom.⁸⁷ This and other facets of Huarte de San Juan's discussion would explain its appeal to a readership interested in matters of artistic theory and practice. For instance, his account of the etymology and definition of the word *ingenio*—in particular, his point about the generative powers of *ingenio*—while articulated around notions and expressions associated with the fields of natural philosophy and medicine, echoes aspects of the language and the disquisitions featured in the artistic discourse of this period, such as the use of expressions like *concepto*, *figura*, *retrato*, *representar al vivo* or *dibujo que contrahace al natural* to describe the 'offspring' ('partos') of the understanding.⁸⁸ Furthermore, it is worth noting that even though Huarte de San Juan does not discuss the art of painting, or, in fact, any form of art, in any systematic way, he does list *pintar* and *trazar* among those activities best suited to those *ingenios* marked by the faculty of imagination, like poetry.⁸⁹

Inspired, perhaps, by his attentive reading of the *Examen*, Carducho must have found these ideas, especially the goat-sheep comparison, suggestive, for he employs them in an important section of his *Diálogos*. The passage in question features in *Diálogo tercero*, where, following the Italian artist and theorist Federico Zuccaro, Carducho distinguishes between three types of painting: 'pintura práctica', 'pintura práctica regular', and 'pintura práctica regular y científica'.⁹⁰ Regarding the third type—the most advanced of the three—Carducho claims that those artists that practice it deserve recognition and fame above everyone else. Such painters, he writes, 'son comparados a las cabras, porque van por los caminos de la dificultad,

87 In addition to Orobítz, 'Del *Examen de ingenios* de Huarte a la ficción cervantina', see Guillermo Serés, 'El ingenio de Huarte y el de Gracián: fundamentos teóricos', *Ínsula*, 655–56 (2001), 51–53; Campione, *La regola del Capriccio*, 123–37.

88 See, in particular, Chapter 1 of the 1594 edition: Huarte de San Juan, *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, ed. Serés, 185–209; Serés, 'El ingenio de Huarte y el de Gracián'; Guillermo Serés, 'El ingenio en Gracián: de la invención a la elocución', in *Baltasar Gracián IV Centenario (1601–2001). Actas del I Congreso Internacional 'Baltasar Gracián, pensamiento y erudición' (Huesca, 23–26 de mayo de 2001)*, ed. Aurora Egado, Fermín Gil & José Enrique Laplana Gil (Huesca: Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses, 2003), 235–56.

89 Huarte de San Juan, *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*, ed. Serés, 395–96.

90 Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 155–58. On this passage, and the use of the term *capricho*, see, among others, Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 158, n. 453, and Campione, *La regola del Capriccio*, 131–32.

inventando nuevos conceptos, y pensando altamente, fuera de los usados y comunes, por sendas nuevas, buscan por montes y valles, a costa de mucho trabajo, nuevo pasto con que alimentarse'. In contrast to these inventive, goat-like painters, the so-called *copiadores* are comparable to the sheep, which just follow the herd. Hence the use of the expression '*capricho*', Carducho writes, to denote the 'pensamiento nuevo del Pintor'.⁹¹ In connection to this passage—but also, perhaps, as a result of his engagement with other sources such as Vasari—Carducho pairs '*inventiva*' with '*capricho nuevo*' again in *Diálogo quinto*, in the context of his discussion of *dibujo*.⁹² Specifically, he does so in relation to what he refers to as 'inventar, dibujar de fantasía, o esquiciar', that is, the creative sketching action through which artists express their ideas or 'primeras intenciones', and which Carducho associates with the 'fuerza de ingenio'.⁹³

Gracián might have drawn upon these references when writing the passage on the 'galante pintor' in *El héroe*, published a few years after Carducho's *Diálogos*. He was certainly appreciative of Carducho, 'tan elocuente en la pluma como diestro en el pincel', as he writes in *Arte de ingenio, tratado de la agudeza* (1642), in the *Discurso 30*, entitled 'De las acciones ingeniosas por invención'.⁹⁴ But Gracián may well have been inspired by other sources, given the prevalence of these tropes and expressions at the time. Indeed, Carducho was neither the first nor the only author to address the associations between *ingenio*, *capricho* and *inventiva* in the context of art theoretical writing in Spanish in this period—not to mention the literature written in other languages, especially Italian. A few decades earlier, for instance, the historian and theologian José de Sigüenza, in his account of the artistic decoration of El Escorial, would use these terms profusely; for example, he writes of the Italian artist Pellegrino Tibaldi: 'ya se atrevió hacer tantas extrañezas, y ser tan inventivo, ó como ellos dicen, caprichoso'.⁹⁵ Likewise, Palomino may have considered these or other materials, in addition to Gracián's text, when adapting the cliché for his biography of Velázquez.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, re-reading Palomino's passage on

91 Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 157–58.

92 On Vasari and the pairing of *capriccio* and *invenzione*, see Juan María Montijano García, *Giorgio Vasari y la formulación de un vocabulario artístico* (Málaga: Univ. de Málaga, 2002), especially pp. 165–71 & 225–52.

93 Carducho, *Diálogos de la pintura*, ed. Calvo Serraller, 242–43 & 202.

94 This is *Discurso 47* in *Agudeza y arte de ingenio* (1648). See Baltasar Gracián, *Agudeza y arte de ingenio*, ed. Ceferino Peralta, Jorge M. Ayala & José María Andreu, intro. de Jorge M. Ayala, 2 vols (Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias, 2004), I, 491–97 & 831; Manrique Ara, 'Teoría e historia del arte', 50.

95 José de Sigüenza, *Tercera Parte de la Historia de la Orden de San Geronimo* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1605), 720.

96 See, for example, Sigüenza's adaptation of the trope, which he uses in his discussions of Hieronymus Bosch and Juan Fernández Navarrete (Sigüenza, *Tercera Parte de la Historia*

Velázquez's 'caprichosa inventiva' from the perspective of these intertextual links, we can see how the underlying theme of *ingenio* allows the former to draw together and connect various threads in his narrative, including his account of the young painter's determination to find a new course for this extraordinary art and differentiate himself from other artists in Seville. This image of the young Velázquez as the embodiment of natural talent, learned inventiveness and creative freedom is one that Palomino is keen to project at the end of this section of his biography—before launching his account of the artist's rise to fame at that 'noble teatro de los mayores ingenios del Orbe', the royal court of Madrid.⁹⁷

3 Velázquez, *diestro*

Considering the close association of early modern *ingenio* with the domain of the intellect, and given the recurring discussions about the status of painting in relation to the liberal arts, it is not surprising to find that many period accounts that invoke this term tend to pair artistic excellence with the workings of a privileged mind—echoing the well-known trope of the alleged superiority of the artist's mind over the artist's hand. As the Spanish poet, painter and scholar Juan de Jáuregui would put it, 'lo esencial del Arte es su inteligencia y teoría' and the fact that painting relies on the use of the hands 'es accidente que no ofende el ingenio e ingenuidad suma desta ciencia'.⁹⁸ However, numerous early modern sources indicate that ingenuity was also understood to relate to matters of practical knowledge and embodied skill. One example—perhaps known to Velázquez—would be Lomazzo's appraisal of the Milanese embroiderer Caterina Cantona or Cantoni (1542–1605), with which his *Idea del tempio della pittura* concludes. Lomazzo refers to this artist as

[...] the famous Caterina Cantona, noble lady of the city of Milan, and even nobler for her rare inventive genius [*rarissimo ingegno*] and excellence in the art of embroidery on canvas and loose-woven cloth. She has never had rivals in this art, even among those from past times despite what poets recount about their fabulous Arachne. Among other excellent qualities in this art, she sewed with such skill that the stitch

de la Orden de San Geronimo, 725 & 837–41); and Tiffany, 'Velázquez's *Bodegones* and the Art of Emulation', 83. On the passage where Sigüenza refers to how Fernández Navarrete followed 'su propio natural, y se dexò lleuar del ingenio natiuo', see Javier Portús, *El concepto de Pintura Española: historia de un problema* (Madrid: Verbum, 2012), 31.

97 Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El museo pictórico y escala óptica*, III, 325.

98 Cited from Calvo Serraller, *Teoría de la Pintura en el Siglo de Oro*, 355.

appeared identical on both sides, which is why, on account of its excellence, it is called the needle stitch of the great Cantona.⁹⁹

As Fredrika H. Jacobs has argued, Lomazzo's appraisal of Cantona, here and in his *Rime ad imitazione de i grotteschi usati da' pittori* (1587), must be read in light of his wider reflection on the status of modern art in relation to the art of Antiquity—a theme that has also been said to inform several of Velázquez's works, including *Las hilanderas* (c.1657).¹⁰⁰ With their multifaceted display of artistry and their connotation of prestige, this and other products of Cantona's *ingegno*—or news and rumours about them—would have appealed to a painter as invested as Velázquez in exploring the intricate nature of artistic practice and its social repercussions.

Historians of art have long been aware of the challenges of integrating issues of workmanship, embodied skill and performance with matters of inventiveness and originality, particularly with regard to discussions around the notion of *style*.¹⁰¹ Recent scholarship on early modern ingenuity has paid significant attention to these issues too, not just in connection with the world of artists and their procedures, but also in relation to other practices marked by practical intelligence and craftsmanship as well as social standing and even fraudulence.¹⁰² In the case of Velázquez, a long history of appreciation and discussion of matters of artistic practice has led to an extensive analysis of his stylistic allegiances and range of techniques, especially his engagement with the so-called *pintura 'de manchas' or 'de borrones'*, which has been contextualized in light of his encounter with Rubens and his first trip to Italy—true whetstones for Velázquez's *ingenio*—and the gradual identification of dexterous and inventive brushwork with true artistry.¹⁰³

99 Gian Paolo Lomazzo, *Idea of the Temple of Painting*, ed. & trans. Jean Julia Chai (University Park: Penn State U. P., 2013), 172; Gian Paolo Lomazzo, *Scritti sulle arti*, ed. Roberto Paolo Ciardi, 2 vols (Firenze: Marchi & Bertolli, 1973), I, 372.

100 Incidentally, Lomazzo informs us that at the time of writing his *Idea*, Cantona was working on 'a representation of the Rivalry between Pallas and Arachne, and the Virtues and Disgraces of the Gods'; this work appears to have survived (Lomazzo, *Idea of the Temple of Painting*, ed. & trans Chai, 321). See also Fredrika H. Jacobs, *Defining the Renaissance Virtuosa: Women Artists and the Language of Art History and Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1999), 23–24, and *Velázquez's Fables*, ed. Javier Portús Pérez (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007), especially pp. 279–97.

101 See Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy*; and Nicola Suthor, *Bravura: Virtuosity and Ambition in Early Modern European Painting* (Princeton: Princeton U. P., 2021).

102 See *Ingenuity in the Making: Matter and Technique in Early Modern Art and Science*, ed. Richard J. Oosterhoff, José Ramón Marcaida & Alexander Marr (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 2021).

103 See McKim-Smith, 'Writing and Painting in the Age of Velázquez'; Marías, 'Tiziano y Velázquez'; and Knox, *The Late Paintings of Velázquez*.

Closely linked to the language of *ingenio*, a number of expressions in early modern Spanish were available to capture or qualify aspects of the subtle interplay between practical dexterity and inventive workmanship, such as *artificio*, *primor*, *industria*, *destreza*, *despejo* and *resolución*.¹⁰⁴ Issues of language and terminology are important when considering Velázquez's understanding and appreciation of painterly performance, as Fernando Marías has argued; allegedly written by the artist, a now-lost description and discussion of a set of artworks sent to El Escorial in 1656—a document mentioned by Palomino and partially transmitted by other sources—deploys a language of criticism that resonates with the rhetoric of *ingenio* and other cognate terms discussed here.¹⁰⁵ In fact, among the fruits of paying attention to matters of language is a better contextualization of period accounts of Velázquez's artistic practice, many of which deploy such rhetoric. The extensively-studied case of Quevedo's *El pincel* has already been mentioned. Another well-known example is Juan Francisco Andrés de Uztarroz's description of Velázquez's technique featured in his panegyric treatise *Obelisco histórico* (1646), which brings together a number of expressions—*primor*, *liberalidad*, *parecer acaso*, *modo galantísimo*, *sutil destreza*, *pocos golpes*, *desahogo*, *ejecución pronta*—that either match or approximate important period terms of art such as *sprezzatura*, *facilità*, *disinvoltura* and *ingegno/ingenio*.¹⁰⁶

Palomino's biography of Velázquez offers a number of examples too. Referring to a miniature portrait of Queen Mariana de Austria painted in 1659, Palomino notes how the painter 'se mostrò no menos ingenioso, que sutil, por ser muy pequeño, muy acabado, y parecido en extremo, y pintado con gran destreza, fuerza, y suavidad'. Palomino goes on to claim that 'una delicada Pintura, que parezca tiene alma, la consigue el que tiene profundo Ingenio con muy largo estudio, y practica de muchos años', a comment that not only resonates with his emphasis on *ingenium* and *ars* in his account of the young Velázquez, but also with the terms of appraisal of portrait

104 See Rodríguez Ortega, *Maneras y facultades* for further analysis.

105 Fernando Marías, 'Los saberes de Velázquez: el lenguaje artístico del pintor y el problema de la "Memoria de las pinturas de El Escorial"', in *Actas del Symposium Internacional Velázquez, Sevilla, 8–11 de noviembre 1999*, ed. Alfredo J. Morales (Sevilla: Junta de Andalucía, 2004), 167–77; and Bonaventura Bassegoda i Hugas, 'Velázquez y la Memoria de las pinturas de El Escorial. Propuesta de edición crítica', in *En torno a Santa Rufina: Velázquez de lo íntimo a lo cortesano*, ed. Benito Navarrete Prieto (Sevilla: Fundación Focus-Abengoa, 2008), 166–88.

106 Juan Francisco Andrés Uztarroz, *Obelisco histórico i honorario que la Imperial Ciudad de Zaragoza erigió a la inmortal memoria del Serenísimo Señor, Don Balthasar Carlos de Austria* (Zaragoza: Hospital R. i G. de nuestra Señora de Gracia, 1646), 108–09. On this important text, see, among others, McKim-Smith, 'Writing and Painting in the Age of Velázquez', 17 & 23; Marías, 'Tiziano y Velázquez', 122–23; Knox, *The Late Paintings of Velázquez*, 21–22; and Tiffany, 'Diego Velázquez's Early Paintings', 144–46.

painting featured in the writings of Pacheco and Martínez, as well as Palomino himself.¹⁰⁷ Likewise, it is worth considering the use of the rhetoric of *ingenio* in Palomino's account of the mirror in *Las Meninas* (Figure 3):

Diò muestras de su claro ingenio Velázquez en descubrir lo que pintaba con ingeniosa traza, valiendose de la christalina luz de vn espejo, que pintò en lo vltimo de la Galeria, y frontero al Quadro, en el qual la reflexion, ò repercusion nos representa à nuestros Catholicos Reyes Phelipe, y Mariana.¹⁰⁸



Figure 3

Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas* (1656).

Oil on canvas. 320.5 × 281.5 cm. Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado.

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107 Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El museo pictórico y escala óptica*, III, 349–50.

108 Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El museo pictórico y escala óptica*, III, 343. Riello, 'Las siete vidas de Velázquez', 1084, remarks on this point too.

These occurrences illustrate aspects of the notion of *ingenio* such as its association with cunning and resourcefulness, which in turn relate to other facets of Velázquez's artistic practice, such as the elements of dissimulation and make belief inherent to his effective appropriation and re-interpretation of the techniques of others, especially Titian and Tintoretto.¹⁰⁹ These associations, in sum, suggest how ingenious, as in both inventive and skilful, Velázquez's art was perceived to be. Because of its currency and capaciousness, the rhetoric of *ingenio* allowed early modern individuals to articulate and express such perception in effective and suggestive ways.

Conclusion

Providing evidence in the cause of Velázquez's knighthood, and in line with most testimonials, one of the witnesses, Francisco de Meneses, wrote that he (Velázquez) neither learnt the art of painting from another painter, had a shop or used this art to pass for a nobleman; instead, he devoted himself to painting 'por su ingenio y ynclinacion', and did so 'para el gusto de Su Magestad y su real palacio'.¹¹⁰ Another witness remarked on Velázquez's *destreza* for painting, claiming 'ser su abilidad gracia y no oficio'. Repeating almost the same formula, numerous testimonials praised Velázquez's 'lustre y porte de ombre noble y principal'.¹¹¹ Contrived accounts like these, precisely because of their stereotypical nature, highlight the important social connotations of early modern *ingenio*, in particular the entwinement of issues of status, identity, character and giftedness. These ideas were central to both the disquisitions about talent in early modern Spanish artistic writing and the promotion, on the part of Velázquez's biographers, of a particular version of his artistic and social selves—the two themes on which this article has focused.

The fact that Velázquez himself devoted his many talents, not least his *ingenio*, to the cause of his own social and artistic advancement must have been apparent to his contemporaries. There is a hint of this in the first recorded (c.1696) description of *Las Meninas*, the painting that best captures Velázquez's identity as an artist and courtier:

To Diego de Velázquez the painter, Philip IV, King of Castile, gave the order of Santiago, which is the chief honor of that realm, as well as the key of the [royal] chamber. His own wit [*seu engenho*] perpetuated this honor in a picture which adorns a room of the palace at Madrid, showing

109 See *Examining Velázquez*, ed. McKim-Smith, Andersen-Bergdoll & Newman; Brown & Garrido, *Technique of Genius*; and Knox, *The Late Paintings of Velázquez*. See also Marcaida, 'Ingenio and Artimaña'.

110 *Corpus Velazqueño*, ed. Aterido, I, 379; mentioned by Knox, *The Late Paintings*, 134.

111 See, for example, *Corpus Velazqueño*, ed. Aterido, I, 379, 381 & 385.

the portrait of the Empress, the daughter of Philip IV, together with his own. Velázquez painted himself in a cape bearing the cross of Santiago, with the key [to the chamber] at his belt, and holding a palette of oils and brushes in the act of painting, with his glance upon the Empress, and putting his hand with the brush on the canvas. [...] The picture seems more like a portrait of Velázquez than of the Empress.¹¹²

Throughout Velázquez's life and beyond, the notion of *ingenio* was invoked as a means to address and interpret both the painter's persona and his art. Far from constituting an empty discourse, this rhetoric of *ingenio* offered an immediately recognizable and graspable language through which to articulate, with varying degrees of nuance and sophistication, ideas and perceptions around the uniqueness of Velázquez's art and the worth of his legacy. Consideration should be given, therefore, not only to the ways in which the notion of *ingenio* informed a number of important debates in the period—on the question of natural talent, or the nature of artistic excellence, to name just two—but also, and especially, to its significance with regard to matters of social and professional status, public image and performance, and prestige. After all, amongst the many individuals involved in the complex and competitive worlds of seventeenth-century Spanish culture and courtly life, Velázquez was—to use Jonathan Brown's words—'one of those who knew how to play the game'.¹¹³ A game ruled, to a considerable extent, by the art of *ingenio*.*

112 Felix da Costa, *The Antiquity of the Art of Painting by Felix da Costa*, ed., trans., intro. & notes by George Kubler (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1967), 458.

113 Brown, *Velázquez: Painter and Courtier*, 187.

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