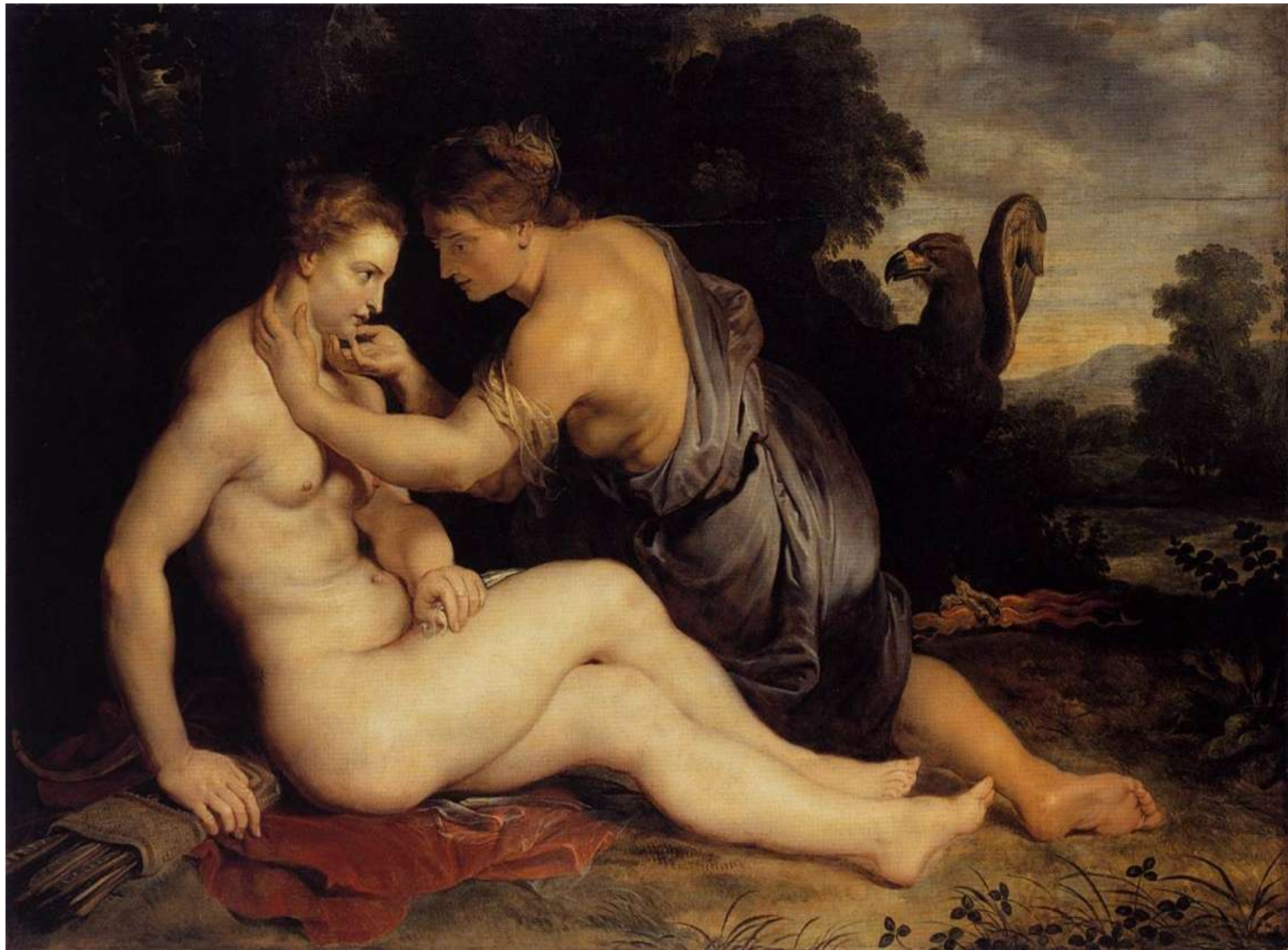


GRESHAM COLLEGE

Founded 1597

Ovid and the Ironic Gaze: Staging Male Desire in Cavalli's *La Calisto*

Wendy Heller,
Princeton University









Metamorphoses, 2. 408-423.

As he busily came and went, an Arcadian virgin suddenly
caught his fancy and fired his heart with a deep felt passion.
Callisto was not in the habit of spinning wool at the distaff
or stylishly dressing her hair; her garment was clasped by a simple
brooch, while a plain white band kept her loose-flowing tresses in order.
Armed with her smooth-polished javelin or bow, she served as a soldier
in Phoebe's troop; of maidens who hunted on Maenalus's slopes
Diana cherished her best--but no one's favour is lasting.
The sun had climbed to the height of the sky; it was soon after midday.
Callisto entered a forest whose trees no axe had deflowered,
and here she removed the quiver she wore on her shoulder and loosened
the string of her supple bow; then she laid herself down on the greensward,
resting her pure white neck on her painted quiver for pillow.
When Jupiter spied her lying exhausted and unprotected
he reckoned: "My wife will never discover this tiny betrayal...."

Metamorphoses, Book 2.424-439

At once he assumed the features and dress of the goddess Diana,
and said to the damsel, “Young maiden, I see you are one of my dear
companions. Where on the slopes have you hunted today? The young maiden
raised herself from the grass and replied, “Hail, goddess, I judge you
greater than Jove, though he hear it himself.” Jove chuckled to hear it,
delighted that she judged him greater than Jove, and gave her a passionate
kiss on the lips, not the kiss that a virgin goddess would give.
And she started to detail where in the forest she’d hunted, he gripped her
tight in his arms, and his subsequent felony gave him away.
Callisto herself, as far as a feeble woman was able
(If ony June had seen it, she would have been more understanding),
Callisto fought back; but indeed what man could a girl be a match for
let alone Jupiter? He, in the flush of his victory, made for
the sky; while she could only detest the forests and woodlands which knew her secret...



Iupiter cum circa montem Arcadiae, ubi genitus
lexistimatur, uagaretur, in Callistis Lycaonis filiae
amorem incidit: sui cum preces de expletione de-
syderij sui admouisset, frustratasq; suas uoces in-
tellexisset, astu eam subijt, in Dianae nanq; sexum
se commutauit, eiq; fatigatae, ornatus Pharetra
& sagittis occurrit, tum ueste deposita uirgo Io-
uem experta est.

ENARRATIO.

Iupiter Arcadium cum perlustraret amatae,
Has circum terras itq; reditq; frequens.

D

Indi si china a la gelata fonte,
E spesso l'acqua in su con la man balza.
Le sitibonde fauci aperte, e pronte
Quella parte n'inghiotton, che più s'alza.
Beve, e poi lava la sudata fronte,
Indi s'asside in terra, e si discalza:
Lava poi (che veduta esser non crede)
Fin 'al ginocchio il suo candido piede.

Giovanni Andrea dell'Anguillara, Delle Metamorphosi d'Ouidio, Libri VIII





Copyright © 2000 National Gallery, London. All rights reserved.



SATIRINO

Ninfa bella, che mormora
Di marito il tuo genio?
S'il mio semblante aggradati,
In grembo, in braccio pigliami.
Tutto, tutto mi t'offerò.

Beautiful nymph, why speak
Of a husband?
If my appearances pleases you,
Take me in your breast, in your arms,
Everything, everything I offer you...

