# Rubens's *Deianira and the Fury*: A New Interpretation Based on Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus*

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Around 1635 Peter Paul Rubens painted a work whose exact interpretation has remained a matter of debate for over a century. Known today as *Deianira and the Fury*, this painting of unknown patronage is currently in the collection of the Galleria Sabauda in Turin (Figure 1).[1] Although the younger woman is accepted as Deianira, Hercules's second wife, the problematic figure in the composition is that of the old woman.[2] Listed in eighteenth-century guidebooks as a maid, this figure has been identified in more recent scholarship as both a Fury, and as the allegorical figure of *"Fama Loquax"*—Loquacious Fame or Rumor.[3] The former appellation appeared in texts as early as 1846 and as recently as 1992, when David Jaffe, in the catalogue for an exhibition entitled *Rubens and the Italian Renaissance*, stated that the painting was an image of Deianira "listening to the mischievous words of the Fury."[4] The latter identification, as *"Fama Loquax,"* was used by both Julius Held and Michael Jaffe, in 1980 and 1989 respectively.[5] Held stated that the literary source of this interpretation was to be found in Book IX of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which "loquacious Fama" tells Deianira of her husband's infidelity.[6] He expanded upon this reference, identifying the woman specifically as *"Fama cattiva,"* or Evil Fame, an allegorical figure described by Ripa in early editions of *Iconologia*.[7]

I believe that none of these identifications is correct, and that another interpretation more fully meets the literary and visual requirements of the painting. I will demonstrate that the old woman is Deianira's nurse and, as such, a character from a play entitled *Hercules Oetaeus*.[8] Written in the first century A.D. by the Roman Stoic Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the play dramatizes the last days of Hercules. In this tragedy, Hercules is brought to an agonizing end through a misguided plot devised by his wife and her nurse to win back the hero's love for Deianira. I believe that it is this moment of conspiracy that Rubens has depicted in the painting under consideration.

The legend of Hercules was one of the most popular subjects of the Renaissance and Baroque eras, although this particular aspect of the myth was far less popular than themes such as the "Dodekathlos" or Twelve Labors. An understanding of Deianira's story is vital to my interpretation of the painting, however, as this is the foundation of Seneca's play. In brief, the legend goes as follows: While accompanying her husband to his palace, Deianira was abducted by the centaur Nessus, to

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1 David Jaffe, ed., *Esso Presents Rubens and the Italian Renaissance* (Canberra: Australia National Gallery, 1992) 126.

2 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (London: Penguin Books, 1955) 203-210; Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) 452-460; Michael Grant and John Hazel, *Who's Who in Classical Mythology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 104, 170-171.

3 For the earliest notations about this painting, see Giuliana Biavati et al., eds., *Rubens e Genova* (Genova: Palazzo Ducale, 1977) 214-221; For the identification of the old woman as a Fury, see Jaffe 126, and Biavati 216; For the identification of the old woman as Fama, see Jane Reid Davidson, *Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts 1300-1990's* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 545, and Julius S. Held, *The Oil Sketches of Peter Paul Rubens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) 323, 647.

4 D. Jaffe 126.

5 Held 323, and Michael Jaffe, *Rubens: Catalogo Completo*, trans. G. Mulazzani (Milan, 1989) no. 1203.

6 Held, 323; Ovid, *Met.*, Book IX, 207: "It was after [Hercules] had conquered Oechalia, and was preparing to offer sacrifices to Jupiter at Cenaeum, that gossiping Rumour, who loves to mingle false with true and, nourished by her own lies, grows steadily from small beginnings, outstripped him on his homeward way and brought to Deianira's ears the tale that her husband, the son of Amphitryon, was in love with Iole."

7 Held 323; Cesare Ripa, *Nova Iconologia* (Padua: P.P. Tozzi, 1618) 172: "Donna con un vestito dipinto d'alcune imaginette nere, come puttini con l'ali nere & con una tromba in mano, conforme al detto di Claudiano nel lib. della guerra Getica contro Alarico."

8 Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Hercules Oetaeus*, from the edition by Frank J. Miller, *Tragedies of Seneca* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907) 216-285. This work will be hereafter cited as *H.O.*

whom she had been entrusted while the couple was trying to cross a great river.[9] To rescue his wife, Hercules shot Nessus with an arrow dipped in the blood of the Hydra, whom he had killed as part of his Labors. As he lay dying, Nessus instructed Deianira to collect some of his tainted blood, promising her that it would act as a love potion when her husband's passion for her began to cool.

Eventually, Hercules fell in love with the beautiful Iole while on a military campaign. Informed that her husband was sending the princess to the palace to become his mistress, Deianira's jealousy drove her to action. Hercules had ordered that a special robe be sent for him to wear at a victory sacrifice. Remembering the centaur's words, Deianira anointed the garment with Nessus's blood and gave it to a servant, Lichas, to deliver. As Hercules stood before the sacrificial altar, the heat from the flames activated the poison in the blood. Far from being a love potion, the hydra's venom permeated Hercules's flesh, causing him excruciating pain. The deadly robe fused itself to the hero's body, and Hercules, unable to remove it, began to rip his body apart with his own hands.

Despite this agony, Hercules, being both superhuman and semi-divine, was not killed by the poison. He was taken to Trachis, where he ordered a pyre to be built on Mount Oeta. There he reclined to await a noble death in the flames. Before this could occur, however, his father Jupiter sent a thunderbolt that consumed the pyre, and Hercules was transported to Olympus, where he was deified. No such glorious end awaited Deianira, however, for she committed suicide when she learned of the result of her actions.

In *Hercules Oetaeus*, Seneca follows this basic scenario, but adds several characters, the most important of which, for our purposes, is the figure of Deianira's nurse. This character was borrowed from Sophocles's play *Women of Trachis*, but is transformed by Seneca from a minor character to one of major importance.[10] In *Hercules Oetaeus* she becomes a prime motivator of her mistress's actions, and a participant in the plot.

Rubens's knowledge of Seneca's work is without question. He was introduced to the Stoic's writings through his close association with Justus Lipsius, the leading scholar in the Netherlandish Neostoic circle.[11] Lipsius was widely recognized as an expert on Seneca and his writings, and through their acquaintance, the artist developed a deep admiration for Seneca.[12] The painting entitled *The Four Philosophers*, of *c.* 1612-15, depicts from left to right the artist, his brother Philip, Lipsius and the humanist Jan Woverius, with Rubens's own bust of Seneca seeming to preside over the meeting (Figure 2).

Several other works within Rubens's oeuvre are believed to have been inspired by Seneca's writings. These include a series of drawings on the theme of Medea, and a cycle of six paintings, produced around 1615, that illustrate the story of the Roman general and *"exemplum virtutis"* Decius Mus.[13] I believe that the painting of Deianira should, likewise, be included with these others as Senecan in source.

An examination of the work reveals that the setting of the scene is Deianira's bedchamber. This is indicated by the high, Roman-style bed against which she is leaning.[14] Bending down from her place on the bed is another woman, considerably older than Deianira, who holds the blood-stained white robe that will bring about Hercules's end. Her dark skin and rough features are an obvious contrapposto to the younger woman's glowing, voluptuous form and aristocratic qualities. Although she does appear to be "a dark and evil presence," as described by David Jaffe, she does not have the other iconographic indicators necessary for identification either as a Fury or as Fama.[15]

In classical mythology, the Furies, also called the Erinyes, were avenging spirits who punished those who committed crimes, especially against family members.[16] Usually described as inhabitants of Hades, these spirits were horribly ugly. They were often shown bare-breasted, with serpents in their hair and hands, as they brandished torches or whips with which to torment their victims. The Furies were common characters in Rubens's oeuvre, and were sometimes represented in associa-

9 As with many ancient myths, the details of place and ordering within the Hercules legend changes with the writer, the time, and the region. This retelling represents a paraphrase that avoids the particulars of time and place while accurately recounting the persons, actions, and outcomes of the myth. For a more complete account, see Gantz 203-210; Grant and Hazel 452-460, and Ovid 203-210; For a more complete list of sources among the ancient authors, see Gantz 203-210.

10 Sophocles, *Women of Trachis*, trans C.K. Williams and Gregory W. Dickerson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

11 For Rubens's involvement with Lipsius and the Netherlandish Neostoic circle, see Michael Morford, *Stoics and Neostoics: Rubens and the Circle of Lipsius* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

12 For an examination of Lipsius's work on Seneca, see Morford 139-180; For Rubens's Neostoic philosophies, see Morford 181-210.

13 Held notes that a drawing depicting the death of Creusa is especially relevant to Seneca's version of the play, because of the similarity to the specifics of the scene: Julius S. Held, *Rubens: Selected Drawings* (New York: Phaidon, 1959) 99. For information on the Decius Mus cycle, see Morford 195-203.

14 David Jaffe notes that the source of the arrow-post bed was probably Rubens's own collection of antique gems. A similar bed is found carved into an antique cameo depicting *The Marriage of Cupid and Psyche* that was known to have been in the collection of the artist. See D. Jaffe 126.

15 D. Jaffe 126.

16 Ovid, 9. 106-107; William Sherwood Fox, *Greek and Roman Mythology*, vol. I of *The Mythology of All Races*, Louis Herbert Gray, ed. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1964) 276-277; Grant and Hazel, *Who's Who in Classical Mythology* 138-140; Michael Grant and John Hazel, *Gods and Mortals in Classical Mythology* (Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Company, Publishers, 1973) 176-177.

tion with warfare or discord. One of the best examples is seen in *The Council of the Gods* from the Maria de' Medici cycle of 1622-24, in which a Fury appears in the lower right of the painting (Figure 3). With snaky locks and bare breasts, she holds both a torch and a serpent.

As this work demonstrates, Rubens knew exactly how a Fury should be depicted. Accordingly, it seems likely that the artist would have used the same formula to describe such a creature with Deianira if that had been his intent. This is not the case, however, as we see when comparing details of the old woman (Figure 4) with the Fury in *The Council of the Gods* (Figure 5). Although the woman certainly has a haggard face and roughened appearance, her hair, while unkempt, is not made of snakes. Neither does she carry a serpent, torch, or whip, all attributes associated with Furies. Furthermore, although one breast is exposed, the woman is not bared to the waist, as in Rubens's previous depictions of these figures. Thus, with the exception of her ugliness, Rubens's description of the old woman does not fulfill the iconographic or literary requirements of a Fury. Her ugliness, as I stated earlier, undoubtedly was intended to enhance Deianira's beauty, as well as establish the nurse's advanced years and lowly station.

In addition, I have not been able to find any text, antique or otherwise, that corresponds with the interpretation of the old woman as a Fury. While it is true that Seneca does make use of the Furies in *Hercules Oetaeus*, this episode takes place only after Deianira learns of Hercules's fate and not before. In Act III, Deianira is maddened with grief and fear and begins to hallucinate, believing that she hears the Furies coming to exact their revenge.[17] A careful reading of this passage indicates that Seneca understood the Furies' role in this drama was not to incite Deianira's "fury," so to speak, but, rather, to avenge the death of her husband. Therefore, this passage could not have inspired the painting, for the presence of a Fury with Deianira before the robe was delivered is not appropriate. Furthermore, the painting could not depict a Fury coming to Deianira after Hercules's agony, as the poisoned robe was fused to his body, and could not have been brought back by an avenging spirit to accuse Deianira.[18] Neither does the latter's dreamy expression indicate fear or grief, as would be expected of such a meeting.

I find the other identification of the old woman as Fama, or Rumor, to be equally inconsistent with the literary and visual sources. Held specifies Book IX of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as the foundation of this identification.[19] An analysis of this source convinces me, however, that this interpretation is also incorrect, since, in the text, it is Deianira who poisons the robe and sends it to Hercules.[20] Thus, while Fama did indeed inform Deianira of her husband's dalliance, she would have no reason to hold the bloody robe, as the figure does in the painting. As Ovid relates it, this action is entirely in Deianira's hands. Furthermore, Held's secondary identification of the woman as *"Fama cattiva,"* or Evil Fame, does not align with Ripa's description of this figure as a woman in a dark gown, with black wings and a trumpet.[21] None of these attributes applies to the old woman.

It is my belief, therefore, that the most viable identification of the figure in the painting is that of Deianira's nurse. By examining the painting, we see that the nurse is wearing the stola of a Roman matron, which is attached at the left shoulder while leaving the right shoulder bare. Although one breast has slipped from her gown, her other breast is covered by a sheer fabric. The single bared breast is, I believe, a device employed by Rubens to indicate the old woman's maternal role as Deianira's nursemaid, a role to which Seneca has her refer continually throughout her conversations with the younger woman.[22] This device follows in such long-established traditions as the Madonna Lactans. Furthermore, the old woman wears a veil, which falls from her head, down her back and across her left

[17] Seneca, 3.1000-1015:

> But hark! I hear their dreadful scourges sound.
> See! Who is that who coils her snaky locks,
> And at her ugly temples brandishes
> Two deadly darts? Why dost thou follow me,
> O dire Megaera, with thy blazing brand?
> Dost thou seek penalty for Hercules?
> I will discharge it. O thou dreadful one,
> Already have the arbiters of hell
> Passed judgement on me? Lo, I see the doors
> Of that sad prison-house unfold for me...
> And see! There stands Tisiphone,
> With ghastly cruel face; she seeks revenge.
> Oh, spare thy scourge, Megaera, spare, I pray,
> Thy Stygian brands. 'Twas love that prompted me.

It should be noted that elsewhere in this passage Seneca has Deianira call the Furies by the name of the Eumenides, meaning "kind-hearted" or "forgiving spirits." The use of such euphemisms was common among the ancients when speaking of the Furies, as it was considered too dreadful to pronounce their true name. The Furies (the Erinyes) are the same mythological figures as the Eumenides, a feature of their evolving *mythos* by the time Aeschylus incorporated them in his tragedies concerning the House of Atreus. These creatures go by other names as well, and were called *"Semnai Theai"* or "revered goddesses" in Athens, and *"Maniai"* or "Bringers of Madness" in Megalopolis. In this passage, Seneca does identify two of these Eumenides as Tisiphone and Megaera, names associated with the Erinyes, thus illustrating the interchangeable nomenclature. See Fox 276-277; Grant and Hazel, *Gods and Mortals* 177.

[18] Ovid, 9. 207.

[19] Ovid, 9. 207; see n. 6 for entire excerpt.

[20] Ovid, 9. 207: "She pondered the various courses open to her and, of them all, chose to send the shirt, impregnated with Nessus's blood, to strengthen anew her husband's dying love. Knowing no more than he did what she was giving him, the unhappy woman handed Lichas the garment that was to be the cause of her own sorrow and, with persuasive words, bade him carry her present to her husband."

[21] Ripa 172.

[22] Seneca, II. 276, 444; III. 926.

shoulder. The artist has indicated its presence with the dark, rippling lines that move across the nurse's left arm. Rubens's Furies wear no such garb, and neither does Ripa's Fama.

In reference to other aspects of the nurse's description, as well as the major features and details of this work, there is one passage of Seneca's play that I find explains all facets of this painting. It is in Act II, in which Deianira, wild with jealousy, plans her husband's death, and then her own.[23] The nurse attempts to calm her anger, telling her that "by magic arts united to their prayers, do wives full oft their wandering husbands bind."[24] She goes on to list her many skills as a sorceress, stating that "...Nothing can withstand my potent charms."[25] It is this comment that reminds Deianira of the vial of Nessus's blood and its supposed power to win back the love of Hercules.

After swearing the nurse to secrecy, Deianira tells her the story of Nessus, and sends her to retrieve the vial from its dark hiding place within the palace. This the nurse does in great haste, but not before instructing Deianira to say a prayer to Cupid. In this prayer, Deianira asks the boy-god to use "one of thy keenest arrows" to rekindle Hercules's love for her.[26] Seneca notes specifically that, upon her return, it is the nurse who holds the robe as it is anointed with blood, while reciting a prayer to augment the power of the charm.[27] It is then that the nurse hears the approach of the unwitting Lichas. Urgently she tells Deianira to hide the charm, lest their plot be revealed. Deianira then takes the robe and gives it to Lichas. After the messenger has left to deliver the garment, Deianira offers up a second prayer, this time to Venus.

I believe that it is a portion of this scene that is illustrated by Rubens's painting. In accordance with the play's narrative, the nurse has just returned with the ceremonial robe and poisoned blood, her hair disheveled by the urgency of her efforts. After anointing the robe, she hears Lichas approaching. With anxious expression, she turns towards Deianira, while motioning in the direction of the messenger. Deianira is still in a state of reverie following the prayer she has made to Cupid. Her parted lips and dreamy expression act as testimony to this. Even Deianira's action of covering her genital area can be seen as imitative of a Venus Pudica, and thus a reference to the painting's overall theme of love, as well as an allusion to the prayer the young woman will subsequently make to the goddess.

Deianira's gesture of touching her earlobe may also be interpreted in terms of Seneca's narrative. In addition to signifying that she has heeded the old woman's words, this action could connote the ancient belief that the earlobe was the site of memory, as noted by Pliny.[28] Thus, this gesture could have been used by the artist to indicate that, with her prayers, Deianira remembers the great love Hercules once had for her. The interaction between the two women and their individual expressions and gestures are, therefore, easily explained when compared to this excerpt from *Hercules Oetaeus*. The scene even clarifies the misinterpretation of the nurse as a Fury, since, by her own admission she was a sorceress or practitioner of the "black arts." Thus, Rubens has described her, to use David Jaffe's words, as "a dark and evil presence."

An examination of the details of the painting emphasizes the play's dual theme of love and death. From Deianira's ear hangs a magnificent red gem, a fact that is pointed out to us by her gesture. A second jewel, as well as pearls, adorn the bracelet that encircles her voluptuous arm. The choice of these gems is significant, as pearls and red gemstones were symbols of love and passion in ancient days.[29] Furthermore, the droplet shape of Deianira's earring may also be an allusion to the blood which has been, and is about to be spilled in the name of love.

Other elements of this work are equally intriguing and reinforce its association with Seneca's play. The bed against which Deianira leans has arrowheads as feet. This is undoubtedly a reference to the fatal arrow with which Hercules ended Nessus's life, and, ultimately, his own. The arrow symbolism is also, I believe, an allusion to Cupid's arrows, to which Seneca has Deianira refer several times in her prayer.[30] David Jaffe notes that the red cloth that "seems to bleed" over the side of the bed is probably an allusion to Hercules's agonizing death, and, I might add, that of Nessus as well.[31] Even its blazing color could

23 Seneca, II. 433-580.

24 Seneca, II. 452.

25 Seneca, II. 463-464.

26 Seneca, II. 545.

27 Seneca, II. 561-569.

28 D. Jaffe 126, notes the gesture has antique origins; Ripa has the allegorical figure of Memory in this posture, and notes that Pliny, Book II is the source: "The earlobe is the seat of memory, and we touch it when calling someone to witness:" Cesare Ripa, *Baroque and Rococo Imagery*. The 1758-60 Hertel Edition of Ripa's *Iconologia* (New York: Dover Publications, 1971) 143.

29 The pearl was identified with Venus, and red stones such as the ruby, or more likely the garnet, were symbolic of passionate love. See Hugh Tait, ed., *Jewelry: 7000 Years* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991) 86-87; *Herder Symbol Dictionary* (Wilmette, Illinois: Chiron Publications, 1991) 147, 157; James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (New York: Harper and Row, Icon Editions, 1979) 238.

30 Seneca, II. 539-560. The arrow-post bed (see n. 14) seems to have intrigued Rubens; he used it in a number of works, such as *Mars and Rhea Silvia* (Vaduz, Collection of the Prince of Leichtenstein, c. 1620), *Cupid and Psyche* (Madrid, Prado, n.d.), and *The Death of Dido* (Paris, Charles de Beistegni, 1635-38). In the first two, Cupid plays a vital part, thus the arrow symbolism could apply to Cupid's arrows here as well.

31 D. Jaffe 126.

refer to the altar fires that will activate the centaur's blood, not to mention the "fiery" passion that started this unhappy episode.

The fact that this sheer red fabric is draped over a bed could have one other important reference. Roman brides often wore a red or orange veil, called a *flammeum*, on their wedding day, because red was the color of love and fertility.[32] Deianira's continual references to herself throughout the play as "Alcides's bride" and "Hercules's wife" may have motivated Rubens to use this exquisite red cloth as a reference to this, especially since it lies across what is presumably their marital bed.[33] When interpreted in Senecan terms, this seemingly innocent detail likewise takes on ominous overtones, for the veil is crushed beneath the nurse's gnarled foot as she looms over her mistress. Through such subtle means, the artist has emphasized the fact that love, passion, and death have been inextricably mingled in the Hercules saga, a theme that resounds throughout Seneca's play as well.

Given, then, that the painting is Senecan in source, the question arises as to why the artist chose Seneca's version of Deianira's story over all the other writers who embraced this tragedy? I believe that there are several reasons. First, Seneca examines Deianira's motivations, emotions, and actions more fully than any other ancient writer, providing the artist with a richer source from which to work. Second, one could say that this play is more Baroque than the other versions of the story, since it is filled with such popular seventeenth-century themes as love, lust, passion, violence, madness, and death. While touched on by other authors, these themes find their fullest expression in Seneca. Finally, Seneca's portrayal of Deianira and her nurse as cunning and manipulative destroyers of man is entirely consistent with that favorite Baroque theme, the power of women. As such, Deianira is put in the company of such *femme fatales* as Delilah, Salome, and Omphale. The inclusion of the nurse here is especially important because it enhances the theme of conspiracy and deceit, and aligns the nurse with such figures as the Procuress.

Thus, I find it significant that Rubens chose this particular moment of the play as the subject of his painting. For much of *Hercules Oetaeus*, Seneca focuses on the violence of Deianira's emotions, and allows her rage to transform the young woman from loving wife to lethal monster.[34] Rubens, on the other hand, has chosen to depict the moment of Deianira's prayer to Cupid—when her savage emotions are quieted by the sweet remembrance of her love for Hercules. It is in the choice of this moment that the artist's compassion reveals itself to us, for Rubens sees Deianira as neither demon nor monster but simply as that most human of creatures, a woman in love.

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32 *Herder Symbol Dictionary* 157; François Boucher, *20,000 Years of Fashion: The History of Costume and Personal Adornment* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, n.d.) 120-124.

33 Seneca, ll. 240, 291, 332, 344.

34 Seneca, ll. 255-270:

> O wife of Jove, where'er in heaven thou dwellest,
> Against Alcides send some raging beast
> That shall be dire enough to sate my wrath.
> If any hydra rears its fertile head
> Too vast to be contained in any pool,
> Impossible of conquest, send it forth...
> But if no beasts avail,
> This heart of mine into some monster change;
> For of my hate can any shape be made
> That thou desir'st. Oh, mould my woman's form
> To match my grief. My breast cannot contain
> Its rage. Why dost thou search the farthest bounds
> Of earth, and overturn to world? Or why
> Dost thou demand of hell its evil shapes?
> This breast of mine will furnish for thy use
> All fearful things. To work thy deadly hate
> Use me as tool. Thou canst destroy him quite....

ll. 283-284:
[Deianira speaks to Hercules *in absentia*:]

> Though all the world is debtor unto thee,
> 'Twill not avail thee now, for thou shalt find
> A monster greater far than Hydra's rage,
> An angry wife's revenge, awaiting thee.

Figure 1. Peter Paul Rubens, *Deianira and the Fury*, oil on canvas, 246 x 168 cm, *c.* 1635, Galleria Sabauda, Turin. Courtesy of Alinari/Art Resource, New York.

Figure 2. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Four Philosophers*, oil on canvas, *c.* 1611, Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, Florence. Courtesy of Alinari/Art Resource, New York.

Figure 3. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Council of the Gods*, from the Maria de' Medici Series, oil on canvas, *c.* 1622-24. The Louvre. Courtesy of Giraudon/Art Resource, New York.

Figure 4. Peter Paul Rubens, *Deianira and the Fury*, detail, oil on canvas, *c.* 1635, Galleria Sabauda, Turin. Courtesy of Alinari/Art Resource, New York.

Figure 5. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Council of the Gods*, detail, oil on canvas, *c.* 1622-24. The Louvre. Courtesy of Giraudon/Art Resource, New York.