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Title: *Erotic Power and the Fall of Troy: The Centrality of Aphrodite to the Iliad.*

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Abstract

The *Iliad* is generally conceived as a war epic whose focal center is wrath and its atrocious consequences. The notion of Eros, in contrast, is deemed to be of a much lesser importance to this epic, and this despite the fact that the myth that stands at the basis of the *Iliad* revolves around a divine beauty contest whose winner was the goddess of passion. The aim of this paper is to unfold the centrality of Aphrodite to the *Iliad* by means of analyzing a section of its third book where Aphrodite forces the unwilling Helen to go to bed with Paris. As the paper demonstrates, this seemingly negligible scene is in fact a manifestation of one of the most focal and horrifying aspects of the war and it opens another new vista for understanding the tragic nature of this masterpiece.