""Bitch that I Am": Self-Blame and Self-Assertion in the *Iliad*


In the *Iliad* Helen is objectified by the male characters in ways that excuse her from male blame and thus serve the heroic agenda. Yet her self-blame is an implicit assertion of agency on her part. It not only disarms male reproach by characterizing her as a "good" woman, but affirms her responsibility (and thus agency) in her original elopement. Her erotic subjectivity is also shown in the Aphrodite scene, where Helen both takes responsibility for her transgression and implies that the impulse prompting it has not been quenched.