

A Comparative Study of Chinese and Western Classical Tragedies from the Feminist Perspective of Subject Construction: Female Characters in *Medea* and *Leifeng Pagoda*

女性主义主体建构视角下的中西古典悲剧比较研究——以《美狄亚》与《雷峰塔》中女性形象为例

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Abstract: As representative texts of classical tragedies from the West and East, Euripides' *Medea* and Fang Chengpei's *Leifeng Pagoda*, though born out of vastly different cultural and historical contexts, reveal a remarkable ideological isomorphism in their portrayals of female figures. Both plays dismantle the traditional tragic narrative of female "submission and sacrifice" and reconstruct the possibility of women as cultural subjects. *Medea* challenges patriarchal structures of marriage and kinship through radical defiance, while *Bai Niangzi* resists Confucian ritualism and legal-moral constraints through subtle and persistent opposition. Their rebellion against predetermined fate and social discipline manifests on three levels: the awakening of subjectivity, the display of rational agency, and the enactment of resistance. This paper examines the implicit mechanisms of gender construction within these classical tragedies, aiming to provide new theoretical support for the cross-cultural applicability of feminist critique.

Keywords: Feminist Criticism; Subject Construction; Classical Tragedy; Female Representation; Cross-cultural Comparison.

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1. Introduction

In 431 BCE, Euripides' *Medea*, based on ancient Greek mythology, debuted at the Athenian Dionysia drama competition. Though it placed third, the play left an indelible mark on Western theatrical history through its portrayal of a woman who dared to love and hate fiercely, ultimately achieving vengeance by killing her own children. Centering on Medea, granddaughter of the sun god Helios, Euripides portrays a woman betrayed by her husband as an extreme and powerful rebel. Her individual actions transcend conventional emotional responses, entering the realm of rational decision-making and the subversion of cultural order. Over two millennia later in China, during the 36th year of the Qianlong reign (1771), Fang Chengpei was invited by salt merchants to write *Leifeng Pagoda*. Building upon the archetype of *The Legend of the White Snake*, he endowed Bai Niangzi with a gentler, more rational, and steadfast character. This transformation lifted her from the marginal status of a “monster”, redefining her as “a beautiful woman who courageously pursued happiness, possessed a kind heart, and willingly sacrificed for others” (Chen, 1994, pp. 52-53), and the embodiment of “Truth, Goodness and Beauty” (Linwu & Su, 2025, p. 77), moving heaven and earth with “affection” and sustaining her tragic marriage through “righteousness”. Though separated by millennia and continents, these two works uniquely shaped female archetypes within their respective civilizational contexts: Unlike contemporaneous narratives, both Medea and Bai Niangzi transcend passive victims of fate. Instead, they emerge as active agents—struggling, contemplating, and acting within the confines of patriarchal ethics. Whether resisting with fiery defiance or protecting with tender devotion, they embody autonomous will, clear rationality, and a stance of resistance that markedly transcends the disciplinary perceptions of female roles in traditional Chinese and Western cultures. Such subjectified female figures are rare in classical drama across both civilizations, making them particularly noteworthy.

Feminist subject-construction theory emphasizes that gender identity is not an innate essence but rather the result of continuous construction and reconstruction within social structures, cultural discourses, and everyday practices (Butler, 1990, pp. 181-190). This

theory applies not only to analyzing gender representations in modern texts but also lends its core propositions to examining early manifestations of female consciousness awakening, rational subject formation, and resistance behaviors within classical texts. By integrating this theory with representative works from ancient Greek tragedy and Ming-Qing legend-tragedy, this paper proposes to explore how classical tragic heroines from both Eastern and Western traditions—represented by *Medea* and Bai Niangzi—transitioned from the margins of cultural discipline to the center of value expression. This analysis will be conducted along three interrelated dimensions: “subject consciousness,” “rational thought,” and “struggle against fate.” Furthermore, it attempts to elucidate how these texts challenge gender order and artistically manifest female subjectivity through the narrative construction of female characters, enriching the applicability of feminist criticism within classical literary texts while revealing the underlying gender-cultural cognitive structures in classical tragedies under conditions of cultural heterogeneity and their contemporary significance.

2. The Awakening of Subjective Consciousness

In both ancient Greece and ancient China—societies profoundly shaped by patriarchal traditions—, women were universally relegated to subordinate positions, with their agency rights in marriage, politics, and economics enduring prolonged suppression. Whether in the West, where gender bias persisted from the Homeric epics (Yi, 2001, p. 45), or in China, where ethical systems were built upon the “Three Obediences and Four Virtues”, a comprehensive structural discipline emerged that rendered women as “the Other”. This marginalization of women’s status manifested not only in social practices but also profoundly shaped the portrayal of female characters in literary texts. Yet in the classical tragedies *Medea* and *Leifeng Pagoda*, we witness two female protagonists demonstrating remarkable agency and self-determination in navigating love and identity choices. This phenomenon can be understood as the cultural emergence of female subjectivity within oppressive contexts: when identity is reimagined as a produced or generated outcome rather than a pre-existing essence, it “opens up possibilities of ‘agency’” (Butler, 1990, p. 187).

Euripides opens *Medea* by having the nurse articulate the protagonist’s emotional choice: “the sight of Jason never would have stunned her spirit with desire” (Euripides, 2007,

p. 3), and Medea “complied with Jason in all things” (Euripides, 2007, p. 4), and describes her leaving her homeland for love, willingly choosing exile. Even after her husband’s betrayal, she insists: My husband “was everything to me” (Euripides, 2007, p. 12), revealing a conscious awareness of building her self-identity upon emotional choice. It is worth noting that in the works of Aeschylus and Sophocles, fellow major tragedians of ancient Greece, we rarely encounter such an obsessive pursuit of love. Whether it be the Danaus’ daughters in *The Suppliants* who vowed to reject the marriage proposals of the sons of Aegyptus even at the cost of death, or Haemon in *Antigone* who took his own life after his father executed his betrothed, or even Deianeira in *The Trachiniae* who attempted to win back her husband’s heart only to accidentally kill him, none match the searing intensity of Euripides’ Medea. Thus, against the backdrop of ancient Greek women possessing some degree of romantic autonomy (Lewis, 2002, p. 186) yet lacking marital self-determination (Brulé, 2003, p. 121), Medea’s proactive pursuit of love and her willingness to fight for it clearly transcended the traditional female role of submission. Instead, she entered a process of self-directed emotional agency and identity reconstruction. It is crucial to emphasize that Euripides did not reduce this emotional behavior to mere “madness” or “irrational impulse”, but instead endowed it with critical cultural and political significance. Medea’s love and hatred, her pursuit and vengeance, not only embodied personal will but also revealed how women resisted the discipline of social structures through their emotional choices. This act of vengeance, through the practice of extreme emotion, challenges ancient Greek norms of marriage and gender, expresses resistance to patriarchal discourse, and in this dynamic process redefines the possibilities of female subjectivity. As Foucault observes, power relations are constantly reshaped through resistance. (Foucault, 1999, p.83)

A similar sense of agency is equally evident in the character of Bai Niangzi in *Leifeng Pagoda*. Fang Chengpei’s reimagining of the White Snake (Bai Niangzi) no longer confines itself to the traditional motif of “a monster becoming immortal”, but rather emphasizes her agency within human emotional relationships. Driven by “an unresolved karmic bond in her heart” (Fang, 1991, p. 1173), Bai Niangzi resolutely descends to the mortal realm. She proactively seeks a partner, orchestrates encounters, and proposes marriage—all

demonstrating self-determination in romantic choice. Even after marriage, when faced with misunderstandings and crises, she steadfastly upholds the validity of her emotions, continually repairing and safeguarding the relationship through her actions. For centuries, particularly before the Qing dynasty, most female characters in classical drama were portrayed as reserved and enduring. We see Zhao Wuniang in *The Story of the Lute*, who after Cai Bojie leaves for the imperial examinations, serves her in-laws without complaint until her death, then journeys alone to the capital by begging, ultimately reuniting with her husband. There is also Wang Jiaoniang in *The Tale of Lady Wang*, who, heartbroken at being unable to marry her beloved, falls ill from grief and ultimately dies for love. Even when the plays occasionally hint at a yearning for free love, few female characters display the proactive initiative in romance seen in Bai Niangzi. Thus, within a social context where “parental decree and matchmaker’s words” remained the dominant norm, Bai Niangzi’s actions undoubtedly represent a subtle protest and breakthrough against this disciplinary system. Moreover, in her relationship with Xu Xuan, Bai Niangzi never occupied the position of the “chosen one”. Instead, she consistently played the roles of initiator of affection, mediator of the relationship, and builder of their household. This proactive consciousness, emanating from within, shattered the passivity and endurance typical of virtuous female characters in classical Chinese tragedies. Through concrete actions, she achieved control over her own destiny. This path of practice can also be understood as a reconstruction of gender subjectivity moving from the margins to the center.

Overall, whether it be Medea’s “madness for love” and rebellion against her homeland, or Bai Niangzi’s “flooding the Golden Mountain” to protect her marriage, the emergence of their subjectivity was not merely a random individual reaction. Rather, it was a resistance and transcendence of traditional roles that gradually—or even inevitably—formed under prolonged gender oppression and social constraints. This consciousness is not a modern projection detached from culture, but a cultural breakthrough achieved through tragedy within their respective eras. It reveals that female subjectivity is not a predetermined state but an ongoing process of emergence through discourse, choice, and action (Butler, 1990, pp. 181-190). Medea and the Bai Niangzi, within the patriarchal order, redefined traditional

female roles through their own practices.

3. The Manifestation of Rational Thought

Within the gender discourses of Classical Greece and ancient China, women were universally regarded as sensuous, emotional beings lacking rational capacity, thereby excluded from political life or public affairs (Yi, 2001, p. 66). Their thinking was categorized as belonging to the “irrational” realm, deemed incapable of constructing order or judging right and wrong. In the writings of Aristotle, Aristophanes, Ban Zhao and others, the notion of women’s innate irrationality was constructed as the cultural foundation sustaining the legitimacy of patriarchal rule. However, this gendered division of reason did not stem from ontological differences but rather from patriarchy’s deprivation of women’s rights, restrictions on educational opportunities, and exclusion from public life, inequalities resulting from the prolonged operation of social structures. From a deeper perspective, “the subjection of women is of course far more than an economic or even political event, but a total social and psychological phenomenon, a way of life” (Millett, 2000, p. 121). In contrast, the female protagonists in *Medea* and *Leifeng Pagoda* embody rationality that transcends their eras through their composure, wisdom, and foresight, serving as quintessential literary examples challenging gender binary logic.

In *Medea*, Euripides portrays a woman betrayed by love as a rational strategist with meticulous planning abilities. After her husband Jason abandoned her for another woman, she did not succumb to hysterical outbursts but swiftly assessed the situation. She persuaded Creon to delay her exile, then secured refuge with Aegeus. Ultimately, using gifts as a ruse, she orchestrated the poisoning and burning of her rival and her father, completing her revenge. At every turn, Medea demonstrates precise mastery of timing, power, and human frailties. Medea’s revenge is not entirely driven by blind rage, but is instead the result of a series of careful deliberations and rational analyses (Rong & Yang, 2025, p. 56). Her words clearly articulate her strategic mindset: “Do you think I ever could have fawned on him like that without some gain in mind, some ruse? I never would have spoken to him, or touched him with my hands.” (Euripides, 2007, p. 18) More critically, Medea not only employs rational calculation to achieve emotional vengeance but also challenges the institution of

marriage itself, revealing a sober awareness of patriarchal order. “Of all the living creatures with a soul and mind, we women are the most pathetic. First of all, we have to buy a husband: spend vast amounts of money, just to get a master for our body—to add insult to injury.” (Euripides, 2007, p. 12) While the female characters in Aeschylus and Sophocles still distinctly reflect the traditional mindset of discrimination against women, Medea’s unprecedented rationality reveals Euripides’ understanding, sympathy, and respect for ancient Greek women, as well as his contemplation and critique of their actual social status. The above confession reveals that Medea is not only rational in her actions but also intellectually aware of the connection between marriage and gender power. Her calmness intertwined with rage forms a conscious rebellion, creating a vivid literary manifestation of gender-critical thinking.

The Bai Niangzi in *Leifeng Pagoda* also demonstrates highly rational emotional choices and marital management skills. When choosing a partner, she disregarded family background and wealth, valuing character and temperament instead. After marriage, she assisted Xu Xuan in opening a pharmacy and managed household affairs, “handling all matters with meticulous order” (Fang, 1991, p. 1207). When their marriage faced threats—whether from the Taoist priest Wei Feixia’s scheming or the separation after Duan Yang’s transformation—she consistently maintained rational thinking, resolving crises through prudent actions. She not only dispelled her husband’s doubts with words but also journeyed to Mount Song to obtain the immortal herb after his sudden death, using wisdom and courage to rebuild their marital bond. This rationality manifested not only in crisis management but also in long-term planning: arranging a betrothal with her aunt before giving birth demonstrated her foresight and planning for family continuity and her children’s future. Though such actions implied restrictions on her offspring’s freedom of choice—suggesting Bai Niangzi’s attempts to break free while remaining constrained by societal shackles of tradition and ethics—this did not diminish her rational thinking and decision-making. She was not a woman who relied on “emotion” to prevail, but rather one whose gentle exterior concealed the capacity for cool judgment and decisive action. This rationality not only subverts the traditional family order of “men managing external affairs, women managing internal affairs”, but also profoundly

challenges the notion that “a woman’s virtue lies in her lack of talent”. Indeed, throughout ancient Chinese literary history, the literary tradition has never lacked female characters embodying both wisdom and courage. Take, for example, Yao Menglan from Jiang Shiqian’s works or Li Xiangjun from Kong Shangren’s writings, neither was a passive figure. Instead, they demonstrated a steadfast commitment to emotional freedom and even took decisive actions to save their nation. Fang Chengpei’s portrayal of the Bai Niangzi amplifies this reality. Her character stands out for her moral integrity, diligence in household management, and clear sense of right and wrong, which in turn renders Xu Xuan increasingly timid, fickle, and indecisive. This stark contrast mirrors the social context of the Qing Dynasty, where female consciousness was gradually awakening. Bai Niangzi’s constant balancing act between love, ethics, and institutional constraints transforms her from a passive family member into an active shaper of domestic structures and marital order, achieving a leap from ethical object to social subject.

From the perspective of female subject construction, the rationality of *Medea* and Bai Niangzi is not merely an innate but a power manifested through action. Their actions continually subvert the preconceived link between reason and gender, transforming rationality from an exclusive patriarchal marker into a tool for women to reclaim narrative and moral judgment. This process of rational construction is both an expression of individual thought and akin to a “cultural fissure” emerging from within the repressive gender order, providing imaginative space and action archetypes for the literary shaping of female characters in later generations. In *Medea* and *Leifeng Pagoda*, these rational female figures transcended the conventions of contemporary literature to some extent, becoming critical elements within the cultural structure. Through their actions, they demonstrated that women are fully capable of occupying a central position in texts as thinkers, judges, and decision-makers. Such portrayals powerfully refute the notion of female irrationality and represent an early response to the logic of gender equality.

4. Conscious Resistance to Fate

“Obedience” was one of the core ethical principles preset for women in patriarchal societies. Whether in the ancient Greek household-state system or China’s Confucian clan

system, women's virtue was defined by submission to male will. In *Economics*, Xenophon had Ischomachus assert that a woman's nobility lay in unconditional obedience to her husband (Xenophon, 2011, p. 37); *Commandments for Women* likewise regarded "the way of reverence and obedience" as "the supreme duty of a woman" (Ban, 1996, p. 2). Under such norms, women were not only institutionally excluded from public power but also frequently portrayed in cultural narratives as victims of fate or bearers of tragedy. Yet power must act upon subjects to take effect, making the subject's final choice the decisive factor in its realization (Zhang, 2024, p. 173). The female protagonists in *Medea* and *Leifeng Pagoda* shatter traditional passive female imagery through forceful agency, demonstrating an active will to resist fate and reshape their roles.

Medea's resistance was not a fleeting emotional reaction, but a deliberate response born of clear-eyed recognition of systemic oppression. When she learned that Jason had broken their betrothal to marry another princess, her anger was not directed solely at personal betrayal. Through her words and actions, she exposed how women were excluded from marriage and the distribution of power under Athenian democracy. "I'd rather take my stand behind a shield three times than go through childbirth once" (Euripides, 2007, p. 13), serves both as an emotional outburst and a public challenge to the reproductive obligations and bodily oppression imposed on women in a patriarchal society. Her revenge, deceiving Creon to delay her exile, securing protection from Aegeus, poisoning her rival, killing her own children, and finally escaping in a dragon-drawn chariot, unfolds as a systematic dismantling of patriarchal kinship logic and marital ethics. Where Aeschylus' Prometheus still believed in fate while resisting Zeus' tyranny, and Sophocles' Oedipus attempted to escape and fight against his predetermined destiny, Euripides' Medea completely breaks free from the shackles of fate, becoming the master of her own destiny. Particularly in the extreme act of "infanticide", Medea, beyond mere vengeance, employs the severing of patriarchal continuity as a means to strike at the very foundations of the patriarchal system. She understood that in the Athenian polis, only male offspring could inherit property, perpetuate the family line, and attain citizenship (Yi Zhaoyin 2001: 83). Jason's future as husband and father rested precisely upon these children. Thus, Medea's violation of sacred motherhood

fundamentally subverts the stability of patriarchal order, an extreme act of resistance by a woman challenging entrenched cultural structures. Though brutal, this action precisely embodies the cultural-political protest of marginalized individuals who resort to bodily and active resistance when language and ethics fail to articulate oppression (Butler, 1990, pp. 172–173).

In contrast, Bai Niangzi in *Leifeng Pagoda* adopts a similarly resolute yet more implicit form of resistance against her fate. Though the narrative frames her as a demon entangled in mortal romance, seemingly controlled by the cycle of destiny, she never surrenders her fate to predetermined karma or religious transcendence. Instead, she actively strives to regain control over her life and emotions through deliberate actions. She refuses to continue her cultivation for immortality, insisting instead on descending to the mortal realm to “seek a man of destiny” (Fang, 1991, p. 1173). When Xu Xuan faces peril or is constrained by Fa Hai, she seeks the miraculous herb, confronts the pagoda, and floods the Golden Mountain Temple, actions that fundamentally challenge the established order’s dictates: that humans and demons follow separate paths, that love cannot overcome the law, and that women must not defy the religious-state authority. Though Bai Niangzi is presented with the traditional appearance of a virtuous wife and mother (Yuan, 2012, p. 84), her behavioral logic consistently exhibits a strong sense of agency. Faced with family breakdown, romantic crisis, and institutional interference, she adopts neither avoidance nor resignation, but instead takes direct action, responds rationally, and persists with determination. Indeed, prior to Fang Chengpei’s *Leifeng Pagoda*, we encounter Wang Jiaoniang in *The Tale of Lady Wang*, who sacrifices herself for romantic freedom, and Li Xiangjun in *The Peach Blossom Fan*, who rejects noble seduction to uphold love. Yet neither embodies Bai Niangzi’s fierce resolve. Her pursuit of “supreme affection” in the mortal world was, in essence, a struggle against the fate imposed upon her by her status as a supernatural being (Li, 2021, p. 7). Bai Niangzi’s struggle extends beyond fate to challenge the triple oppression of Taoist, Buddhist, and legalistic cultural systems, oppressing her as a woman, as an emotional subject, and as a mother. If human identity is defined through opposition to and negation of nature, then male identity is defined through opposition to and negation of women. Compared to the dominant

male, the female is merely a subordinate “the Other”. This relationship bears striking resemblance to the dynamic between nature, also representing “the Other” and the conquered, and humanity, which occupies the central, sovereign position. In other words, the opposition between “female-nature” and “male-humanity” conceals a deeper layer of dualistic structure (Dai, 2011, p. 155). Bai Niangzi, bearing the “monsterized” identity, epitomizes this “woman-nature” archetype. By transcending the constraints of her monsterization, she reshapes the female figure as one embodying emotional autonomy and moral responsibility. This subversive act not only redefines the connection between “woman and nature” but also critically reconstructs the relationship between “nature and humanity”.

Medea and Bai Niangzi represent two distinct yet equally intense paths of female resistance within Eastern and Western cultures. The former violently shatters ethical systems, while the latter employs subtle intervention to dismantle power structures. Neither passively accepts fate nor serves as a sacrificial victim in traditional tragedies; instead, they actively vie for the authority to shape their destinies. Through their actions, they become cultural symbols participating in the reconstruction of world order. Through rebellious defiance, they challenge established norms, redefine their roles within patriarchal discourse, and claim their rights and voices. They truly embody the act of “unlocking the door to collective truths unmediated by the opinions of men” (Brownmiller, 1999, p. 5). Thus, whether *Medea*, who shocks culture through extreme means, or Bai Niangzi, whose gentle exterior conceals an indomitable spirit, their struggles against fate not only propel the narrative forward but also embody their power as agents challenging social norms and gender hierarchies. By refusing submission, they shatter the traditional narrative framework of female resignation, forging a model of female resistance worthy of deep reflection and critique. This struggle represents not only a pivotal shift in literature but also reflects a certain evolution in gender perspectives.

5. Conclusion

The portrayal of female characters has always been central to dramatic development, serving as a vital witness to the evolution of gender discourse and cultural value transformation. Though originating from vastly different cultural traditions and historical contexts, *Medea* and *Leifeng Pagoda* exhibit striking convergence in their depiction of

female protagonists. This trans-temporal female subjectivity gains deeper understanding and cultural reflection when viewed through the lens of feminist theory.

From the perspective of constructing subjectivity, both characters transcend traditional societal prescriptions of female subordination. They actively pursue love, take charge of their emotional and marital destinies, and demonstrate intense self-awareness when confronting oppression and betrayal. This agency in their actions echoes Simone de Beauvoir's classic assertion that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (Beauvoir, 1953, p. 273), while also powerfully refuting the notion of women's innate submissiveness within patriarchal culture. On the rational plane, Medea and Bai Niangzi respectively demonstrate strategic judgment and rational problem-solving capabilities that transcend male roles through their planning of vengeance and crisis management. This shatters the classical cultural binary that assigns emotion to women and reason to men, validating Judith Butler's theoretical assertion that "gender attributes are not expressive but performative" (Butler, 1990, p. 180). Textually, this demonstrates that female rationality is not an innate essence but a process continually constructed and manifested within culture and context. In resisting fate, both women, though situated in distinct cultural contexts, reject predetermined destinies and gender order through profoundly autonomous agency. Medea employs extreme measures to challenge patriarchy's control over female loyalty and reproductive rights, while Bai Niangzi uses subtle actions to test the boundaries of ethics and law. Both redefine traditional "nature-woman" and "nature-human" relationships, highlighting women's rewriting and transcendence of conventional gender narratives. Their resistance carries not only emotional and ethical weight but also explicit cultural-political significance. Ultimately, viewed along the vertical axis of historical development, the artistic images of Medea and Bai Niangzi represent the inevitable crystallization of the Axial Age and the ideological transformation of Ming-Qing society. The subjectivity, rational thought, and spirit of resistance embodied by these female figures reflect common trends in the development of humanistic thought across Eastern and Western civilizations. This transcendent resonance of thought across time and space, these seemingly coincidental parallels, are in fact inevitable patterns in the historical evolution of human society. They also represent the convergence points of human civilization's development

across diverse cultural contexts.

This comparative study of *Medea* and *Leifeng Pagoda* demonstrates that feminist subject-construction theory not only provides a robust analytical framework but also undergoes further validation and refinement through research. The multidimensional interpretation of these two classical tragic heroines reveals that gender roles are not fixed historical paradigms but rather socially constructed through actions, discourses, and relational structures within specific contexts. This cross-cultural validation deepens our understanding of ancient women while offering insights for reflecting on contemporary women's roles in society, ethics, and family. Simultaneously, it provides feminist theory with new historical perspectives, revealing shared experiences across civilizational contexts and broadening its interpretive depth and breadth. Particularly regarding the question of “how women moved from the margins to the center”, classical texts have long embedded the seeds of thought and logical foundations, thereby demonstrating the unique value and significance of classical literature in gender criticism. To a certain extent, this transcends the limitations of related critiques that rely solely on modern institutional and discursive shifts. Texts such as *Medea* and *Leifeng Pagoda* are not merely artistic works but also profound reflections by civilizations on their own gender orders.

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Yangjiabu *Legend of the White Snake*, Late Qing Dynasty

This print depicts three scenes: “The Broken Bridge” “Borrowing the Umbrella” and “Slaying the Snake”. The composition is novel and unique, imbued with a strong decorative appeal.
https://mmbiz.qpic.cn/mmbiz_png/O4iauibxXvWu2AfaxbYdxAKPyicUzFetx3LrxR6amvB6qcBVpWE0CVH07FYpovuzA1upibsRsMLQdakibUFiaCaiaC8eg/640?wx_fmt=png&from=appmsg&tp=webp&wxfrom=5&wx_lazy=1#imgIndex=2



Charles-André van Loo (1705–1765), Miss Clairon in *Medea*

This 1764 print depicts the celebrated French actress Mademoiselle Clairon in the climactic final scene of Pierre Corneille's tragedy, *Medea*.

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/d1/Charles_Andr%C3%A9_van_Loo_-_Mlle_Clairon_en_M%C3%A9d%C3%A9e.jpg/960px-Charles_Andr%C3%A9_van_Loo_-_Mlle_Clairon_en_M%C3%A9d%C3%A9e.jpg?_=20130608103302