An Analysis of the Characterizations of Aida and Amneris.

Myrtle Yvette McDaniel  
*Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College*

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses

**Recommended Citation**  
https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/5196
INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI
University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
An analysis of the characterizations of Aida and Amneris

McDaniel, Myrtle Yvette, D.M.A.
The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1991
An Analysis of the Characterizations of Aida and Amneris

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in School of Music

by
Myrtle Yvette McDaniel
B.S., Pfeiffer College, 1981
M.M., University of South Florida, 1983
August 1991
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my major professor, Martina Arroyo and Co-Chairman, Griffin Campbell for their guidance and support. Also, thanks to Dr. Jan Herlinger and my committee members, Robert Grayson, Patricia O’Neill, and Dr. Edward Lambremont.

The microfilm of the autograph of the Verdi/Du Locle Scenario was accessible through the American Institute for Verdi Studies at New York University and Linda B. Fairtile, archivist.

Special thanks to family (especially my parents, James and Myrtle McDaniel) and friends for their support.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter One</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterizations of Aida and Amneris: The Mariette Outline</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Two</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterizations of Aida and Amneris: The Verdi/Du Locle Scenario</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Three</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterizations of Aida and Amneris: The Libretto</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Four</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterizations of Aida and Amneris: The Production Book</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works Cited</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### List of Figures

1. Reduction of the skeletal description of the dramatic action given in Mariette’s Scenario.  
2. Draft I Outline  
3. Draft II Outline  
4. Draft III Outline  
5. Draft IV Outline  
6. Draft V Outline  
7. Draft IV Outline  
8. Act IV Outline  
9. Libretto Outline  
10. Production Book Outline
Abstract

Giuseppe Verdi's Aida has been well received by audiences since its inception. The plot of the opera centers around the relationships among Aida, her antagonist Amneris, and Radames. The two women display similar characteristics that provide not only the nucleus of their unique entities, but the themes upon which the drama is constructed.

The purpose of this analysis is to identify, contrast and compare points of characterization that define Aida and Amneris. These characteristics are traced from the original story by Auguste Mariette through three stages of development by Verdi: preversification, versification, and production.

Chapter One begins with a brief history of the original story of Aida. It also traces the characters Aida and Amneris as presented in the Mariette Outline and discusses the similarities found as shared by them.

Chapter Two presents a brief history of the characterizations as found in the Verdi/Du Locle Scenario and Act IV as written by Verdi. Particular attention is given to the order of the sections of this Scenario.

Chapter Three illustrates the characters Aida and Amneris as outlined in the libretto of Aida. A brief history of the libretto is presented, followed by an analysis of the similar characteristics of Aida and Amneris.
Chapter Four offers the similarities in the characterizations of Aida and Amneris as outlined in the Production Book by Ricordi, a book that was prepared from the La Scala premiere of the opera. Highlighted in the brief history of the Production Book is the soprano Teresa Stolz, the Aida of the La Scala production.

An appendix concludes this monograph. It contains new and/or more detailed dramatic directions derived through this research.
An Analysis of the Characterizations
of Aida and Amneris

Introduction

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) was an eminent composer of 19th-century Italian opera. He presented operas in other languages and composed works in other genres. Yet it is his operas that are most widely recognized, not only as entertainment, but for their historical significance; his operas encompass the passage of Italian opera tradition from the bel canto style of Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti through the verismo of his later works, which foreshadow the operas of Puccini.

Many of Verdi's operas remain well received by audiences today; Aida is foremost among them. Aida is an amalgamation of old with new; grand opera traditions including ballet and set pieces (arias, duets, trios) in closed forms coupled with bolder techniques such as arias not in traditional forms (sui generis), exoticism, and through composition; all inclusive of the concept of parola scenica:

Verdi coined the term parola scenica, the "theatrical word" or "scenic utterance." . . . It seems that, at least in some ways, Verdi saw the "theatrical word" as a reaction against the more conventional "number opera" where the drama was rigidly partitioned into self contained musical units. . . . Typically Verdi stresses the device during dramatic outbursts in recitative or
ariasos: in "unrhymed" sections of text, where the music is free of any strict formal constraint. While the structuring of long passages in this "unrhymed" style was by no means new...never before Aida had it formed the cornerstone of Verdi's musical composition.¹

Verdi was deliberate when choosing subjects for composition, he became more so in the period between Don Carlo and Aida. "In writing an opera it is not the labor of composition that burdens me; it is the difficulty of finding a subject to my liking. . . ."² Previously Verdi had stated, "It is impossible, or almost impossible, for another to sense what I want. I want subjects that are new, great, beautiful, varied...and bold to the core, with new forms, yet at the same time appropriate for music. . . ."³

Verdi compromised his need for the new by accepting a story by Auguste Mariette that was written as an outline for the opera Aida. As stated in the above letter, Verdi requested novelty. However, the plot of Aida is conventional, even antiquated. This also is true in respect to the


characters; Italian-opera audiences had become accustomed to portrayals of characters that were more individualized and distinctive. Even Verdi acknowledged the lack of novelty of the story: "I have read the Egyptian outline. It is well done; it offers a splendid mise-en-scène, and there are two or three situations which, if not very new, are certainly very beautiful."  

The plot of Aida is simple. The Princess Amneris and her slave Aida are in love with the soldier Radames (who loves Aida). In battle, he captures Aida's father, the king of Ethiopia, and triumphantly returns to Egypt where Radames is awarded the hand of Amneris. Convinced by her father, Amonasro, Aida persuades Radames to flee with her to Ethiopia and to betray Egypt by telling her the route of his troops. Amneris overhears this, and Radames is captured. Amneris continues to love Radames and offers him freedom in exchange for his love. Radames rejects Amneris. He is sentenced to die in a subterranean tomb, where he is secretly joined by Aida. Amneris prays for his passage into heaven.  

While there are three characters who form the romantic triangle that is the core of the plot, two characters emerge as the predominant forces around which Aida centers, the title character of Aida and that of Amneris.

---

4 Julian Budden, The Operas of Verdi, from Don Carlos to Falstaff vol. 3 (London: Cassell, 1981), 166.

5 Verdi to Du Locle, St. Agata, 26 May 1870, Busch, 17.
It is the way in which the characters Aida and Amneris are written that provides the dramatic core of the opera. As Godefroy has pointed out, "Amneris and Aida are both heroines, both princesses, proud and god-fearing and steadfast, lovers certainly, virgins presumably, two admirable characters richly developed, each true to her identity throughout, their conflict keeping the plot a-boil, so that it develops out of their reactions. . . ."

Verdi understood the complexities of these roles, both vocally and dramatically. To Ricordi he wrote, "Do you recall the third act of Aida? That act can be a success, but only if there is a strong Aida, one with great vocal and dramatic ability." It was also to Ricordi that he aired his thoughts on the casting of Amneris: "You are familiar with the libretto of Aida, and you know that for Amneris one needs an artist with highly developed dramatic sensibility who is a mistress of the stage. . . . The voice alone, no matter how beautiful, . . . is not enough for that role.

A traditional perception of the character Aida is that she personifies self-sacrificing love. Aida is a slave of the Princess Amneris (who also loves Radames); she is also a princess in that she is the captured daughter of the

---


7 Verdi to Ricordi, Genoa, 22 November 1871, Busch, 254.

8 Verdi to Ricordi, St. Agata, 10 July 1871, Busch, 182.
king of Ethiopia, Amonasro. Aida remains faithful to the love she feels for Radames, even though that love culminates in her death.

The character Amneris often is viewed as an anti-heroine. Amneris is cunning and cruel as she torments Aida at every turn, offering to Aida the pretense of affection to gather information, then cruelty when she, Amneris, confronts Aida as a rival. Amneris also remains faithful in her love for Radames; his death does not end her love for him.

It is evident in these prescriptive perceptions of the characters Aida and Amneris that there is one pervading similarity, the unending love for Radames. Research into the characterizations and the process by which these characterizations were formed offers more similarities. As based solely on the nonmusical elements of characterization, Aida and Amneris both display a commanding use of the eyes (the eyes instigate a new dramatic direction), a reliance on deities, cunning, deceptiveness, rivalry, self-denial, love of country — all unfolding under the shadow of sexual love.9

The love for Radames, sexual love is the most prominent of the similarities. However, it is the choice between sexual love and filial love that

---

9 Sexual love, as defined within the parameters of this monograph, is passionately erotic love, amorous yet noble. It is sexual love in its purest intent, supreme attraction and/or affection. For a more complete interpretation of the concept of sexual love as found in Verdi’s operas, see Peter Conrad, *Romantic Opera and Literary Form* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977).
is the axis for the plot of the opera, and for the individual characterizations as well. For Amneris the choice is simple; sexual love prevails as there is little necessity for choice. For Aida, sexual love for Radames underlies her choice of filial devotion. Verdi employs the choice by daughters between sexual love and filial devotion to achieve stirring dramatic situations, and the conflict is strengthened through the addition of patriotism; loyalty to father is intensified by loyalty to fatherland. Verdi evolved these seemingly dissimilar characters as outlined by Mariette into women who personified many similarities, the most prominent being sexual love that is often underscored with the conflict of sexual versus filial love.

Giuseppe Verdi has been credited with proposing substantial portions of the ideas for the verses of his librettos. For the opera *Aida* this is evident in the quantity of letters written by Verdi about his requirements of the verses. John Richard Kitson, in *Verdi and the Evolution of the Aida Libretto*, reiterates this and goes further by revealing Verdi as primary librettist for the opera. The poet Antonio Ghislanzoni is credited as librettist of the Italian score but is actually the versifier; as witnessed through research of the documents surrounding the opera. Verdi is responsible for the written

---

10 Conrad, 53.

characterizations of Aida and Amneris. Verdi also took responsibility for stage characterizations during many of the Italian and French premieres of the opera; he chose or approved the cast and personally coached the singers.\(^{12}\) Since story and staging as outlined by Verdi mold these characters, primary concern for the study of the characterizations of Aida and Amneris must center around the dictates of Verdi through all stages of composition and the premiere stagings of *Aida*.

Prior to Verdi's involvement, the development of *Aida* begins with Auguste Mariette, a noted Egyptologist who was instrumental in the discovery of the granite and alabaster monument beneath the Sphinx.\(^{13}\) Mariette's outline was submitted to Verdi by his friend Camille Du Locle (future librettist, with Charles Nuitter, of the French verses of *Aida*), who acted as emissary. Upon receiving this outline, Verdi immersed himself in the expansion, composition, and versification of the story.

This monograph will illustrate the development of the characters Aida and Amneris from the Outline by Mariette through three steps of development under Verdi: preversification, versification, and production. Preversification study will reveal the characterizations of Aida and Amneris as

---


\(^{13}\) *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 13th ed., s. v. "Mariette, Auguste."
outlined by Mariette and the translation of that Outline by Verdi and his wife Giuseppina. Preversification characterizations also will be noted as derived from drafts compiled by Verdi and Du Locle, and a draft of Act IV written by Verdi alone. This research will employ the translations of these documents found in Verdi’s *Aida: A History of an Opera in Letters and Documents*, edited and translated by Hans Busch.

Versification study will focus on the characters Aida and Amneris as presented in the libretto. Production study will employ the Production Book written by Giulio Ricordi as translated in Verdi’s *Aida*. This Production Book contains the characterizations of Aida and Amneris as they were staged at the La Scala premiere, a premiere that Verdi oversaw. Production study will include information on Teresa Stolz, the Aida of the La Scala premiere from which the Production Book was derived.

The appendix contains dramatic directives derived from the research placed with the applicable dialogue from the libretto. A synopsis of the dramatic actions in Mariette’s Scenario (Outline) as viewed by Kitson precedes Chapter One. This synopsis, which uses the French names of the characters, is the schema to which Verdi’s expansions and additions to the characterizations of Aida and Amneris will be compared.
Fig. 1

Reduction of the skeletal description of the dramatic action given in Mariette's Scenario.¹⁴

Act I
1. Amneris's perception that Rhadamès is indifferent to her and that her love for him is contended by another woman
2. Rhadamès's love for Aida
3. Aida's appearance identifies, for Amneris her rival
4. The entrance of the King and his court
5. The Herald brings news of the Ethiopian advance into Egypt
6. Rhadamès is declared chosen one by the oracles, to be leader of the Egyptians, and is sent to the Temple of Vulcan to have his weapons blessed
7. Aida, alone, laments the fact that her father and her lover will face one another in the battlefield as enemies

The Consecration scene:
8. The entrance of Rhadamès before the gathering of the priests
9. The invocation of Ramphis
10. Rhadamès's invocation
11. The dressing of Rhadamès in his battle armor

Act II
1. Amneris feigns sorrow in announcing to Aida that Rhadamès has died in battle
2. Aida's sobs disclose to Amneris the truth of her suspicions about the lovers
3. The entrance of the Ethiopian prisoners, among them Amounasro
4. Aida recognizes Amounasro and begs the King to spare her father's life
5. Amounasro stops Aida and tells her of his plan for vengeance
6. The King grants Amounasro's life

Act III
1. Aida awaits Rhadamès and expresses her grief
2. Amounasro appears and informs Aida of the new Ethiopian revolt

Fig. 1 (continued)

3. Having perceived the love of Rhadamès and Aida, Amounasro persuades Aida to wrest the secret of the Egyptian march from her lover

4. Rhadamès appears and is fascinated and captivated by Aida’s charms: he decides to betray his country for the love of Aida

5. Amounasro reappears: Rhadamès hesitates but capitulates at the sight of Aida’s imploring eyes

6. Rhadamès reveals the secret of the Egyptian march, and the three characters leave the stage

7. Amneris enters, having heard everything; she vows vengeance

Act IV

1. A description of the flight of Aida and Amounasro, the latter’s death, the disappearance of Aida, and Rhadamès’s imprisonment as he awaits his trial

2. Rhadamès is brought before Amneris, but her pleas to save him are useless: he declares it is Aida he loves

3. The trial of Rhadamès is conducted by Ramphis and the Priests; Rhadamès is condemned to death by burial alive

4. Rhadamès alone is confronted by the appearance of Aida who has hidden in the tomb

5. The lovers expire to the sound of solemn religious rites
Chapter One
Characterizations of Aida and Amneris: The Mariette Outline

The conflict of sexual versus filial love as found in the *Aida* story was established prior to any of the modifications made by Verdi. The conflict was strongly presented in the characterization of Aida in the Outline written by Mariette. Other character traits that would subsequently be shared by Amneris and Aida are a use of the eyes to incite a dramatic situation, a reliance on deities, cunning, deceptiveness, rivalry, and self-denial. Mariette established these traits in one or both of the princesses prior to Verdi's involvement.

It has been argued that Auguste Mariette was not the sole author of the outline that Verdi received. It is known that Mariette was awarded Egypt's highest honors for his archeological discoveries, the titles of Bey and Pasha, respectively. His knowledge of Egyptian history is above question. Yet Osborne states that Mariette could not have submitted the finished product and speculates that Du Locle filled out Mariette's sketch that Osborne assumed to be lacking in detail. He also hypothesizes that elements were taken from other dramatists, including Metastasio and Racine.15

---

One reason for a prevalence of the thought that Mariette was assisted in his writing is Du Locle's misrepresentation through expansion of his role in the collaborative process. Du Locle explained that Mariette wrote the initial story, but that he, Du Locle, wrote the libretto line by line and scene by scene during his visit with Verdi at Bussetto.\textsuperscript{16} This is untrue; Du Locle wrote an incomplete scenario, not the libretto of the opera \textit{Aida}. Du Locle contradicted himself in a previously written letter to Verdi stating that Mariette and the Viceroy (the Khedive of Egypt) composed the Outline (the inclusion of the Viceroy was incorrect). He explained: "The Egyptian libretto is the work of the Viceroy and Mariette Bey, the famous archeologist. None else has put a hand to it. It has been edited and printed in Egypt, as I told you."\textsuperscript{17}

The inference by Osborne that Mariette did not possess the tools to write such a thorough sketch of an opera lacks foundation. Mariette, a 19th-century archeologist, was a scholar and explorer who, while employed by Viceroy Ismail from 1858 through 1881 made numerous discoveries of Egypt's monuments and historical sites.\textsuperscript{18} Mariette not only possessed the knowledge of Egypt to formulate a plausible plot, he also had written books that

\textsuperscript{16} Kitson, 76.
\textsuperscript{17} Du Locle to Verdi, Paris, 29 May 1870, Busch, 17.
\textsuperscript{18} Kitson, 13.
required plot development. Prior to his work in Egypt, Mariette taught in Boulogne, where he wrote many romances including *Hassan le Noir*, and *Properce, ou l'Héritier Supposé.*

Another incorrect portion of Osborne’s assumption concerns the history of the story itself. Osborne is among several scholars who, following Metteo Glinski, noted similarities between the plot of *Aida* and that of the Metastasio play *Nitteti*, "'musicked' by thirteen composers between 1756 and 1812 which its author claimed to have derived from Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus." Yet many discrepancies are found in the two plots. While the two stories are similar, the plot of *Aida* is simple in comparison to that of *Nitteti* which contains an *antefatto*, several mistaken identities, and a large cast; Osborne himself states that the situations in *Aida* are not new. The similarities between *Aida* and *Nitteti* can be found in many dramas. Therefore, Mariette alone is given credit for the initial and original story of *Aida*.

On some level, Mariette, in all probability, based the characters Aida and Amneris on women in Egyptian history or folklore. Traceable historical elements of the *Aida* story include the conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia, a

---


20 Budden, 165.

21 Budden, 165-66.
conflict that is pervasive throughout history, and the probability of names being based on actual people: Amonasro (King Meroe), Aida (Arabic name) and Amneris (princesses of Amon, called Amenirdis, of seventh century B.C.)\textsuperscript{22} There are many women in the history of northern Africa that Mariette could have studied.\textsuperscript{23} If there are historical figures upon which the characters Aida and Amneris are based, they cannot be identified from the Mariette Outline because he did not specify a time period or identify a sovereign.

Aside from the possibility of Aida and Amneris having bases in actual historical figures, their characterizations have their genesis in the Outline of Mariette. For a time, a copy of Mariette's Outline could not be found; French scholar Jean Humbert located one entitled \textit{Aida, opéra en quatre actes et en six tableaux} in the files of Nuitter at the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra under the shelf-mark Réserve III.\textsuperscript{24}

It is evident in the letters of Verdi that he began work on the libretto as soon as he received Mariette's Outline. Verdi stated: "Here I am at the Egyptian affair; and first of all I must set aside time to compose the opera,

\textsuperscript{22} Simpson, 34.

\textsuperscript{23} This point is developed by Mary Jane Matz, "An Ancestor for \textit{Aida}," \textit{Opera News} 20, no. 8 (26 December 1955).

\textsuperscript{24} Budden, 169.
because this is a work of the broadest proportions (as though it were for the
grande boutique), and because the Italian poet must first find the thoughts to
put into the mouths of the characters and then fashion the verses from
them.\textsuperscript{25}

Kitson and Budden agree that Verdi and his wife Giuseppina translated
the Mariette Outline from French to Italian prior to Du Locle’s visit. The
autograph manuscript was probably written during June 1870 with Acts I and
II in Verdi’s handwriting, and Acts III and IV in his wife’s.\textsuperscript{26}

The Outline illustrates the blatant conflict of affections that had been
established as a focal point in the opera from its inception: the conflict
between Aida and her father, Amonasro, over the deception of Radames.
Aida begins the opera with her loyalties toward sexual love firmly established.
It is at the news of her father leading the Ethiopians that a foreshadowing of
the conflict is shown — Aida almost faints at hearing the news.

The conflict is voiced in the first act when Aida states that her loyalties
are divided between her lover and her father; she is alone and confused.
Aida realizes that there is no happy outcome to this battle. The inference is
that the fates will make her decision between sexual and filial love, not she.

\textsuperscript{25} Verdi to Du Locle, St. Agata, 2 June 1870, Busch, 19.

\textsuperscript{26} Kitson, 134.
The moment of decision is in Act III, where Mariette states three reasons for vacillation; Aida's father convinces her to choose him through his argument against the ignoble Egyptian soldiers, memories of her childhood in Ethiopia, and rivalry with Anmeris for Radames. Until Act III, sexual love is primary and unchallenged.

The inclusion of the promise of everlasting life with Radames allows sexual love to continue even though there is a shift in the primal affection, the choice now being filial. The premise that love of country is magnified filial love is supported. Aida's father includes memories of Aida's childhood as well as those of the ongoing war between Ethiopia and Egypt to sway her choice for filial love.

There is no choice for Anmeris to make between sexual and filial love. Throughout most of the Outline, her sexual love is supplemented by her love of country. She is excited that Radames is a soldier and even more so when he returns victorious; Mariette states that her love for Radames grows because of his glory.

Also there is no choice made by Amneris after she discovers that Radames is a traitor. At no point does she choose her country or think of the possible consequences to her country or father because of the betrayal by Radames. Her choice is still sexual as she leaves him at the mercy of the
fates and the wrath of men after he is willing to die for Aida — Amneris is angry because her love is unrequited.

Many similarities shared by the Princesses Aida and Amneris in subsequent revisions of the plot are present in one of the two characters in Mariette's Outline. Rivalry is established in both characters, as there is the choice of sexual love by both characters. From the beginning of the opera Amneris is suspicious of Aida, those suspicions foster hatred to the point of wishing Aida dead. As stated, Aida is influenced toward her choice of filial (and patriotic) love by her rivalry with Amneris. This choice is hastened by it being inclusive of her sexual love; Aida's father states that Radames will be captured and taken as a slave to Ethiopia, where he will be enslaved to Aida. Those bonds will be eternal.

The characters Amneris and Aida as outlined by Mariette use their eyes effectively. Amneris detains Radames with an imperious look during their initial conversation. Aida uses her eyes to wrest from Radames the secret route of his troops; she implores him with her eyes.

A reliance on deities is stronger in the characterization of Aida than that of Amneris. Aida prays to the Goddess Isis, the protector of love while she is waiting for Radames after his return from the campaign. In Act I, Aida blames the gods for offering no mercy to her; she is confused about her
loyalties and longs for death. Aida is rewarded by the gods in that the gates of heaven appear to her as she dies in the tomb with Radames.

In the Mariette Outline, Amneris has little need for the gods. It is not until Radames's refusal to defend his honor or renounce Aida that Amneris mentions the gods; she leaves Radames to their will.

The character of Amneris more blatantly displays cunning than that of Aida in the Outline. Amneris couples cunning with deception. She pretends sorrow as she fabricates the death of Radames so that she will gain confirmation of her rivalry with Aida. Aida is cunning as she uses her feminine charms to persuade Radames to betray Egypt. Aida is deceptive throughout the story; her pretense as an unimportant slave is both cunning and deceptive. She is the daughter of the king of Ethiopia, and has not divulged this information to either her lover or her rival.

The denial of self that Aida portrays with her presence in the subterranean chamber can be examined on many levels. At this point one must confirm that denial of life is a principle that Mariette intended to exemplify. Yet it is Amneris who displays the true sense of self-denial as she offers Radames to the will of the priests, a gesture of certain death for him. Therefore it is Amneris who gives up her sexual love for all eternity, not Aida.
Another place where a prescriptive perception of self-denial by Aida is inaccurate is where she chooses filial love. In the Outline, Mariette does not illustrate a tormented Aida, but one with a choice that will gain her sexual and filial loves that are not mutually exclusive.

Mariette was clear in his characterizations of Aida and Amneris as distinct entities. The similarities, with the exception of sexual love, are cast in such a way as to offer sharp contrasts. Amneris uses her eyes to command, Aida to implore. Aida prays to, beseeches, and is blessed by the gods; Amneris offers Radames to them. Amneris is cunning and deceptive to gain information; Aida gains information through cunning without deception. Amneris declares her rivalry with Aida; Aida, though a rival, never states this. Aida states her love of country, using it as motivation for her to seek information from Radames; Amneris is ready to forgive a betrayal of her country for the love of Radames.
Chapter Two
Characterizations of Aida and Amneris: The Verdi/Du Locle Scenario

The basic plot of Aida did not change through the alterations by Verdi, but the characterizations were expanded and modified. Verdi realized the characters of his operas in light of his personal view of the human condition, thereby inciting a drama of personalities and the interrelationships among those personalities.\(^\text{27}\) The evolution and redistribution of similarities in the characterizations of Aida and Amneris reflect this concept of drama based on personalities.

It was Verdi who supervised the direction of the nonmusical elements of characterizations of Aida and Amneris. He honed the characterizations incorporating the similarities that were previously established by Mariette. Verdi was assisted in molding the characters by his friend Du Locle, the emissary of the story of Aida from Mariette to Verdi and the librettist for the French translation of the completed opera. Du Locle visited Verdi in June 1870, and together they developed the Mariette Outline into a draft of the libretto in dialogue and prose.\(^\text{28}\) This draft is incomplete not only for the


\(^{28}\) Andrew Porter, "Aida," About the House 6, no. 11 (Spring 1984): 5.
sketched scenes interspersed with refined dialogue, but also in that Act IV is a different sketch; it was written by Verdi after Du Locle’s departure.

Of the Du Locle visit Verdi stated, "We studied the outline together, and together we made the modifications we thought necessary. Du Locle has left with the conditions and the modifications. . . ." Kitson confirms Verdi and Du Locle as partners in drafting of the prose/dialogue Scenario, proves Verdi's ideas are the basis for enhancing Mariette's Outline, and hypothesizes that Du Locle acted as secretary. In the above letter to Ricordi, Verdi does not substantiate Du Locle as secretary, yet he also does not give Du Locle the paramount position in the collaborative process that Du Locle claimed.

One fact that could support Kitson’s hypothesis of Du Locle as secretary is the brevity of Du Locle’s visit with the Verdis. Du Locle claimed to have stayed with the Verdis for three weeks to complete the Scenario; however, Verdi's letters to Du Locle and Ricordi respectively state that Du Locle had not arrived as of 18 June 1870 and that Du Locle had departed by 25 June -- the visit was approximately one week. Kitson’s proposal may never be substantiated, but it must be remembered that the

29 Verdi to Ricordi, St. Agata, 28 June 1870, Busch, 27.
30 Kitson, 144.
31 Kitson, 140-41.
last portion, Act IV of the prose/dialogue Scenario was not drafted. The Act IV Sketch that completes the preversification stage is in Verdi's handwriting. Also, Verdi wrote to Ricordi of his activities after Du Locle's departure, "I have further studied the outline, and I have made and am still making new changes."32

Verdi met briefly with the librettist of *Aida*, Ghislanzoni, soon after completion of the Scenario with Du Locle. Of that visit, Verdi wrote:

> I continuously reread the outline of *Aida*. I see some notes by Ghislanzoni which (just between us) frighten me a little; I would not want us, in order to avoid imaginary dangers, to end up saying something that does not belong in the situation or in the scene; and, likewise, I would not want the theatrical words to be forgotten. By theatrical words, I mean those that carve out a situation or a character, words that always have a most powerful impact on the audience. I know well that sometimes it is difficult to give them a select and poetic form. But . . . (pardon the blasphemy) both the poet and the composer must have the talent and the courage, when necessary, not to write poetry or music.33

As Verdi was not particularly pleased with Ghislanzoni's notes, Ghislanzoni, in probability, had limited impact on the libretto prior to versification. The preversification stage, post-Mariette, consisted of the collaboration between Verdi and Du Locle from the first through third acts and substantive development of the fourth act by Verdi himself.

32 Verdi to Ricordi, St. Agata, 25 June 1870, Busch, 27.

33 Verdi to Ricordi, Sunday, [St. Agata, 10 July 1870], Busch, 31.
Of the fourth-act, Kitson states:

Verdi’s method of assembling and writing the fourth act of the prose Italian libretto differs somewhat from that employed in large portions of the preceding acts owing to the fact that the *modificazioni* contains neither a prose narrative sketch nor a prose libretto for any part of this act.\(^{34}\)

One of the most striking situations of the opera is the subterranean chamber scene, with Amneris praying above the dying lovers. Even Du Locle admitted that "The idea of the finale of the last act, with its two superimposed scenes, belongs particularly to him [Verdi]."\(^{35}\)

The autograph of the Verdi/Du Locle Scenario contains four title pages and 34 sides of legal paper on which there is Verdi’s watermark; the writing is Du Locle’s.\(^{36}\) This unbound autograph is in French and is preserved at Sant’ Agata in the Carrara Verdi collection; it is written in pencil.\(^{37}\)

A study of the microfilm at the American Institute for Verdi Studies at New York University revealed the autograph of the Scenario to be 43 sides of legal-size paper, with blank sides interspersed, that appear to be embossed with Verdi’s initials. The microfilm also pictures one smaller piece of paper

\(^{34}\) Kitson, 250.

\(^{35}\) Du Locle for "L’Italie," 28 March 1880, Kitson, 76.

\(^{36}\) Busch, 448.

\(^{37}\) Kitson, 143.
on which there is writing. From the study of the apparent embossments, the edges of the separate pages, and the copy that can be seen through the 43 sides, it appears that the photographer did not reproduce the back of page 29, and the back of the smaller page also was not reproduced.

The microfilm also shows three title pages, not the four that Busch contends. "Act II" is written at the top of page 11. This page contains an outline that is marked through. Page 11 could be construed as a title page in that it is followed by a blank page (as are the title pages to the acts) and it is placed before the actual title page to Act II. However, the correct title page for Act II, page 21, is written in the style of the title pages for Acts I and III; the specific act and the title of the opera are all that appear on the actual title pages. It should be remembered that the autograph is unbound and might be out of the order in which it was written.

The Act IV Sketch that is in Verdi's handwriting is presumed to be a part of a lost document of 37 pages, a scenario subsequent to that written with Du Locle. Kitson states that there are numerous drafts of the fourth act written by Verdi in Italian. Verdi wrote the drafts in simple language so that the exact meaning of the words and the dramatic sequences could be

---

38 Budden, 171.

39 Kitson, 250.
adopted easily from these drafts or the two French versions of the *Aida* story, Mariette’s Outline and the Verdi/Du Locle Scenario. As Verdi and Du Locle did not sketch Act IV during their visit, and there are numerous drafts by Verdi, he is proved the sole author of the expansions to Act IV of Mariette’s Outline.

The Verdi/Du Locle Scenario is printed in Verdi’s *Aida* as one continuous document. The plot of *Aida* found therein is not continuous, but edited and modified within the manuscript. The Scenario vacillates between dialogue and prose copy, not often within continuous dramatic material, but always between the primary and the revised versions of the dramatic material. As delineated by writing styles and dramatic content, this Scenario should be divided into six distinct drafts. The microfilm of the autograph supports this division in that the six drafts end with partial (2, 3 and 6), blank (1) or complete (4 and 5) pages that are followed by pages entitled with subsequent acts or scenes; Busch deletes the blank and partial pages, which in turn upsets the portions ending with complete pages and all entitled beginnings. The clear demarcations within the autograph, coupled with the changes of writing style and content, prove that there are six drafts within the Busch/Du Locle Scenario.

---

40 Kitson, 220.
The first draft (Busch, 448-55) includes dramatic material of Act I through Act II, 1st tableau, scene 2, and is written in dialogue with prose passages frequently inserted toward the end. The second draft (Busch, 457-58) is written in prose and encompasses Act II, 2nd tableau, scene 1. This draft and what is numbered draft three are in reverse order as printed by Busch. These drafts are reordered in this monograph because of dramatic content.

Draft three (Busch, 456-57) is comprised of Act II, 1st tableau. Not only does this draft repeat material previously presented, it contains a new dramatic situation. It is written in dialogue, however, this dialogue, as compared to the dialogue in draft one appears closer in style to that found in the Aida libretto (concise); the draft one dialogue being less refined.

The dialogue form of the fourth draft (Busch, 459-62) and the incorporated material, Act II, 2nd tableau, scenes 1 and 2, prove it an edited version of draft two. Draft five (Busch, 463-65) contains Act III in prose (scene 1) and an outline. The outline which follows does not adhere to the plot as presented by Mariette, nor subsequent modifications under Verdi.

Draft six of the Verdi/Du Locle Scenario (Busch, 465-70) is Act III, scenes 1-5 in dialogue form, and a description of Act IV, 2nd tableau. A portion of this material is the edited form of draft five. Act IV, 1st tableau does not appear in any of the drafts. The six drafts, coupled with the Act IV
Sketch by Verdi, offer a complete view of the preversification evolution and redistribution of similarities of the characterizations of Aida and Amneris.

Charts compiled by this author of the dramatic actions of Aida and Amneris as found in the six drafts will precede the discussions of the characterizations.

Fig. 2

Draft I - Dialogue (prose ending)\textsuperscript{41}

Act I - Act II, 1st tableau
1. Amneris questions Radames for the identity of the fortunate women who brings him joy.
2. Amneris asks Radames if he could leave Memphis without regret.
3. Amneris realizes that Radames is indifferent to her and that he is attempting to hide something from her.
4. Aida enters; she, troubled, stops when she sees Radames.
5. Amneris asks herself if Aida is her rival; she pretends sisterly affection for Aida.
6. Aida pretends that her anxiety is caused by the threat of war.
7. Aida states her confusion about her loyalties.
8. Amneris states her jealousy and says that she will win Radames.
9. Amneris and Aida express concern for Radames at war.
10. Amneris, followed by Aida declare that Radames should return victorious.

Act II
11. Alone, Aida laments her confused state.
12. Amneris offers the pretense of sisterly affection to Aida.
13. Aida states that she thinks of her country and her family.
14. Amneris tells Aida that Radames is dead.
15. Aida states that she too should die, that the daughter of the king of Ethiopia should die.

\textsuperscript{41} Du Locle, "Scenario," Busch, 448-55.
Fig. 2 (continued)

16. Amneris asks why Aida should cry for Radames.
17. Aida states that she weeps for all that she has loved.
18. Amneris reiterates that Radames is dead.
19. Aida reiterates that the gods are without pity.
20. Amneris's suspicion is confirmed; she says that she must observe Aida when she sees Radames return.
21. Amneris questions why her eyes cannot kill Aida.
22. Aida, to herself, reiterates that Radames is dead.
23. To herself, Amneris says that Radames is alive and that Aida, in that she is Amneris's rival, will be destroyed.

In the first Verdi/Du Locle draft Amneris and Aida have chosen sexual love. They are concerned for Radames. Aida's confused state is highlighted, yet a predilection for sexual love is established. While the characterizations of Aida and Amneris offer no dictates about the use of their eyes in this draft, other similarities of characterization as previously outlined in this document are applicable.

Amneris indirectly is involved with her deities. She is present as the slaves offer glory to Isis for the safe and victorious return of Radames. She mentions to Aida that a god of love will comfort her, a ruse that is a part of garnering confirmation of their rivalry.

The first Verdi/Du Locle draft contains a dramatic aria for Aida after she wishes Radames a victorious return. Aida offers a plea for the gods to defeat the Egyptian army. She immediately recants, stating that the gods should end her life. After Aida is deceived about the death of Radames, she states that the gods are pitiless. This is extended by Aida's thought that the
gods have punished her for her sacrilege; they have avenged themselves because she dared to love the destroyer of her country.

Aida is cunning as she evades Amneris when first questioned about her agitation. Aida states that her anxiety stems from the threat of war instead of admitting that it is a result of her excitement from seeing Radames. Amneris is cunning and deceptive as she attempts to confirm Aida as her rival.

The rivalry of the characters Aida and Amneris is understood. Amneris is consumed by the need for confirmation of this rivalry throughout the first Verdi/Du Locle draft. Self-denial is intimated as Aida prays to the gods to take her life.

As Conrad established, patriotic love is a magnification of filial love in many of Verdi's operas, especially in the opera *Aida*. Throughout Aida's dramatic aria, which subsequently would become the aria "Ritorna vincitor!," the thought that she, Aida, would wish for Radames to defeat her father and country repulses her. When being questioned by Amneris immediately prior to her deception, Aida states in all honesty that she weeps for her defeated country, and her father and sisters.

Verdi and Du Locle are clear in their requests of the characters Aida and Amneris in the first draft of the Scenario. The points of characterization

---

42 Conrad, 53.
that are similar are distinctly portrayed by each character. The ever-present sexual love for Radames is blatant in Amneris. Aida likewise blatantly chooses sexual love, indeed she is so agitated by Radames's presence that she, Aida, alerts Amneris of her feelings.

While Verdi does not control the drama through Aida's or Amneris's use of their eyes, references are made to the eyes in the characters' observations. Aida prays to and beseeches the gods; Amneris only mentions the god of love while attempting to wrest confirmation of rivalry. Amneris is cunning and deceptive in her attempt to gain this confirmation; Aida is cunning as she avoids entrapment at the initial confrontation over her agitated state. Amneris declares her rivalry with Aida and states that Aida must die; Aida never states this rivalry. Aida asks the gods to give victory to her father, and openly grieves for her defeated country; Amneris need not.

Fig. 3

Draft II - Prose

Act II, 2nd tableau, 1st scene
1. Amneris awaits the triumphant Radames at the side of her father, the king of Egypt; Aida is with the slaves.
2. Aida realizes that she has been deceived when Radames enters.
3. Amneris, who has been watching Aida, rises and with a threatening glance, stops Aida.
4. Aida recognizes her father as one of the captives.
5. Aida begs the king for mercy for her father.

6. Amneris states that Aida must die after Radames asks the king for mercy for Aida’s father.

7. Amneris is given to Radames by the king for marriage.

The second Verdi/Du Lode draft displays continuations of the choices of sexual love by both Aida and Amneris. Aida, who has been threatened by Amneris, cannot stop the show of emotion as she realizes that she has been deceived and Radames is alive. Amneris is joyous after she is awarded to Radames for marriage.

Another characteristic similarity in draft two is rivalry. Verdi notes that Amneris stops Aida through her using her eyes threateningly. Love of country is displayed by Aida, as is self-denial. The brevity of plot precludes the similarities of cunning and of reliance on deities.

Amneris blatantly challenges the surprised Aida with a glare, intimating the ongoing rivalry. The germ of love of country is filial love, and Aida displays filial love and self-denial as she begs for her father’s release; she cannot gain her own.

Draft III - Dialogue

Act II, 1st tableau, scene 2

1. Aida states that she weeps for all that she has loved.

2. Amneris tells Aida that Radames is dead.

Fig. 4 (continued)

3. Aida says that the gods are pitiless.
4. Amneris warns Aida and states that she knows the truth.
5. Aida feigns incomprehension.
6. Amneris admits her deception; Radames lives.
7. Aida falls to her knees and thanks the gods.
8. Amneris states that they both love Radames and declares their rivalry.
9. Aida, beside herself, thanks the gods that Radames lives.
10. Amneris threatens Aida and demands that she desist with Radames.
11. Aida asks that she be allowed to hide in the palace.
12. Amneris commands Aida to accompany her to the triumphal ceremony.

The third Verdi/Du Locle draft is the most thorough in its setting of the plot in dialogue form. The brevity of the dramatic material presented allows few points of development of the characterizations, but offers a situation that has not been presented in the previous drafts: Amneris admitting that her announcement of Radames's death is a trick.

The choice of sexual love is dictated through the blatant admission by Amneris of her love for Radames. Aida implies her choice as well as displays her reliance on deities as she thanks the gods that Radames is alive. Amneris is cunning and deceptive in her lie to Aida. Rivalry is established through trickery, but Aida also displays cunning when she tries to curb her emotions at the news of Radames's death.
Draft IV - Dialogue

Act II, 2nd tableau, scene 1 - scene 2

1. Amneris, at the side of her father, awaits the triumphant return of Radames; Aida is among the slave.

2. Aida, throwing herself into the arms of her father, cries to the gods and begs the king for mercy for her father.

3. Aida, silenced by her father, realizes that she was about to betray his position.

4. Amneris is jealous as she notices the love between Radames and Aida.

5. Aida continues to plead for mercy for her father.

6. Amneris realizes the depth of Radames's love for Aida.

7. Amneris is awarded to Radames for marriage.

8. Aida tells her father that she loves Radames.

The fourth Verdi/Du Locle draft allows the characters to openly express the choice of sexual love. Aida is obvious in her choice without speaking, thereby causing jealousy in Amneris. Amneris expresses her rivalry of Aida through her hostility toward the slave after Amneris is awarded to Radames.

Filial love, the archetype of love of country, is displayed by Aida, as is self-denial when she begs for her father's release; she cannot gain her own.

---

Draft V - Prose with Outline

Act III, scene 1 - outline (material undetermined)

1. Amneris enters in a boat on the Nile.
2. Amneris disembarks and states that she will pray to Isis for Radames's love; she goes into the temple.
3. Aida enters the scene, weeping — she is waiting for Radames.
4. Aida calls nature to witness her faithfulness and loyalty.
5. Aida states that she will kill herself if Radames turns to Amneris.
6. Aida is confronted by Amonasro, who reminds her of her homeland, mother, and gods and ancestors.
7. Amonasro wants Aida to use her love to learn the route of Radames's troops.
8. Aida is promised escape with Amonasro, the capture and bondage of Radames, and eternal life with him through this servitude.
9. Aida agrees to gather the information.
10. Aida threatens, entreats, and captivates Radames.
11. Aida tells Radames that she is the daughter of the king of Ethiopia.
12. Aida implores him with her eyes; this convinces him to betray Egypt.
13. Amneris and Ramfis (the Priest) overhear the betrayal.
14. Amneris calls Radames a traitor, but wishes to spare his life because of her love.

(Outline)

The blatant choices of sexual love are expressed in the characterizations of Aida and Amneris in draft five. Amneris shows her consuming desire for Radames through her petition to Isis for assistance in gaining his love, and after she has discovered him to be a traitor by wishing him to remain alive.

Aida also is overt in her choice. She calls nature to witness her loyalty and faithfulness. Aida does not state to what she is loyal and faithful, but one can assume that these emotions are toward Radames, who has been awarded Amneris.

Amneris shows her reliance on deities in her prayer for the love of Radames. It is the first time that Amneris prays to her deity, Isis, a deity invoked by Aida in the Mariette Outline. Aida is persuaded by her father to seek Radames's betrayal of Egypt through the memories of her gods. During the coercion of Radames, rivalry is intimated when Aida states that she will kill herself if Radames goes to Amneris.

Aida shows her cunning through the use of her love and physical attractiveness to gain the betrayal from Radames. As stated in the Outline by Mariette, it is the imploring eyes of Aida that cause Radames to betray Egypt. There is no deception between Aida and Radames because she clearly states her royalty and her intent.

Aida displays a love of country through her persuasion of Radames. Amneris does not think of her country, or of the consequences of Radames's betrayal when she requests that he should live.

This draft of the Verdi/Du Locle Scenario continues the expression of similarities in a way that denotes distinct characters. Again, it is Aida's imploring eyes that secure Radames's betrayal. Amneris prays to Isis for
Radames's love. Aida is cunning in that she uses her love and physical attributes to persuade Radames. Rivalry is inferred. Self-denial at this point in the story is inapplicable. Aida rationalizes her request of Radames through memories of her homeland, her mother, and her eternal life with Radames; love of country, inclusive of filial love, is underscored with sexual love.

Fig. 7

Draft VI - Dialogue and Description
Act III, scenes 1-5 and Act IV
1. Amneris enters in a boat on the Nile.
2. Amneris disembarks and asks why she is at the temple of Isis.
3. Amneris agrees that she should pray to Isis.
4. Aida, alone, asks the night to hide her as she awaits Radames.
5. Aida, during her *romanza* states that she will kill herself if Radames turns to the beautiful Amneris.
6. Aida is puzzled — she then recognizes her father's voice.
7. Amonasro tells Aida that she can save her love and her country; that she must remember her gods, ancestors, and the splendors of her homeland.
8. Amonasro tells Aida that she must learn the route of Radames's troops.
9. Aida is promised escape with Amonasro, the capture of Radames, and eternal life with him (Radames).
10. Aida states that it will be so; her gods avenged and her beloved with her forever.
11. Aida tells Radames that she is the daughter of the king of Ethiopia.
12. Aida states that Egypt is inhospitable and that they should flee to Ethiopia.

---

Fig. 7 (continued)

13. At his silence to her statement, Aida tells Radames that he does not love her.
14. Aida asks Radames for the route of his troops. (Silent scene)
15. Aida, supported by her father, reaches toward Radames and entreats him with her eyes.
16. Aida bows, then falls to her knees imploring Radames.
17. Aida stands, places her head in her hands, and sinks into her father’s arms, weeping.
18. Aida, after Radames succumbs, speaks of the joy that awaits.
19. Amneris, overhearing Radames states that he is a traitor.
20. Amneris states that she loves Radames and that he shall live.

Act IV Outline

21. Amneris kneels on the stone that seals the subterranean tomb from above as Aida dies.

The obvious choice for sexual love is stated by both Aida and Amneris in draft six. Amneris states this choice as she enters the temple of Isis and also after she learns that Radames is a traitor. Aida expresses this choice in her *romanza* when she states that she will kill herself if Radames leaves her, then also as she is attempting to persuade him to betray Egypt. This attempt is fostered by the promise of eternal life (love) with Radames.

Amneris shows a hesitant reliance on deities, even though she eventually prays to Isis. She questions her situation, asking why she is there. Amneris admits that she should solicit Isis, the Goddess of Love, after an explanation
by the priests that she, Amneris, as a pious princess should petition Radames's love on the eve of her wedding.

Aida is assisted in her decision to gain information from Radames through her memories of her gods. A reliance on deities is also displayed when she states that her gods should be avenged. She offers her gods to Radames during their confrontation.

A denial of self, the suicide in the final act, is foreshadowed by Aida's statement during her romanza that she will kill herself if she cannot have Radames. Amneris also foreshadows her denial of self as she does not care about the betrayal by Radames; he must live regardless of her responsibilities to her subjects or family.

Love of country is demonstrated by Aida's agreement to garner information from Radames. Her statements on the beauty and splendor of her homeland also denote this love of country. Amneris does not think of the reprisals to her country from the betrayal by Radames when she states that he must live -- her choice is sexual love.

The characterization of Aida in draft six denotes a use of the eyes that alter the dramatic situation, a reliance on deities, cunning, rivalry, and love of country. Self-denial is intimated. Amneris's characterization displays a lesser sense of reliance on deities in that she only prays after an explanation.
as to why she should. Both characters are overt in their choice for sexual love; they confirm this choice through direct voicings of this emotion.

Fig. 8

Act IV - Dialogue
1. Amneris states that Aida, her rival, has fled.
2. Amneris wishes Radames to live; she states that she loves him desperately and will try to save him.
3. Amneris tells Radames that she will attempt to gain a pardon for him, but that he must renounce Aida.
4. Amneris informs Radames that she wishes him to live even though he seeks death.
5. Amneris says that she will renounce her throne, gods and father for Radames.
6. Amneris tells Radames not to speak of his love for Aida.
7. Amneris warns Radames of her wrath; she offers his fate to the gods when he refuses to accede.
8. Amneris curses the priests.
9. Amneris states that it is her jealousy that will cause the death of Radames and her own eternal grief.
10. In tears, Amneris asks the gods to have pity on Radames.
11. Amneris interceded on behalf of Radames after he has been condemned.
12. Amneris expresses her love for Radames to her father.
14. Aida states her presence in the subterranean chamber, where she has been for four days.
15. Aida observes their blessings from heaven descending upon them.
16. Aida bids Radames farewell then dies.

Verdi's Sketch of Act IV concludes the preversification drafts for consideration. Sexual love is pervasive in the characterizations of Aida and

---

Amneris. Aida offers her life in exchange for death and eternal love. Amneris states her love for Radames and voices this to her father.

Act IV contains no dictates for specific uses of the eyes, cunning, nor deception in the characterizations of Aida or Amneris. Amneris expresses her reliance on deities through her request for the gods to have pity on Radames. Aida expresses her reliance on deities through her acknowledging the descending blessings from heaven.

Self-denial is noted in the Act IV characterizations of both Aida and Amneris. Aida relinquishes her life. Amneris offers to abandon her throne, gods, and father for Radames. It appears that this statement is negated when Amneris, in a fit of jealousy, abandons Radames to his fate. However, Amneris eventually does intercede on behalf of Radames regardless of her jealousy; she is not successful.

When Amneris offers to renounce her throne, gods, and father, there is no regard for love of country or its prototype, filial love. Though it is never stated, Aida's actions infer that she does not think of love of country or filial love when she seals her fate through her burial in the tomb. Both characters, Aida and Amneris, ultimately and permanently choose sexual love.

Similarities of characterization established in the Mariette Outline are included and developed in the Verdi/Du Locle drafts and the Verdi draft of Act IV. Mariette as well as Verdi and Du Locle clearly differentiate Aida
and Amneris as distinct entities; but similarities do exist. Both the frequency and the manner of execution of these similarities as expressed in the characterizations of Aida and Amneris enhance the separate identities. These similarities are a use of the eyes which cause a dramatic action or emotion to occur, a reliance on deities, cunning, deceptiveness, rivalry, self-denial, and love of country — all subjugated to or influenced by sexual love.

Mariette establishes that Amneris uses her eyes to command Radames and Aida uses hers to implore him. Verdi/Du Locle allow Amneris to command Aida through the use of her eyes; Aida continues to implore Radames with hers, causing his betrayal.

In the Outline, Aida prays to, beseeches, and is blessed by the gods (the named one being Isis); Amneris offers Radames to their will. Aida prays to, beseeches, and is blessed by the gods in the Verdi/Du Locle Scenario and Act IV; Amneris prays to Isis for the love of Radames, and eventually offers him to the gods' will. Amneris also mentions a god of love in her attempt to outwit Aida.

Amneris is cunning and deceptive as she attempts to confirm her rivalry with Aida, according to Mariette's Outline; Aida gains information through cunning without deception. In the Verdi/Du Locle Scenario and Act IV, Amneris is more cunning as she deceives Aida; Aida continues to remain cunning, but honest as she attempts to gain information from Radames.
Amneris, as written by Mariette, is obvious and vocal in her rivalry with Aida; Aida never states this rivalry, although it is implied. Verdi and Du Locle allow Amneris to declare this rivalry and to be so consumed by it that she wishes Aida's death. Aida never states this rivalry, but acknowledges Amneris as beautiful and implies that Radames might leave her (Aida).

Aida states her love of country (magnified filial love) in the Outline by Mariette, and this love of country and filial love are factors in her decision to seek information from Radames; Amneris never states her love of country and is ready to renounce her homeland for the love of Radames. In the Verdi/Du Locle Scenario, Aida asks the gods to give victory to her father (fatherland). As in the Mariette Outline, she allows her father to convince her to seek information from Radames. In the Verdi/Du Locle Scenario and Act IV Sketch as in the Mariette Outline, Amneris never states her love of country; she is prepared to leave it (and her father) for the love of Radames.
Chapter Three
Characterizations of Aida and Amneris: The Libretto

*Aida* retained its dramatic framework as established by Mariette through the versification and production processes of Verdi, especially the element of sexual versus filial love. Verdi chiseled the characters Aida and Amneris into stimulating figures that are more attuned to their basic passions, enhancing the opera's dramatic intent. The lyricism and sentimental appeal of Verdi's opera often overshadow the basic human emotions and relationships found therein. The similarities of these emotions and human relationships in the characterizations of Aida and Amneris that Verdi found in the Mariette Outline and honed in the drafts, both independent of and with Du Locle, were established permanently by the completed libretto.

Verdi perceived the dramatic definition of the *Aida* story complete prior to the versification. To Ricordi he wrote, "Now we must think about the libretto or, to say it better, about writing the verses, since all we need now are the verses." For this task Verdi returned to Ghislanzoni, the poet whom he had used for the revision of *La forza del destino*. Even in his request for the librettist, Verdi reiterated the role of versifier only:

"Ghislanzoni - could he and would he do this work for me? It is not an

---

49 Mendelsohn, 230.

50 Verdi to Ricordi, St. Agata, 25 June 1870, Busch, 27.
original work; make that clear to him. It is only a matter of writing the verses. . . . 51

Ghislanzoni never took credit for any original ideas concerning the libretto of Aida. While the title page of the printed libretto for the Cairo premiere reads Parole di Ghislanzoni (words by Ghislanzoni), Ghislanzoni himself wrote Versi di Ghislanzoni (verses, or lines of poetry by Ghislanzoni) on the title page of the autograph; the title page of the first printed Italian libretto that was prepared for the La Scala premiere also reads Versi di Ghislanzoni, and the use of this phrase continued for a time. 52

Verdi not only made suggestions, he actually wrote verses of the text as examples for Ghislanzoni. The letters show how Verdi wished the verses to appear both rhythmically and substantively. Of Ghislanzoni’s manuscript, only page 57 is entirely in Verdi’s handwriting; this material was never established clearly in the Mariette Outline or the Verdi/Du Locle Scenario. 53 Page 57 contains the text for the climactic point of the opera; the betrayal is introduced, requested, done, and overheard.

Since Verdi regarded the prose libretto as complete without versification, the characterizations also were perceived as complete and Verdi

51 Verdi to Ricordi, St. Agata, 25 June 1870, Busch, 27.

52 Kitson, 69-70.

53 Kitson, 296.
corrected and/or approved of the way in which Ghislanzoni set these characters in verse. The letters that Verdi exchanged with Ghislanzoni note that Verdi wished the verses to verify these finalized perceptions: "have the characters say what they must without preoccupying yourself. . . " It is not certain from which outline Ghislanzoni worked. In a letter dated 25 June 1870, Verdi mentioned sending to Ricordi, along with Ghislanzoni, an outline for study; Verdi stated that there were only two copies. Weaver states that Ghislanzoni worked from the Verdi/Du Locle Scenario. Yet in a letter dated 16 August 1870, Verdi mentioned that he would send the French outline "so that you may see the full importance of the tableau."

With the mailing of the first-act verses on 15 July 1870, Ghislanzoni began the cooperative venture of versification. He and Verdi worked continuously, trying to achieve Verdi's vision of the story. After four months Ghislanzoni wrote, "The libretto for Verdi is finished or almost finished; but you know that one cannot say Amen so long as the Maestro has not given

54 Verdi to Ghislanzoni, 16 October 1870, Busch, 79.
55 Verdi to Ricordi, St. Agata, 25 June 1870, Busch, 27.
57 Verdi to Ghislanzoni, St. Agata, 16 August 1870, Busch, 47-48.
58 Ghislanzoni to Tornaghi, [Lake Como], 15 July 1870, Busch, 33.
the intonation." Shortly thereafter, Verdi expressed his perception to Ricordi that the libretto was not complete: "Ghislanzoni has finished, but there is a lot of reworking to do. It is obvious that he is afraid of the ending. I, who am not afraid at all, definitely plan to show Amneris, to have her kneel above the stone of the subterranean chamber, and to sing a Requiem, an Egyptian De profundis."

The chart below outlines the dramatic directive for Aida and Amneris as found in the libretto.

Fig. 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Libretto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Act I</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Amneris uses cunning as she questions Radames about his happiness and his chosen lover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Amneris thinks that Radames might love another woman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Amneris observes Radames as he looks at Aida; she questions if Aida could be her rival.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Amneris feigns sisterly affection for Aida; she pretends concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Aida states that she weeps for her unhappy country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Amneris states (to herself) that the slave should tremble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Aida states (to herself) her confusion about her loyalties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Aida asks for whom she weeps and should pray; she loves Radames.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Amneris, followed by Aida calls for Radames to return victorious.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

59 Ghislanzoni to Tornaghi, [Mariaga, 2 November 1870], Busch, 90.

60 Verdi to Ricordi, Monday [St. Agata, 7 November 1870], Busch, 98.
Fig. 9 (continued)

11. Alone, Aida berates herself for wishing victory; stating that her father fights to rescue her.
12. Aida thinks of the horrors of her war-torn land; yet she also loves Radames.
13. Aida laments her confused state.
14. Aida begs the gods to end her suffering, to allow her to die.

Act II

15. Amneris rhetorically beseeches her lover to come to her.
16. Amneris expresses conflicting emotions at the entrance of Aida; Amneris states that to her, Aida's grief is sacred but that she, Amneris is suspicious of Aida and Radames.
17. Amneris pretends friendship toward Aida, and says that she, Aida, will live happily.
18. Aida asks how she can have happiness away from her homeland and ignorant of the fate of her family.
19. Amneris offers pity, and states that time and a powerful god of love will heal Aida.
20. Aida is effusive about love.
21. Amneris, sensing the worst, states that she almost would not want to question Aida.
22. Amneris encourages Aida to tell to her secrets; Amneris asks if there is a loved-one among the troops.
23. Amneris tells Aida that Radames is dead.
24. Aida asks Amneris to repeat her statement.
25. Amneris asks Aida why does she weep.
26. Aida states that she will weep forever.
27. Amneris asserts that the gods have avenged Aida; Aida says that the gods have always been against her.
29. Amneris confirms her knowledge by Aida's reaction when she states that Radames lives.
30. Aida thanks the gods.
31. Amneris states that she loves Radames; she, the daughter of the Pharaohs.
32. Amneris declares Aida her rival.
33. Aida reiterates that Amneris is her rival and states "So be it."
34. Aida asks for pardon and states that she in powerless, owning only this love.
Fig. 9 (continued)

35. Amneris threatens Aida — she says that this love could cause Aida’s death.

36. Amneris says that Aida shall appear in the dust at the triumphal ceremony, while she, Amneris will be exalted.

37. Aida asks for pity, stating that her love will soon end in the grave.

38. Amneris commands Aida to come, see if she can fight.

39. Aida beseeches the gods for mercy.

40. Aida recognizes her father at the triumphal ceremony.

41. Amneris states that Aida’s father is a captive.

42. Aida begs the king for mercy for her father.

43. Amneris states her jealousy over Radames and Aida; she says that vengeance is hers.

44. Amneris is awarded to Radames for marriage.

45. Aida expresses her hopelessness.

46. Amneris is overcome with joy at the announcement of their betrothal.

Act III

47. Amneris states that she will pray for Radames’s love.

48. Aida, alone, is waiting for Radames; she says that she will kill herself if he severs the relationship.

49. Aida states that she will never see the radiance of her country again now that her hope in Radames is gone.

50. Aida is startled by her father.

51. Aida tells her father that she is in Amneris’s power.

52. Aida is promised by Amonasro her throne, country and lover.

53. Aida is reminded of the ignoble Egyptian conquerors and she asks the gods to return peace to Ethiopia.

54. Aida is horrified at the thought of gaining information from Radames.

55. Aida pleads for mercy from her father as he barrages her with guilt; he states that she is the cause of the destruction of her homeland.

56. Aida acquiesces after she is rejected as her father’s daughter; she states that she will be worthy of him.

57. Aida sends Radames away, saying that he belongs to Amneris.

58. Aida states that Amneris will seek vengeance if Radames, in victory, asks for Aida.
Fig. 9 (continued)

59. Aida states that they should flee to a beautiful country.
60. Aida tells the hesitating Radames that he can retain his
    gods there, and gain freedom.
61. Aida tells Radames to go, that he does not love her.
62. Aida, after Radames relents, speaks of the beauty of her
    homeland.
63. Aida asks for the route of the troops, pretending to need
    it to avoid capture.
64. Aida tries to calm Radames after he realizes that he has
    betrayed his country.
65. Amneris has overheard the betrayal; she calls Radames a
    traitor.
66. Aida announces Amneris as her rival.
67. Aida flees with Amonasro.

Act IV
68. Amneris, alone, excuses the betrayal by Radames in that
    he wished only to elope -- then calling for his death as a
    traitor.
69. Amneris wishes that Radames could love her.
70. Amneris tells Radames that he must defend himself so
    that she can ask for his pardon.
71. Amneris tells Radames that he must live, that she will
    give up her country, her throne, her life for him.
72. Amneris assures Radames that she has not killed Aida;
    the slave has vanished.
73. Amneris asks Radames to renounce Aida in exchange for
    her, Amneris, to save his life.
74. Amneris offers Radames to the will of the gods; he has
    changed her love into rage.
75. Amneris berates her jealousy as she awaits the judgement
    of Radames, stating her jealousy the cause of his death
    and her eternal grief.
76. Amneris curses the priests.
77. Amneris asks the gods to save Radames.
78. Amneris, hearing the sentence of burial alive, curses the
    priests, stating that the vengeance of heaven will fall upon
    them.
79. Aida announces to Radames her presence in the
    subterranean chamber; she had anticipated his sentence.
Fig. 9 (continued)
80. Aida observes their blessings from heaven that are descending upon them.
81. Aida bids Radames farewell.
82. Anmeris, kneeling on the stone that seals the subterranean chamber from above, implores the gods for Radames's passage into heaven and peace.
83. Aida dies.
84. Anmeris, sobbing, reiterates peace.

The characteristic similarities in the *Aida* Outline and Scenario were expanded and altered for dramatic viability in the libretto; Verdi needed verses that were true to the characters while unfolding the story. Aida and Amneris show a reliance on deities. Aida asks that the gods end her life, as she is confused about her loyalties. At the announcement of the death of Radames, Aida says that the gods have always been against her; she then thanks them after she learns that he is alive. She beseeches them for mercy, as she must face Radames in humiliation when he returns triumphant. Reminded of the ignoble Egyptian army's treatment of her homeland, Aida asks the gods to grant it peace. Aida states that Radames will not have to relinquish his gods should he flee with her to her homeland; this is not mendacity, as Isis was worshiped throughout Egypt and in parts of Ethiopia, especially at the holy city of Meroé. Maryla Friedlaender, "*Aida* and the Cult of Isis," *Opera News* 11, no. 10 (23 December 1946): 11.
The characterization of Amneris in the libretto shows more reliance on deities than in previous expositions. Amneris mentions the gods as a part of her deception of Aida; she states that Aida will be healed from her unhappiness by a god of love and that Aida's gods have been avenged at the death of Radames. In anger, Amneris discards Radames's fate to the will of the gods. As she awaits the judgement from his trial, Amneris asks the gods to have mercy upon him. She states that vengeance from heaven will befall the priests; they kill an innocent man. Amneris begs the gods for the passage of Radames into heaven, and for peace.

Aida and Amneris share the trait of cunning throughout the libretto. In Act One as well as in the confrontation scene of Act Two, Aida uses her concern for her country and family to avoid truthful answers to Amneris's questions; they would reveal her affection for Radames. The libretto allows cunning and deceptiveness in the characterization of Aida as she learns the route of the troops through guile, not from a direct question as in the previous versions of the Aida story.

Amneris displays this facet (cunning) of her character from the beginning of the opera; she seeks to ascertain information about Radames's feelings through indirect questions. Amneris is cunning and deceptive when she probes Aida's feelings through falsifying the death of Radames, later admitting the deceit. Amneris states that she does not wish to question Aida
about the relationship, but her sexual love overrules her affection for Aida; Amneris needs confirmation of their rivalry.

Rivalry is present from the opening of the opera. Amneris asks herself if Aida could be her rival. It is the need for confirmation of this rivalry that prompts Amneris to deceive Aida. Upon confirmation, Amneris threatens and challenges Aida because of the rivalry. When the captured Radames refuses to renounce Aida, Amneris's rival, Amneris relinquishes him to the will of the gods, sealing his fate.

The characterization of Aida found in the libretto augments the portrayal of rivalry by Aida. During her confrontation with Amneris, Aida echoes Amneris's statement of rivalry, then announces "so be it." The challenge is quelled immediately when Aida realizes that she was about to reveal her identity; she then begs for forgiveness. Unlike in previous settings it is not the rivalry with Amneris that motivates Aida to gain the information from Radames; however, when Aida sees Amneris, she does not call Amneris by her name nor her title, but announces Amneris as her rival.

Self-denial is evident in both Aida and Amneris through their characterizations as found in the Aida libretto. Aida shows self-denial and filial devotion when she begs for mercy for her father, and also demonstrates both when she agrees to deceive her lover for the good of her country and to
reclaim her father's affection. Aida makes the final denial of self by choosing death — her suicide through burial in the tomb.

Amneris attempts self-denial in her offer to relinquish her country, her throne, and her life in exchange for the love of Radames. While inadvertently choosing it, Amneris experiences her ultimate self-denial, the denial of Radames through his death; she denies herself any options of life with him.

Aida demonstrates a clear love of country and its model, filial love. From the inception of the story as written in the libretto, Aida shows concern for her family and country. Later, this is confused with her emotions about Radames, which leads to the focal points of Aida, sexual versus filial love. The depth of the conflict is strongly established in the libretto by the extensive confrontation between Aida and Amonasro. It is not until Amonasro states that she is no longer his daughter that Aida consents to deceive her lover. In prior writings, Aida is swayed more by her sexual love than filial or patriotic love in her decision to seek the information from Radames; in the libretto it is primarily filial devotion.

Filial love as denoted by pride is found in the characterization of Amneris. She informs Aida that her (Aida's) rival is the daughter of the Pharaohs. Amneris's choice throughout the opera is always sexual love, and
this overrides her patriotic and familial love when she states that she is willing to divest all for the love of Radames.

The primal emotion of sexual love is the overwhelming characteristic in *Aida*. It is the conflict of this love with filial love that is the catalyst for drama. The similarities between Aida and Amneris begin with this shared characteristic as early as the Mariette Outline, and can be traced through all subsequent drafts including the libretto. Without the similarity of sexual love and the ensuing conflict between it and filial love as found in the characterization of Aida, there is no plot of the opera.

Other similarities that can be traced from the Mariette Outline are a use of the eyes to instigate or control the action, a reliance on deities, cunning, deceptiveness, rivalry, self-denial, love of country in its full state and in diminution as filial love. Unlike the Mariette Outline, the libretto does not dictate Amneris to control Radames with her eyes, nor do the Verdi/Du Locle drafts. Aida is not instructed to implore Radames with her eyes in the libretto, as was the case in the Outline and drafts V and VI; in five her imploring eyes convince Radames, in six they do not.

A reliance on deities is present in the initial *Aida* story by Mariette. Aida is the first character to invoke the named gods through her request of Isis for the protection of her lover as he goes to war; Aida's gods are not mentioned by name again. Amneris mentions Isis in the versions subsequent
to the Mariette Outline. In the libretto Amneris does invoke the gods, but she truly beseeches them at the close of the opera with the prayer for ascension and peace for Radames.

Cunning is a trait coupled with deception in the characterizations of Aida and Amneris at various stages of the development of Aida. From the Mariette Outline through the libretto, Amneris displays both when she confronts Aida with the fabricated death of Radames. Amneris is more cunning as written in the libretto than in the previous drafts when she initially approaches Radames in Act I. Aida, deceptive through her omittance of her regality, displays cunning without further deception in the Mariette Outline and through all stages of preversification. It is in the libretto that she is deceptive of Radames when she does not directly request the information of the troops so that they might flee; she falsely claims that the information is necessary for their escape, omitting her heritage and the true intent of this information.

Rivalry is expressed by Amneris at every stage of development of the Aida story. Amneris, from the onset, expresses a premonition of Aida as her rival; this is stated in every setting of the plot. It is Aida who grows in her expression of rivalry as characterized in the libretto. She indirectly challenges Amneris by stating "so be it" after she repeats Amneris's declaration of rivalry. Aida also refers to Amneris as her "rival" when Aida is caught as she
learns the route of the troops from Radames. It is this strength in Aida that helps to denote her royalty and adds new dramatic dimensions.

Self-denial is expanded in the libretto in both the characters. Aida, though unwilling, eventually denies her conscience when she is convinced to betray her lover; in the previous versions Aida wants to gather the information in order to gain Radames. Her final denial (suicide) remains constant and is written similarly to the version drafted in the initial Outline. The characterization of Amneris, as in the Verdi draft of Act IV, offers Amneris a chance to express her readiness for self-denial: if she can have Radames's love, she will renounce throne, country, and life (draft version — father) for him. Aida is not the only character willing to make the ultimate denial, death; so is Amneris.

Love of country and filial love are enlarged in the characterization of Aida in the libretto as differentiated from the Outline, the six drafts of the Scenario, and the Verdi Sketch of Act IV. The conflict between Aida and her father is intensified by Aida's resistance to betray her lover. Unlike the preversification characterizations, Aida is not convinced by the thought that she and Radames will live happily ever-after, but is shamed into submission through her father's denial of her worthiness to be his daughter.

The characterizations of Aida and Amneris are similarly founded in the portrayal of sexual love and the dramatic ramifications when this love is
involved in the same romantic triangle. The resolution of these antagonistic sexual loves is determined by filial devotion.
Chapter Four  
Characterizations of Aida and Amneris: The Production Book

Verdi continued to influence the characterizations of the *Aida* story after the completion of the score for the Cairo premiere. Verdi had the final decisions in the casting of *Aida* at Cairo and La Scala, he added new music for the La Scala premiere, and he prepared the cast for the La Scala premiere.

For the Cairo premiere, Verdi agreed upon Pozzoni and Grossi as Aida and Amneris. For Verdi's return to La Scala he finally settled for Stolz and Waldmann after many requests to Ricordi to find a singer other than Waldmann for Amneris. Verdi expressed his concern about a singer for Amneris to Ricordi: "Keep in mind that this Amneris is driven by the devil, has a powerful voice, is very emotional, and very, very dramatic. . . . We must not make a mistake on this role. A mediocre Amneris means a ruined opera." He originally wished to trust the role to his favorite singer, Teresa Stolz. "I too had thought about la Stolz for Amneris, but all things considered, it is better to entrust her with the role of Aida." This information is often overlooked by scholars and will be significant to subsequent points.

---

*62 Verdi to Ricordi, St. Agata, 24 May 1871, Busch, 163.*

*63 Verdi to Ricordi, Cremona, 25 May 1871, Busch, 164.*
One of the most important aspects of the La Scala premiere was the addition of the aria "O cieli azzuri," better known by the beginning of its recitative, "O patria mia." Verdi wrote to Ghislanzoni:

I would like to add a little piece for Aida alone, an idyll as you once said. The verses you wrote, however, are not quite suitable for an idyll. It's true that an idyll would not be appropriate for the character Aida at that moment in the opera; but, by digressing a little through memories of her native land, the little piece could be made quiet and tranquil, and this would be a balm at that moment.64

This aria, a *romanza* for Aida, was added at the first La Scala performance of *Aida* and became a permanent component of the opera.65 It allows more definition of the character, offering another dimension to the figure as delineated in Cairo. This addition was important not only to the definition of the character Aida, but also in light of the soprano who premiered it, Teresa Stolz.

Twentieth-century scholars have debated the nature of the relationship between Verdi and Stolz. La Stolz, as she was known, gained the reputation as Verdi's *femme fatale*, and became the subject of many apocryphal stories.66 This was in part because of her striking presence; she was tall, statuesque,

---

64 Verdi to Ghislanzoni, Genoa, 5 August 1871, Busch, 196.
65 Parker, 38.
and very attractive, with a special quality that enlivened the stage.\textsuperscript{67} It must be considered that this presence attracted Verdi, who was always searching for great acting as well as great singing. In 1864, he revived \textit{Ernani} for the young soprano from Bohemia; her strong, clear voice and this undefinable presence enraptured both the crowd and the critics.\textsuperscript{68} Sheean theorizes that Verdi’s attraction was more than artistic. While admitting that the evidence is circumstantial, Sheean suggests that Verdi was entranced by Stolz and could not have forgotten her as he wrote \textit{Aida}; Stolz was Aida in Verdi’s mind prior to her premiere of the role.\textsuperscript{69} Regardless of the nature of the relationship, it is clear that she epitomized for Verdi the spinto soprano ideal.

Stolz was a spinto soprano who specialized in Verdi roles after 1865, including \textit{Un ballo in maschera}, \textit{La forza del destino}, \textit{Don Carlos}, and \textit{Aida}; she also performed the falcon roles in \textit{Robert le Diable} and \textit{La Juive} and premiered Verdi’s \textit{Requiem}.\textsuperscript{70} Stolz was initially cast as Amneris for the Cairo premiere and planned to sing the role at La Scala as late as January

\textsuperscript{67} Wechsberg, 140.

\textsuperscript{68} George Martin, \textit{Verdi: His Music, Life and Times} (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc., 1963), 408-09.

\textsuperscript{69} Vincent Sheean, \textit{Orpheus at Eighty} (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, publishers, 1975), 62.

\textsuperscript{70} Rupert Christiansen, \textit{Prima Donna: A History} (London: The Bodley Head, 1984), 220.
1871. Verdi wanted Antonietta Fricci for the original title character and Teresa Stolz for Amneris. Verdi wrote: "What a beautiful thing: la Stolz and la Fricci for those two beautiful roles. Tell la Stolz, even in my name if you wish, that perhaps she may not like the music but that it will be impossible for her to miss the [dramatic] effects in that role." As the Cairo premiere was delayed by war, so was the La Scala premiere; the delay instigated the change of role. By the end of the war Fricci, who had been contracted for Lisbon, was unavailable and Stolz was switched to the role of Aida; as Amneris, Maria Waldmann, a neophyte mezzo-soprano was accepted reluctantly by Verdi.\(^{72}\)

Sheean suggests that Verdi kept Stolz in mind as Aida while writing the opera. As previously noted, Verdi wanted her for Amneris, and Sheean's theory should be applied to the role of Amneris as well. One must remember that there is no proof of Verdi writing this, or any other opera or part, for a specific singer; the conjecture of a relationship that would recant this is based on the beauty of Stolz, both physically and vocally, and her similarity in manner with the character of Aida.\(^{73}\)

---

\(^{71}\) Verdi to Ricordi, Sunday at 4 [Genoa, 1 January 1871], Busch, 123.

\(^{72}\) Budden, 188-89.

\(^{73}\) Sheean, 62.
Stolz was the Aida of record when Ricordi, with Verdi compiled a Production Book based on the staging of the La Scala premiere. The insight that this book offers is invaluable in that it is a recording of what Verdi accepted or expected his characters to be on stage. There are places where Ricordi notes that the music and the words are so closely attuned and the intent obvious that the singers are left to their own devices, not directed.

While the Production Book offers insights into Ricordi's view of the opera as overseen by Verdi, there does exist a libretto annotated by Verdi during the rehearsals of the La Scala premiere. The annotated libretto is associated with the Parma production of *Aida* in 1872. These annotations, however, are found in the Ricordi Production Book inscribed *come fu messa in scena il Teatro alla Scala, Milano* (like the past production at the Theater of the Scala, Milan); it is probable that the annotations were written during the La Scala production and served as a production outline for Verdi in Parma.74

The chart below outlines the dramatic directives for the characterizations of Aida and Amneris as dictated in the synopsis found in the *Aida* Production Book.

---

74 Budden, 191.
Fig. 10

Production Book\textsuperscript{75}

Cast list

i. Amneris is 20 years old; she is very vivacious, impressionable and impetuous.

ii. Aida is 20 years old; she is loving, submissive, and sweet.

Act I

1. Amneris enters and is satisfied to see Radames there.

2. Amneris is obvious in her intent when she asks Radames about his chosen lover; she smiles maliciously.

3. Amneris suspiciously observes Radames after Aida enters.

4. Amneris, in concentrated anger questions if Aida could be her rival.

5. Amneris suddenly alters expression and smiling, pretends sisterly affection.

6. Aida lovingly glances at Radames before approaching Amneris.

7. Aida and Amneris are surprised by the declaration of war.

8. Amneris, followed by Aida calls for Radames to return victorious.

9. Alone, Aida is in deepest sorrow.
   (Stage Direction -- The dictates of the words and music should guide the Aida.)

10. Aida staggers, afflicted with anguish as she leaves.

Act II

11. Amneris, with great expansiveness, rhetorically beseeches her lover to come to her.

12. Amneris is obvious in her intent as she sweetly tells Aida that the love will heal her.

13. Shocked, Aida is effusive about love.

14. Amneris, with suppressed anger, states that she almost would not want to know; her eyes are fixed from time to time on Aida.

\textsuperscript{75} Giulio Ricordi, "Production Book," Busch, 558-618.
Fig. 10 (continued)

15. Amneris is jealous, and aware of her power as she attempts to wrest the secret name of Aida's lover from her; she continuously studies Aida's reactions.

16. Aida is sorrowful upon learning of the death of Radames.

17. Amneris cannot control herself; she is furious as she commands Aida to fear her.

18. Aida is terrified.

19. Amneris is choked with anger as she states that Radames lives.

20. Aida is overcome with joy; she falls to her knees and enthusiastically thanks the gods.

21. Amneris furiously screams that Aida should dare lie to her.

22. Amneris contemptuously glares at Aida and states that they are rivals.

23. Aida, rising with pride, reiterates the challenge and says "so be it."

24. Amneris, with maximum pride, tells Aida that Radames returns.

25. Aida sorrowfully beseeches the gods for mercy; she has little strength left, and can barely walk as she exits.

26. Aida recognizes her father at the triumphal ceremony and rushes to him.

27. Aida begs the king for mercy for her father.

28. Amneris is awarded to Radames for marriage.

29. Aida is sorrowful.

30. Amneris joyously cries out.

Act III

31. Amneris disembarks from a boat on the Nile.

32. Aida enters cautiously; she is agitated.

(Stage Direction -- The dictates of the words and music should guide the Aida.)

33. Aida is shocked and terrified at the unexpected sight of Amonasro, her father.

(Stage Direction -- The dictates of the words and music should guide the artists.)

34. Aida is terrified of her father.

35. Aida is thrown to the ground, and is assisted by her father to her feet after she has consented to deceive Radames.
Fig. 10 (continued)

36. Aida remains frightened by the promise she has made to her father.
37. Aida lovingly tells Radames of her homeland.
38. Aida forcefully tells Radames that he should go, that he does not love her anymore.
39. Aida suddenly changes expression when Radames acquiesces.
40. Aida suddenly stops their departure and asks for the route.
41. Aida tries to calm Radames after he realizes that he has betrayed his country.
   (Stage Direction -- The Aida-Radames-Amonasro confrontation must be portrayed with great fire and enthusiasm.)
42. Amneris calls Radames a traitor.
43. Aida announces Amneris as her rival.
44. Aida flees with Amonasro.

Act IV

45. Amneris, alone and in deepest sorrow, holds her head in her hands; she is perplexed.
   (Stage Direction -- Amneris must observe the dictates of the composer without fear of exaggeration.)
46. Amneris tries to hide her passion as she reasons with Radames.
47. Amneris, with great passion and feeling, tells Radames that he must live.
48. Amneris scornfully turns from him.
49. Amneris excitedly tells Radames to renounce Aida and then she will save him.
50. Amneris is sorrowful when as tells Radames that he has turned her love into fury and that heaven will avenge her.
51. Amneris, with ever increasing passion and anger, begs the gods for mercy for Radames.
52. Amneris, stupefied through sorrow, turns in the direction of the priests and angrily curses them.
53. Aida listlessly staggers into sight; in a feeble voice she states that she is really present.
54. Aida bids farewell to the earth.
Fig. 10 (continued)

53. Amneris enters; she prostrates herself on the stone that seals the subterranean chamber from above.

54. Amneris, choked with tears, implores the gods for Radames’s passage into heaven and peace.

55. Aida dies.

56. Amneris, in a voice broken by sobs, implores peace.

The similarities of characterization were permanently established in the libretto; the Production Book offers insight into what Verdi actually accepted or expected from these characterizations. One obvious similarity found in the Production Book is the ages of the characters, with Aida and Amneris both being twenty years old.

The similarity of a use of the eyes to control the dramatic direction was not prevalent after the drafts; however, much is written in the Production Book about Amneris’s use of the eyes to command her servants; she terrifies Aida with them. The reliance on deities is highlighted in terms of how Aida and Amneris address the gods; sorrowfully, passionately, beseechingly, angrily.

Cunning and deception are vividly characterized through intent-filled smiles, malicious smiles, and impetuous expressions. Impetuousness, a characteristic of Amneris, is also displayed by Aida when she deceives Radames; Aida rapidly changes emotions and expressions. Rivalry is firmly established. Aida rises proudly and confirms the rivalry between her and Amneris; Amneris is angry and jealous beginning at the entrance of Aida in
Act I — she ultimately screams her contention toward Aida after confirming their rivalry in Act II.

Aida, as portrayed in the Production Book, is less faithful to country and more terrified of her father when she agrees to deceive Radames. Aida's filial devotion is not because of affection but inspired by fear. In the original Outline by Mariette, and as presented in the three stages under Verdi (preversification, versification, and production), *Aida* is a story of Amneris's sexual love in opposition to Aida's sexual love that is misled by, but not exclusive of, filial devotion.
Conclusion

Isaiah Berlin has written, "Knowledge of basic human emotions is virtually all the extramusical equipment that is needed to understand Verdi's works, early or late, great or small..." It is these basic emotions, especially sexual and filial love, that form the skeletons for the characterizations of Aida and Amneris in Verdi's *Aida*.

Mariette was the first writer to establish these characters, even though musicologists and biographers dispute his contribution. Mariette explained to his brother, "It's true that I'm not writing the music of the opera in question; it's true that I am not writing the libretto. But the outline is mine; that is, I have put all its scenes in order, and the opera has essentially come out of my bag."^76

The characterizations of Aida and Amneris, as early as Mariette's Outline, display women with similar but strongly separate identities. Clément suggests:


77 Auguste Mariette to Edouard Mariette, [Cairo, 21 June 1870], Busch, 25-26.
Aida is more a Christian than a Nubian. Her chivalrous Radamès is Christian as well. The only Egyptian is the lofty Amneris, the pharaoh's daughter. Her violence, her dignity and her anger are Egyptian. The mournful lamentations during which she has thrown herself on the floor of the temple are Egyptian. Animal-headed gods dwell in Amneris, and, while the lovers sing together about resignation and the virtue of taking leave of the earth, she retains the inflexibility of those standing queens with the graceful arms, those eternal girls whose smiles still light up the walls of tombs, columns of ruins, and capitals where the goddess Hathor, with her cow's ear, signifies desire, intoxication, and happiness. . . . They are both locked up in the temple, both Amneris and Aida. The Egyptian is condemned to live, an authoritarian queen, defeated by the opera; and the Nubian woman is condemned to die. The first one finds herself back with the Egyptian gods, the second carries out her death, thanks to heaven.28

Scholars may never know whether Mariette based Aida and Amneris on actual historical figures. Clément conjectures:

These two heroines, created after a fashion by men of the opera to inaugurate the Suez Canal [sic] amid imperial pomp, Aida and Amneris (thanks to the faithful memory of a passionate archaeologist), are somehow the heiresses to the two greatest figures of women that Egypt has left us. But one of these, Hatshepsut, ruled powerfully, in a world where gods lived and took care of both everyday life and the wonderfully prepared life on the other side of mortal shores. The other, Nefertiti, the beauty with the bent neck, paid the price of her royal husband's monotheistic madness with her freedom. From the confines of the desert, conveyed from memory to memory, surmounting the ridicule of sumptuous restorations with golden trumpets and

28 Catherine Clément, Opera, or the Undoing of Women, translated by Betsy Wing (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 116, 117.
paper palm trees, across the thousands of years separating us from it, this struggle between gods comes down to us.\textsuperscript{79}

No matter what the origin, the characterizations of Aida and Amneris matured through the dictates of Verdi. In \textit{Aida}, the characterizations of Aida and Amneris embody the themes of sexual love and filial relationships, two themes that are central to Italian opera with the second not only central to Verdi's operas, but without comparison in operas by other composers.\textsuperscript{80}

As for La Stolz – can any of the development of the characterization of Aida, or for that matter of Amneris be attributed to her relationship with Verdi prior to and during his writing \textit{Aida}? Was the addition of the aria "O cieli azzuri" for the La Scala premiere influenced by Verdi's involvement with Stolz, his favorite soprano?

What is known is that Verdi had definite dramatic needs for his characters and outlined them, not only in the score of \textit{Aida}, but in his drafts and sketches and in the production materials that survive. Verdi established

\textsuperscript{79} Clément, 117. Of the resources available, Ms. Clément's descriptions of possible historical figures provides characteristics most comparable to those of Aida and Amneris as found in this monograph. However, her inclusion of the Suez Canal as the cause for the inception of this opera is incorrect. Verdi declined to write a hymn for the opening of the Canal, but allowed \textit{Rigoletto} to serve as the inaugural opera for the theater built in honor of the occasion (see Busch, 3, 5n).

\textsuperscript{80} Mendelsohn, part 1, 123.
Aida and Amneris, through words, as separate dramatic entities with similarities in characteristics. They are both twenty-year old princesses who display a reliance on deities, cunning, deceptiveness, rivalry, self-denial, love of country and above all, sexual love. The characterizations of Aida and Amneris demand that the artists become complete personalities, with similar facets that are distinctively written so that the separate identities remain secure. Verdi asked the singers to become actors, and portray the subtleties found within the score, so that the drama unfolds, not through surface and prescriptive characterizations of these princesses, but by the actualities of the human conditions as written.
WORKS CITED


Encyclopaedia Britannica, 13th ed.


The dramatic directives in this appendix are derived from the Production Book of the La Scala premiere of Aïda written by Giulio Ricordi under the supervision of Giuseppe Verdi. The piano-vocal score of Aïda published by Ricordi is the source for the libretto.

 Directive 1

Verdi dictates that Amneris enter at the end of the tenor's aria, "Celeste, Aida." The Ricordi Book states that Amneris should enter and express satisfaction at seeing Radames there.

 Directive 2

Verdi states that Amneris should be expressive when questioning Radames about his feelings (see fig. 9, no. 1). The Ricordi Book elaborates this by stating that Amneris is obvious in her intent when she asks Radames about his chosen lover; she smiles maliciously.

---

81 Busch, 558-618.

82 Giuseppe Verdi, Aïda, Opera in four acts with verses by Antonio Ghislanzoni (Milan: G. Ricordi, 1944).
Directive 3

Prior to Amneris rhetorically questioning whether Aida could be her rival, Verdi dictates that she, Amneris is observant (see fig. 9, no. 3). The Ricordi Book states that Amneris questions, with concentrated anger, if Aida could be her rival.

Directive 4

Verdi asks that Amneris turns to Aida and gracefully calls her . . . stating that Aida is not a slave to her, but more like a sister (see fig. 9, no. 4). Ricordi states that Amneris suddenly alters expression and while smiling, pretends sisterly affection. Ricordi also writes that Aida lovingly glances at Radames before approaching Amneris.

Directive 5

During the confrontation between Amneris and Aida in Act II, Verdi calls for Aida to be lively and excited when singing about love (see fig. 9, no. 20). The Ricordi Book states that Aida is effusive about love because she is shocked by Amneris's statement concerning the healing powers of love.
Directive 6

Aida is instructed to turn and see her father at his entrance after her aria "O cieli azzuri" (see fig. 9, no. 40). Ricordi writes that Aida is shocked and terrified at the unexpected sight of Amonasro, her father.

Directive 7

The tempo is marked fast and agitated when Amneris tells Radames that he has changed her love after because he refuses to renounce Aida (see fig. 9, no 74). The Ricordi Book states that Amneris is sorrowful when she tells Radames that he has changed her love into fury and that heaven will avenge her.
Vita

Myrtle Yvette McDaniel was born in Douglas, Georgia and currently resides in Orangeburg, South Carolina. She made her professional operatic debut in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* with the Orlando Opera Company. She has been a South Carolina Touring Artist, an Artist in Education for South Carolina, a Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Regional Winner, and a featured vocal soloist for *This Other Eden*, a movie produced for the Public Broadcasting System. While at Louisiana State University, Yvette McDaniel was awarded a Louisiana State University Alumni Fellowship, and membership into the Honorary Fraternities of Pi Kappa Lambda and Phi Kappa Phi, respectively. She continued performing while at Louisiana State with appearances as Guest Soloist with the Tennessee Technological Community Orchestra (Cookeville, Tennessee), debuting with the Baton Rouge Opera Company (Baton Rouge, Louisiana), and as a Concerto Competition winner with the Louisiana State University Orchestra. Yvette McDaniel received degrees from Pfeiffer College (B.A.), the University of South Florida (M.M.), and Louisiana State University (D.M.A.).
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Myrtle Yvette McDaniel

Major Field: Music

Title of Dissertation: An Analysis of the Characterizations of Aida and Amneris

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination: July 8, 1991