Representing Insanity and the Crisis of Identity through Henry Purcell's "Bess of Bedlam"

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> **Abstract:** *This article explores in detail Henry Purcell's "Bess of Bedlam" (first published in 1683), which represents insanity as a personal crisis clothed in the common musical style of the era of its origin. Despite its standard musical language, the song conveys a meaning that can speak to many generations, and those shared meanings expand the use of the work as a metaphor for the concept of insanity across time. Via this metaphorical function works such as "Bess of Bedlam" have become iconic and thought-provoking emblems of the 'affliction' of madness and reveal the societal conditions through which their nature and meaning can be construed. This example also points toward the medical origins of the term 'crisis' and how our changing portrayals of madness in musical works and in the history of their performance reflect developing notions of what kind of crisis insanity might be. "Bess of Bedlam" exemplifies the topic of insanity revealing moral and behavioural aspects of its own time and in relation to earlier and later times. With an archeological approach via textual, intertextual, contextual and musical analyses, this article suggests methods for understanding the layers of representation in this song within its past, present, and future environments.*

Introductory Thoughts on Current Crises and 17th-Century Mad Songs

Faced with environmental threats, pandemics, several wars and their exacerbating effects on our lives both physical and mental, recent years can certainly be described as a time of crises. Many scholars and artists have been responding to these difficulties: for example, ethnographic work has been produced on music "in times of trouble";[2] there have been attempts to explore "trauma and music" in 19th-century case studies,[3] and to examine what the role of art music should be in these critical times.[4] Recent issues of this present journal have also contributed to the debate, and musicologists have begun to examine how comparable challenges have been dealt with in the past and how new methods might enable us to understand better the relationship between cultural attitudes and the problematic symptoms and solutions to which they give rise.

As part of that ongoing process, I have chosen here to explore textually, intertextually and contextually a particular work from the past that can serve as an emblem of a certain kind of human crisis and society's attitude towards it – the issue of representing madness in 17th-century England. The work in question is Henry Purcell's "Bess of Bedlam" (z. 370), first published in 1683 in a song-collection entitled *Choice Ayres and Songs*.[5] The main reason for this choice is because this song is one of the most multi-layered examples of the expression of a personal crisis – a total disorientation of 17th-century conceptions of the mind and the self – albeit clothed in a musical style which was considered 'standard'

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1   Author's email address: n.matsumoto@gold.ac.uk.
2   For example, see RICE 2014 and OKIGBO 2017.
3   MEINHART and ROGERS 2022. Also see the articles included in that publication.
4   KRAMER and NONES 2021.
5   PLAYFORD 1683: 45–47.

in the era of its origin. This should make us wary of the notion that such a song must inevitably rely on bizarre or disturbing texts and musical devices for its effects. Indeed, standard language often enables works to convey a meaning that can speak to many generations, and those shared meanings can in turn expand the use of the work as a metaphor for the concept of crisis across time.

This latent metaphorical force arises in the genre of the 'mad song' through evocative displays of the condition of insanity. In this way "Bess of Bedlam" has come to be taken as an iconic and thought-provoking emblem of that mental 'affliction' and to encode the societal perspectives and conventional signals through which its nature and meaning can be construed. Thus, "Bess of Bedlam" has not only become a 'popular' exemplar (i. e. it is well-known and taken to be stereotypical) but its moral and behavioural aspects both speak of attitudes from its own time and contain traces of background ingredients from times even earlier than its own. Through an analytical and 'archeological' approach, I hope to uncover some layers of representation in this song. Also, along the way, I will consider the medical origins of the term 'crisis' and exploring how different ages represent human personality and its breakdown.

Insanity and Early Modern Music

A large repertory of 'mad songs' was produced in 17th-century England.[6] We might first assume that it was composed in response to a series of crises experienced during that era in the region: the Civil War (1642–1651), the Plague pandemic (1665–1666), the Great Fire (1660) and the Glorious Revolution (1688).[7] However, it is striking that the subject of insanity also abounds in songs and musico-theatrical works in other countries on the Continent throughout that century. Among early Italian operas, approximately 50 works feature mentally afflicted characters. Examples include Claudio Monteverdi's lost opera *La finta pazza Licori* (1627) – the work given by common agreement the accolade of being the earliest known 'mad' opera –, Francesco Sacrati's *La finta pazza* (1641), Francesco Cavalli's *Didone* (1641) and *Egisto* (1643), Pietro Andrea Ziani's *Le fortune di Rodope e Damira* (1657), Giovanni Maria Pagliardi's *Caligula delirante* (1672), Alessandro Scarlatti's *Gli equivoci nel sembiante* (1679) and Carlo Pallavicino's *Didone delirante* (1686), to name but a few.[8] Also in France,[9] several relevant *tragédies en musique* were composed such as *Atys* (1676), *Roland* (1685) – both by Jean-Baptiste Lully – and *Médée* (1693) by Marc-Antoine Charpentier as well as staged dramas with musical pieces featuring the subject of insanity, for example, Raymond Poisson's comedy, *Les fous divertissants* (1680) with Charpentier's *intermèdes*.[10] Perhaps such a 'vogue' is not surprising since there were long shared traditions from Antiquity which dealt with insanity in one way or another and paved the way to those early modern musico-theatrical genres: Greek tragedies and comedies, the Homeric epics, Roman literature (especially Virgil's *Aeneid* with the abandoned and frenzied Dido and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* with many characters who lose their sanity), as well as the medieval representation of madness as a wondering wild man.[11] During the early modern period, traditions in Italy and France developed their respective conventions of representing the mad through practices embedded in their own genres (e. g. the *commedia dell'arte* in Italy with *Innamorata forsennata*, most famously played by Isabella Andreini,[12] and several *ballets de cour* in France with *ballets des folles/foux*[13]). Furthermore, Italy left its mark on the French practice

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6   For a list of 17th-century English 'mad songs', see Matsumoto 2005: 432–436.
7   For those events, see, for example, Lincoln 2021.
8   For a full list, see Matsumoto 2005: 429–430. For discussions on those operas, see Fabbri 1995, Rosand 1992 and Matsumoto 2005: Chapters 3, 7 and 8.
9   For a full list, see Matsumoto 2005: 431. For discussions on the French 'mad' repertoire, see Powell 2000: esp. 134–147 and Matsumoto 2005: Chapter 4.
10 For the most recent modern edition of this work see Canova-Green et al. 2022.
11 Matsumoto 2005: Chapters 1 and 2.
12 MacNeil 1995.
13 Christout 1992 lists 15 works with such scenes presented between 1572 and 1671.

through the first opera performed in Paris – Luigi Rossi's *Orfeo* (1647) which includes a substantial mad scene – and the use of Italian literary models such as Ariosto's epic *Orlando furioso* (1516).[14]

In 17th-century England where through-sung musical drama was not properly established,[15] the presence of a mad scene or character in a spoken drama, or in what we nowadays call 'semi-operas' did not always guarantee the involvement of music. That said, there are songs associated with insanity in art songs and ballads as well as in dramas. Such songs seem to fall into four separate categories: first, those that simply *refer to* madness; second, gentle 'remedial' songs (i. e. used to ease one's infirmity); third, those sung by characters on the stage designated as mad either by tradition or the particular plot in which they appear; and fourth, items containing first-person descriptions or enactments of the behavioural symptoms of actual mental disturbance.[16] Among those 'mad' songs, "Bess of Bedlam" is one of the rare cases of the fourth category – what we might call a mad song proper.

As for the circumstances surrounding Purcell's "Bess" – the exact date of the composition and the author of the text are both uncertain – we know very little, but Bess is certainly an insane character. This is made explicit in the title of the song: the word 'Bedlam' signifies the Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem, England's first mental institution.[17] And by the early eighteenth century, the song acquired the more explicit title of "Mad Bess".[18] Furthermore, it is not an incidental song sung by a character in a drama. Rather, the song stands alone in its own fictive world, unlike incidental songs which require a certain knowledge about their dramaturgical contexts in order to be understood as mad songs.[19]

Fragmentation and Disruption as a Formal and Representational Principle

Table 1 shows the lyrics of "Bess of Bedlam". We can see it presents various fragmented and ambivalent ideas in a series of sections; it consists of nine contrasting strophes in total, the central seven of which contain four lines, and the two outer sections, six and eight lines apiece.

Stro-phe	"Bess of Bedlam" in PLAYFORD 1683: 45.	Rhyme	Music Section
1	From silent shades, and the Elizium Groves,	a	Recit 1
	Where sad departed Spirits mourn their Loves;	a	
	From Chrystal Streams, and from that Country, where	b	
	Jove crowns the Fields with Flowers all the year,	b	
	Poor senceless Bess, cloath'd in her Rags and Folly,	c	
	Is come to cure her Love-sick Melancholy:	c	

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14 In fact, *Orlando furioso* is one of the most important literary sources throughout the history of opera and became the basis of over 100 operas with/without mad episodes. CARTER 2022.

15 DENT 1965 [1928].

16 MATSUMOTO 2005: 173–175.

17 For the history of 'Bedlam' see, for example: ARNOLD 2009 and ANDREWS et al. 2013 [1997]. In many cases, mental institutions took over from the old lazar (leprosy) hospitals of the late medieval period. Another example of a shift in a particular illness acting as a metaphor.

18 Although the title that the first edition gave to this music was "Bess of Bedlam", the appellation "Mad Bess of Bedlam" seems to have been in circulation in the late seventeenth century as MS GB-Cfm, 118 indicates. In the eighteenth century, the nickname "Mad Bess" seems to have been used first in advertisements and programmes of concerts, and then editions followed suit. The earliest of such editions seems to be: BICKHAM c. 1736, vol.1, 21. Since then, the nickname has been widely used, as in: TIPPETT and BERGMAN 1961. However, the song is not entitled in that manner in any of the editions of *Orpheus Britannicus,* Purcell's most famous posthumous collection of songs.

19 Examples of incidental mad songs by Henry Purcell include: seven songs (z. 571:1–6 and 8) for Thomas D'Urfey's *A Fool's Preferment* (1688); "Beneath a Poplar's Shadow Lay Me" (z. 590:1) for Nathaniel Lee's *Sophonisba* (1693); "Behold the Man that with Gigantic Might" (z. 608:1) for *The Richmond Heiress* (1693); "Let the Dreadful Engines" (z. 578:3) and "From Rosy Bow'rs" (z. 578:9) for D'Urfey's *The Comical History of Don Quixote*, Part I and III (1694 and 1695 respectively).

2	Bright Cynthia kept her Revels late, While Mab the Fairy-Queen did dance; And Oberon did sit in State, When Mars at Venus ran his Lance.	a b a b	Air 1
3	In yonder Cowslip lies my Dear, Entomb'd in liquid Gems of Dew; Each day I'll water it with a Tear, Its fading Blossom to renew:	a b a b	Air 2
4	For since my Love is dead, and all my Joys are gone;	A	Recit 2
	Poor Bess for his sake A Garland will make, My Musick shall be a Groan,	b b a	Air 3
5	I'le lay me down and dye; within some hollow Tree, The Rav'n and Cat The Owl and Bat, Shall warble forth my Elegy.	A b b a	Air 4
6	Did you not see my Love as he past by you? His two flaming Eyes, if he come nigh you, They will scorch up your Hearts. [//] Ladies, beware, ye, Lest he shou'd dart a glance that may ensnare ye;	a a b b	Recit 3// Air 5
7	Hark! I hear old Charon bawl, His boat he will no longer stay; The Furies lash their Whips, and call, Come, come away.	a b a a	Recit 4
8	Poor Bess will return to the place whence she came, Since the World is so mad, she can hope for no Cure; For Love's grown a Bubble, a Shadow, a Name, Which Fools do admire, and wise Men endure.	a b a b	Air 6a
	[The section below is not found in GB-Lbl: MS Lansd. 740]		
9	Cold and hungry am I grown;	a	Recit 5
	Ambrosia will I feed upon, Drink Nectar still, and sing;	[a] b	Arioso
	Who is content, Does all sorrow prevent: And Bess in her Straw, Whil'st free from the Law, In her Thoughts is as great as a king.	c c d d b	Air 6b

Table 1. The Text of "Bess of Bedlam".

The first strophe sets the scene by introducing, via an external narrating voice, the situation of Bess. It is "from silent shades and the Elizium groves" that insane Bess appears to pour out her 'melancholy'.[20] The central stanzas (2–7), occasionally in the first person, parade the utterances and fantasies of Bess, alluding to a world more mysterious and darker than it seems, full of fantastical or spooky apparitions
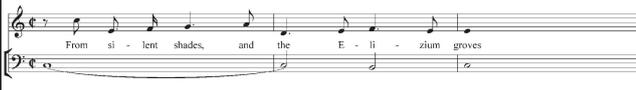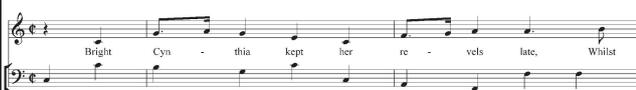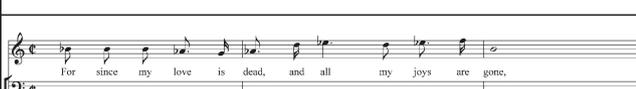
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20 Melancholy has been identified as a central concept in the early modern period as most famously exemplified in Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). For a recent edition, see Gowland 2021.

– Cynthia, Mab (the Fairy Queen), Oberon, a raven, cat, owl, and bat. In strophe 8, the third person voice is heard which could be construed as an unnamed companion within the drama itself, drawing attention to the action on the imagined stage, or it could be Bess referring to herself in a detached manner. In strophe 9, Bess in the first person definitely 're'-appears *before* the poem ends with a statement in the third person – "in her thoughts, [Bess] is as great as a king!". Throughout the text, only on two brief occasions does Bess directly express how she is feeling (stanza 4: "my joys are gone"; and stanza 9: "cold and hungry am I grown").

Interestingly, a text-only source, GB-Lbl: MS Lansdown 740, which seems to predate the "Bess of Bedlam" publication, omits strophe 9. It is possible that this source preserves the state of the poem at an intermediate stage of the musical composition – it may be that the unknown poet wrote a traditional, regular-type poem ending with strophe 8, and then Purcell pressed him/her to add the last strophe for musical reasons – or Purcell himself might even have had a hand in the last strophe.

Purcell set the *Bess* lyric in several sections, contrasted by different keys and metres, which effectively convey the shifting aspects and moods of its afflicted character. In fact, such a multi-sectional form led to the song being frequently labelled as a "cantata" in the late eighteenth century. For example, when Nancy Storace (1765–1817) – the original Susanna of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* – sang "Bess" in London in 1790, the programme note not only called the song "a cantata" but also divided up the sections, stipulating them as either "Recit" (in speech-like recitation style) or "Air" (more melodic tunes).[21] In fact, starting with "Bess of Bedlam", Purcell soon developed the dramatic effect of interspersing declamatory 'recits' with lyrical 'airs' within one work, as in "Awake, and with Attention Hear" (z. 181, c. 1685).[22] The composer himself never labelled the contrasting sections as such in his autographs, however.

Table 2 is based upon those 1790 divisions as indicated in the Storace programme but the airs and the recits have now been numbered, and the interruption of Air 6 by Recit 5 is clearly indicated, as is the fact that Recit 5 develops into an arioso (where the recitative verse is set to lyrical music):

Label	Number of poetic lines	Metre	Key	Musical Incipit
Recit 1	6	Barred C	C	From si - lent shades, and the E - li - zium groves
Air 1	4	Barred / reversed C	C - G	Bright Cyn - thia kept her re - vels late, Whilst
Air 2	4	Barred C 3	C	In yon - der cow - slip lies my dear,
Recit 2	1	Barred C	C min – G	For since my love is dead, and all my joys are gone,
Air 3	3	C dot 3	C min	Poor Bess for his sake a - gar - land will make;
Air 4	4	Barred C	C	I'll lay me down and die, with - in some hol - low tree.

21 ANONYMOUS 1790: 7–10.
22 ADAMS 1995: 204–205.

Recit 3	2 and several words of the subsequent line	Barred C	C	*Did you not see my love as he passed by you? His two flam - ing eyes,*
Air 5	The remaining words from the 3rd line above and 1 complete line	Barred C 3	C – G	*La - dies, be - ware ye, Lest he should dart a glance*
Recit 4	4	Barred C	G – C	*Hark! hark! I hear old Cha - ron bawl,*
Air 6a	4	C dot 3	C	*Poor Bess will re - turn to the place when she came,*
Recit 5	1	Barred C	C min – F	*Cold and hun - gry am I grown,*
Arioso	2	Barred C	F – C	*Am - bro - sia will I feed up - on,*
Air 6b	5	C dot 3	C	*Who is con - tent, Does will sor - row pre - vent*

*Table 2. The Musical Structure of "Bess of Bedlam".*

We will examine Purcell's music in more detail shortly, but overall Purcell constructed "Bess of Bedlam" as if Bess in her insanity sang a series of varied tunes, sometimes as a whole, sometimes as fragments. This strongly reminds us of Ophelia's mad scene in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, where the mad heroine sings snatches of several ballads such as "How Should I Your True-Love Know" (thought to be a variant of *the Old Walsingham Song*) and "Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's Day".[23] The impression of fragmented identity and distracted half remembrance is deliberate and a clear portrayal of the condition of the fictive mad person.

Within the scheme Purcell employed, two of the melodic sections seem to function as independent tunes. They are Air 2 "In yonder cowslip lies my dear" (see Music-Example 1) and Air 4 "I'll lay me down and die" (Music-Example 2). Purcell seems to have composed them in line with traditional ballads, because those sections are based upon musical structures commonly used for the ballad even if the poetic structures of the sections did not indicate such forms. "I'll lay me down" has the musical form *ABCD* (despite the text's *ABBA* structure) which is the most common structure found in the ballad, and "In yonder cowslips" (with the lyric in an *ABAB* form) has the form *ABAC*, which is the second most common amongst ballads with four-phrased tunes.[24]

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23 SHAKESPEARE 1997: [*Hamlet* IV, 5] 1730 and 1731. For the identities of the ballads Ophelia sings, see, for example: STERNFELD 2013 [1963]: 68–78; and STERNFELD 1964. Also see HENZE 2017: 123–126.
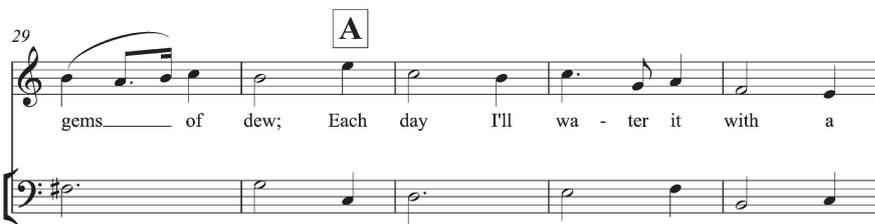
24 BRONSON 1969: 153 analysed roughly 3450 ballad-tunes and concluded that almost the half of them belong to the *ABCD* type. The second largest number (less than 250) belongs to the *ABCDE* type but this is obviously 5-phrase music. The third is the *ABAC* type (less than 200).
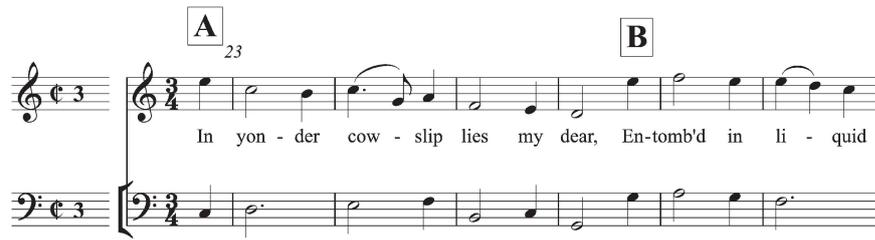
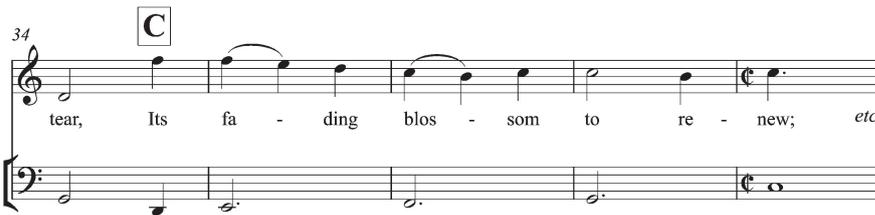*Music-Ex. 1. Henry Purcell, "In Yonder Cowslip" .*
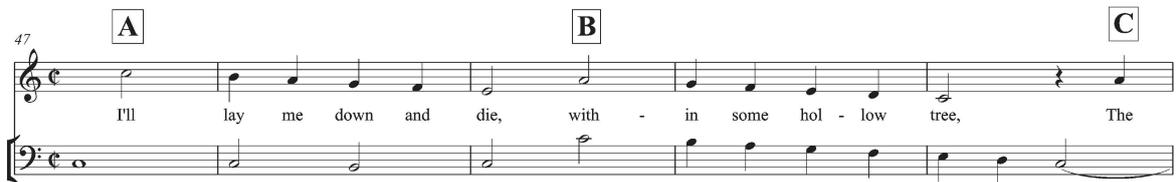
Music-Ex. 2. Henry Purcell, "I'll Lay Me Down".

These two airs by Purcell were probably independently sung at the premiere of a play by Thomas D'Urfey, *A Fool's Preferment* in 1688. The playbook of D'Urfey's comedy allocates the lyrics of the two excerpts not to a woman but to Lyonel, a male character who goes mad after his beloved is seduced by the king (Act III, Scene 2).[25] The 1688 playbook seems to be the only record of a performance of at least a portion of "Bess of Bedlam" during Purcell's lifetime. In the two sections included in D'Urfey's drama, their references are neutral as to gender, they are both in the first person. Moreover, Purcell's music for those sections is relatively simple, making it accessible for actors of only moderate singing ability.

The connection between D'Urfey's drama and "Bess of Bedlam" does not stop here. In addition to "Bess of Bedlam", Purcell wrote some other songs for the 1688 production of *A Fool's Preferment*. And amongst those songs there is "I Sigh'd and Pin'd" (z. 571:1a) that contains a line echoing the afore-mentioned aphorism of Bess: "But I'm a Thing *as great as a king* [my italics] so blest is the head that is addle".[26] The reference to a king in Lyonel's case makes sense because his insanity was caused by being cuckolded by the king. However, Bess's analogy between herself and a king seems rather odd. In fact, as we shall now see, such references seem to emerge from the various types and layers of popular traditions that lie behind the song.

An Intertextual Archaeology of "Bess of Bedlam"

"Bess of Bedlam" poses interesting questions about how we might understand its meanings through the prism of its so-called 'popularity'. Nowadays, the song is considered one of the most celebrated songs by Purcell, having found itself in the repertory of many illustrious female singers. Already in its early history, "Bess of Bedlam" was circulated widely: 15 manuscript copies were made before c.1750 and five of those may predate the first publication.[27] Also by 1750, fifteen printed song collections included Purcell's work (Table 3, see Appendix). Furthermore, independently of the music, the text of the song was disseminated throughout the eighteenth century in a large number of poetry collections.[28] This kind of popularity suggests that for whatever reason madness was seen as more of an entertaining curiosity than a harrowing trauma.

Aside from being widely disseminated, "Bess of Bedlam" is also 'popular' in the sense that it draws upon a varied range of tropes and references to traditions of popular culture in England. The name Bess is certainly a derivative of Elizabeth and yet our Bess is, despite being a woman, clothed with the delusional grandeur of a king. This might well allude to Queen Elizabeth I who is said to have made the legendary speech at Tilbury in 1588 during the fight against the Spanish Armada: "I know I have the bodie, of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and Stomach of a King, and of a King of England, too". The speech was first published in 1654.[29] Also, there are at least two further aspects that connect Bess and the Virgin Queen. First, Bess declares at the outset of her song that she has come from "the Elizium groves". The term 'Elizium' signifies "the abode of the blessed after death in Greek mythology".[30] However, in the Elizabethan era, the word was frequently used as a laudatory word for the land governed by Queen Elizabeth (Eliza).[31] Second, Bess refers in the song to 'Cynthia', and Queen Elizabeth was often associated with that moon goddess (who was a perpetual virgin) particularly during the 1580s and 1590s when the prospect of Elizabeth's producing the heir to the throne became very slim.[32]

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25 D'URFEY 1688: 41. This early use of "Bess" was discovered by: BALDWIN and WILSON 1981.
26 This link has also been identified in: EUBANKS WINKLER 2006: 153.
27 See the items bearing asterisks in Table 3.
28 Examples include: ANONYMOUS 1733: II, 250–252; ANONYMOUS 1737: 182–183; ANONYMOUS 1765?: 157–158, and their subsequent editions.
29 ANONYMOUS 1654: 260.
30 *OED* 2023: s.v. "Elysium".
31 For example, see ASKE 1588 and PETOWE 1603.
32 Literature that discusses this 'cult' of Elizabeth includes: YATES 1977 [1975]; STRONG 1977 and HACKETT 1995.

Several portraits of the Queen from this period present her wearing jewellery shaped like a moon cre-scent (see Figure 1).[33]

Fig. 1. "Elizabeth I Rainbow Portrait" . Credit: Reproduced with permission of the Marquess of Salisbury, Hatfield House.

Exactly why the Queen should partially become the model for mad Bess is unclear. Possibly there was a link between the moon goddess and 'lunacy',[34] or Elizabeth's famously troubled womb linked her to the notion of female hysteria – a word derived from the Greek, *hystera*, for womb.

Just how deeply "Bess of Bedlam" was embedded in popular traditions is further exemplified in the several manifestations and transformations of the Bess figure in the genre of the broadside ballad in early modern England. Frequently, such ballads were written by hack poets on topical issues to be sung to pre-existing commonly known tunes and were hawked by street singers,[35] – for example, there is a ballad which commemorates the rebuilding of Bedlam in Moorfields in 1676, "This is a Structure Fair".[36] And it is in the ballad tradition where the figure of the original 'Mad Bess' is found, rather than being invented by Purcell or his anonymous poet.

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33 The motto on the left side of the portrait "Non sine sole iris" means: no rainbow without the sun.
34 *OED* 2023: s.v. "lunatic".
35 SIMPSON 1966: ix.
36 JORDAN 1676.

There were many broadside ballads featuring a young girl called 'Bess', 'Betty' or 'Bessie' in the late six-teenth and early seventeenth centuries,[37] and as statistics show, Elizabeth was the most popular girl's name in England between 1550 and 1649.[38] Hence, it was plausible that 'Bess' could stand, in a generic sense, for any English woman.[39] Amongst those 'Bess' ballads, there is one particularly relevant to our subject: "Loves Lunacie or Mad Besses Fegary" dating from c.1637/1638 (Example 1),[40] which features the morbidly lamenting Bess. As is recorded in the publication, the Bess ballad was sung to the tune of "The Mad Mans Morris,[41] which unfortunately has not yet been identifed. In Purcell's "Bess" we never learn the name of her lost love, but in her earlier manifestation as Bess in "Loves Lunacie", she gives a detailed account of her troubles, and mentions her erstwhile partner, 'Tom'. She says that he did her "some wrong" by devouring all her means and "making no recompense". Her lodging "was once soft and easy" and her garments were "silke and sattin", but now she is locked up in Bedlam, "a place of torment", ruined by "pride and love".[42]

Declaring her sorrow, care and mone,
Which may cause many a sigh and grone:
A Yong-man did this Maid some wrong,
Whe[re]fore she writ this mournful Song.

1
Poore Besse, mad Besse, so they call me,
I'm metamorphosed;
Strange sights and visions I doe see,
By Furies I am led:
Tom was the cause of all my woe,
To him I loudly cry,
My love to him there's none doth know,
Yet here he lets me lie.

2
This Bethlem is a place of torment,
Here's fearfull notes still sounding;
Here minds are fil'd with discontent,
And terrors still abounding.
Some shake their chaines in wofull wise,
Some sweare, some curse, some roaring,
Some shrieking out with fearfull cries,
And some their cloaths are tearing.

3
O curst Alecto that fierce fury,
Megara, Tysiphon!
Are governours of my late glory;
Wise Palas me doth shun:
My jems, my sewels and my earings,
Are turnd to iron fetters;
They now doe serve for others wearings,
Such as are now my betters.

4
Orcades Fairies now doe lead me,
Ore mountaines, hils and valleys,
Naiades doth through waters drive me,
And Brizo with me dallies:
O sometimes I dreame of my Tom,
Then with my folded armes
I him embrace, saying welcome,
But waking breeds my harmes.

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37 Ballads related to Bess/ Betty/ Bessy include among others: "Bess a Bell She Doth Excel"; "Bouncing Bess of Bromley"; "Come Hither my Dear Betty"; "Come o'er the Burn Bessy to me"; "Good Health to Betty"; "Now of My Sweet Betty"; "O Bessy Bell and Mary Gray"; and "Well Met my Pretty Betty". In addition, there were several ballads which refer directly to Queen Elizabeth including: "In Good Queen Bess's Golden Days"; "O Dear Lady Elizabeth Which Art Our Queen"; "The Queen's Visiting of the Campe at Tilsburie"; and "Queen Bess's Dame of Honour"; see SIMPSON 1966, under the title of each song. Moreover, several Elizabethan jiggs feature 'Bessie' characters which are linked to Elizabeth I. BASKERVILL 1965 [1929].

38 SMITH-BANNISTER 1997: 196–199.

39 BREWER 2018 [1895]: s.v. "Bess o Bedlam: Bess is a national name for a woman, especially of the lower order".

40 CLIMSELL [CLIMSULL] 1637/8?. This ballad entered the Stationer's Register on 12th December 1637. The text only can be found in: HINDLEY 1873: II, 286–290. The word "Fegary" found in the title is an old English word meaning in this context 'whim'. OED 2023: s.v. "Fegary".

41 The text of "The Mad Mans Morris" was written by Humphrey Crouch but its tune cannot be identified. SIMPSON 1966: 658, n. 1.

42 The crazed Bess in that ballad refers obsessively to various mythological figures, including the Furies: Alecto, Megara and Tysiphon. Those references seem to have been indebted obliquely to Ovid's Metamorphoses, where, for example, Juno visits various monstrous figures in the underworld and with the aid of the three furies makes her enemies mad. Various protago-nists in 17th-century Italian operas mention those monstrous figures when they go insane. This is one of the conventions which contemporary English culture shared with its Italian counterpart for the depiction of insane states.

'Tom' himself is the most famous male embodiment of insanity in early modern English culture, and appears in several ballads from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[43] In the theatre, the most famous appearance of Mad Tom occurs in Shakespeare's *King Lear* (c. 1605), where the character of Edgar is temporarily disguised as Tom o' Bedlam.[44] There are two surviving tunes featuring Tom: one known as "Tom a Bedlam", is associated with the text "From the Hag and Hungry Goblin",[45] and the other, much more famous, employed the so-called "Gray's Inn Masque" tune.[46] Two anonymous ballads were written to fit this second tune: "New Mad Tom of Bedlam",[47] and "The Man in the Moon Drinks Clarret".[48] The author of the former poem, although hitherto unnoticed, is William Basse (c. 1583–1653?),[49] and the "Gray's Inn Masque" tune itself was once erroneously attributed to Purcell by the printer John Walsh.[50] Instead, it was most probably taken from the dance of the Madmen in the second antimasque of Francis Beaumont's *The Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn* performed in 1613, for which John Coperario (John Cooper) wrote the music.[51] In fact, such choreographed presentations of the insane were ubiquitous in 17th-century musico-theatrical genres. Apart from the French *ballet de cour* which we have referenced briefly above, several Italian operas include a 'ballo di pazzi' in order to represent emotional disorders. For example, in Sacrati's *La finta pazza* on Giulio Strozzi's libretto, "pazzarelli buffoni di Corte [insane court buffoons]" rescues the title-role character who feigns madness from being caught and begin their dance, which leads to the final act stipulated as "Catastrofe".[52] Regrettably, however, music for these dances rarely survives – the ballo di pazzi of Cavalli's *Pompeo Magno* (1666) is an exception where the designated music is preserved in its entirety.[53]

Although we have come to see Tom as Bess's former lover, another character often coupled with him in the ballad tradition is a woman called Mad Maudlin. Mad Maudlin is featured in several ballads, including one sung to a version of the tune for "From the Hag and Hungry Goblin".[54] However, 'Tom and Bess', as England's representative mad couple, seems to have been established before Mad Maudlin came on the scene. The Tom and Bess couple dates back at least to the turn of the seventeenth century when a collection of social observations published in 1607 describes how the "frantique" mad who "make sport with stick and flowers" were called "Poore Besse" and "Tom".[55] Moreover, it seems probable that Bess and Maudlin were not essentially different characters but one and the same person.[56] This is because Bess and Maudlin share so many attributes – both come from the "Elizian fields";[57] they both make reference to nymphs and fairies, and to mythological figures such as Jove, Mars and Venus,

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43 For a collection of Tom-related verses, see LINDSAY and GRAVES 1969 [1927], which includes the following songs directly associated with Tom: "From the Hagg & Hungry Goblin" (originally included with its tune in Gb-Lbl, MS. 24,665; *Giles Earle his Booke* [1615].); "Loving Mad Tom"; "Tom o' Bedlam's Song"; "From the Top of High Caucasus"; and "Forth From my Sad and Darksome Cel". The last with its music is preserved in: PLAYFORD 1673: 66–67; PLAYFORD 1675a: 75; PLAYFORD 1676: 94; PLAYFORD 1685: n. 71; PLAYFORD 1686: n. 25; PLAYFORD 1699: 43–44; TONSON 1719: 43–44.
44 For a recent study of Tom o' Bedlam and *King Lear*, see CARROLL 2002.
45 GB-Lbl, Ms Add. 38539, f.14, see also SIMPSON 1966: 710–711.
46 PLAYFORD 1675b: 56. Playford's series contains this tune from its first edition but in the first three editions, it is entitled only "Grayes-Inn Mask" without mentioning 'Tom'.
47 CHAPPELL and WOODFALL EBSWOTH 1869–1901: II, pt. 2, 259–261.
48 CHAPPELL and WOODFALL EBSWOTH 1869–1901: II, pt. 2, 255–258.
49 WALTON 1653: 84.
50 WALSH c. 1725: 13. The index of GB-Lbl, Ms Add. 22099 attributes this song to Henry Lawes.
51 Beaumont's text for the masque describes the scene: "The second anti-masque rush in, dance their measure, and as rudely depart; consisting of, a Pedant, May Lord, May Lady; Servingman, Chambermaid; a Country Clown, or Shepherd, Country Wench; an Host, Hostess; a He-Baboon, She-baboon; a He-fool, She-fool, ushering them in". COLMAN 1811: III, 573.
52 STROZZI 1641: 82–83.
53 MATSUMOTO 2005: 128.
54 First printed in: PLAYFORD 1700: 192–193.
55 WEST 1607: f.3ʳ.
56 For this investigation, the 'Maudlin' text is taken from: SMITH et al.1656: 126–127.
57 In most of the sources of "Bess of Bedlam" including *Choice Ayres*, this reads as "Elizium grove"; however, the 'Elysian grove' occurs in some early sources such as Och 350, CFM 118, Lb-Add.29397 and 33234.

and both describe the scene where the ferryman of the underworld, C[h]aron wanders away from his boat (Example 2).

From forth the Elizian fields A place of restlesse soules, Mad Maudlin is come, to seek her naked Tom, Hells fury she controules: The damned laugh to see her, Grim Pluto scolds and frets, Caren is glad to see poor Maudlin mad, And away his boate he gets; Through the Earth, through the Sea, through unknown iles Through the lofty skies Have I sought with sobs and cryes For my hungry mad Tom, and my naked sad Tom Yet I know not whether he lives or dies. My pains makes Satyrs civil, The Nimphs forget their singing; The Fairies have left their gambal and their theft The plants and the trees their springing. Mighty Leviathan took a consumption, Triton broke his organ, Neptune despis'd the Ocean; Flouds did leave their flowing, Churlish winds their blowing, And all to see poor Maudlins action. The Torrid Zone left burning, The deities stood a striving, Dispised Jove from Juno took a glove And stroke down Pan from whistling.	Mars for feare lay couching, Apolloes Cap was fire'd: Poor Charles his waine, was thrown into the main The nimble Post lay tir'd Saturn, Damas, Vulcan, Venus, All lay husht and drunk; Hells fire through heaven was rim, Fates and men remorslesse, hated our grief & hornesa, And yet not one could tell of Tom. Now whether shall I wander? Or whether shall I flie? The heavens do weep, the earth the aire the deep Are wearied with my cry. Let me up and steal the Trumpet That summons all to doome; At one poor blast the Elements shall cast All creatures from her wombe. Dyon with his Heptune, Death with destruction; Stormy clouds and weather, Shall call all soules together Against I finde In Tomkin ile provide a pumkin And we will both be blisse together.

Ex. 2. The Text of "Mad Maudlin" (under the title "Tom of Bedlam")

Moreover, 'Maudlin' is not only a woman's name, but also a descriptive epithet of sorrow, her quintessential demeanour derived from early pictures of the weeping Mary Magdalene.[58] In that sense, 'Maudlin' is a personification, not a person. Perhaps this is the reason why Mad Maudlin gradually sank into oblivion, while the character of Mad Bess retained her status as the true counterpart of Mad Tom beyond the turn of the eighteenth century.[59]

Bess, Tom and Robin Goodfellow: Fluidities of Identity, Race and Gender

Deeper investigation into the component aspects of the Bess character reveal other indications of her composite identity. In 16th-century English folk theatre Bess was an androgynous figure whose attributes were assigned in some sources to Bess and in others to 'Tom Fool'.[60] This figure was sometimes referred to as 'Betsy Bob', a term that may well have been derived from some archaic transformation of 'Beelzebub', Prince of Devils in the Bible.[61] The association with darkness may also explain why the Betsy Bob character had its face blackened. In some sources the Tom figure also had a black face,

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58 *OED* 2023: s.v. "Maudlin".
59 Early modern literature which refers to "Mad Bess"/ "Bess of Bedlam" as the symbol of female insanity include: MILL 1640 (poem); TATHAM 1660; JEVON 1686; HOPKINS 1696 (dramas); DONNE 1662: 67 "Of a Bedlam"; ANONYMOUS 1709a and 1709b (satirical proses).
60 MALIN 1981: 25–26.
61 MATTHEW 12: 24. For the Beelzebub figure in medieval theatre, see CHAMBERS 1996 [1903]: 214–226. Also note that Robin Goodfellow is believed to have been transformed from the satanic figure of 'Beelzebub'. LAMB 2000: 299.

and this phenomenon is held in some traditions to be related to the Moors and their 'Morris' (Moorish) dances. If so, the fact that the ballad "Loves Lunacie", where the Mad Bess figure appeared for the first time, was sung to "The Mad Mans Morris" provides a suggestive link.

The ambiguities of characterisation do not stop there. The Bess/Tom figure sometimes strongly over-laps with Robin Goodfellow, the character from which Puck, a jester to the fairy king, in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night Dream* (c.1594–1596)[62] was derived.[63] Interestingly, there is a musical similarity between a section from "Bess of Bedlam" and the traditional ballad of "Robin Goodfellow the King of Fairies". The Robin ballad is known to have been sung "to the tune of 'Dulcina'".[64] The music of "Dulcina" is strikingly similar to the sections "Bright Cynthia" (Air 1) and "In Yonder Cowslips" (Air 2) in "Bess of Bedlam". It seems very likely that Purcell must have based his music upon the ballad in some way (Music- Example 3, see Appendix). Rebecca Herissone has demonstrated that Purcell incorporated pre-existing ballads within his music for a 'specific purpose' (as in, for example, his quotation of the Scottish ballad "Cold and Raw" in his *Birthday Song for Queen Mary*, 1692).[65] What we see here may be yet another example, but it is inserted in such a discreet manner that it has hitherto escaped the notice of scholars.

We have noted above that Purcell's Bess echoes the references in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* to "the Fairy Queen", "Oberon", "cowslips", "the raven", "cat", "owl" and "bat",[66] and so it should not be surprising that Mad Bess is connected to the midsummer, since the summer solstice was believed to bring on insanity already from the Middle Ages.[67] The connections between Robin/Puck and Tom/Bess strengthen this notion. The following illustrations (Figures 2 and 3) reveal some strong similarities between Robin,[68] and Tom.[69] They are both half-naked; both of their faces are covered with a moustache and beard; they are both carrying horns;[70] and although blatantly displaying the erect male member, they have female breasts. Some of their attributes follow the image of a wandering wild man, a Pan-European folklore figure from the Middle Ages. The Wildman as well as the mad existed on the 'margins' of human and non-human, questioning the establishment of what is expected from a cultivated human being, including the securities of sex, as Hayden White has elucidated.[71] The Wildman figure was featu-red frequently in Renaissance theatre, but its function and identity on stage shared some attributes with that of a clown,[72] in a similar way to the figure of a madman.

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62 Foakes 2003: 44–45 discusses Shakespeare's play in relation to the cult of the Moon Goddess. Also, Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queen* (1590) famously refers to the Queen as the Moon Goddess – for a discussion, see Wells 1983.

63 For the transformation from the wild Robin Goodfellow to a courtly Puck, see Lamb 2000.

64 GB-Lbl, Add. Ms. 24665, f. 35ᵛ "As at No One Dulcina Rested". For a facsimile edition, see Bickford Jorgens 1986: Part I, Item no. 3, unpaginated. Also see GB-Cfm: 32.g.29. "Daunce", II, [CCVI].

65 Herissone 2013: 34.

66 In Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "Cowslips" are mentioned by a fairy (Shakespeare 1997: [II, 2] 858), "raven" by Lysander ([II, 2] 830), "cat" by Oberon ([II, 2] 820), "bat" by Oberon ([III, 2] 820) and "owl" by Titania ([II, 2] 827) and by Robin ([V, 2] 859). Also note that Purcell wrote the semi-opera *The Fairy Queen* (1692, z. 629) based upon an anonymous adaptation of Shakespeare's comedy.

67 For a discussion of Renaissance rituals and their relation to madness see Vlasopolos 1978. Shakespeare was obviously aware of the relation, for example, in his *Twelfth Night*, Olivia utters, "…this is very midsummer madness", Shakespeare 1997: [III, 4] 1801.

68 Figure 2 is taken from: Anonymous 1639: ii.

69 Figure 3 is taken from: Anonymous 1670?.

70 Traditionally "to wear the horns" means "to be a cuckold". Brewer 2018 [1895], s.v. "Horn".

71 White 1972: 20.

72 Goldsmith 1958: 483. For the functions of the Wildman figure in entertainments for Elizabeth I, see Stróbl 2008. Stróbl 2008: 64 also explores the connection between the figure of the Wildman and that of Hercules, a mythological figure associa-ted with insanity. I am grateful to Dr Stróbl for her communication with me concerning this issue.

Fig. 2. "Robin Goodfellow". Credit: Call # STC 12017, Robin Good-Fellow, his mad prankes and merry iests, full of honest mirth, and is a fit medicine for melancholy, title page, used by permission of the Folger Library.

Fig. 3. "Tom of Bedlam". Credit: Courtesy of University of Glasgow Shakespeare Archives & Special Collections: Euing Ballad 248.

The male/female ambiguity of the original Bess is to some extent reflected in the early performing traditions of the song. The early modern singers for whom we have records of singing "Bess of Bedlam" were all male: William Mountfort (in the aforementioned production of *A Fool's Preferment* in 1688); a certain Mr Shaw (at Drury Lane in 1703); and John Beard ('in character' at Covent Garden in 1737 and 1745; and at Drury Lane in 1749) (see Table 4, Appendix). This is rather striking because after the introduction of actresses in 1660 (as opposed to the boy actors who previously took female roles) mad scenes performed with abandon by female protagonists in plays were often used as an excuse to titillate the audience.[73] As Table 4 shows, the earliest recorded female performance of "Mad Bess" was not until 1762 by Jane Poitier (1736−1786, aka Mrs Vernon).[74]

From then on, several notable sopranos sang the song, including Sarah Harrop (c. 1755−1811; aka Mrs Joah Bates), Nancy Storace (as we have mentioned above), and Gertrud Mara (1749−1833; the German soprano who enjoyed a triumphant career in England). The song fully established itself as an embodiment of female madness in 1790 when Elizabeth Billington (c.1765/68−1818) as Ophelia in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* sang it as a replacement for ballads which were originally designated for the role.[75] This practice of singing "Mad Bess" as Ophelia was repeated by Caroline Poole (1770s−1833) in 1793, but in 1814 Catherine Stephens (1794−1882) was hissed by the audience who found such a practice inappropriate for Shakespeare. However, through those singers' characterisations, Bess's 'insanity' acquired a sentimentality and poignancy which tended to mask the original darker connotations. For example, in February 1791 when Storace sang the work "within the finest effects of sympathy",[76] she left the audience in some doubt "to whom the greatest share of merit was due, the singer or composer".[77]

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73 For discussions, see HOWE 1992: 39−43; TOMLINSON 2005: 129−146.
74 ANONYMOUS 1762. For a discussion about the 18th-century dissemination of Purcell's music see TUPPEN 2015.
75 Billington's performances as Ophelia took place at Covent Garden on 2nd and 7th June 1790. Her interpretation of "Mad Bess" (with some added ornamentations) has come down to us in the form of a single-sheet edition. BILLINGTON 1817.
76 ANONYMOUS 1791a, n.pag.
77 ANONYMOUS 1791b, n.pag.

In the early performances of "Bess of Bedlam", by contrast, the character was presented in an antic and grotesque manner in order to evoke in the audience laughter rather than pity. The transformation of Bess's image in later days may have mirrored changing attitudes to the insane in England. First, madness was subject to ridicule and amusement – as is exemplified by visits to see the insane at Bedlam as a popular pastime.[78] But the 1720s and 30s saw the emergence of a new, arguably more positive perspective on insanity, one which regarded a gloomy, melancholic state as part of England's national and perhaps artistic psyche. In 1733, George Cheyne first described insanity as "the English Malady" and, in his publication of the same name, he concluded that this condition was derived from the nation's intellectual superiority[79] (feel free to disagree!).

Crisis and Containment: "Bess of Bedlam" as a Metaphor

All works of art, whether through concrete references or abstract design, have a content. In that sense, they are 'about' something. Also, they are usually intended for a particular kind of listening, reading or visual culture – that is, certain types of reception are usually intended by the artist. This subtle transaction between the content and the cultural 'readiness to receive the work' expands its meaning beyond the mere notes and words. The composer thus not only 'says' things in the work, but can intend to say further things by saying them in the wider and redolent worlds of art, culture and history.

Hence a work such as "Bess of Bedlam" not only does 'cultural work'[80] by acclimatising audiences to the acceptance of madness in a relatively benign way. It also implies things about how the 'crisis' of madness was construed in the seventeenth century and how it might be contained. Moreover, the way in which the breakdown of Bess's identity in madness is presented acts as a metaphor[81] for whether society at the time thought that human beings had psychological coherence or a thread of psychic identity, and if so, to what extent society might be threatened by its breakdown.

We have seen that the deeper we explore the traditions behind "Bess of Bedlam" the more her true identity becomes problematic and ambiguous. Also, her words and the narrative voice in the song keep us twisting and turning between fantasy and reality. In fact, it was in the observation of these turning points of the body and soul that the word 'crisis' entered modern European languages from Greek and Latin.[82] It signified that point in an affliction or disease where the outcome could go either way – death or recovery, madness or sanity – as described in treatises such as *Chirurgia Magna* by Guy de Chauliac (c. 1300–1368),[83] who had worked as a doctor in the Black Death and had seen many such 'turning points'. From what we can gather of "Mad Bess", when we encounter her, she had moved beyond the crisis point and will now be forever trapped in the world of insanity.

Given the ambiguities of the text it is difficult to grasp exactly where these scenes are located (e. g. strophe 9 in the underworld?). Also is Bess fully caught up in her madness or does she sometimes step outside of it (strophe 6, she turns to the ladies of the audience)? What is clear is that Bess says little about her actual emotions. The text largely describes her behaviour and the fantasies that flit through her mind.

We mostly infer what kind of character Bess is from the very fragmented presentations of her visions and descriptions. We get little idea of her interiority, her psychological cohesion, or her true 'individuality' beyond her somewhat eccentric and slightly stereotypical erratic behaviour. In fact, the sectionalised music and text may to some extent act as a metaphor for how the seventeenth century viewed personhood as a 'mosaic' of attributes and behaviours not strongly governed by an interior and

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78 Andrews et al. 2013 [1997].
79 Cheyne 1733. For a study of the English Malady, see Skultans 1979.
80 Banks 2007.
81 Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980].
82 *OED* 2023: s.v. "crisis".
83 Chauliac (1997) [1363]: esp. vol. I, 68–70.

integrated sense of self or 'individualism'.[84] And as Ian Watt has suggested,[85] "problematic" persons who attempted overtly to be "individualistic" (figures such as Don Juan, Faust, Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe etc) were either condemned to hell or were ridiculed or marooned in isolation. These last two solutions to the 'crisis management' of madness were common around 1700 in the absence of any proper psychiatric strategy.[86]

As the above remarks suggest, the formal sectionalisation of text and music is not sufficient on its own to show exactly in what way they might act as metaphors for societal attitudes. In the case of "Bess of Bedlam" that fragmentation seems to reflect 'personality' as something displayed in a set of behaviours. In early 18th-century opera, we frequently see the building up of character conveyed through a sequence of contrasting arias, each encapsulating a particular attitude or emotion (*Affekt*). This was not an organicist view of character, or of structure, but a way of emphasising the vivid connectedness of arias to which the genre was tied.[87] In a 19th-century work such as *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835), the heroine's mad scene unfolds in a series of sections which reveal in a continuously unfolding manner an interior integrated human being struggling to come to terms with the destructive crises she is aware of and has created. And like all crises it is a crisis precisely because it effects events well beyond the immediate situation and threatens to destroy something systemic.

Our changing portrayals of madness in works and in the history of performance reflect our developing notions of what kind of crisis insanity might be. But, of course, in art, emotions and traumas are already constrained by the needs of formal organisation, and by the fact that performers on the whole are sane and suffer crises of delivery and mimicry, rather than reason. Perhaps most elusively of all, as Purcell's frequent collaborator John Dryden said: "there is a pleasure sure in being mad which none but madmen know".[88]

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84 TRIGG 1999 [1988].
85 WATT 2009 [1996].
86 FOUCAULT 2003 [1963].
87 STROHM 1997: 18.
88 DRYDEN 1808 [1681]: 408.

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Appendix

Table 3. The Sources of "Bess of Bedlam".

Manuscripts

Location	Shelf-mark	Date[89]	Remarks
GB-Och*	350, item no. 41, pp.121–127	c. 1675–1690	Copied by Richard Goodson (Head Professor of Music at Oxford from 1682)
GB-Lbl*	Add.33234. pp. 246–9 (ff. 125^v–127^r)	c. 1680–1685	Copied by Charles Morgan; almost identical with, probably copied from, GB-Och, 350, item no. 41.
GB-Cfm*	118, pp. 78–81	c. 1680–1685	Entitled as *Mad Bess of Bedlam*. Copied by Daniel Henstridge (organist of Rochester Cathedral between 1673–1698). [See: HERISSONE 2017]
GB-Lbl*	Add.29397, ff. 69^r–71^r	c. 1682–1688	Linked to the area of Rochester; *Bess* with additional embellishments (voice part only)
GB-Lbl*	Lansdowne 740, ff. 171^v–172^r	Late 17th century?	The text only
GB-Osc	B. 469, ff. 9^v–12^r	After 1685?	Within Ursula Nevill's music book (dated 1664) but the relevant pages were copied later. Voice only, with added ornamentations,
US-NHub	Osborn Music MS 9, ff.7^r–9^r	1692	Rather corrupt
GB-Ob	(26495) Mus Sch C. 96, f. 4^v	Late 17th century	Voice part only. Within a folio song book which contains altogether 9 songs.
GB-Lbl	Harley 1270, ff. 49^r–54^r	Between the late 17th and early 18th centuries	The MS consists of an Italian-song section titled "Arie italiane" (mainly A. Scarlatti/ Pasquini's works) and others.
GB-Lbl	Add. 63626, f.78^v and ff. 113^v–116^r	c. 1700? Before c.1740	Within *The Song Book of Mr. Montriot*. Versions for a male voice in bass clef: in C major (f.78^v) and B-flat major (ff. 113^v–116^r)
GB-Lbl	Add.22099, ff. 41^v–42^r	c. 1704–1707	Within a folio book of mainly vocal music with an index added later.
GB-Lbl	R.M.24.e.6. ff. 28^v–30^v	Early 18th century	Within a collection of 31 songs and duets by Purcell.

89 * = sources which may have predated the first publication, 1683.
Where possible, the dates in the table follow: SHAY and THOMPSON 2000.

US-Ws	V.b.197 (formerly 1634.4), pp. 130−131	c. 1710	Within a songbook copied in one hand.
GB-Cfm	120, p.22.	Probably 1728	Probably copied from *Orpheus Britannicus*?
GB-Ob	MS. Mus.e.48, ff. 49ᵛ−53ʳ.	c. 1750−1751	Former Shelfmark (GB-Ouf, Mee e.1)

Printed Music *(up to the early 19ᵗʰ century)*

Date	Title etc
1683	*Choice Ayres and Songs, the fourth book* (London: A. Godbid and J. Playford, 1683)
1695	*The New Treasury of Musick* (London: Henry Playford, 1695)
1698	*Orpheus Britannicus*, Book I (London: Henry Playford, 1698)
c. 1705	*A Collection of the Most Celebrated Songs and Dialogues Composed by the Late Famous Mr. Henry Purcell* (London: R. Mears, c. 1705)
1706	*Orpheus Britannicus*, 2ⁿᵈ ed. (London: William Pearson, 1706)
1706	Ditto with additions
c. 1710	Single sheet edition "From silent shades, Bess of Bedlam" (London: [T. Cross Jr.], [c. 1710]) [See: GB-Lbl: H 1601. (152)]
c. 1720	Single sheet edition, "Bess of Bedlam" (London: non pub, [c. 1720]) [See: Gb-Lbl: G. 316. g. 29]
1721	*Orpheus Britannicus*, 3ʳᵈ ed. (London: William Pearson, 1721)
1725	[Orpheus Britannicus] *Mr. Henry Purcell's Favourite Songs out of His Most Celebrated Orpheus Britannicus and the rest of his works* (London: John Walsh, c. 1725)
1726?	Ditto, 2ⁿᵈ ed. (London: John Walsh and Ino. And Joseph Hare, after 1726?)
1736?	*The Musical Entertainer* (London: George Bickham, 1736?)
1737	*The Musical Entertainer* (London: George Bickham, 1737)
1737?	*The Universal Musician or Songster's Delight* (London: non pub., n. d)
c. 1745	*Orpheus Britannicus* (London: J. Walsh, c. 1745)
1779?	*A Select Collection of the most admired songs, duets &c* (London: Corri, 1779?)

c. 1790	Single sheet edition, "Bess of Bedlam, sung by Mrs Harrop" (London: J. Bland, [c. 1790]) [See: GB-Lbl: G. 295.u.1]
c. 1790	Single sheet edition, 'Mad Bess' (London: n. pub., [c.1790?]) [See: GB- Lbl: H. 2818. b. (71.)]
1790?	Single sheet edition, "Bess of Bedlam: a celebrated old song" (Dublin: J. & E. Lee, [1790?]). [See: GB-Lbl: H. 1601. b. (69.).]
c. 1800	Single sheet edition, 'Mad Bess: a favourite song composed by Mr. Henry Purcell' (London: Robt. Birchall, [c. 1800]) [See: GB-Lbl: H. 1601. p. (6).]
1805	*The Beauties of Purcell …arranged with a separate accompaniment for the Pianoforte by Jos. Corfe,* (London: Corfe by Preston, 1805)
1809	*The Beauty of Purcell, Selected, adapted and Arranged for the pianoforte…by John Clarke* (London: Rt. Birchall, 1809)
1817	Single sheet edition, 'Mad Bess: a celebrated song sung by Mrs Billington (London: G. Walker, [1817]) [See: GB – Lbl: H. 1653.I. (37.)]
1819	Single sheet edition, 'Mad Bess, a favourite cantata…arranged by T. Greatorex (London: Regent's Harmonic Institution, [1819]) [See: GB – Lbl: H. 1653. I. (38.)]

Table 4. Recorded Performances of "Bess of Bedlam" up to c. 1820

Year	Date dd/mm	Venue[90]	Titles of plays/ concerts (Act) in which the song was sung	Singer
1688	April	DG	A Fool's Preferment (Act III, scene 2)	William Mountfort as Lyonel?
1703	16/10	DL	The Fatal Marriage or the Innocent Adultery (Unknown)	'Mr Shaw' (Details unknown)
1737	10/03	CG	*The Funeral* (Act IV)	John Beard
1745	15/04	CG	*Don Sebastian* and *The Schoolboy* (Unknown)	Beard
1749	05/04	DL	*The Distress'd Mother* (Act V)	Beard
1762	17/02	CG	*The Pilgrim* (Act IV)	Jane Poitier
1772	06/05	DL	*The Gamester* (Act V)	Isabella Scott
1777	10/02	NR	The Concert of Antient Music (Unknown)	Not recorded
1778	04/05	NR	Ditto	Ditto
1779	01/03	NR	Ditto	Ditto
1780	06/03	NR	The Concert of Antient Music (Act II)	Sarah Harrop

90 AW = Almack's Rooms (sometimes called as Willis's Rooms after 1783); AR = Argyll Room in Regent Street; CG = Covent Garden; DG = Dorset Garden; DL = Drury Lane; FH = Freemason's Hall; HAY = Haymarket; HS = Hanover Square Rooms; NR = New Rooms, Tottenham Street; R = Ranelagh Gardens; and RL=Royal Lyceum.

1781	28/08	HAY	The Hodge Podge or receipt to make a benefit! (Unknown)	Elizabeth Harper
1786	25/04	DL	*The Lord of the Manor* (End of the play)	Miss George
1787	10/08	HAY	*The young Quaker* (End of the play)	Miss George
1788	21/05	HS	*Knyvett's Benefit Concert* (Part II)	Gertrude Mara
1790	17/03	DL	*A Grand selection from the works of Handel* (Part I)	Nancy Storace
1790	30/04	HS	*Madame Mara's Night* (Part I)	Mara
1790	02/06	CG	*Hamlet* (Act IV, scene 5 = Ophelia's mad scene)	Elizabeth Billington as Ophelia
1790	07/06	CG	*Hamlet* (Ditto)	Billington
1791	03/02	Freemasons Hall	*Concert of the Academy of Ancient Music* (Act II)	Storace
1791	01/04	DL	*A Grand selection from the works of Handel* [Pt 3 of the concert after a performance of *Acis and Galatea*]	Anna Maria Crouch
1791	26/04	DL	*The Rivals* (End of the play)	Crouch
1791	18/05	HS	*Knyvett's benefit concert* (Part II)	Mara
1792	07/03	CG	*A Grand selection from the works of Handel* [Pt 3 of the concert after a performance of *Alexander's Feast*]	Billington
1792	30/03	King's	*A Grand selection principally from the works of Handel* (Part II)	Crouch
1792	27/04	HAY	*Cramer's Benefit concert* (Part II)	Billington
1793	20/02	CG	*A Grand Miscellaneous Act* (Pt 3 of the concert after a performance of *Alexander's Feast*)	Mara
1793	27/02	HAY	*A Grand Selection* (Part III)	Caroline Poole
1793	06/03	CG	*A Grand Selection* (Part III)	Mara
1793	13/03	HAY	*A Grand Selection* (Part II)	Poole
1793	14/03		*The Concert of the Academy of Ancient Music* (Act II)	Storace
1793	20/03	CG	*A Grand Selection* (Part III)	Crouch
1793	22/03	CG	*A Grand Selection* (Part III)	Crouch
1793	19/06	HS	*Miss Poole's Night*	Poole
1793	09/10	CG	*Hamlet* (Ophelia's mad scene)	Poole as Ophelia
1794	12/03	CG	*A Grand Selection of Sacred Music from the Works of Handel* (Part III)	Mara
1794	14/03	DL	*A Grand Selection of Sacred Music from the Works of Handel* (Part II)	Not specified

1794	26/03	CG	*A Grand Selection of Sacred Music from the Works of Handel* (Part III)	Mara
1794	04/04	CG	*A Grand Selection of Sacred Music from the Works of Handel* (Part III)	Mara
1794	11/04	CG	*A Grand Selection of Sacred Music from the Works of Handel* (Part III)	Mara
1794	25/04	CG	*Every one has his fault* (End of Act IV)	Poole
1794	20/05	CG	*The suspicious husband* (End of Act IV)	Poole
1795	19/02	AW	*Vocal Concert* (Part I)	Mary Hester Parke
1795	04/03	CG	*A Grand Miscellaneous Act* (Pt 3 of the concert after a performance of *L'Allegro ed il Pensieroso*)	Parke
1795	18/03	CG	*A Grand Miscellaneous Act* (Pt 3 of the concert after a performance of *Acis and Galatea*)	Parke
1795	26/03	AW	*Vocal Concert* (Part I)	Parke
1795	24/04	NR	*Abrams' Benefit Concert* (Part II)	Storace
1796	26/02	CG	*A Grand Selection of Sacred Music from the Works of Handel,* (Part III)	Mara
1796	16/03	CG	*A Grand Selection of Sacred Music from the Works of Handel,* (Part II)	Mara
1796	18/05	CG	*Inkle and Yarico*; *Tom Thumb*; *The point at Herqui* (In the course of the evening)	Elizabeth Clendining
1796	23/05	HS	*Miss Parke's Concert* (Part II)	Parke
1796	24/05	CG	*The Earl of Warwick and Margaret of Anjou*; *The Lie of the day*; *Springs of Laurel* (In the course of the evening)	Clendining
1796	23/05	HS	Miss Parke's Night (Part II)	Parke
1796	25/05	CG	Comus (End of Act I)	Mara
1796	30/08	HAY	*The Hodge Podge or a receipt to make a benefit*! (Unknown)	Elizabeth Leak
1797	13/02	NR	*Opera Concert* (Part II)	Storace
1797	31/03	CG	*A Grand Selection of Sacred Music from the Works of Handel* (Part III)	Mara
1797	24/03	CG	*A Grand Miscellaneous Act* (Pt 3 of the concert after a performance of *Acis and Galatea*)	Mara
1797	04/05	HAY	*Galli's Benefit Concert* (Part II)	Mara
1798	09/03	CG	*A Grand Selection of Sacred Music from the Works of Handel* (Part III)	Mara
1798	30/03	CG	*A Grand Selection from the most favourite works of Handel* (Part II)	Mara

1798	01/06	R	*General Christopher Ashley Garden's Benefit Concert* (Part II)	Mara
1799	20/02	CG	*A Grand Selection from the works of Handel* (Part III)	Mara
1799	13/03	CG	*A Grand Selection of Music from the works of Handel, Boyce and Purcell* (Part III)	Mara
1799	26/04	AW	*Miss Parke's Night* (Part II)	Parke
1800	14/03	CG	*A Grand Miscellaneous Act* (Pt 3 of the concert after a performance of *Alexander's Feast*)	Sarah Second
1802	04/03	HAY	*Musical Society Annual Concert*	Storace
1804	24/02	NR	*Vocal Concert* (Act II)	Billington
1804	14/03	HS	*Concert of Antient Music* (Act II)	Billington
1806	23/04	HS	*Concert of Antient Music* (Act II)	Billington
1808	27/04	HS	*Concert of Antient Music* (Act II)	Billington
1809	03/05	HS	*Concert of Antient Music* (Act II)	Billington
1810	14/03	HS	*Concert of Antient Music* (Act II)	Billington
1810	23/05	HS	*Concert of Antient Music* (Act II)	Billington
1811	17/12	RL	*The Americans* (in the course of the evening)	Dickons [née Poole]
1814	21/03	CG	*Hamlet* (Ophelia's mad scene)	Catherine Stephens as Ophelia
1814	20/04	HS	*Concert of Antient Music* (Act II)	Stephens
1815	19/04	HS	*Concert of Antient Music* (Act II)	Ditto
1816	24/04	HS	*Concert of Antient Music* (Act II)	Ditto
1817	26/03	HS	*Concert of Antient Music* (Act I)	Ditto
1818	15/04	HS	*Concert of Antient Music* (Act I)	Ditto
1819	02/04	CG	*A Grand Miscellaneous Act* (Pt 3 of the concert after a performance of *Messiah*)	Dickons
1820	10/03	CG	*Oratorios during Lent*	Stephens
1820	24/03	HS	*Vocal Concert*	Stephens
1820	02/05	AR	*Miss Sharp's Benefit concert* (Act II)	Miss Goodall
1820	24/05	HS	*Concert of Antient Music* (Act II)	Stephens

Music- Ex. 3. An Analytical Comparison between "Robin Goodfellow" and Air 1 of "Mad Bess".