



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hugvísindasvið

“My teeth go into her smooth neck”

**The Significance of Vampirism and Doppelgänger in
Emma Tennant’s *The Bad Sister***

Ritgerð til B.A.-prófs

Svanhildur Rósa Pálmadóttir

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Kt.: 240682-4439

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Abstract

This paper examines Emma Tennant's novel *The Bad Sister* as a vampire story and compares it with Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The vampires in the two novels are directly compared in order to demonstrate similar characteristics between them. This examination will reveal the vampire as a sexual metaphor and a protest to radical feminism. *The Bad Sister* is a rewrite of James Hogg's novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and represents a more feminine point of view with sexual instead of religious politics. *The Bad Sister* uses supernatural metaphors such as vampirism and Doppelgänger in order to explain the discontentment of the protagonist, Jane, feels. The Doppelgänger is used to symbolise Jane's suppressed homosexuality and her repressing gender role demanded by society and vampirism as her means to escape from it.

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Introduction

The vampire has for a long time been a popular monster both in folklore and literature. This evil creature has developed from being a mindless zombie into the sophisticated sensual lover, which characterises the modern vampire in popular literature. Ever since Bram Stoker wrote *Dracula* (1879) the vampire has been symbol of sexual freedom versus society's inflexibility. In the novel *The Bad Sister* by Emma Tennant the protagonist Jane seems unsatisfied with her life because she is constantly looking for and admiring something outside her heterosexual life. Tennant says in an interview "I have always disliked the idea that I might be thought of as being somebody who believed in psychic powers" (Haffenden 295). Tennant's use of the vampire element in the novel may suggest a psychological metaphor for gaining freedom in sexuality. Margaret, the antagonist of the novel, and Jane are interesting to look at to see the indicated psychological traits brought to the reader in the form of vampirism.

In the novel *The Bad Sister* there are typical features of the vampire that will be the focus of the first chapter of the essay in historical context to show how they have developed and in that way demonstrate how Tennant feminises their masculine attributes. This section of the essay also explains many of the traditions and vampire characteristics that the modern vampire still has today. In the next two chapters it will be demonstrated how Jane is a vampire and Margaret a female version of Stoker's *Dracula*. Then Jane and Margaret will be compared directly to the vampires in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. *Dracula* is a great example of the modern vampire in literature, which indicates the repressed sexual nature of a human liberated when turned into this creature. In the latter part of this essay Jane's suppressed sexuality will be demonstrated in the form of a Doppelgänger, which appears to be used as a symbol of Jane's repressive gender role in society and suppressed sexual identity. Finally, this essay will analyse and discuss Jane's subconscious and dreams with the help of psychoanalytic theory and in that way indicate how it is connected with the sexual identity of the vampire and its symbolism. Tennant's metaphorical use of the bad sister/Doppelgänger and vampirism demonstrate Jane's release from the male dominated society into one of female empowerment.

Vampires

Folk stories on vampires seem to always have existed in various forms. From antiquity there have been reports of restless bodies that have risen from their graves to harass the living. These folk stories have the primitive symptoms of a vampire, as David Keyworth writes in his book *Troublesome Corpses*, referring to a story about a bride who fed upon the blood of her spouse (18). However, in the medieval period the undead in Western Europe were nothing more than malevolent decomposing corpses that did not drink blood and were operated by the devil. Some of the stories tell of the undead's ability to shape-shift into some kind of an animal. People were opening graves in order to stop the corpses from returning by using methods like decapitation, cremation and Christian elements such as holy water and crosses. In Northern Europe the Sagas account for the phenomenon *draugr* or a corpse that returned from the grave and to terminate them, people entered the tomb to amputate the body (Keyworth 24-29). In the pre-modern period the folklore initiated the modern form of the vampire by describing the corpses as "well fed and as if it were still alive" (Keyworth 41). These corpses were called spectrums and they behaved like poltergeists or incubi, but at this point in the folklore they did not drink blood. The first appearance of the blood-sucking vampire was in Eastern European folklore in the 18th century. They attacked their prey during the night and drained blood from it causing the victim to waste away. Their bites were contagious and the unfortunate victim became a vampire after its death. To rid themselves of this curse, civilians once more invaded the graves and took such measures as plunging a stake through the dead person's body and cremating it. The cadavers were said to be bloated with blood because they bled when punctuated and people thought that growth of the nails and hair was further evidence that they were still alive. They were also noted for being extremely heavy. Keyworth furthermore writes that in Romanian folklore the vampire bodies were given to gypsies, who then performed the ritual of killing them by decapitation and cremation. He also notes that there is no explanation in the stories why gypsies were considered best suited for this task, but supposes it must be because they were considered experts on dealing with the undead and being outsiders (Keyworth 54). It is interesting to note that not all vampires operated in the night. The Ukrainian vampires died in sunlight, Polish and Russian vampires moved from noon to midnight and the Romanian vampires only appeared on certain nights of the year. Another modern characteristic would be their fangs, but they

were not essential in folklore. The Ukrainian vampire had steel-fangs because its arms would become too stiff to use while the Polish one had a sharp pointed tongue to work with. It is also interesting to note that they did not necessarily attack the neck. In Romania they sucked between the eyes, the Croatian vampire chewed on the heart and innards, the Armenian sucked from the soles of travellers and in Germany vampires bit the breast (Keyworth, 59). In folklore those who were most likely to become vampires were people who were thought of as disagreeable or who were presumed to have made a pact with the devil.

Through the ages the vampire has taken on different forms and has now become a popular symbol in literature where it has taken on a more human form and receives sympathy, but still holds on to many of the old superstitions. The modern vampire is more of an intellectual being who sometimes is lonely and troubled with their everlasting life, often even feeling guilty over their need to kill, i.e. Louis in *Interview With the Vampire* (Rice, 1973). They are very sexual and sometimes even possess mental powers so resilient that humans cannot resist them, such as Stoker's Dracula. The elements that have survived into modern times are the association with witches, gypsies and the devil. The common way to kill the modern vampires is still plunging a stake through their hearts, decapitation and fire but today they create new vampires by exchanging their blood with their victim's. Similar to Stoker and Rice, Tennant makes her mark on the modern vampire by using it to demonstrate faults she finds in society. Tennant takes the vampire myth and symbolism a step further in her novel, by making the vampires all female and in that way protesting both gender roles and radical feminism at the same time (Haffenden 292), remaining faithful to many of the historical folkloric aspects.

II Margaret as the Female Dracula

The antagonist of *The Bad Sister* is Margaret, often referred to as Meg. She is a leader of a group of radical women who call themselves Wild and it is with them Jane grows up (Tennant 20). Margaret is an important character in the novel as she plays a crucial role in Jane's development into a vampire. It is necessary to compare Margaret with Dracula because she shares many of his characteristics. In *The Bad Sister* she is described as a tall woman with brown hair and fierce eyes who dresses in gypsy skirts and shawls. This gypsy appearance mirrors Szgany gypsies in Stoker's *Dracula*, were they played the role

as the helpers of the vampire (46). In *The Bad Sister*, Tennant has combined the vampire and the gypsy appearance suggesting a connection with *Dracula*. Furthermore, in Tennant's novel the priest, Stephen, uses the words "embezzlement" and "ravishment" to describe her appearance (Tennant 30). To emphasise his unnatural impression of her, he asks the editor if he has never "felt real evil", indicating that Margaret is the devil (Tennant 25). According to Stephen no precise description is to be found because "she always seemed to look different" (Tennant 20).

Another important element is the vampire's ability to transform itself into another being. This element is faithful to the folklore belief like Kirtley writes that in Romanian folklore vampires are believed to be able to "self-transform" (138). Margaret's other shape is suggested to be Jane's mother in law, Mrs Martin. When Jane, Mrs Martin, Gala and Tony have lunch at the Italian restaurant close to Jane and Tony's house, Jane discovers that Margaret is there with them and that Mrs Martin and Margaret look the same. Jane might be able to see Margaret's other form because she herself is turning into a vampire and recognises Margaret. Also, the editor's notes at the end of the book indicate that they are one and the same:

She was wearing a white petal hat, and as it was windy outside, the petals ruffled in the breeze. I don't know why, but I couldn't help remembering Stephen's description of his visit to Margaret, and the white petals blowing in from the window onto her hair. (Tennant 167)

Gil-Martin is also present at this lunch and it is interesting to study him as a character even though he only appears vaguely and does not seem to be human. In Haffenden's interview with Tennant it is expressed that *The Bad Sister* is a rewritten form of James Hogg's novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and represents a more feminine point of view with sexual instead of religious politics and this is where the character Gil-Martin originates (290-291). This is similar to Stoker as he also creates a character built on a resource or a myth. Kirtley writes "Stoker put in Van Helsing's speech details of a legend which have documentary confirmation" (134). This technique is used to suggest the authenticity of the story. In a similar manner as in Van Helsing's speech, the editor in *The Bad Sister* notes at the end of the book that Gil-Martin was a spirit known in the Ettrick area and had harassed a young man in the seventeenth century, which is a direct reference to Hogg's novel (Tennant 166). Furthermore, the editor speculates if Margaret could have summoned Gil-Martin up to give her powers. As Margaret is described with gypsy qualities and is constantly talking

about witches during the book, it makes it possible that she did summon Gil-Martin. This is another similarity with Dracula who was a sorcerer according to the myth and the novel (Kirtley 136). Keyworth demonstrates a connection with witches and vampires when he writes: "Throughout the world, witches have also been associated with drinking blood... female witches that sucked the blood of children, akin to a vampire" (102). Margaret and Dracula are demonstrated as leaders of their groups and are the only ones who make vampires in the novels, which suggest that they are the first of their kind. Another indicator is that they both could have been made a vampire through a spirit they summoned and that would explain why Margaret is so often seen with Gil-Martin, her spirit.

The modern vampire has often been associated with immense mental telepathy powers to make the victim succumb to the attack. This is a characteristic of Dracula and another similarity shared by Margaret. This mental telepathy of Margaret's is discussed when Jane confides in Stephen that she believes Margaret can control others with only a look (Tennant 22), which can easily be compared to Bram Stoker's Dracula when he is using this ability to attract Lucy to him (99). In Tennant's book Margaret is able to control others and her clan of women is likened to "nuns" and "votaries in a temple" waiting for orders (Tennant 21). This is also indicated in a conversation between Gala and Jane, as they feel compelled to obey her (Tennant 116-118).

Another important suggestion of Margaret being a female version of Dracula is that she creates new vampires by biting her victims. Similar to Dracula with the mental telepathy powers, Margaret makes Jane succumb to her bite and remove her Christian protection. The ritual of converting Jane into a vampire is by biting her and that is why Margaret sinks her teeth into Jane's neck and sucks her blood (Tennant 100-101). When Margaret does this her physique changes into one that is considered characteristic of a vampire. Jane writes: "Her eyes were shining. Her lips parted. In the depths of her mouth the teeth were as long and white and pointed as stalactites" (Tennant 99). She notes that Margaret bloats and has blood on her face just like Dracula when Jonathan discovers him in his coffin just after Dracula has nourished on a new victim (Stoker 56-57).

Another suggestion of Margaret being Dracula is the constant association with the devil. This would explain why it is believed they do not like Christian elements. Jane writes in her journal that: "Stephen was one of the few people who could dissuade me from the course before it was too late" (Tennant 84). In the same conversation

Stephen and Jane talk about Margaret wanting Jane's soul Jane says that she is welcome to have it. Jane understands that she has to sacrifice herself and that Margaret is evil or even the antichrist. The devil would never sacrifice himself like Jesus did, but he would choose someone else to do it as she writes in her journal: "my salvation would be paid for in blood, but never hers. She was the anti-Christ, she would take where he gave, the wooden cross on which he hung, a passive victim, she would plunge into the heart of her prey" (Tennant 90). Margaret becomes Jane's creator and is most likely the first of her species in *The Bad Sister*, which makes her like Stoker's Dracula, only the female version of the long feared monster.

III Jane as a Vampire

In *The Bad Sister* the story follows closely on Jane's transformation from a mortal into the liberating nocturnal killer through her personal journal. In the beginning of her journal she goes on the first of her journeys after seeing Margaret at a party. Afterwards Jane goes home and transforms into, what seems to be, a man. She cuts off her hair and puts on jeans and a jacket, which later are commented on as being too small for her by her boyfriend Tony (Tennant 45). That may mean that her whole physique takes on another shape like that of Margaret when she turns into Mrs Martin. Another indication of her becoming a vampire is when she is in Stephen's office talking about her travels and transformations and how her clothes smell of sulphur when she comes back (Tennant 84). This is commonly known as an old Christian symbol of evil and the devil because the smell of sulphur reminds one of the Catholic images of hell.

Jane becomes a vampire when Margaret bites her and it is interesting to examine the similarities with Stoker's *Dracula* because it is comparable to when Dracula bites Mina (Stoker 99). Both victims seem to succumb into being transformed as they are under the powerful influence of their vampire. After the attack, Jane returns to her apartment where she finds Mrs Martin and Mrs Martin comments on her being pale and that her throat is wounded. This confirms to Jane that Margaret really did sink her teeth in her neck and it was not just a fantasy. The novel is ambiguous at this stage and gives the impression that it all might be Jane's imagination, which makes Mrs Martin an unclear character. The confusion can be explained by comparing Jane's journal to Lucy's journal in *Dracula*. Lucy does not manage to realise clearly what is happening and has unnatural recordings of the attacks. She talks of "flapping against the windows"

and “distant voices” (Stoker 147). In Tennant’s novel at the end of Jane’s journal, Margaret becomes Mrs Martin, which makes her clearly a vampire who can change its form. The prognosis arises if Margaret is now Mrs Martin and is deliberately making Jane hang on to the illusion of becoming a vampire or if it really happened. This doubt emphasises the supernatural element of the novel and suggests Margaret as a very powerful character.

In consequence of this attack Jane’s vision changes, as colours seem to be fading away and only red dots are left. The reason why she is losing the ability to see colours is because she is dying and she realises that when she writes: “I felt the shudder of the premonition of death... I was already a walking dead” (Tennant 120). Both in the novel *Dracula* and *Interview with the Vampire* the infected has to die in order to finish the transformation, i.e. both Lucy and Louis (Stoker 174, Rice 22). Louis’s sensations change like Jane’s and in the novel it is explained when Louis shouts at Lestat that “Something’s happening to me,” Lestat answers “You’re dying, that’s all” (Rice 22). In *The Bad Sister* Jane becomes sick and needs to lie in her bed just like Lucy in *Dracula* (Tennant 118). This suggests that Jane has to die to complete the conversion.

After the attack Jane continues her obsession for Miranda and this can be seen as her sexual desire through her journal, which she could finally act on and embrace as a vampire. A sexual act may be proposed suggested as killing Miranda by penetrating her teeth in her neck and sucking her blood. Apart from the colour change, Jane also notices that she feels stronger during the night and hungry which is representative for a vampire as they hunt during the night, similar to Stoker and Rice’s vampires. In *The Bad Sister* Jane can travel during the daytime, but feels weak, suggesting evil that needs darkness and in that way gets more power from the night. This is another similarity with Stoker’s *Dracula* like Keyworth writes in *Troublesome Corpses*: “In Bram Stoker’s novel, *Dracula* (1897), vampires are well able to walk about during the day, albeit reduced in strength and power” (57).

Just before Jane finds her prey and attacks it she sees a man in a vampire costume, a mirror to herself, and she notices that her upper teeth have started growing (Tennant 157). In *Dracula* this also occurs to Lucy during the transformation into a vampire and it is described as “the gums seemed to have shrunk back from the teeth” (Stoker 138). In an atmosphere similar to *Dracula*, Jane finds her victim alone in a room (Tennant 158). In Tennant’s novel Miranda is standing in front of a mirror and Jane has no reflection like she writes in her journal “I look up into the mirror ... my

terrible absence there in the glass” (Tennant 158). This suggests Jane being deceased as a human.

In the editor’s notes he finds what seems to be Jane’s body in St. Mary’s Loch. It is in a forest that became noted for being haunted by a woman who came there and walked towards the forest of birches like “a walking corpse” and ran like a wild animal in it (Tennant 163). This is comparable to Jane’s vision of the forest of birches where she runs around. Jane, similar to Dracula who brings with him boxes of earth to England (Stoker 58), needs her origin and that might be why she goes back to the forest. The reason why Jane mysteriously disappears is because someone kills her by putting a stake through her heart. Her corpse is in a very good condition despite the fact she has been in her grave for a long time and her hair has grown a few inches. Her death is therefore typical for a vampire who has been slaughtered similar to the vampires in the novel *Dracula*. The editor writes about his discovery in this way: “There was no way (and the uncertainty was not caused by the result of decomposition) in which it was possible to tell the sex of the corpse” (Tennant 165). It was believed that corpses in good condition in the graves were the confirmation of them being a vampire. However, there is no description in folklore about what condition the vampire’s body should be in if it had been staked through the heart. In *Dracula* Lucy turned back into “sweetness and purity” (Stoker 233). In general it was believed that this action would kill the vampire and it would die, so the fair conclusion would be that the body would decay. That is why in *The Bad Sister* the interpretation of Jane’s condition in her grave and also her being found sexless could be that she was castrated by the stake and therefore become a mummy without a sexual identity.

IV The Vampires in *Dracula*

The comparison of *The Bad Sister* to *Dracula* reveals similarities between these two books demonstrating the influence the latter had on. *Dracula* has gained its reputation for its sensuality and grotesque sequence of events. The elements that make *Dracula* unforgettable and maintain the reader’s attention are the use of real elements. The first element is the name Count Dracula, which was the nickname of Count Vlad Tsepesh Voivod of Wallachia, who was known for his cruel treatment of his enemies and countrymen. The second element is the use of Romanian folklore and with these elements combined Stoker recreates the Dracula myth (Kirtley 133-136).

What deepens the authenticity of Stoker's *Dracula* is the use of journals in the narrative. The reader reads detailed journals and telegraphs written by the different characters and makes his/her own conclusions. The only characters in the book, who do not write their own journals and do not get their experiences across, are the vampires and that leaves the reader with uncertainty that heightens the imagination. *The Bad Sister* shares these characteristics with important variations; Dracula is female and a radical feminist and only Jane's journal and the editor's notes are read. Jane's journal is a journal of transformation and continues until she dies. Tennant takes the uncertainty of the Count Dracula even further and makes the reader doubt Margaret even exists. Similar to Jonathan's journal in *Dracula*, Jane's journal is not written for the purpose to be read by anyone, but in some sense both seem to be written for therapeutic purposes. Both are trapped between two worlds and in the end manage to escape to one of them.

It is not possible to look at *Dracula* without discussing the treatment of women in the novel. In the novel there is only one male vampire and the others are female, who are described in negatively erotic terms. The first half of the novel centres on the innocent and good Lucy, who turns into a vampire and must be killed savagely (Stoker 232), similar to the three women in the castle (Stoker 396). To quote Carol Senf: "If it were not for Mina Harker, the reader might conclude that Stoker is a repressed Victorian man with intense hatred of women or at least a pathological aversion to them" (Senf 34). Therefore she draws the conclusion that this treatment is because of "his ambivalent reaction to a topical phenomenon – the New Woman" (Senf 34). The New Woman was a feminist who added alternatives to the traditional role of woman and the most dangerous of all, more liberty in sexual matters. This, according to Senf, is the matter Stoker touches on in his *Dracula*. Stoker embarks on the shocking controversial issue to the and Tennant is doing the same in her novel only a century later. Both issues are on the wave of feminism and how it can go to the extremes. The biggest difference would be that Tennant is also protesting society's traditional female roles while Stoker seems to praise them. As Tennant herself says: "The important split which makes this wild person is only there because of the necessity to conform; if that necessity wasn't there, the wildness would have transformed into a proper sense of self-expression, without so many barriers" (Haffenden 293).

In analysing the character Lucy it appears that while awake she is the sweet, good Lucy, in her sleep her subconscious reveals her discontentment and her desire to escape. This indicates the reason why she becomes the next victim of Dracula. She

subconsciously desires sexual freedom and to get rid of the constraints of society's gender roles. The novel is filled with the aggressive sexuality of the vampires and they, including the Count, are the only ones "voluptuous" in the book. This suggests that sexually free women cannot exist in normal relationships or society and Dracula is the tool used to explain to us the evil of their comportment. As Senf notes on the female vampires in *Dracula*: "Their aggressive behaviour and attempt to reverse traditional sexual roles show them to be New Women... In his mind the voluptuous woman is transformed into a carnivorous animal; and finally he reduces her to a mouth filled with sharp teeth" (Senf 40-41). Stoker even goes so far as to make them prey on small children in order to make them less feminine. This aspect is in some way used in *The Bad Sister* where Tennant explores the consequences of radical feminism on personas and society as she says: "I think if someone is so leant on by the expectations of society and by a very frightening and rather occultish radical feminism it could only drive them to destroy themselves" (Haffenden 292). Therefore, Dracula becomes a woman, who preys on females and lives with a group of women, which she controls. The transformation is looked at from the viewpoint of the woman or the so-called victim and reveals its liberating sensation instead of being considered negative.

Another aspect is the sexuality and how it is expressed through vampirism. In *Dracula* the difference between the vampires and the humans begins in the description by overusing the words "voluptuous" for the vampires and "good and brave" for the latter. Stevenson concludes that the sexuality in *Dracula* is so horrifying because Dracula represents the foreigner who has different customs and steals the innocent Englishwomen from their men. This stranger needs other men's women to reproduce and then changes them into his kin (Stevenson 140). One interpretation can be that the vampire represents the nocturnal erotic dreams of a man, only that in *Dracula* the objects are females visited by the count, meaning the women initially desire the encounter. This means that in the vampire world the gender roles are changed and this modification happens to women who desire it (Stevenson 146). In *The Bad Sister*, Jane has erotic dreams of a woman and is not satisfied with her heterosexual sex life (Tennant 75). When reading the novel it is easy to conclude that with her man she is not able to live out her desires and only gives in to satisfy his needs. After Margaret attacks her, Jane changes fundamentally in her behaviour and becomes more the aggressor than the passive woman. The vampires in *The Bad Sister* are also different in the aspect of their lack of males. They seem to be a lesbian society with Margaret as their mother.

Another difference is that Jane does not suck Margaret's blood in the transformation, probably because of the lacking male principle apart from the mystery Gil-Martin character. They are eliminating men from their lives. However, Jane seems to be a lesbian and enters a society of women where through vampirism she is not judged for her desires. She desires her liberty and therefore, becomes easily the prey of Margaret similar to the women who Dracula visits. Similar to what Stevenson says about Dracula and his want of creating his own tribe of vampires (140), Margaret seems to be creating her own world filled only with vampire women.

According to Stevenson the vampires in *Dracula* are bisexual and do not follow the sexual pattern considered normal to us humans (Stevenson 145-146). The count penetrates the women, but he receives their fluid and afterwards the women become the penetrators and are also sexually aggressive. Lucy represents in her own way subconscious desire for the sexual freedom of the New Woman and therefore becomes the victim of Dracula (Senf 42-43). When analysing Mina's transformation it can be interpreted as a fellatio as well as lactation "His right hand gripped her by the back of the neck forcing her face down on his bosom... a thin stream trickled down the man's bare chest which was shown by his torn-open dress" (Stoker 302). From this aspect Dracula can also be considered the mother as well as the husband destroying in some sense the old boundaries. This protest to the New Woman expresses Stoker's feelings about them similar to what Stevenson writes: "Female vampires are not angels turned into whores but human women who have become something very strange, beings in whom traditional distinctions between male and female have been lost and traditional roles confusingly mixed" (146).

V Repressed Sexuality in the Doppelgänger Element

The preparation of her liberation in the form of vampirism is carefully prepared throughout the novel. In the beginning of Jane Wild's journal, she starts her liberation by cutting off her hair and takes off her silk dress to put on jeans (Tennant 35). The changing of her attire is to make her appear more masculine and hence protest her gender role in society. This is emphasised later when she looks at her hands in this new clothing and sees how long she has hidden this part of herself or "has been under the sea" (Tennant 40). She is waking up to her true sexual desires and preparing to take the final step with vampirism. Demetrakopoulou suggests Stoker's use of vampires in

Dracula to be: “the exchange of conventional sex roles suggests the weariness that Victorians felt towards pure, passive, decarnalized females versus bestial, aggressive males” (106). In *The Bad Sister* the male element has almost been removed and it reflects Jane’s desire to live with women. Symbolically, Jane admires Paradise Island, a lesbian nightclub located next to the house of “the battered women” (Tennant 36). This underlines her discontentment with being a heterosexual female and how she feels inhibited in a relationship of that nature. Like the description so plainly puts it, she needs to move from the house of male repression and enter the freedom of lesbian companionship.

Jane’s suppression is also very evident in the novel. It is expressed through the symbolism of the Doppelgänger and according to Catherine Spooner, the Doppelgänger element in gothic novels is “the Freudian model of masculine paranoia as repressed homoerotic desire” (Spooner 292). The Doppelgänger means a double of a character bringing with it misfortune and the repression of the person. In *The Bad Sister* Jane’s Doppelgänger has many names depending on the experience or journey Jane has. Therefore it carries different names i.e. Mary, Miranda, bad muse, the bad sister etc. An interpretation of this element in *The Bad Sister* is the same as to the male Doppelgänger, because similar to them, it represents Jane’s homosexual desires. This double element plays on ideas of appearance indicating the sexual repression society has brought on Jane by demanding of her a certain gender role, like Jane says in her journal: “I had tried myself to be the woman of the posters and yet not to love her ... to be myself and her, and to please the world” (Tennant 121). According to Spooner, this is because the Doppelgänger was initially a male trade, but the female Doppelgänger does not function in the exact same way. This is because female and male homosexuality is perceived differently in society and their intimate relationships are not identical. According to the words of Spooner:

What occurs “between women” may not be the same as that which occurs “between men”, but it is certainly not a Utopian zone of undifferentiated sisterhood. If, as Sedgwick argues, the presentation of a Doppelgänger narrative necessarily expresses a relationship between men, then twentieth-century female Doppelgänger narratives equally indicate an interrogation of relationships between women. (Spooner 297)

The Bad Sister appears to emphasise the reunion of women and even suggests the idealisation of lesbianism. Jane Wild is brought up by a group of women who have a

female leader. She does not even bear the name of her father, but the surname chosen by this female commune, Wild. Also the sentiments she has towards her half sister, dislike mixed with admiration, sheds an important light on how she suffers under the demands of society and how she as a woman should be. Her sister, Ishbel, has the love and support of their father while Jane is ignored. This discontentment is also expressed through her relationship with Tony, i.e. when he reacts to her new haircut and she responds “But men cut their hair off like that. Why shouldn’t I?” (Tennant 44). She refuses to behave according to her gender role and rebels against traditions such as the lunch on Sundays: “Sunday lunch was supposed to be a cementing thing for couples... Yorkshire pudding solidifies relationships too... I would be sitting watching the screen instead of preparing all this. And Tony would be hard and distant as a result” (Tennant 47). This echoes what Demetrakopoulou writes about *Dracula*: “... my point is that the vampire women are outlaws of society through their utter rejection of the conventional feminine role.” (107).

Another important element in the Doppelgänger is the female appearance as demanded by society because they reflect the superficial look of a person. This appearance creates who we are superficially and does not present profound psychological traits like our emotions or thoughts. Spooner explains the connection between Doppelgänger and fashion in the following:

Fashion is presented as entrapping the protagonists, both in that they feel alienated from the myth of ideal womanhood to which the culture demands they aspire, and in that the choices they make frequently turn out to be no real choices at all, but something replicated by their sinister doubles. (295)

Jane’s remarks about living with Tony are that he has not made any marks on her apartment and he would not even notice if she left. This relationship makes her feel confined to a female gender role, which she attempts to resist, but eventually surrenders in order to make him happy. For example as Jane describes what is expected of her and how she reacts when she leaves the house after telling Tony she will not be present at the Sunday lunch:

If I walked like a woman cowed by thousands of years behind the veil, eyes down, erect, shuffling gait, there was no reason for me to be allowed out at all and I would be unable to get as far as the main door of the building. If I went “ordinarily”, as Tony would go, simply walking out of the flat with a quick wave it would be selfish, uncaring. (Tennant 48)

In the journal as Jane describes a sexual encounter between Jane and Tony she writes: “his body was dead... We lay breathing self-consciously, as if trying to catch each other out in some demonstration of lack of feeling” (Tennant 68-69). This appears to emphasise the solitude she experiences with him.

In her journal, Jane’s bad sister first appears in person following her and then invades her home in the form of a photograph seemingly following her around the apartment (Tennant 68). Jane associates the bad sister with Tony, thinking she is his former girlfriend, which creates a love triangle and jealousy. As Spooner describes it: “... the Doppelgänger relationship veils an “erotic triangle” in which the female relationships are defined through a third, male character” (297). The triangle is between Jane, the bad sister and Tony and it is shown when Jane fantasises about the sex between Tony and the Doppelgänger, or the bad sister. This sex fantasy stresses the lack of intimacy between her and Tony and its focus is on the bad sister.

It is not plainly Jane’s desire to be someone else, but to be with a female and to be able to escape from her repressing role in her heterosexual relationship. Here the Doppelgänger element becomes more evident as a fantasy and her desire to live out her true sexuality. Jane’s need to kill the Doppelgänger is the need to be freed from repression and become a vampire who lives out her desires in a comparison to what Demetrakopoulou describes as the sexuality in *Dracula*:

Yet the sexuality is violent, brutal, intriguingly evil; emanations of irresistible sexuality break through into consciousness in fantastic and grotesque forms. It presents a fantasy world that would have provided escape from many of the sexual and psychic restraints prevalent in Victorian culture. (106)

The triangle then evolves and the relationship between the women becomes more important and slowly replaces the heterosexual one (Spooner 297). This is demonstrated in Jane’s masturbation when she desires “never to feel the desolate openness again” and her hand makes a “five-barred gate over the entrance” (Tennant 70). This appears to indicate her growing displeasure of being entered by a male partner. Consequently, she goes on one of her journeys and again changes her form with a great significance of clothing. This time she tries to put on the jeans, but instead puts on a black worn dress. This is also very symbolic because she feels humiliation of having a curvy female body and is running away from men, who only see her physique, into a situation of repression, i.e. the garden (Tennant 74-75). She finds peace in bed with her bad sister, both wearing the same dress, hence the same oppressive gender role, and fulfils her sexual desires

with intimacy she does not receive from Tony. “Marie and I are in the one bed now, and our black dresses, which we never take off, even to sleep, are up around our waists. With our fingers we give each other comfort” (Tennant 78). Until this point in the novel, Jane cannot live out her desires outside her fantasy world, which seems to make it irresistible for her to return to Margaret and be liberated with a vampire’s kiss.

VII Jane’s Subconscious and Journeys

Jane’s subconscious and dreams are a large part of *The Bad Sister* in such a way that it easily invites a psychoanalytic reading. In an interview with Haffenden, Emma Tennant revealed that this is exactly what she intended to do. In Tennant’s words:

... when the narrative says that it might comprehend ‘the psychopathology of the developing female’ and ‘the mythology sustaining our concept of the feminine in society’, it is said not by me but by a pretty stupid narrator: the very narrator who is collecting the dossier is somebody who is capable of making that kind of judgement. The narrator is a fictional person, and I think I did much the same thing in *The Bad Sister*, which ended with a perfectly convincing psychiatrist’s report but which I wrote tongue-in-cheek. (Haffenden, 290)

Before leaving on the first journey she cuts off her long feminine hair making her hard in the face or masculine (Tennant 37-42). In the journey she changes into a man Jane who walks around with a gun. The gun could be interpreted as a metaphor for the male genitals. Therefore, when Jane goes into the bar and shoots the sailors, it could be very symbolic for going to the extremes of masculinity. She discovers her masculinity by becoming a man and then kills it by murdering the men in the bar. This is somewhat the idea that Tennant explains in her interview: “I think the lack my book deals with is that to pursue the feminist position, to become aware of the loss of masculine principle in you, and then to murder it - by murdering a paternalist society- is no answer” (Haffenden 291).

Jane’s final vision, before entering freedom in the form of vampirism, occurs after her visit to Stephen the priest. She sees a beautiful forest with light and darkness in balance, which traditionally symbolises the good and bad in right proportions (Tennant 91-94). A popular slang occurs in this vision and it is the word “bird”, which is used for women. Therefore it could be interpreted that the birds in the forest are women, and the colours black and bright blue immediately bring with them the idea of bruises and

Jane's continually thinking about the battered women's house in her street. This shift of colours may represent the change these women bring with them to society, or the forest, when they rebel against oppression. This could be interpreted as the feminist movement with groups like the Wild women in the novel. The wolves are the next metaphor.

Stoker's *Dracula* uses wolves throughout the novel as his helpers so this suggests a connection between vampires and wolves. This aspect can represent that Jane is on the limit of being transferred into the freedom of a vampire. Also in this vision, Jane meets her male self and is unable to get close to him. He disappears, similarly to her masculine muse; he is unreachable and non-existing. Her bad sister/Doppelgänger appears and Jane understands that this is the beginning of the bad sister's death. The bad sister here indicates the imbalance in the female role forced upon Jane in society and the war a female muse would have with a female poet. Jane's search for a male muse is not coincidental as Tennant explains in her Haffenden interview:

I'm looking at a situation where the male poet has a muse who is obviously female, and at Virginia Woolf's remark that it is very difficult for a woman poet or writer to coexist with another woman – because if the muse is female there are then two unpleasantly warring women in the same breast. (292)

The muse becomes more unattainable because Jane has killed her masculine part and now the only thing left is her female muse. The wolves do not look at the bad sister, not seeming to accept her. This suggests she does not belong to their liberating company of sexual freedom, as she represents the repression of the Doppelgänger (Tennant 92-93). The journey ends with Jane walking into the metal forest passing her sister and in that way she leaves her and enters the forest of freedom or a world without sexual prejudice.

In the journal Jane gives the reader an insight into her feminine subconscious, allowing us to see how it develops into the vampire. This happens because Jane Wild's sexuality is immensely repressed in *The Bad Sister*. According to Freudian psychoanalysis theory the cause might be the unnatural imbalance of her personality where her Super-Ego has taken control. The Super-Ego defined by Freud is:

The Super-Ego retains the character of the father, while the more powerful the Oedipus complex was and the more rapidly it succumbed to repression (under the influence of authority, religious teaching, schooling and reading), the stricter will be the domination of the Super-Ego over the ego later on—in the form of conscience or perhaps of an unconscious sense of guilt. (Freud 30)

The Super-Ego forces Jane to attempt living in a society according to what is considered normal and therefore she hides her longings towards women. Margaret, or the mother of vampires, assists her in returning to her origin, to the community and companionship of women. This begins with visions and dreams, which demonstrate the subconscious desire for the unity only existing between two women. These aspects are indicated when Margaret attacks Jane. The surroundings and Margaret's clothing are both highly sexual. Margaret is wearing a "long gown of deep red, slashed at the bosom to show a white neck like a column going up to support a Roman head" (Tennant 96). The whole room is red like "dried blood" (Tennant 98), which is a very sexual symbol of life and death, enhancing both the Freudian ideas of Eros, the life instinct, and the death instinct (Cherry). The room is also filled with phallic symbols such as candles, reminding us of the masculine absence in these sensual circumstances. Margaret has a lock of hair from a woman who got struck by lightning, holding its significance to be that the impossible can happen. Earlier in the story Jane cuts off her hair, which could be perceived as a protest against gender roles and Margaret's hair lock functioning as a reminder of Jane's female liberation and preparing her for more by turning her into a vampire. Margaret pushes Jane on the divan, goes on top of her and Jane experiences Margaret like guilt, which again confirms the control Jane's Super-Ego has over her. This is Jane's desire, but being controlled by her Super-Ego for so long she is not able to enjoy her nature. When this happens, Jane senses Margaret's bosom pressed against her, emphasising the lesbian element. The appearance of Jane's male muse and him leaving, accentuates the ambiguity of Margaret claiming to be Gil-Martin confusing the gender roles ones more. This occurs right before Margaret penetrates Jane with her teeth. Jane experiences pain and she loses blood similar to when a woman loses her virginity. After this intercourse Margaret becomes "like a woman who has given birth", breathing noisily and fast just like a person right after an orgasm (Tennant 101). When Jane is liberated from the Super-Ego her ID takes over her persona. Freud defined the ID in this way: "It is filled with energy reaching it from the instincts, but it has no organization, produces no collective will, but only a striving to bring about the satisfaction of the instinctual needs subject to the observance of the pleasure principle" (as cited in Storey 73). This could explain why the imbalance of the ID might change a human being into the hunter of the night.

Conclusion

Emma Tennant explores the subconscious of a woman in this novel using supernatural metaphors like the Doppelgänger to symbolise Jane's suppression and vampirism for her liberation. The Doppelgänger/the bad sister is her significant other in the novel playing the part of society's control of Jane by following her around and limiting her. Jane uses the Doppelgänger to veil her homoerotic desires, but in the end she has to kill it in order to become free from its powers. This essay has sought to examine the protagonist, Jane, from the vampire aspect demonstrating its psychological functions in the novel. It has been clearly established that the vampire element functions as a metaphor for radical feminism and also as Jane's liberation from society's gender roles.

Tennant in this novel has continued the development of the modern vampire and therefore has made some great similarities with her novel, *The Bad Sister*, and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. These similarities go so far into making Margaret looking like the female version of Dracula. The use of the modern vampire in literature is considered a consequence of society's restraints or blockage of sexuality. Female vampires are shown as sexually aggressive and vampires in general are bisexual, demonstrating a more liberal sexuality among them. In *The Bad Sister* the vampires are a society of women and therefore become an obvious attraction for a repressed homosexual like Jane. The males and all masculinity have been removed from this society, which is the step Tennant takes the modern vampire. Tennant creates Margaret as a radical feminist group leader, noticeably similar with Dracula to help the reader see the connection in the vampire metaphors between the two novels. Margaret tries to create her own society only with vampire women. In that way Tennant continues Stoker's interpretation of the New Woman only this time they are radical feminists a century later.

From the psychoanalytic perspective, Tennant is successful in demonstrating sexual politics through Jane's journal, with the use of explicit metaphors in her daydreams and visions. Through them Jane is demonstrated as severely repressed by her gender role and with longings towards a female companionship. Tennant uses the metaphors and supernatural elements such as the Doppelgänger and vampirism in their characteristic functions in literature to depict the protagonist's state of mind and her ultimate salvation through the latter in the end.

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