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The Antichristian Views of Marcellus Emants

When attempting to determine the nature of the antichristian views of the Dutch writer Marcellus Emants (1848-1923), the work that serves best as the basis for such an investigation is *Lilith*, a poem in three cantos which the author published in 1879, early in his literary career. In *Lilith* Emants devised his own interpretation of the genesis of mankind and especially with regard to the origin of man's sinfulness he deviated fundamentally from the Bible story.

It is not surprising that in a country with such a long and rich religious tradition as Holland the appearance of *Lilith* focused the attention of the reading public on the young writer. It is also only natural that an intricate complex of causes lay at the bottom of Emants' ostentatious rebellion, not only against the institution of the church, but also, and foremost, against several of its fundamental doctrines. It seems that the conflict in young Emants between romantic idealism and a persistent rational search for truth may be considered as a major cause for this attitude.

Marcellus Emants was born into a well-to-do family in The Hague. In 1860 his father was appointed a judge in that city and his mother, whose maiden name was Verwey Mejan, belonged to the nobility. As was typical of respectable families in those days, the father insisted that religious appearances be kept up and for that reason it was customary in the Emants household to read at the breakfast

table a text from the Bible. Young Marcellus did not like this custom, just as he did not like the compulsory attendance of church services. From our major source of information on his life, *Marcellus Emants. Een schrijversleven* (M.E. The Life of a Writer) by Pierre H. Dubois, we learn that Emants' widow Mrs. Kuhn-Emants supposedly told the municipal archivist of The Hague that "Marcellus Emants, who was already as a child totally unbelieving, did not want to be confirmed. He was, however, forced by his father and went to church on horseback with a whip. Afterwards he had his picture taken in this peculiar confirmation attire. It happened in 1862 when he was fourteen years of age. The story seems somewhat improbable, but it was told to me exactly in this fashion."¹ Although the statement cannot be verified, young Emants' attitude, as described here, is in full agreement with remarks in writings of later years in which the author did not let the opportunity slip by to ridicule church rituals.

However, in his *De levensbeschouwing van Marcellus Emants* (Emants' Philosophy of Life), Boerwinkel stresses, very much to the point, that young Emants should not be considered simply irreligious, and in this connection he refers to a poem "Lentezang" (Spring Song) of 1871 in which Emants sings of God and freedom: (When spring comes...)

Then I feel such wondrous beatitude.
In my eye a tear wells up and I thank you my
God,

That already here on earth in freedom and love
 You prepare man for a higher and purer joy.
 Because once in his love God gave
 Man and animals freedom as holiest pawn,
 Who is deprived of freedom cannot worship
 God,
 Who fails to value freedom is not worthy of his
 love.²

It is almost incredible that at one time in his life the author of *Lilith* wrote these verses. It is especially striking that Emants in the last strophe of the poem adheres to the basic ecclesiastic doctrine that man can only worship God in freedom, i.e. with the freedom to accept or reject Him. In *Lilith*, on the other hand, man is depicted as deprived of that choice. It seems therefore proper to interpret the outpouring of thankfulness towards God in this youthful poem as the expression of an emotional undercurrent that came spontaneously to the surface. Further investigation shows that the steadily growing rational rejection of both church and religion is really characteristic of Emants in this period. It is only reasonable to assume that his experiences in life pushed him in that direction. For one thing, the sensitive young man had the greatest difficulties finding his place among people. Under great pressure from his father, who wanted his son to continue in the family tradition, Marcellus registered as a law student in 1868 at the university of Leiden. He also became a member of the "Leidse Studentencorps" (the Corporation of Leiden students). Emants, however, had great difficulties associating with this élite group. He was uninterested in what was called "gezelligheid" at parties where there was a great deal of drinking and talking about what he must have considered trivial matters. It comes nevertheless somewhat as a shock to learn that later in life, in 1907, the author declared to an interviewer, M.J. Brusse: "In Leiden I became a hater of mankind."³ It is puzzling how a young man simultaneously could have felt the urge to

express his thankfulness to God and a hatred for His creation, mankind.

In an attempt to reconcile the two antagonistic positions we should assume that in his Leiden period the young student was not yet a real "menschenhater", and that the older Emants, when he looked back to this time, depicted the feelings of his younger self in too negative a way. At the same time, however, the statement justifies the assumption that an aversion for his surroundings was growing in the young poet who was unable to find a sympathetic ear for the romantic idealism expressed in his own verses.

In 1872 Emants published the essay "Bergkristal" (Rock-crystal) based on his visit to Oberammergau (Bavaria), where he attended a performance of the world-famous Passion play in which Christ's crucifixion is re-enacted. On the one hand, the play urged him to draw the sword against religion in general, and Roman Catholicism in particular; on the other, the excellence of the performance caused him to write that "in Oberammergau, however, a glorious victory was gained because pure artistic sense and love for pure beauty triumphed over want of taste and disgusting fanaticism."⁴ It is noteworthy that in this essay Emants still professes an essentially positive approach to the concepts of God, belief, and beauty. He leaves it basically to the individual what to believe, but he obviously tries to promote the image of an anthropomorphic God when he states: "Search for the most beautiful qualities in man, and imagine them in their most perfect state and harmony. Then you don't have a God because, in order to be able to 'think God', you should be God yourself; but you will imagine an ideal mankind and every step in that direction brings you closer to God."⁵ Later on in the article, however, it becomes clear that Emants does not search for an anthropomorphic God but rather identifies

God with beauty: "Each religious doctrine should believe in beauty."⁶ According to Emants each human being possesses a sense of beauty and "art and science will provide the guidelines which will enable man to come closer and closer to pure beauty."⁷ And still later: "A sense of beauty leads to God, if you want to postulate the existence of a God..." Although Emants does not know what God is, he nevertheless confesses: "However, in God's work, in the impressive creation around us ... we see the most beautiful harmony reigning as the foremost law."⁸

In all likelihood, the above quoted statements should be considered as an expression of the young writer's thankfulness that he had been given the opportunity to undergo such an overwhelming aesthetic experience during the Passion-play in Oberammergau. They are not the expression of the philosophy of life to which he adhered with great persistency once he had formulated it, and which may be characterized as dogmatic pessimism. However, the first powerful signs of this, his real view of the world, which must have been growing in the *camera obscura* of his soul, can already be detected in the sketches he wrote following a trip through Sweden in 1875. In Lappmarken he attended a church service. It is in itself revealing that he was apparently time and again drawn to religious manifestations, perhaps to give himself an opportunity to determine and formulate his stand vis-à-vis religion while confronting it. Although he was unable to follow the sermon because of language problems, he learned later that the major theme had been that every human being will one day be called to account for his deeds. What follows in this sketch from *Op reis door Zweden* (Traveling through Sweden) is the first powerful unmistakable expression of Emants' pessimistic philosophy of life: "I did not ask to live. I did not create myself. Punish Him Who created me, because if He desired me to be better, why didn't He

deliver me better? That change would not have cost Him anything but for me it is impossible!"⁹

In her very informative introduction to the latest edition (1971) of *Lilith*, Dr. Cram-Magré makes the following comment in connection with *Travelling through Sweden*: "Emants would like to ask God to account for the fact that an innocent child is placed in a world in which sorrow dominates happiness while, in addition, he still will have to answer in the future for acts which he was forced to perform in the course of his lifetime."¹⁰ Elsewhere in the sketch, in the wake of his annoyance with the terms under which man was created, Emants goes even further and states, as he repeatedly did in later years in various forms, that not-living should be preferred to living. In a surprisingly cruel way Emants suggests that it would have been better to smother at birth the many children of a dirty beggar who was asking for alms. In a review, the critic Loffelt expressed his feelings of discomfort especially with this passage and Emants answered him in April 1877. The letter is of special interest because in it Emants laid down the fundamentals of his pessimistic philosophy. Not taking back a single word of his conviction that it would have been better to strangle the children, he postulates here: "Strictly speaking, I consider giving birth a crime."¹¹

It also becomes apparent that for Emants the preference of discontinuing life is not dependent on the financial state of the individual. He writes in the letter: "... in comparison to thousands of others I was accorded a far better destiny which, in addition to the cowardice that makes every man continue living, prevents me indeed for the time being from pegging out."¹¹

Since on various occasions Emants confessed that his pessimism was not an emotional

matter but solely one of the mind¹² it is not surprising that he singled out contemplation as man's only faculty capable of development. Therefore, throughout his life he chose a rational, dogmatic approach to life's problems. As a result, by the end of the Seventies Emants, the artist, started expressing in a literary form what his systematic mind had figured out, namely the iron truth that man cannot be considered responsible for the existence of evil in this world, and that notwithstanding man's basic innocence he is unable to find any credit balance in happiness during his lifetime. Thus, as both rationalist and artist, Emants must have felt the urge to turn to the Creator of mankind, the Power that gave us life, and to the source of procreation on earth, woman, and lodge his complaint with them.

Already in literary works preceding *Lilith* Emants had started to depict woman as a major cause of man's unhappiness and downfall. In this context the novella "Mastazza", the second of three stories which Emants published in 1878 under the covering title *Monaco*, is exemplary.

The young, handsome, and passionate Italian, Mastazza makes a bet with two college friends that in the course of a few days he will easily conquer a well-known Monacan *cocotte* by the name of Laura. He is successful because he manages to play his game with the *femme fatale* very coolly. For her part, Laura is irresistibly attracted to Mastazza precisely because he does not want to stay with her. But then an inevitable turn-about takes place. Despite his attempt to continue the cool conquest, the hot-headed Mastazza falls deeply in love with Laura. The latter also experiences moments of great happiness because she in turn has succeeded in conquering the man who seemed so inaccessible. So, strictly speaking, Mastazza won the bet, but he is not a conqueror because

he is emotionally so deeply involved with Laura that he wants to marry her. Here, in a refined way, Emants uses the technique of the *Wendepunkt-Novelle*: the pro- and antagonist exchange roles. Laura, aware of her complete conquest, is not only against marriage, she has no use for Mastazza any more, and wants to get rid of him. For the passionate Italian the mere thought of losing Laura is an unbearable torment, and after he has learned that Laura has started a liaison with a wealthy Englishman, he kills both her and himself in a fit of uncontrollable jealousy. According to Cram-Magré, Laura may be considered as an embryonic Lilith.

It would, however, be a mistake to conclude from the high frequency in Emants' works of women in the role of calculating seducers, causing the downfall of passionate men, that his self-confessed hatred of mankind, which started already in his student days, developed into a more specific hatred of women. It should not be forgotten that Emants' philosophy of life was a dogmatic pessimism, and as he himself stressed on several occasions, a matter of the mind. For that reason, a marked dichotomy can be discerned between what we may call the "Geist der Erzählung" (the spirit of the narrative) of many of his literary works and the life-experience of their author.

Emants was married three times. We know very little about his first marriage which lasted less than two years, but the second, to Eva Verviers van der Loeff, herself a novelist, lasted for twenty years and was apparently very happy. Unfortunately, the opposite is true for the third marriage, to Jenny Kuhn, which was contracted in Berlin in 1904 when Emants was already fifty-five years of age. (I was told by the writer Pierre Dubois that, upon a doctor's recommendation, Emants immediately consented to fathering a child on Jenny as a possible solution for the nervous

disease from which she was suffering.) But these changes in his personal life did not affect his thinking. An interview which the writer must have given towards the end of his life proves that his philosophy had not changed since the time, in April 1877, when he wrote the letter to Loffelt quoted above. After some thirty years he reiterates: "And thus the end of all life must be the view that it is impossible to obtain any credit balance in happiness."¹³

In the same interview, with further reference to the incorporation of his *Weltanschauung* into his literary works, Emants made the following important remark: "That has actually happened only twice. Once in *Lilith* and a second time in *Godenschemering* (Twilight of the Gods) which I later changed into *Loki* (this is the title of Emants' own dramatization of the poem). In these two poems a philosophy is expressed."¹⁴

As was already mentioned above, one of the major tenets of that philosophy was Emants' conviction that man cannot be considered responsible for the existence of evil on this earth. Therefore, in his attempt to prove man's basic innocence in the poem *Lilith*, Emants was forced to deviate in principle from the Christian doctrine about the genesis of man. In Genesis we are told that after God had created man and had led him into the Garden of Eden, He said: "You may freely eat of every tree of the Garden; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."¹⁵ Thus, according to the Bible, man was created with a choice: to obey or disobey God. And since Eve and Adam chose to disobey, the ground was cursed because of them and God sent Adam and Eve forth from the Garden of Eden.

In *Lilith* Emants eliminated the element of

choice by postulating that man was created as a result of the voluptuousness of Jehovah, and thus doomed from the moment of his creation; however, — and this should be stressed — beyond his own guilt. Consequently, according to Emants — and in this respect he follows Schopenhauer — the only solution for man to redeem himself from continuing to suffer on earth is by means of striving for non-being. This position is also in obvious contradiction to the Bible.

In *Ezekiel* we read: "... As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live."¹⁵

On the other hand, it is important to be aware of the fact that in the poem in which Emants laid down his personal version of man's origin, he made use of a figure, Lilith, with a long, very complex, and therefore partly obscure history. Fortunately, Emants not only added an extensive introduction to the first (1879) edition of his poem, but wrote also a detailed clarification of his work in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* of October 7, 1879. He had been vexed by a review of *Lilith* by a certain Haverkorn van Rijswijk who had shown an irritating lack of understanding for the meaning of the work. In the introduction, Emants starts out by referring to the quotation from Goethe's *Faust* which he had used as a motto:

Mephistopheles: Look at her carefully!
That is Lilith.
Faust: Who?
Mephistopheles: Adam's first wife.
Beware of her beautiful hair,
Of this adornment with which she
uniquely shines.
When she captures the young man
with it,
Then she does not let him go again
so quickly.¹⁶

However, unlike Goethe's Mephistopheles, Emants introduces Lilith not as Adam's first wife, but as his mother.

Furthermore, the saga of Lilith, as retold by the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder in his *Blätter der Vorzeit* (Prehistoric Papers) impressed Emants so much that he felt the urge to preface his poem with a Dutch translation of Herder's text. While Emants follows Herder in the latter's portrayal of Adam being enchanted by Lilith's beauty, in sharp contrast to the German philosopher he does not believe in the possible happiness of the young man united with his other half, formed from his heart. Herder states that "feeling that they were created for one another, they become as one in always renewed contentment and beauty."¹⁷ According to Emants, however, whatever happiness exists is only a delusion.

In his article in the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, Emants declares that he strove for a depiction of the character of life in *Lilith*. He goes on to agree with Schopenhauer that "preservation of the individual and procreation of the species are the key words for all the striving and hurrying, fighting and loving that everybody can observe around him."¹⁸ Emants expresses here also a new facet of his pessimistic philosophy: "Unjustly, voluptuousness and love are still continuously being separated from one another, whereby the first is condemned as sinful but then silently tolerated as an inevitable sin. In fact they are one."¹⁹ Later on Emants reiterates: "Love and lust are inseparable."²⁰ This is followed by a statement about delusion (*begoocheling*), a concept that plays an important part in *Lilith* and the author's philosophy in general. According to Emants, a man can be deluded when he, "still unaware of a physical desire, thinks that he harbours

only a spiritualistic — if you will, platonic — veneration. Delusion is inherent in love, in fact, love without delusion is unthinkable."²⁰

The two concepts are then united in the following dictum: "Thus lust creates a need as a result of which the preservation of life is guaranteed, and, in order to ensure the achievement of this goal, delusion is added, necessarily followed by disillusionment, which accompanies the satisfaction of the need."²¹

Consequently, as Cram-Magré points out in her commentary, the heroine of Emants' poem, Lilith, the personification of lust, has a double function to fulfill; she seduces and deludes. For this reason it is only natural that Emants felt attracted to the goddess of Indian philosophy, Maya, whose name means delusion. This figure must have become so dear to Emants that he calls his heroine alternately Lilith and Maja without any obvious semantic reason. Unfortunately, this choice has not contributed to the clarity of the text. In the context of the article, however, it is important that in his explanatory notes Emants quotes a description of Maya from a German etymological-symbolic-mythological dictionary: "Thus, originated from Brahma's egg, Maja is the protomother (Urmutter) of all things with whose help ... the protobeing (Urwesen) created all." And further: "... she is love, the feminine principle in God, the cause which makes him express himself."²²

Although in her acts Lilith makes frequent use of delusion, her relation to Jehovah is very different from that of Maya to Brahma. In the first canto of Emants' poem, she herself tells Adam:

On the down of clouds at Jehovah's side
His Lilith lay in the arms of sleep.
Her dark eye closed by the glow of the sun

From which his will had made her into a divine being,
And the father's eyes remained full of love
Fixed on her beauty, dear to his heart.²³

But then the following happened:

He, whom you call father, king, succumbed
To the fire of lust which was inflamed in his bosom.
His head sank down, his lips softly pressed
A kiss on my mouth ... I was awakened.²⁴

Hereafter, Lilith is put on God's throne as queen of heaven, but:

Jehovah's kiss lay burning on my lips,
A wild sea of flames waved through my bosom,
A longing for unknown bliss
Consumed the thoughts in my brain.
The pure light darkened in my eyes,
Lilith's soul was surrounded by deep darkness,
And she sank down into Jehovah's arms,
Having lost her senses but with a heart drunk
with love, —
Woe, short joy, I had dearly to expiate you!²⁴

Lilith's bitter punishment is that she is banned from Heaven:

And into the infinite night of the abyss
Lilith fell down. — There I gave birth to you,
my son.²⁵

It can be argued that in the verses quoted above, the kernel of Emants' philosophy is expressed: man is not responsible for his downfall, Jehovah is. The latter succumbed to lust and produced Adam with a woman of his own creation, who calls him father, and therefore in an act of incest.

Although the concept of the base element as part of the Divine is not original with Emants, in the majority of legends Lilith is linked with the fallen angel, Lucifer. A.M. Killen writes in her article "La Légende de Lilith": "The legend unites the two fallen angels with close

links. Lilith, daughter and lover of Lucifer, when falling as he does, loses all her divine qualities and keeps only the meanest feminine instincts. She becomes personified vice, cruel and perverse love; she has her kingdom in the dark abyss of human nature."²⁶ In his striving to accuse Jehovah, to ascribe the guilt to Him, it was essential for Emants to depict the relation between God and Lilith as he did.

After the birth of Adam, Jehovah decides to give him a companion. For this purpose he summons Lilith back to heaven. Lilith agrees, on two conditions: that she be allowed to return to her dormant state of yore, and that the female companion be created in her image. Her first condition is not met, and the seraphim declares solemnly:

Jehovah's kiss which awakened you from sleeping,
Will never be wiped out on your lips.²⁷

The second condition is partly met in so far as Eve will look like Lilith but will not have black but blond hair; furthermore — and this is of the utmost importance — :

And may not the glow of lust, but the light of love
Shine from her eyes, blue as the skies.²⁸

It may seem that Emants is inconsistent in his portrayal of Eve. How could pure love shine from her eyes when she, like Adam, is the product of the sexual engagement of Jehovah and Lilith, voluptuousness? From the author's explanatory notes it becomes clear that it was his intention to depict here the purity of emotion as it exists in the initial stage of a liaison between a young man and woman. It seems indeed psychologically sound to interpolate a phase of hesitation before passion demands satisfaction. In Emants' own words: "Then it is as if the burning desire

hesitates to interrupt the beautiful delusion which was called into existence by it, to desecrate the altar on which an unknown happiness was venerated."²⁹ It is therefore obviously not a pure love but — in full agreement with Emants' convictions — the delusion of pure love which shines from Eve's eyes.

However, this delusion is only the initial stage in the liaison. Hereafter, in the terms of the poem, imperious ambition urges Eve to check the sincerity of Adam's feelings. Originally, Lilith had wanted to do it herself, but when she is confronted with and deluded by Eve's purity, she, who is after all her mother, is incapable of performing this mean act:

No, daughter fed and nursed in my womb,
In your presence, Lilith's wrath melts away in
tears.³⁰

Thus, by inserting this interlude, Emants prolongs the struggle between pure love, or rather its delusion, and lust. But at this point Lilith's sister, imperious ambition, is very eager to step in and to declare for Lilith:

It was me who put you at Adam's side,
So that his heart would give you love;
But although his mouth speaks sweetly to you,
It is not your name which lives in his thoughts.
Although his hand strokes your blond locks
His eye longs for a different head-dress.³¹

Eve is urged to put on Lilith's dark veil and in this disguise to tempt Adam. Although the latter is hesitant because he is looking for Eve, who has disappeared, in the end he cannot help himself and avows his former passion for Lilith:

Yes, Lilith, Lilith, Adam loves you,
His soul longs for the breath of your lips.³²

Hereafter, Adam utters the fatal words:

And for a moment of blissfulness
Enjoyed in Lilith's arm, at Lilith's bosom
Eve's sisterly love is a small price.
May it disappear with all magnificence of Eden
...³³

Naturally, as punishment for the disavowal of Paradise, Adam, and with him Eve, is chased out of Eden. And this is the sombre prediction for the future: driven by lust, the couple will grow into hundreds of descendants, and the hundred into millions, and there will be no end to the misery until the moment that man realizes that the only true solution for this misery is to stop procreation:

And when man understands the darkness in
which he grubs,
Then his hand, armed with the force of despair,
Will break the miracle created by your power,
And sweet rest will settle on Lilith's eye,³⁴

It cannot be denied that it sounds paradoxical that Emants refers here to a "wonder", whereas that miracle, the creation of man, is so deeply resented by the author. His message, however, remains clear: the misery will end when Lilith will again slumber and mankind will have died out.

In conclusion, a quotation from his last unfinished essay of 1919 or 1920, entitled *Woorden* (Words), clearly testifies to the fact that until the end of his days the writer unequivocally adhered to his dogmatic pessimism. Emants writes: "There exists only one means to obtain lasting peace and lasting happiness ... not by thrusting a rational compassionate second nature upon the instinctive cruel first one ... not by trying to reconcile egoism and altruism with one another; but by annihilating the specialization in individuals, by the return of the individual to the all-encompassing: death."³⁵

Summarizing, it can be said that Emants' pessimistic philosophy is anti-biblical and anti-Christian. For a Christian in the widest sense of the word Adam's genesis as depicted in *Lilith* is unacceptable, as is Emants' conviction that love and lust are basically identical, and that the goal for which mankind should be striving is its own annihilation. However, an awareness of the incompatibility of Emants' philosophy and Christian faith does not prevent us from giving the author full credit for his courage in expressing his original thoughts in a literary work at a time and in a country whose hostility he could not have failed to expect.

NOTES

¹ "... Marcellus Emants, die reeds als kind geheel ongelovig was, zich niet wilde laten aannemen. Hij werd daartoe echter toch door zijn vader gedwongen en ging toen te paard met een karwats ter kerke. Daarop liet hij zich in dit eigenaardige aanneemcostuum fotograferen. Het was in 1862 en hij was 14 jaren oud. Het verhaal lijkt enigszins onwaarschijnlijk, maar is mij juist zo verteld." P. Dubois, *Marcellus Emants. Een schrijversleven* ('s Gravenhage, 1980), p. 17. All translations into English are mine.

² "Dan is't mij ook zoo heerlijk, zoo zalig te moede. In mijn oog welt een traan en ik dank u mijn God, Dat ge in vrijheid en liefde den mensch hier op aarde Reeds bereidt tot een hooger en reiner genot.

Want voor menschen en dieren gaf God in zijn liefde Eens de vrijheid als heiligste pand hier op aard, Wie de vrijheid moet derven kan God niet aanbidden, Wie de vrijheid miskent is zijn liefde niet waard.

³ "In Leiden ben ik menschenhater geworden", Dubois, *Marcellus...*, p. 23.

⁴ "In Oberammergau daarentegen werd een glansrijke zege bevochten, want reine kunstzin en liefde voor het ware schoone triompheerden over wansmaak en walgelijke dweperij." M. Emants, "Bergkristal," *Spar en Hulst*, I (1872), 16.

⁵ "Zoek de schoonste eigenschappen in den mensch, en

denk u deze in hunne meest volkomen ontwikkeling en harmonie. Dan hebt gij geen God, want om God te kunnen denken, moest gij God zelf zijn; maar gij zult u eene ideale menschheid voorstellen en elke stap daarheen brengt u nader tot God." *Ibid.*, 33.

⁶ "Slechts één voorschrift moest elke godsdienstleer hebben: Streef naar het schoone; slechts één artikel elke geloofsbelijdenis: ik geloof in het schoone." *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷ "Kunst en wetenschap zullen de leidraden verschaffen, langs welke men meer en meer zal naderen tot het ware schoone." *Ibid.*, 42.

⁸ "Schoonheidszin leidt tot God, als gij een God wilt aannemen... Doch in Gods werk, in de grootsche schepping om ons heen ... zien wij de schoonste harmonie als eerste wet heerschen." *Ibid.*, 43.

⁹ "Ik heb niet gevraagd te leven, ik heb mijzelf niet gemaakt. Straf Hem, Die mij schiep, want indien Hij mij beter heeft begeerd, waarom heeft Hij mij dan niet beter afgeleverd. Hem kostte die wijziging niets, mij is zij eene onmogelijkheid!" M. Emants, *Op reis door Zweden* (Haarlem, 1877), p. 177.

¹⁰ "Emants zou God rekenschap willen vragen van het feit dat een onschuldig kind wordt geplaatst in een wereld waarin het leed het geluk overheerst, terwijl het zich bovendien in de toekomst nog zal moeten verantwoorden voor daden die het in de loop van zijn leven noodwendig moest begaan." M. Emants, *Lilith. Gedicht in drie zangen* (Poem in Three Cantos). Ed. and introd. by A.M. Cram-Magré (Culemborg, 1971), p. 11.

¹¹ "Ik vind het leven geven strikt genomen een misdaad.. is mij in vergelijking een lot boven duizenden ten deel gevallen, dat gevoegd bij de lafheid die elken mensch in 't leven houd mij inderdaad belet voor 't oogenblik optestappen ... Zelfs de grootste optimisten moeten mijns inziens zien dat zij valsch redeneeren omdat: optimisme = vermeerdering van geluk = toeneming in kracht = vermeerdering van waarmte en het tegendeel van het laatste is waar dus zelfs geen nihilisme in den zin van gelijkheid van lust en smart is mogelijk, maar het laatste wint hoe langer hoe meer. Het eenige wat zich in den mensch ontwikkelt is naar mijn inzien: het nadenken. Dit ontwikkelt zich ten koste reeds van de rest en zal eenmaal tot het begrip moeten komen dat het leven geen batig saldo oplevert ondanks de ingeboren levenslust die ons voor den gek houdt en dat het dus

beter is nooit geboren te zijn dan te leven." *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

¹² "een verstandszaak".

¹³ "En het eind van alle leven moet dus zijn: het inzicht dat onmogelijk te bereiken is eenig batig saldo in geluk." E. d'Oliviera, "De mannen van '80 aan het woord." *Een onderzoek naar eenige beginselen van de "Nieuwe-Gids" School* ("The Men of the Eighties Are Speaking." An Investigation of Some Principles of the "Nieuwe-Gids" School), (Amsterdam, n.d.) p. 132.

¹⁴ "Dat is eigenlijk maar tweemaal gebeurd. Eens in *Lilith* en een andermaal in *Godenschemering*, dat ik later heb veranderd in *Loki*. In deze twee gedichten ligt een levensbeschouwing." *Ibid.*, p. 133. In this article *Godenschemering* is not discussed because its contents do not contribute to a deeper understanding on Emants' antichristian views.

¹⁵ *Genesis*, 2:16-17, *Ezekiel*, 33:11, *The Holy Bible* (New York and Glasgow, 1952), pp. 2, 760.

¹⁶ Mephistopheles: Betrachte sie genau! Lilith ist das.

Faust: Wer?

Mephistopheles: Adams erste Frau, Nimm dich in Acht vor ihren schönen Haaren, Vor diesem Schmuck, mit dem sie einzig prangt. Wenn sie damit den jungen Mann erlangt, So lasst sie ihn sobald nicht wieder fahren.

Emants, *Lilith...*, p. 100.

¹⁷ "Gevoelend dat zij voor elkander geschapen zijn, worden zij te zamen tot één, in altijd nieuwe tevredenheid en schoonheid." *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁸ "Instandhouding van het individu en voortplanting der soort zijn de sleutelwoorden voor al het streven en jagen, bestrijden en beminnen, dat ieder om zich henen ontwaren kan." *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 53.

¹⁹ "Wellust en liefde worden nog steeds ten onrechte van elkander gescheiden, waarbij de eerste als zondig veroordeeld, maar als een onvermijdelijke zonde in stilte weder wordt geduld. Inderdaad zijn zij één." *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁰ "Liefde en wellust zijn niet te scheiden... van eene lichamelijke begeerte nog onbewust, slechts eene spiritualistische — zoo men wil platonische — vereering en zijn boezem meent te herbergen. Begoocheling is aan de liefde eigen, ja, er is geen liefde zonder begoocheling denkbaar." *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²¹ "De wellust scheidt dus de behoefte waardoor de instandhouding van het leven is gewaarborgd, en verbindt er, ter zekerder bereiking van dit doel, eene begoocheling aan, waarop de ontuchtering volgen moet, die de bevrediging der behoefte vergezelt." *Ibid.*, p. 54.

²² "Maja ist also die aus Brahma's Ei hervorgegangene Urmutter der Dinge, Mittles welcher ... das Urwesen Alles erschuf ... sie ist die Liebe, das weibliche Prinzip in Gott, der Grund, der ihn sich zu äussern veranlasst..." *Ibid.*, p. 55.

²³ Op wolkendons lag aan Jehova's zijde
In de armen van den slaap zijn Lilith neer.
Haar donker oog hield zonnegloed geloken,
Waaruit zijn wil haar't godlijk aanzijn schonk,
En op haar schoonheid, dierbaar aan zijn hart,
Bleef liefdevol des vaders blik gevestigd.

Ibid., p. 110.

²⁴ Hij, dien gij vader, koning noemt, bezweek
Voor 't vuur der lust, dat in zijn borst ontvlamde.
Zijn hoofd zank neer, zijn lippen drukten zacht
Een kus mij op den mond ... ik was ontwaakt.

Jehova's kus lag brandend op mijn lippen,
Mijn borst doorgolfde een wilde vlammenzee,
Een drang naar ongekende zaligheid
Verteerde de gedachten in mijn brein.
Het klare licht verduisterde in mijn oogen,
Met diepen nacht werd Lilith's ziel omgeven,
En in Jehava's armen zank zij neer,
Bezinningsloos, maar 't hart van liefde dronken, —
— Wee, korte lust, u moest ik vreeslijk boeten!

Ibid., pp. 111-112.

²⁵ En in des afgronds onafzienbaren nacht
Viel Lilith neer. — Daar baarde ik u, mijn zoon.
Ibid., p. 113.

²⁶ "La légende unit des deux anges déchus dans des liens étroits. Lilith, fille, amante de Lucifer, en tombant comme lui, perd toutes ses qualités divines, ne garde que les instincts les plus bas de la femme. Elle devient

le vice personnifié, l'amour cruel et pervers; elle a son royaume dans l'abîme ténébreux de la nature humaine." A.M. Killen, "La légende de Lilith, et quelques interprétations modernes de cette figure légendaire," *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 12 (1932), 301, 302.

²⁷ Jehova's kus die uit den slaap u wekte,
Wordt op uw lippen nimmer uitgewischt.
Emants, *Lilith...*, p. 120.

²⁸ En uit haar oogen, blauw als't hemelruim,
Straal' niet der wellust gloed, maar't licht der liefde.
Ibid., p. 121.

²⁹ "Dan is't of de brandendste begeerte aarzelt de
schoone begoocheling te verbreken, welke zij zelve in
het leven riep, het altaar te ontwijden waarop een
onbereikbaar geluk werd aanbeden." *Ibid.*, p. 56.

³⁰ Neen, dochter in mijn schoot gevoed, gekoesterd,
Bij u smelt Lilith's toorn in tranen weg.
Ibid., p. 135.

³¹ Ik was't, die u aan Adams zijde legde,
Zodat zijn hart u liefde schenken zou;
Maar spreekt zijn mond op zoeten toon u aan,
Uw naam is't niet, die leeft in zijn gedachten.
Mag ook zijn hand uw blonde lokken streelen,
Zijn oog verlangt naar andren schedeltooi.

Ibid., p. 138.

³² Ja, Lilith, Lilith, Adam heeft u lief,
Zijn ziel vermacht naar de adem van uw lippen.
Ibid., pp. 144, 145.

³³ En voor een oogenblik van zaligheid
In Lilith's arm, aan Lilith's borst genoten
Is Eva's zustermin een luttel prijs.
Verzinke zij met alle pracht van Eden...
Ibid., p. 145.

³⁴ En kent de mensch den nacht waarin hij wroet,
Dan zal zijn hand, met wanhoopskracht gewapend,
Het wonder breken door uw macht gewrocht,
En zoete rust op Lilith's oog doen dalen.
Ibid., p. 148.

³⁵ "... er maar één middel bestaat om de duurzame vrede
en het duurzaam geluk te bereiken ... (en dat dit middel)
niet is het opdringen aan de instinktief wrede natuur
van een verstandelijke medelijdende tweede natuur ...
niet het pogen om egoïsme en altruïsme met elkander te
verzoenen; maar het opheffen van de verbiezondering
in individuen, het terugkeren van de enkeling tot het al,
de dood." M. Emants, "Woorden," *Tirade*, 119/120
(1966), 808.