



# Men Don't Tell? Masculinity, Sexual Abuse and Narrative in *I, Jan Cremer*

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**Abstract:** This article seeks to discuss masculinity and sexual abuse from a narrative point of view by examining the Dutch autobiographical novel *I, Jan Cremer* (1964). In its extensive celebration of its protagonist's physical strength, social autonomy, aggression, emotional restraint and excessive promiscuity, *I, Jan Cremer*, generally recognized as an icon of sexual liberation in the sixties, can be seen as exemplary for dominant narratives on masculinity. As such, the book also demonstrates the incompatibility of these narratives with the idea of sexual victimhood, especially if the perpetrator is a woman. A close reading of the novel demonstrates how the first-person narrator forcefully imposes his masculine self-image on his victimized self, up to a point where the narrative becomes inconsistent.

**Keywords:** Masculinity, Sexual Abuse, Female Offenders, Narrative, Dutch Literature

## Masculinity and Victimhood

In 1996, Mary Kay Letourneau, a 34-year old American elementary school teacher, was sentenced to six months' prison and three years' psychiatric treatment for second degree child rape. The victim, Vili Fualaau, was Letourneau's former student and 12 years old at the time of her conviction. Shortly after her time in prison, Letourneau was arrested for raping Fualaau again and subsequently convicted for violating the terms of her probation. Having been released after seven years in jail, Letourneau gave an interview to Larry King, in which she claimed there was a 'deep spiritual oneness' between herself and Fualaau. King wished her good luck.<sup>2</sup> One year later, she married her victim, who was 21 years old by that time. The wedding was covered exclusively by CBS's gossip show 'Entertainment Tonight'. In 2009, the couple was reported hosting a 'Hot for Teacher Night' at a Seattle bar. Asked for his opinion, the owner of the bar commented it was OK for the couple to have some fun on a Saturday night.<sup>3</sup> [89]

'Think about', as a blog on female sex offenders wrote, 'what the reaction would be [...] if the roles were switched and it was a 34-year old male and a 12-year old girl.'<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the case of Letourneau seems to suggest that whereas male offenders are generally pictured as monstrous predators, society is hesitant to recognize even the mere possibility of a female offender victimizing a boy. Psychological research verifies this impression: extensive interviews by Broussars, Wagner and Kazelskis<sup>5</sup> and Finkelhor<sup>6</sup> show that a significant majority of people perceive sexual abuse perpetrated by women as less harmful when perpetrated by men. Research quoted by Davies and Rodgers<sup>7</sup> suggest that most people perceive the idea of sexual assault on men by women as implausible. Heatherton and Beardsall<sup>8</sup> and Denov<sup>9</sup> show this

attitude is common even among professionals dealing with child abuse.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Denov shows that many professionals consciously or unconsciously play down sexual offenses by women, thus echoing Lisak's finding<sup>11</sup> that male victims of female offenders have considerable trouble finding professional help.

This help is much needed. As emerges from qualitative research by Denov and Lisak, a significant number of boys victimized by women faced severe problems in the aftermath of the abuse, including depression, suicidal ideation or attempts, discomfort with sex, substance abuse and feelings of self-blame, guilt, shame, humiliation and uncontrolled aggression. Furthermore, many abused men showed a general mistrust and retaliation towards others – women in particular – and a need to control others. Nearly a third of male victims victimized others at some point in their lives: 29% of the men interviewed by Denov reported to have sexually abused children themselves, 31% of the men Lisak interviewed acknowledged to have abused children, raped adult women, battered female intimate partners or had assaulted other men physically.

Yet even this potential danger for others does not seem to urge further societal recognition of the possibility that boys can be sexually abused by women. At stake here are societal gender norms: 'The existence of female perpetrators and male victims confronts many of our most firmly held beliefs about women, men, sexuality, power, and sexual assault', as Munro concisely phrased it in an article published on her website in 2002. As both Lisak and Denov observed, even as a potential source of further societal recognition, the male survivor finds himself caught up in these firmly held beliefs. Being a victim, as Lisak stresses, involves vulnerability, passivity and helplessness, psychological states which are broadly regarded as non-masculine. Correspondingly, among the men interviewed, those who tried to come to terms with their victimization often experienced themselves as 'inadequate men'. Men who denied feelings associated with their victimization often sought reinforcement of this denial by means of hyper-masculine behaviour, a reaction also observed by Denov.

This alarming status quo calls for the need of a broader debate on narratives on masculinity and sexual victimhood. In the following, I will try to initiate such a [90] debate by discussing the novel *Ik, Jan Cremer* ('I, Jan Cremer', 1964).<sup>12</sup> The choice for this book is certainly not random. In Dutch cultural remembrance, *Ik, Jan Cremer* is broadly seen as an icon of the so called 'sexual revolution'. The strong reaction it provoked by its bulky depictions of sex and violence is usually considered as marking a break with Dutch culture in the fifties, which is generally seen as all too decent, authoritarian and prudish.<sup>13</sup> Its author, Jan Cremer, actively sought and established a status as a media celebrity, comparable with the male rock stars who emerged during the sixties.<sup>14</sup>

*Ik, Jan Cremer* is an autobiography in the sense that its first-person narrator, called Jan Cremer, recalls his youth and adolescence in a more or less chronological order and seeks to create a particular image of his self, the 'I, Jan Cremer' of the title. Focusing on its status as a provocative pop novel, scholars have qualified this image as rebellious, independent and highly masculine. This, as we shall see, certainly holds stake, but at least some of the memories presented also allow recognition of Cremer as a victimized self.

In describing his earliest youth, Cremer recalls<sup>15</sup> getting involved with a twenty-eight year old woman called Betty. Betty lives next door to Cremer and is described as a close friend of Cremer's mother. Betty's relationship with her husband is described as dysfunctional: her husband is a very violent traumatized veteran, who suffers from alcohol problems and ends up in a clinic. Betty lives promiscuously. Her contact with the young Cremer starts when she asks

him to do her some favours, which she rewards with affection. At one point, she asks him to show her his penis. From that moment, she gradually increases the sexual intimacy. Cremer mentions repeated sexual contact, and intercourse on two occasions. After the first intercourse, Betty demands that the young Cremer keep it secret and threatens to deny him further intercourse if he breaks his promise.

Following Ford's<sup>16</sup> overview of research on female sex offenders, this passage is to be considered as a typical abusive situation. The vast majority of female sex offenders are either related to their victims or intimately linked to their social environment. Betty's dysfunctional relationship can also be considered typical, as most female offenders suffer from difficulties with interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, female offenders, especially if the abuse is inflicted on older children, do not frequently inflict physical violence, but rather seek to gain control over their victims by manipulating them, as is the case here: Cremer is treated with favouritism and 'special treatment'; the sexual offence itself is embedded in physical acts that can also be interpreted as signs of affection, which makes it more difficult to qualify the situation as abusive. It appears that many female offenders view the abuse as a relationship which fulfils emotional needs that were not met in relationships with adults. This notion of exclusivity is still apparent in the way in which Cremer later relates to Betty: he sees her and himself as sharing a 'secret bond'<sup>17</sup> and considers her a 'safe haven'<sup>18</sup> which stands apart from a world considered to be hostile and unreliable. [91]

However, to my knowledge no critic or scholar has ever read the passage as a display of sexual abuse. When the passage is mentioned at all, it is referred to as a sexual rite of passage, demonstrating Cremer's superiority as a man.<sup>19</sup> The latter is ironic, albeit in a very bitter sense, because many female offenders frame their abusive actions on male children as such. But given society's reluctance to recognize the possibility of sexual abuse committed by women on men, it should not come as a surprise. Furthermore, the narrative through which this memory is recalled seems to confirm the interpretation of a rite of passage:<sup>20</sup>

Soon Betty stood up and pulled her dress over her head. She was stark naked. [...] So this was The Great Adventure ... now I was going to Fuck! Overexcited as I was, my dick became absolutely soft, but Betty soon had it standing again. How I managed I don't remember, but at a given moment I had fucked. Thirteen years old, and I had fucked!

## Displaying the Phallic Self-Image

The passage quoted above is characteristic for the narrative in *Ik, Jan Cremer*. As a narrator, Cremer presents an image of himself as distinguished, rebellious, heroic, potent, strong and above all masculine. This becomes clear in the immanent phallic nature of the title: '*Ik, Jan Cremer*'. Throughout the novel, this image is displayed in every element of the description of his life. In the first pages of the book, Cremer represents his father as an infamous outlaw, explorer, adventurer, war-correspondent and 'one of the first non-Spanish bullfighters'. He celebrates him for having a violent nature, extremely promiscuous behaviour, even though he recalls him being violent towards his mother and himself.<sup>21</sup>

The phallic self-image is also projected onto his social background. Cremer pictures his earliest youth in a nameless Dutch border town explicitly as a poor, fertile, dangerous and exciting chaos, which is contrasted with the orderly world of the bourgeois 'rich city'. He not only describes the neighbourhood he grew up in, but celebrates it in a hymn-like prose-poem, in which he portrays himself as its ultimate embodiment.<sup>22</sup> This heroic portrayal is typical of

the image Cremer projects of himself as a social being. From his earliest memories on, he is superior to others, including most of his contemporaries: he is braver, stronger and sexually more experienced. For example, when Cremer is sent to a Catholic boarding school, he describes sex games the boys play with one of the older girls. These games take place only when the youngest boys are out hiking: '[...] I belonged to the youngest boys officially, but I was one of the tallest boys and the strongest except for two, so I was always allowed to participate.'<sup>23</sup> Later memories show Cremer as a leader. He mobilizes others to resist authority and commit crimes.<sup>24</sup> As an artist, his behaviour is said to be eagerly copied.<sup>25</sup> In various [92] passages Cremer reveals himself as a simple sadist. But even then his actions are celebrated as a demonstration of his power over others:

Now I went back to see [the Eiffel Tower] again. We sat in the little park under the tower. No one else was around so I told the little squirt that the tower was a huge iron monster and had eaten all the other people in the park. She started screaming and raised a hell like a racket. I had to take her right home. On the way, every time she caught a glimpse of so much as the tip of the tower she broke into hysterics. I bet she never sent anyone a postcard with a picture of the Eiffel Tower!<sup>26</sup>

Cremer's phallic self-image is developed further in the description of his attitude towards institutions: throughout the novel, Cremer places himself at the centre of numerous conflicts with pedagogic institutions and their representatives. In opposition to their submissive, hypocritical and cowardly nature, Cremer is depicted as a rebel unwilling to conform to authority and order and eschewing any compromise when it comes to his own desires, even when this requires inflicting violence on others. In fact, violence inflicted on people representing pedagogic institutions is frequently celebrated as heroic, even when it becomes lethal.<sup>27</sup>

The way in which Cremer describes his relationships with women can also be seen as a display of his phallic self-image. Cremer narrates rapidly alternating sexual relations with women, starting from an early age on. In the first half of the book, the relationships described at some length involve girls from rich families, who consider him as a threat, which Cremer enthusiastically affirms with numerous provocations. One enraged father forces his daughter to change school and, after the girl runs away from home, hires detectives to follow Cremer – to no effect. Cremer recalls how in the end the father begs him to be allowed to see his daughter, whereupon Cremer triumphantly dictates his conditions.<sup>28</sup> In addition, Cremer rarely courts women; on the contrary, women offer themselves to him, rather spontaneously, once even following an accidental encounter in a bathroom.<sup>29</sup> Brigitte, one of the very few women whose relationship with him is described in detail, accepts to lodge and feed Cremer and even prostitutes herself for him, after just two nightly encounters.<sup>30</sup>

Cremer's account of his professional life also highlights the phallic self. Through various pedagogic institutions, Cremer is placed in various apprenticeships and jobs, which mostly facilitate descriptions of further conflicts with his superiors, sabotage and sexual encounters,<sup>31</sup> which is also the case with his student jobs.<sup>32</sup> The other jobs he takes on before becoming recognized as a painter can be considered to be specifically masculine: he works as a sailor, as a marine and as a soldier in the French Foreign Legion. Even brief careers as cowboy, stage outfitter and bullfighter are mentioned.<sup>33</sup> Especially his employment as a marine [93] is presented as a triumph, leading to enrolment as a trainee in the secret service because of his distinguished performance:

Because I could throw grenades farthest and fastest, never got tired, excelled at calisthenics, didn't have nude pin-ups over my bunk, hadn't caught the clap yet, was good at climbing poles, broad jumping and racing, and always politely said, "Yes, Sergeant," I was chosen, together with three others form the batallion, for the Naval Intelligence Service.<sup>34</sup>

A brief stint as a fun fair boxer presents Cremer as physically slightly less omnipotent, but an iron hoof in his left glove ensures Cremer's earnings and public admiration, which inspires the narrating Cremer to celebrate himself as a brilliant fraud.<sup>35</sup> Significant in this context is also a passage in which Cremer recalls a visit to a film studio in the French town of Billancourt, during which the director René Clément immediately offers him a role in one of his movies.<sup>36</sup>

Apart from the activities that flow from his various professions, Cremer also recalls being a trapper, a smuggler, a gangster, a fraud, a pimp and even a murderer. Moral reflection is virtually absent in the description of these criminal activities. In the majority of cases, Cremer offers some legitimacy for his actions, yet this legitimacy coexists with language that calls upon and celebrates the image of the self as cool-blooded, iron-willed and powerful. A good example is the following description of a fight:

"What do you think you're doing with that knife?" I asked calmly. "You'd better throw it away or put it back in your pocket before you cause an accident. And get the hell out of here!" But he kept moving toward me and I saw that the situation was dangerous. I opened my coat and whipped out my Colt 45. I felt the sweat on my palm as I aimed the gun at his face. "Come on, scram!" I wanted to warn him. But he already lunged at me. Now I had no choice. The steel of his knife glanced off my elbow. I pushed the barrel right into his face and pulled the trigger. A smoky roar, a sizzling sound, and his blackened face snapped back. He reeled and fell away from me. The crowd began to mutter and I raced away.<sup>37</sup>

It will be clear from the above that Cremer uses virtually any occasion to present himself as possessing an outstanding physique, serving him as a source of power both in a sexual and in a violent sense. In addition, Cremer frequently portrays himself as a skilled drinker. Even his ignoring the request not to use the toilet while the train halts at a station is celebrated for its potentially unsettling power:

I think of a mournful family group – father, mother, a young girl and a chaplain – waving a sad good-bye to someone, the son of the family. They continue [94] to wave until the last car has rattled the iron rails. Then sudden quit. And, on the spot where their loved one ascended, a large, healthy, steaming heap of shit.<sup>38</sup>

## Scars

The persistence with which the narrating Cremer seeks to display his phallic self-image in virtually every element of his recollection of his life already suggests compulsion. So does the structure of the narrative by means of which this display is realized. Cremer's descriptions of singular experiences pointing out his outstanding masculinity often tend to disembody in claims that are just as hyperbolic as they are vague. A good example is the passage mentioned above, in which Cremer is offered a film role. Cremer recalls refusing the offer and continues:

[René Clement] kept calling me for weeks, hoping I would change my mind. I didn't. Work? What is that? World-famous directors offered me contracts; they were aware of my brilliant acting talent. I could go to New York at their expense to take classes at the Actors Studio. Where Brando, Monroe and Newman had been trained.<sup>39</sup>

The compulsive nature of these demonstrations of potency also becomes apparent in the many breaks in the narrative. An example of such a break can be found in the following passage, in which Cremer describes his experiences as a young teen in an home for young men with disciplinary problems:

But once in a while, I'll admit, I wasn't so happy. For a few days I'd feel low and rotten. Then, late at night, when the talking had stopped and everyone else was asleep, I'd cry for hours, very quietly. I don't know why or what about. I just had to cry, to cry something out of myself, but cautiously, under the blankets, so that no one would hear me. After all, wasn't I one of the roughest and toughest of the lot? The kid who made everyone laugh and was liked by all? If I said, "Tomorrow, don't touch your oatmeal; we want pudding!" every single kid would refuse to eat that slimy crap. Every last one of them! For my word was law. Then, after we were all sent away from the table, some of the younger kids would pretend to faint from hunger during work. Next day there was pudding! I showed them, I Jan Cremer! It was pudding we wanted, pudding with fruit. And that's what we got!<sup>40</sup>

Feelings of helplessness and vulnerability are exposed, yet this exposure is first questioned and then erased by a reassuring portrait of the young Cremer as the toughest and most powerful kid in town. This narrative break reveals a conflict between a powerful and masculine self-image and a vulnerable, traumatized self. [95] The narrating Cremer clearly seeks to impose the first on the latter, but this impulsive operation has left behind scars, which are still visible in the narrative.

Looking closer at these scars allows the reconstruction of the self which the narrating Cremer seeks to erase. In his account of his experiences as a sailor, Cremer frequently mentions visits to brothels in port towns. Yet the first description of such a visit clearly reveals a sense of discomfort about these visits: Cremer recalls wishing to see a little more of the countries where his ship docked than 'neon-lighted bars and painted whores'.<sup>41</sup> A few pages later, Cremer mentions brothels again. This time, he describes visiting them, yet the description is very negative, describing the alcoholic and sexual excesses in brothels as disgusting and dull. Significantly, Cremer uses the generic you instead of the 'I' from the first passage.<sup>42</sup> The third occasion on which Cremer raises the subject, the connotation is purely positive. In this passage, however, personal experience is entirely erased and life as a sailor is romanticized on an abstract level.<sup>43</sup>

Discomfort with alcohol abuse is also revealed in another sense. As discussed above, the narrator Cremer clearly seeks to present frequent and heavy drinking as proof of his masculinity. Yet as the novel progresses, description of heavy drinking becomes shorter and is finally merely mentioned by means of a weary repetition of the phrase: '... once again we boozed through the night', which is omitted in the English translation.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, weariness with sexual intercourse is articulated regularly<sup>45</sup> and at some point, having sex is called 'participating in nuclear warfare'.<sup>46</sup> In fact, all his claims of erotic success cannot disguise that happiness and fulfilment are virtually missing from his encounters with women: distrust, embarrassment and mutual hatred dominate his recollection – significantly, an idyllic romance with a prostitute in

Barcelona who seems to love him unconditionally ends with a guilt-ridden Cremer fleeing the city overnight.<sup>47</sup>

Another narrative scar is the way in which emotional commitment is subsequently written out of the novel. Although children are not mentioned in the novel, Cremer occasionally recalls himself impregnating women. In the description of the first impregnation, Cremer considers marrying his pregnant girlfriend.<sup>48</sup> When remembering the second pregnant girlfriend, he mentions an emotional argument, during which he turns the woman in question down rather roughly.<sup>49</sup> A third pregnancy, of a nameless girlfriend, is mentioned in a brief remark about the difficulties in getting an abortion in Paris,<sup>50</sup> the fourth pregnancy is mentioned in a recollection of trouble with farmers on Ibiza.<sup>51</sup> Clearly, the narrator Cremer subsequently devotes increasingly less attention to emotional commitment.

Another striking example of how the structure reveals that the narrator Cremer obliterates memories of vulnerability, fear, pain, discomfort with alcohol abuse and sex, emotional reflection, compassion, moral doubt and remorse, is a description in which Cremer, as a legionnaire with the French Foreign Legion, takes part in the execution of a French officer. The execution is unambiguously presented [96] as traumatic: Cremer gives a forthright account of his fear, horror, compassion and his inability to eat lunch after the execution. However, this reflection is immediately erased by a display of indifference, appetite, Schadenfreude and a rather vulgar sexual fantasy:

By this evening I was fine again – I even went back for seconds on stew. So much happens in one day. But if you think about it, it really was rough on the poor cat. Maybe he left a beautiful chick behind. Frenchmen, especially officers, are pretty hot stuff with women. What would happen to his girl? She probably lives in Paris, in a large apartment with a view of the Eiffel Tower ... When you go there, she asks you in very graciously ... You make her in the first five minutes, fuck her all night and stay for weeks and weeks. ... Maybe she hated her lieutenant because he had four other women and never wrote ...<sup>52</sup>

A similar pattern emerges from Cremer's recollections of violence. In a passage which finds Cremer jailed, an incident in which Cremer fires a gas pistol in someone's face is mentioned. Cremer claims the other person was to blame, yet he does ask himself why he used the gun and recalls listening intently to a priest calling for penitence.<sup>53</sup> In the subsequent episode, Cremer is in an asylum, where he mutilates and kills the director who rapes female pupils.<sup>54</sup> What follows is a scene in which Cremer is molested by police officers, a scene in which he threatens and mutilates two anonymous people, a brief reflection on the Apocalypse and the Freudian death drive and a scene in which Cremer commits murder.<sup>55</sup> Whilst the violence becomes increasingly more lethal, the narrative loosens itself gradually from the autobiographical superstructure. In other words, the narrator Cremer writes himself so arduously into his phallic self-image that the formal coherence of the novel becomes subverted. The last passage, quoted above, in which Cremer comprehensively represents the image he seeks to produce as a narrator, lacks any contextual information.

Another example of how the compulsive nature of Cremer's narration subverts the formal structure is the fact that quite a number of the experiences Cremer presents as proof of his phallic self-image – conflicts with pedagogic institutions, criminal activities or distinctively 'male' professions – are not described, but merely listed.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, it should be noted that the number of activities Cremer claims to have carried out seems rather extensive, considering that the narrative time-frame stretches from Cremer's birth at the eve of World War II to the end of

the novel, which is dated 'December 1962'. It is hardly a coincidence that I, Jan Cremer was thoroughly re-ordered and partly rewritten for the English edition.<sup>57</sup> For an autobiography, the book did not seem to have been regarded as sufficiently consistent. [97]

## Conclusion

*Ik, Jan Cremer* ends with a peculiar scene. A girl, stripped down to her underwear and smelling of sperm, takes Cremer to an attic in which an old man is tortured to death and beheaded. Cremer, horrified by the sight, leaves the scene but discovers a bloodstain on his raincoat. He enters a restaurant under the attic where he feels everybody is looking at him. While he discovers the place is filled with old people, policemen storm the attic and Cremer fears being caught by the 'invisible brigade'. Detectives take Cremer to the attic again, where he is questioned in a language he does not speak. The girl, hidden by the detectives, is revealed: she is naked, bleeds from her vagina and has been whipped. When Cremer remains silent, the detectives start harassing the girl. Cremer feels he wants to confess something, but stays silent nevertheless. The eyes of the killed old man, whose head is placed on his corpse, open and wink cheerfully at Cremer. The girl grabs him and starts screaming.

This grotesque finale is very significant. Throughout the novel, all the psychological symptoms Lisak and Denov observed as evolving in the aftermath of sexual abuse are represented as part of Cremer's experience: substance abuse, discomfort and even plain disgust with sex, inability to commit emotionally, strong feelings of helplessness and vulnerability, uncontrolled outbursts of anger, distrust of women and victimization of others by means of violence, emotional abuse and manipulation. As a narrator, Cremer seeks to deny the distress they cause and imposes a phallic self-image on his recollection – the hyper-masculine is essential for enforcing the denial of sexual victimhood and the sensation of inadequate masculinity which flows from it. This imposition involves violence, of which the narrative bears the scars. Yet in the end, the scars burst open: guilt, fear, disgust, pain and all the other emotions the narrator Cremer has sought to erase throughout the novel become manifest with psychotic intensity.

Therefore, the conclusion of *Ik, Jan Cremer* can be read as a horrific end of the line of a narrative incapacity to perceive the self as masculine whilst coming to terms with the trauma of sexual abuse at the same time. When, in our culture, we talk about masculinity, we seem to lose our ability to talk about everything which comes with being sexually victimized; in fact, talking about masculinity seems to demand that we erase the narrative of sexual victimhood. Yet this erasure cannot succeed: it violates experience and eventually distorts any adequate representation of reality. Of this, I, Jan Cremer gives an impressive account. It is telling that the novel has long been seen as liberating sexuality from an oppressive bourgeois order. The novel depicts very little liberation, as I hope to have pointed out. Recognizing this might be the beginning of a realization that we need to talk differently about masculinity when we want to allow male victims of sexual abuse perpetrated by women to tell their story. [98]

## Notes

1. The author would like to thank Rivka Halbershtadt and Vered Menasse for sharing their indispensable insights and Basia Sliwinka and Unn Gustafsson for their critical remarks on the first draft.



2. A transcript of the interview can be read at <<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0410/11/lkl.01.html>> (last visited on 3 September 2011). The show was aired on 11 October 2004.
3. 'Letourneau, young spouse to host "Hot for Teacher" night', <[http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2009249390\\_webletourneau22.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2009249390_webletourneau22.html)>, posted on 21 May 2009.
4. 'Mother-Son sexual abuse', <<http://female-offenders.com/Safehouse/>>, posted on 12 July 2008.
5. S. Broussars, N.G. Wagner, and R. Kazelskis, 'Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of Child Sexual Abuse: The Impact of Victim Sex, Perpetrator Sex, Respondent Sex, and Victim Response', *Journal of Family Violence* 6 (1991), 267-78.
6. D. Finkelhor (ed.), *Child Sexual Abuse: New Theory and Research* (New York: Free Press, 1984).
7. Michelle Davies and Paul Rogers, 'Perceptions of Male Victims in Depicted Sexual Assaults: A Review of the Literature', in *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 11 (2006), 367-77.
8. Heatherton, J. and L. Beardseall, 'Decisions and attitudes concerning child sexual abuse-does the gender of the perpetrator make a difference to child protection professionals?', in: *Child Abuse and Neglect* 22 (1998), no. 12, 1265-128.
9. M. Denov, *A Culture of Denial: Exploring Professional Perspectives on Female Sex Offending*, in *Canadian Journal of Criminology* 43, (2001), no. 3, 303-15.
10. The research quoted here involved policemen, social workers and psychiatrists dealing with sexual offenders and victims.
11. David Lisak, 'The Psychological Impact of Sexual Abuse: Content Analysis of Interviews with Male Survivors', in *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 7, (1994), no. 4, 525-47.
12. Jan Cremer, *Ik, Jan Cremer* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2000). For the English translation, see Jan Cremer, *I, Jan Cremer* (New York: Shorecrest, 1965).
13. For a recent verification of this status, see the television documentary *Hoge bomen: pioniers* ('High trees: pioneers') on Cremer, broadcasted by the Dutch broadcaster AVRO on 5 September 2007. The documentary is available online at <[http://avro.nl/hogebomen/Player/tcm8\\_109415/](http://avro.nl/hogebomen/Player/tcm8_109415/)>.
14. Gaston Franssen, 'Literary Celebrity and the Discourse on Authorship in Dutch Literature', in *Journal of Dutch Literature* 1, (2010), no. 1 <<http://journalofdutchliterature.org/jdl/vol01/nr01/art05>>; Hugo Brems, *Altijd weer vogels die nesten beginnen: geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur 1945-2005* (Amsterdam: Bakker, 2006), pp. 260-2.
15. Cremer, pp. 42-3.
16. Hannah Ford, *Women Who Sexually Abuse Children* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2006).
17. Cremer, p. 76.
18. Cremer, p. 155.
19. For a recent example, see Rudy Vandendaele, 'Ik Jan Cremer Derde Boek', in *Humo*, 22 July 2008. [99]
20. For practical reasons, English quotes are taken from the translation published in 1965 by Signet Book, to which Seymour Krim wrote an introduction. Page numbers noted in the text refer to this edition as well. The object of this inquiry is nevertheless the Dutch text: the English translation has by no means

a comparable cultural significance as the original in the Dutch context and, as we shall see, not all of the observations related to the narrative apply to the English edition.

21. Page numbers in the Dutch edition (D): pp. 11-3 and p. 331 (Corresponding pages in the (E)nglish edition: pp. 17-9 and p. 267).
22. D: pp. 24-5 (E: pp. 30-1).
23. D: p. 37 (E: p. 43).
24. D: p. 66, p. 235, p. 238, pp. 299-306 and pp. 352-6 (E: p. 87, p. 99, p. 101, pp. 246-51 and pp. 239-42).
25. D: pp. 287-8 (E: pp. 236-7).
26. The original reads: 'Ik ben eens [op de Eiffeltoren geweest] met het drie jaar oude dochttertje van een vriendin. We gingen op een bankje zitten, in het parkje aan de voet van de toren. Ik vertelde aan het meisje dat de reusachtige ijzeren constructie zich voedde met mensen die op onze bank zaten. Toevallig was er niemand in het parkje op dat ogenblik. De ukkepuk begon toen vreselijk te gillen en te schreeuwen. En wilde weg. Als we later maar even de spits van de Eiffeltoren zagen opdoemen begon ze al te gillen. De kleine zal later zeker geen kaarten naar huis sturen met de Eiffeltoren erop.', p. 249 (D) (E: p. 211).
27. D: p. 55 (E: p. 77).
28. D: p. 103 (E: p. 70).
29. D: p. 279 (E: p. 231).
30. D: p. 217 (E: p. 197).
31. D: pp. 76-83 (E: pp. 60-7).
32. D: pp. 143-52 and pp. 159-62 (E: pp. 135-43 and pp. 147-9).
33. D: pp. 113-31, pp. 93-102, pp. 175-206 and pp. 319-20 (E: pp. 108-22, pp. 158-67, pp. 171-95 and p. 208).
34. 'Omdat ik de granaten het verst en het vlugst kan gooien, nooit moe werd, bij de lichaamssporten uitblonk, geen naakte wijven aan mijn brits had hangen, nog geen druiper had gemeld, goed mastklimmen kon, verspringen en hardlopen en altijd netjes 'Ja meneer' zei, werd ik met drie anderen uit de divisie gekozen voor de ID.', p. 161 (D) (E: p. 95).
35. D: pp. 163-7 (E: pp. 127-31).
36. This passage is missing in the English translation. See p. 260 in the original.
37. 'Wat wilde je met dat mes doen?' vroeg ik kalm. 'Gooi het nou maar neer, of stop het in je zak en gauw voor er ongelukken mee gebeuren. En loop dan maar vlug die kant op!' Maar hij bleef op me afkomen, ik vond de toestand gevaarlijk en dreigend worden. Met één beweging knoopte ik mijn colbert los en had ik de kolf van de Colt 45 in mijn natgeworden handpalm. Ik richtte op zijn gezicht: 'Loop nou echt maar gauw door!' wilde ik zeggen maar hij had zich op me gestort en ik had geen keus. Ik voelde het staal langs m'n mouw schampen. Ik duwde vliegensvlug de loop tegen z'n gezicht en haalde de trekker over. Een knal en een suizend geluid. Zijn gezicht trok zwart weg, hij draaide om zijn as en viel van me af. Ik hoorde gemompel van de menigte en rende weg.', p. [100] 244 (D) (E: p. 106). Note that the Dutch original is slightly more explicit in its celebration of the unsettling scene.

38. 'Heerlijk lijkt me dat, wanneer vader, moeder, meisje, dominee of pastoors hun dierbaren en geliefden uitwuiwen en maar blijven zwaaien en wuiwen, dat er dan wanneer de laatste wagon over de ijzeren rails is weggevoegen en hen eenzaam of alleen en verdrietig achterlaat, op die plek waar hun dierbare instapte moederziel alleen achterblijft een grote, forse, dampende stronchoop.', p. 268 (D) (E: pp. 223-4).
39. As mentioned in note 36, this passage was not included in the English and the translation is therefore mine. 'De regisseur belde mij wekenlang dagelijks op in de hoop dat ik mij zou bedenken. Ik bedacht me niet. Werken? Wat is dat? Wereldberoemde regisseurs boden me contracten aan; zij waren zich bewust van mijn meesterlijke gaven als acteur. Op hun kosten mocht ik overkomen naar New York om daar les te nemen aan de Actors Studio. Waar Brando, Monroe en Newman opgeleid zijn.', p. 260 (D).
40. 'Maar af en toe, ik geef het toe, voelde ik me niet zo gelukkig. Ik voelde me dan al een paar dagen rot en down. Dan ging ik laat in de nacht, als ik uitgeluld was en de meesten sliepen, urenlang liggen huilen. Ik weet niet waarvoor of waarom. Ik ging alleen maar huilen. Lekker uithuilen. Stiekem onder de dekens, want niemand mocht het horen of merken. Ik was toch een van de rauwste en harde jongens? Waar iedereen om lachen moest en bewondering voor had. Als ik zei: 'Morgen allemaal die havermout laten staan. We moeten pudding,' dan liet iedereen zijn slijmerige havermoutpap staan. Iedereen. Want mijn woord was wet. Als we dan van tafel moesten en op het werk een paar jongens zich flauw lieten vallen, dan stond er de volgende dag pudding, hoor! Want dat zou ik ze dan wel eens even laten zien: Ik, Jan Cremer. Pudding moesten we: pudding met vruchten. En we kregen pudding. Pudding met vruchten.', p. 87 (D) (E: p. 66).
41. D: p. 119 (E: p. 112).
42. D: pp. 123-4 (E: pp. 116-7).
43. D: p. 127 (E: p. 119).
44. The episodes introduced by this phrase in the Dutch original (see p. 299, p. 306 and p. 352) were translated into English nevertheless (see English translation p. 247, p. 251 and p. 239).
45. D: p. 69, p. 76, p. 154, p. 219 and p. 348 (E: p. 89, p. 60, p. 144 and p. 198). The last passage mentioned, in which Cremer recalls having nightmares after fantasizing about a woman, has been omitted in the English edition.
46. This is another passage that does not appear in the English edition. See p. 243 in the Dutch original.
47. D: p. 33 (E: p. 274).
48. D: p. 133 (E: p. 124).
49. D: p. 153 (E: p. 143).
50. D: 248 (E: p. 210).
51. D: 357 (E: p. 281).
52. 's Avonds was ik er overheen. Er gebeurt zo veel op één dag. Ik heb dubbel van de hachee gegeten. Als je toch nadenkt is het zonde van zo'n man. Misschien had ie wel een lekker wijf. Want die Fransen hebben wèl verstand van wijven! En vooral de officieren. Wat zal er nou met zo'n wijf gebeuren? Misschien woont ze wel in Parijs. In een [101] groot appartement met uitzicht op de Eiffeltoren? Als je er naar toe gaat ontvangt ze je hartelijk: Je kan haar direct versieren en naaien en bij haar wonen

- (omdat ze haar man haatte aangezien hij vier maîtresses had en haar nooit schreef).’, pp. 201-2 (D) (E: p. 191).
53. D: pp. 232-3 (E: pp. 96-7).
54. D: pp. 233-41 (E: pp. 97-104).
55. D: pp. 241-4 (E: pp. 97-106).
56. D: p. 55, p. 88 and pp. 319-20 (E: pp. 77-8, p. 60 and pp. 208-9).
57. The English displays a more ‘realistic’ chronology. For example, it places all events occurring in youth institutions and juvenile prisons before the episodes in which Cremer becomes a soldier for the Dutch Marines and then for the French Foreign Legion. It also groups in chapters the events taking place in Paris, in Amsterdam and on Ibiza. The means by which the book was reordered can also be derived from contrasting the English translation of the passage on the Eiffel Tower and the Dutch original quoted above (see footnote 26). In the translation, the passage is written into the broader narrative of Cremer’s stay in Paris. In the original, it is recalled as a memory from a different visit to Paris, marked only by the vague ‘I was once there ...’

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