

Summary of "The Centerfold Syndrome"

In his essay, "The Centerfold Syndrome," Gary Brooks emphasizes that there is equal damage to men and women because of the popular view that an attractive woman's body (naturally being an object of men's attention) is to be exposed, glorified, visually enjoyed, and desired. The author defines this attitude as the Centerfold Syndrome. The five elements of the Centerfold Syndrome are voyeurism, objectification, the need for validation, trophyism, and the fear of true intimacy.

Clearly identifies the main idea of essay. (2a)

Active sentence style. (5b)

Clearly states order of essay. (3f)

Brooks' first element, voyeurism, refers to the practice of playing on men's sexual feelings by displaying attractive women's bodies in commercials, print, and media in order to catch and retain the public's attention. This tendency exaggerates and perverts men's sexuality, creates in them unreal expectations, and encourages women to be the objects of men's observation. Being objectified and evaluated only by their physical features, women lose their personal value in men's eyes. For a man whose mind is focused only on an idealized sexual image, the average woman appears more complicated and less attractive. This man is unable to and uninterested in building a long-lasting relationship with her.

Shows evidence of active reading. (2b)

Supporting details of summarized text are identified. (2a)

Specific detail used. (2e)

Substantial explanation of ideas in summarized text. (2e)

The next element of the Centerfold Syndrome is the need for validation, which most men experience. They measure their worthiness by the amount of achievements they have gained in their social and personal lives. If a man views women primarily as objects of his sexual interests, women become an important validating factor for him. The Centerfold Syndrome thus leaves men fearful of possible rejection and preoccupied with the quality of their sexual performance.

Identifies another main concept of summarized text. (2a)

Effective and polished sentences. (5c)

Conquering a number of attractive women is also considered as a criterion of a man's validation, resulting in the fourth element of Centerfold Syndrome: trophyism. Possessing a woman, however, carries the potential danger of losing her, which in turn can push a man to destructive actions. Trophyism also encourages a "hunter" to drop his "trophy" as soon as she loses her freshness and attractiveness.

Evidence of active reading. (2b)

The last element of this syndrome is the fear of true intimacy, which is initiated in early childhood. The main conflict within a man toward a woman is created by the social stereotype that a young boy should avoid such feminine qualities as softness and sensitivity—though he still needs comforting and loving (the first experience of which comes from the mother). A widely accepted stereotype is that a "real" man has to be aggressive, competitive, emotionless, and popular among women. This attitude encourages men to suppress their true feelings, avoid dependence on a partner, and gain their emotional gratification from sex only.

Details strengthen the writing here. (2e)

Brooks argues that though the Centerfold Syndrome is accepted in our culture as natural, it is equally destructive for both sexes. It depersonalizes women, deprives couples of deep emotional closeness, promotes immoral behaviors, lowers self-confidence in both sexes, and creates barriers and conflicts between them. The Centerfold Syndrome, according to Brooks, is a culturally created structure and therefore can be removed.

Overall, this essay is well organized with strong topic sentences, adequate transitions, and clearly written sentences. (5a-d)

Works Cited

Brooks, Gary R. "The Centerfold Syndrome." *Signs of Life in the USA: Readings on Popular Culture for Writers*. 2nd edition. Boston: Bedford Books, 1997. 438-446.