

'Mother!' Shows Us Better Living Through Solitude And Away From Social Media

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By [Carlos Rosario Gonzalez](#), writer at [Creators.co](#)

This Earth's Sorcerer Supreme. I'm currently stuck in the Matrix and can't get out. I also write. | Twitter: @Lonelez

The great writer and philosopher Henry David Thoreau wrote in his book, *Walden*, that "I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude." In this day and age we are constantly pressured to "connect" with other people, especially through social media, so when are we ever really, truly alone?

In Darren Aronofsky's *Mother!*, the character of Mother is a representation of Mother Nature. She lives in a house with her husband, Him, and her life appears pleasant and blissful in its solitude in the countryside. That is, until her solitude is interrupted by two strangers, which is a bummer because up to this point, the film suggests it's a beautiful thing to live in solitude. Mother doesn't want anything more and there are times when she even finds peace with the silence of her empty house. This is important to her, and should be important to us. Through the character of Mother, *Mother!* demonstrates that it's not bad to be alone and that our lives could be better by embracing solitude.

Solitude Isn't The Same As Loneliness

An interpersonal communication course in college taught me that human beings are naturally driven social creatures, but I believe our intrapersonal communication is just as essential. Jennifer Lawrence's character in *Mother!* certainly agrees. Solitude gave Mother strength, in all sense of the word, and it was only when people came into her life that life became Hell on Earth for Mother. What I think most people fail to comprehend though is that being alone doesn't mean being lonely. Like Mother and Him in the film, you can be in a romantic relationship while at the same time be alone. This is something Mother deeply wanted.

We got a taste of that tranquility in the first act of the film before two strangers, Woman and Man, appeared at the house. In her solitude, Mother painted her house and felt one with her home. She cooked and did as she wanted without the approval of no one. She was complete with her husband and needed nothing more. But it is when Man and Woman arrive at the house that we are able to see why solitude is precious.

Their presence unbalances the harmony that exists in the house. Instead of Him dedicating to his work as a poet and being with Mother, Him directs his full attention to Woman and Man, who leave a dirty mess wherever they move around the house. The kitchen is trashed by Woman. Man leaves a trail of used cigarettes on the floor. Both of them even break valuable ornaments without feeling a sense of remorse. And Him simply doesn't care, continuing to allow such misconduct. These strangers have invaded Mother's privacy and solitude, and as a result she's grown stressed, having to take a medicinal substance to calm down. Mother was sane when she was self-reliant and alone, it was when Man and Woman arrived at the house that Mother's purity was perverted. This is [one of the arguments of transcendentalism](#), a philosophy that strives for individualism and one's connection with nature.

Mother is a quintessential transcendentalist and society, represented by all the subsequent strangers that come to the house after Man and Woman's first visit, is corrupting her well-being. In today's time, I think there's no better way to see this as an analogy to how we use social media and how it corrupts us.

Social Media Is The Real-World Man And Woman Equivalent Here

If transcendentalism wants us to live through solitude, then one might think of things like social media as the

complete antithesis to this idea. Social media is one of the easiest real world connection to draw, a stand-in for Man and Woman in *Mother!*. The driving force behind social media is one's inclination to share parts of our lives, to connect. Some do it to a much larger extent than others, but at the root of social media is the push for people to let go of the self and seek the illusion of companionship. [This illusion leads to the destruction of the self](#) and the construction of an ill-crafted new self. Essentially, once we decide to let other people experience and react to our own sense of self in social media, they become the secret craftsmen of our identity, our individuality; a study looking at [why people use Facebook](#) suggests this exact premise.

It's a scary thought and though I myself limit my social media use extensively, it's no question that our use of social media affects us in some way nonetheless. If we see *Mother* as ourselves, the house as Facebook and the strangers in the house as likes, comments and shares, then the picture Darren Aronofsky is painting is not a pretty one. These strangers invaded *Mother's* house inflicting their opinions and judgement, eventually making *Mother* go insane. I think that the lesson is not to stop using social media entirely, but to limit its use because evidence suggests that it is in fact affecting us.

Solitude Is A Good Thing

Mother! is a film filled with many meanings, from [biblical allegories](#) to [divine feminism](#), to transcendentalism, as we've discussed. *Mother!* suggests that through solitude we can live better and that social media can be a detriment to our individuality. There's nothing more precious than our individual self and when we can nourish that by embracing solitude, I think we should all at least try.

As author and transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in *The Complete Prose Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*: "The great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude."

***Mother!* is now in theaters everywhere.**

[Source: [National Center for Biotechnology Information](#); [USHistory.org](#)]

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