

# [Metamorphosis and the yellow wallpaper essay](https://assignbuster.com/metamorphosis-and-the-yellow-wallpaper-essay/)

In Franz Kafka’s “ Metamorphosis” and Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “ The Yellow Wallpaper,” the reader can easily see demonstrated the effects of the alienation and loneliness both of the main characters experience. The feeling of loneliness and the state of alienation leave the characters changed from who they were and manages to completely alter their lives in almost every imaginable way. Each main character is faced with certain circumstances that inevitably lead them to a point in their lives where they are completely alone and left dealing with extreme situations pretty much all by themselves.

Each of the characters have people in their lives that love them yet there is a certain wall up or lack of understanding that keeps them from being able to share their struggles with their loved ones. In Metamorphosis the main character Gregor was an introvert who also seemed to be a workaholic. Gregor did not have many friends that he socialized with. His days were spent working and on his evenings he stayed in. Gregor’s mother while talking with his boss states, (pg323) “ The boy thinks of nothing but his work.

He nearly drives me to distraction the way he never goes out in the evening; e’s been here the last eight days, and every single evening he’s stayed at home. ” Gregor was already a loner before his harrowing transformation into a hideous beastly insect. The transformation led him to be unable to communicate with his family. Gregor’s human mind was still intact even though he was a tremendous insect. He was left stuck inside his new body with only his own thoughts to entertain and harass him.

Being stuck inside yourself like that must be an almost unbearable situation to be in. It is like being both mute and deaf with no way of interacting socially with other human beings. His family quickly began to lose sight that he was still inside the new bug body, and pretty much just locked him in his room. They at least remembered to feed him, but showed him no other concern or any other form of personal interaction. Gregor was left to try and figure out his amazing new circumstances alone. He was left with a feeling of guilt, due to his being unable to work.

Gregor felt an obligation to contribute to his family financially and to help them recover from previous debts owed. Strangely, Gregor does not obsess about the fact that he has physically changed into a completely different form. His only real concern is that he is no longer able to go to work and make money. It is almost as if his entire human life revolved around his working and providing for his family. The transition to insect life was lonely and unpleasant being that he was stuck with his thoughts about how he was no longer able to do as he had always done, provide for his family.

Gregor, being transformed was stuck in circumstances that led to him being completely alone and alienated from all he felt comfortable with. The internal struggle suffered by Gregor throughout the story led to him becoming depressed and complacent, which nevitably led to his premature death. Without being able to fulfill his previous obligations, Gregor felt useless and that he was a burden to his distanced family. He eventually gave up on life rather than try to continue his transformed existence in complete solitude, while alienated from his loved ones and his work.

The new mother in “ The Yellow Wallpaper,” also experienced many unpleasant side effects of loneliness and alienation. The young mother was diagnosed by her doctor-husband, with (pg473) “ temporary nervous depression – a slight hysterical tendency,” which was a common diagnosis for omen in the time period in which the story was written. John, the doctor-husband prescribes rest and recuperation while in confinement for the young mother as treatment for her mental state. The young mother is locked away in a room in their rented summer house, where she is told to do nothing except relax.

The young mother’s passion for journaling leads her to secretly document her time in solitary confinement. The journaling is her only outlet from her current situation and she nervously protects it from being known by her husband and the house keeper. The young mother does say, (pg473) “ I did rite for a while in spite of them; but it does exhaust me a great deal- having to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition. ” The young mother while in solitary begins to slowly experience delusions about her surroundings.

She becomes obsessed with the wallpaper in her room, believing it has a secret life of its own or that there is a life inside its pattern. The young mother exclaims, (pg481) “ I really have discovered something at last. Through watching it so much at night, when it changes so, I have finally found out. The front pattern of the wallpaper does move- and no wonder! The woman ehind it shakes it! ” The young mother’s delusions are fueled by her limited exposure to real people. She is left to herself in that room with the yellow wallpaper, and slowly goes mad.

The effects of loneliness and alienation are severely damaging to the young mothers psyche. The young mother has hallucinations of an imaginary woman who is a prisoner, which closely relates to her own circumstances and the feelings she has of being kept in captivity. Being confined and cut off from the people you love can have serious psychological repercussions, especially to an individual who is already considered to be entally unstable. At the time the story “ The Yellow Wallpaper” was written the treatment used in the story was an acceptable means of treating such conditions.

Medicine was not advanced to the point it is today, so doctors did not even know that the treatment was counterproductive and definitely not conducive to the patients recovery. The young mother’s mental state deteriorated severely to the point where she was completely consumed by her belief that there was in fact a woman living in the wallpaper. Her alienation from the world around her contributed heavily to her developing dementia. The entire story was based on the reality that the methods of treating patients at that time were completely backward and lacked any significant medical basis.

The entire point of the short story was in fact to educate people on the incorrect views on treating mental illness. The story itself stands as a testament to the effects of alienation and loneliness on an individual, and stands to also bring light to the grave and disastrous effects that solitude or confinement can have on a person. In the story “ The Yellow Wallpaper,” the young mother ends up losing her grasp on reality and is left only with her new perception. The new perception is in a way a projection of her internal struggle dealing with her life as it is and the life she is expected to have by the society she lives in.

The alienation and isolation were only the catalysts that allowed her to finally see from a new perspective, and to realize her existence as it truly is. The young mother was liberated from her predisposed notions about her life through alienation and psychosis, but may have in fact been left in a mental state that does not permit a normal life out in the real world. After reading the two stories, I feel that it is made clear that loneliness and alienation have only egative effects on people.

Being left completely alone, or with the feeling of being completely alone, leaves an individual with nothing except themselves to rely and to hold on to. A feeling of isolation can lead to depression as well as a sense of hopelessness. Human beings are a social species with the physical and psychological need to interact with others. Negative side effects develop and manifest when an individual is alienated from the world they are comfortable with.

According to the website About. com under the category of Psychology, in an article titled: “ Loneliness. Causes, Effects and Treatments for Loneliness,” “ Loneliness causes people to feel empty, alone and unwanted. People who are lonely often crave human contact, but their state of mind makes it more difficult to form connections with other people. Loneliness has a wide range of negative effects on both physical and mental health. ” The characters were forced to endure their loneliness, and also had to deal with the debilitating side effects. In the stories, “ Metamorphosis” and “ The Yellow Wallpaper,” the characters’ lives were left forever altered or ended by their experiences with alienation and loneliness.