

Below are some questions to start the discussion, and we welcome yours as well.

1. One of the women in the film states: "Sometimes forgiving may be mistaken for permission." "What does forgiveness mean to you? What did it mean to the women in this film?"
2. Another woman commented that "by staying here we betray pacifism." What did she mean and what impact did that have on their decision to leave?
3. There was a lot of attention to cinematography, camera angles, close ups, and music. What did you notice and what was its effect on the film?
4. There was a very varied repertoire of responses from this group of women to the brutal experiences they had undergone. This at times caused great dissonance between them. One even called another a spinster and a whore. What finally happened to make almost all of them decide to leave together?
5. Although the women were uneducated, illiterate, isolated, and discouraged from thinking, their dialogue that was the core of the movie was at a very high level of both rational thinking (weighing all options and the pros and cons of each) and emotional understanding (realizing that the woman who was repeatedly brutalized by her husband just needed their tender apologies). Did this seem realistic to you?
6. August was a saint of a man and the only man these women could trust. What did you think of his decision to remain in the colony rather than leaving with the women and Ona whom he loved, even though he knew he might be punished by the men when they returned from town? Do you think his goal of reeducating the young men was realistic or possible while living within that colony?
7. Sometimes you can find a film gripping and compelling but still think it does not entirely succeed. How well did this film work for you to tell its story and what got in your way of fully appreciating it?

There is so much more to discuss. How the men attempted to make the women disbelieve themselves and it was a little girl who called out the truth. How the shots of all the little children playing together in the wide lush green field appeared so idyllic. How one woman asked how love--the absence of it, the want of it, the need of it--result in such violence.

What are your questions?

Denise L

Women Talking is a 2022 [drama film](#) written and directed by [Sarah Polley](#). Based on the Canadian [2018 novel](#) by [Miriam Toews](#), inspired by the [rapes](#) that occurred at the [Manitoba Colony](#), a remote and isolated [Mennonite](#) community in [Bolivia](#), the film

follows a group of American Mennonite women who discuss their future, following their discovery of the men's history of raping the colony's women. It features an [ensemble cast](#) that includes [Rooney Mara](#), [Claire Foy](#), [Jessie Buckley](#), [Judith Ivey](#), [Ben Whishaw](#), and [Frances McDormand](#), who also served as a producer on the film.

Women Talking premiered at the [49th Telluride Film Festival](#) in 2022. It received positive reviews from critics, who lauded Polley's screenplay and direction, the performances (particularly of Foy, Buckley, and Whishaw) and score. It was named one of the top ten films of 2022 by the [National Board of Review](#) and the [American Film Institute](#), won Best Adapted Screenplay at the [28th Critics' Choice Awards](#), [75th Writers Guild of America Awards](#), and [95th Academy Awards](#), where it was nominated for [Best Picture](#). It has since been cited as among the best films of the 2020s.