

Sample essay on higher ground-film and memoir

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



- Sexuality as Main Agency of Change

Higher Ground, the film and the memoir, both depict sexuality as the main agency of change in the story. The developments and the conflicts are centered on this subject, with the protagonist heavily influenced by her sexual experiences in majority of her life decisions.

In the film, the reason for Corrine's marriage are a hasty solution to her unexpected pregnancy. The pregnancy arose from her sexual curiosity, which reflects her usual curiosity towards all aspects of her life. The marriage and incidences that follow are the main reason that Corrine becomes excessively drawn towards exploring her spirituality.

The conflict in her marriage can also be attributed to sexuality. Corrine no longer feels drawn to her husband, as she feels he no longer satisfies her virile sexuality. This conflict eventually leads to the unexpected ending where she leaves her husband.

The church teachings are also portrayed as a central part of this conflict. Corrine and her friend secretly laugh at the teachings of the pastor, but at the same time she feels irritated by the wife's attempt to suppress their quest at intellect. The free-speaking manner of Corrine's best friend also lead to her conflicting sexuality, culminating in a moment of homosexual fantasy where she envisions her licking her toes.

The memoir also depicts sexuality as central to the conflict and change in Carolyn's life. While her sister is already mature in body size before she joins high school, Carolyn still has a small girl's body in high school. The boy's interest in Lisa and total ignorance of Carolyn's existence makes her unwilling to explore her sexuality in any form initially. It is probably due to

this lack of attention that the young woman is overenthusiastic in her quest for sexual experience once she meets Eric. This culminates in her getting pregnant and married, and her delve into the Christian journey.

The sexual influence does not end in her marriage move. After several years of marriage to Eric, Carolyn writes a fantasy assignment where a woman wishes to have an affair with a stranger. When the professor reads the assignment, he recognizes the need in her and encourages her to do it. Although Carolyn is hesitant at first, she takes action and leaves her husband, Eric, who she feels is not satisfying her sexuality.

The reason for the use of sexuality as the agent for change is due to the sensitivity that the subject bears within religious faiths. The subject is treated with secrecy, and this is especially more intense for women.

Introducing sexuality as the central point in Higher Ground elaborates the effect it has on all lives, even those Christian. It elaborates the need for understanding in this area even as people pursue their personal journeys in life.

- Film versus Memoir: Differing Perspectives

While both the book and the film have attempted to maintain similar perspectives in developing the story, the film tends to leave out some aspects in Corrine's life that exist in Carolyn's. One of these aspects is the shift of Carolyn's perspective regarding abortion. Carolyn Brigg's book explains her recruitment into anti-abortionist activism, and details the experience she has within this movement. On the other hand, the film tends to leave out the details of Corrine's recruitment and the changes that take place as she participates in the activism.

While the book explains Carolyn's love for public speaking in contrast to picketing, these aspects are not highlighted in the film. The memoir helps the reader understand that Carolyn's thoughts on abortion were not entirely similar to those she picketed with. While the young woman may have carried placards, she enjoyed neutral messages, for her point was that all women have the right to choose life or death, even if they were yet to be born. A deep insight is developed into Carolyn's personal life and the expectation she has from God as she takes part in activism against abortion. While the picketing and public speaking is a success, Carolyn is constantly feeling that God has abandoned her. The film does not bring the two situations into perspective.

Carolyn becomes deeply lonely and upset, feeling she is expected to act like a saint, raise her children and save those of other people. This loneliness is increased by the pressure on her to "suffer with Jesus". This eventually leaves her faith slipping, and the belief in her work decreases. Understanding Carolyn's feelings and the woman her lifestyle turn her into makes it easy to see her change in perspective, as contrasted by the lack of detail in highlighting Corrine's change to a disbeliever.

Carolyn's participation in the activities of the group also reflect her true intent and the possible reasons that she changed from a believer to disbeliever. Carolyn experiences a change in perspective upon realizing that her placard "Equal Rights for All Women" insinuates an idea completely different from what she fights for.

Her friend, Julie, is horrified that any of the protesters could want other women to have their lives decided for them. This could have influenced

Carolyn's shift from not supporting abortion. She advocated for equal rights for women, and it is understandable that developing such a perspective could influence her to not protests against abortion.

This approach in representing the journey of a woman of faith is effective. While most church-goers are willing to adopt the mannerisms and tasks assigned by the church, many do so only to fulfil the obligations of religion. Like in Carolyn's case, their personal lives are largely dissatisfied, and they only maintain a brittle peace within their relationships. These people, especially women, suffer in silence as it is expected of a woman of Christ. However, Carolyn represents the possibilities that exist outside religion. Even though they appear increasingly negative, they later appear to be positive in fulfilling the satisfaction the women seek in their lives.

- Briggs versus Farmiga: A Woman of Faith

The fact that the author and director of the book and film, respectively, are women is significant in possibly revealing their perspectives of life through the characters. Briggs and Farmiga both give the film a touch of their personalities, enabling the audience not to only experience the story, but also derive an insight into the thoughts behind it.

The life of a woman of faith presents an intriguing perspective into viewing the world. The woman is expected to survive in a largely secular setting, but at the same time maintain her religious nature. As the film and book depict, while the woman is expected to understand the scriptures, she is forbidden from preaching to men. This not only suppresses her spiritual development, but also makes it impossible for those talented teachers to develop under the church.

The obligations carried by the woman of faith also inspire the creation of these two works. The memoir and film depict Carolyn's obligation to her family, her husband and her church. The idea to picket is not her own, but comes from the obligations she bears to her religious community.

Carolyn/Corrine feels differently regarding the activism, but she must participate despite the tedious nature of the activity.

Finally, the inspiration to develop a story regarding a woman of faith generates an opportunity for any woman to review their lives, and the moments of indecision they have had to face. For Corrine/Carolyn, experiencing sexual pleasure is a foreign idea, as she has never done so. Her expression of sexual fantasy reveals her desires. The tough decision to leave her husband, influenced by her friends and teachers, only highlights these moments of conflict.

The film and memoir, however, differ significantly. While the memoir is considered a kind of biography by Briggs, the film is a pure form of art. The writer of the memoir may have intended to simply express the struggle in her life, with the ideas being more passionate due to the first-hand experience.

However, the film is only a derivation from the story and the intentions of Farmiga are not the same with those of Briggs. Farmiga tends to explore the ideas of doubt and faith co-existing more deeply, and the ideas that surround inner growth. Farmiga aimed towards projecting those moments when people experience internal turmoil, thus leaving out most details from the book. The memoir, on the other hand, tends to highlight the idea attaining a healthy soul and achieving a higher ground not only in religion.