

## A Woman's Dilemma: A Study of Rachel Crothers' Susan and God

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A hundred men can make an encampment,  
But it takes a woman to make a home.

S. G. Champion, Racial Proverbs

Rachel Crothers' *Susan and God* looks at the problem of the role of a woman in family from a different angle. In this play, Rachel Crothers tries to illustrate how the family is shattered and how its harmony is destroyed when the woman, the mother, leaves it in search of her own identity. This play, the last professionally produced play of Crothers, which proved a commercial success with a run of 288 performances in New York, conveys the message that it is the woman who can bring peace and happiness to the family. This message is dramatized through the life of Susan Tixel who is alienated from her husband and daughter but later reunited with them.

The change of attitude in Susan is not a sudden or a simple whim or change of heart, but it is the product of a strange combination of circumstances. Susan is caught in her own trap. But this in a way proves a blessing in disguise for her because it is this that leads to her reunion with her husband, Barrie and her daughter, Blossom. Susan's life with Barrie has not been a happy one -- "The kind of life they had been living wasn't living at all -- not for either of them" (Mantle, *The Best Plays of 1937-38* 212). He has been a drunkard and has hardly been in his senses. In the case of her child, though she had adored her in the beginning, she suddenly developed an indifference towards her --

On the other hand, Susan gets tired of everything. Even her daughter, Blossom. Blossom, to Susan, was the most wonderful of babies until she grew up. Now that Blossom is at the unattractive age of 15 Susan is bored stiff with her....  
(201)

Susan's renewal of interest in her husband and daughter takes place in a much unexpected way. The first Act of the play is devoted to a depiction of how Susan is caught in her own trap.

The opening scene is laid out in the country house of Irene. A number of Irene's friends are gathered and Susan, who has returned from a European tour, joins them. The European tour has brought about

a turning point in Susan's life. In Paris, she had met a lady called Wiggam who took her to England. This Wiggam was the founder of a new movement named after her.

Susan's entry into the house is itself made characteristic by the impact of foreign culture on her life, her newly imbibed religion and with it her renewed zest for life. She explains that her joyous mood is the result of a "perfectly marvelous experience" she has had. She is eager to describe to them, all about the Movement and is enthusiastic about converting her friends to the new religion.

Susan describes her first meeting with the other members of the Movement thus:

It's thrilling and alive and fun -- so people aren't ashamed to be good. This was the most remarkable collection of people at Lady Wiggam's -- all sorts and kinds. I never heard so many titles -- all at once -- in my life -- and great thinkers -- you never saw so much thinking -- and some were just people -- and some -- well, practically out of the gutter -- with the samelightshiningintheir -- ..... (202)

Susan goes on to describe the nature of the people who were members of the Movement. She says that everybody at Lady Wiggam's called one another by their first names and even Lord Ramsdale was called by his first name by his chauffeur. According to Susan the Movement preaches for all, irrespective of their nationality, colour or race. She says that love is the pivot on which the whole Movement hinges. Giving a graphic description of the strange experience of love, Susan observes:

For instance, the first night I was there the house was filled with people. I didn't know anybody -- and I was holding my chin as high as possible and trying to be as insulting to the English as they were to me -- when Lady Wiggam herself floated in -- and we all loved each other in a minute. (202)

Susan has been attracted to the Movement by the freshness of its approach and its practicability. It does not preach any dogma or any impracticable theories -- and she feels that this Movement can be the panacea for all the ills of the society.

The dramatist however exposes the hollowness of Susan's commitment to this Movement through the element of satire and irony with which she describes Susan's conduct and words in this scene. For instance, even as she is waxing eloquent over the great impact of the Movement, she suddenly asks Charlotte, "How are the dogs, Charlotte?"

(202). Again, when Susan finds Clyde, an actor, she switches over to the topic of actors and acting. The description of one of Lady Wiggam's gardeners not pressing the trigger of his gun and believing, after becoming a member of this Movement, that it was God who had stopped him from killing his wife -- is more ludicrous than serious. Similarly, instead of explaining the salient features of the Movement and its objectives, etc., Susan becomes enthusiastic in describing the people who had assembled in Lady Wiggam's house and their behaviour. Her greatest confession under the influence of the Movement is said to have been the confession that she had had her hair made up in Paris. No reader of the play can miss the point that the impact of the Movement on Susan is shallow and superficial. But the Movement is a clear device used by Crothers to develop the plot in an interesting way because it is her admiration for this Movement that makes it impossible for her to deny her husband a chance to redeem himself.

The transition from the Movement to the story of Susan is effected naturally and convincingly. During the conversation, Stubbie, one of the men assembled there, introduces the name of Barrie, Susan's husband. Susan just tells them that she hopes he is doing well. She adds that she has no intention of going back home and running the family because Barrie is least interested in her and her daughter also seems to be quite at home in the camps and does not seem to feel her absence. In a casual way she drops the subject at that and passes on to several questions to the others on many worldly issues like Irene's divorce, Stubble's wedding, etc. This is significant because the dramatist reveals through this, Susan's total indifference to her husband and child. But this is also ironical because the development of the play is going to prove her deep attachment to them and theirs to her.

The next significant point about the opening Act is the way in which Susan is trapped by her own eloquence and commitment. Susan's friends decide to cure her of her evangelical fad by playing a practical joke on her. It is secretly planned that one of them will make a pretended, ridiculous, public confession. Susan is so much infatuated, fancifully with the Movement, that she wants to have as many converts to the Movement as possible. She tells Stubbie that he is nothing but an animal if he is not God-conscious. She goes out to the terrace and finds Leonara and Clyde together and is quick to guess that they are in love with each other. She thinks that they ought to go and reveal the truth to Stubbie. She asks Clyde to confide in Stubbie. She does all these unwanted intrusions into the personal lives of others because, under the impact of the Movement, she feels that she has the right to do so. When Stubbie also comes to the terrace Susan reveals to him the truth about Clyde's love for Leonara. As Stubbie prepares himself to fight it out Susan asks him to keep cool and concentrate on the spiritual forces

buried deep in him. The others resent her interference and this is indicated by Irene's words: "For heaven's sake -- let our souls alone over the week – end" (208).

The actual beginning of the plot takes place when Susan begins to preach. Barrie and Blossom -- her husband and daughter, come in unexpectedly. Barrie is a little drunk and he listens to Susan's sermon on the power of love. Mike, who is the actor to play the role of the confessor, begins to perform his role. He says that he wishes to confess, but the others try to warn him about it. Susan asks Mike to come out with his confession saying, "No matter what we are -- or What we do -- if we're sorry -- really -- really and honestly want His help -- we can be made over" (211). At this stage, Barrie asks her, "Do you mean He can do something about me -- if I ask Him? If you do -- I do ask Him" (211). Susan is taken aback to hear these words of her husband, because she has not noticed Barrie and Blossom entering the hall. Barrie tells Blossom that her mother has been speaking about something that can change the "whole stinking rotten world" (211).

The situation is very piquant for Susan. On the one hand she cannot go back on her own words about the efficacy of love. Moreover she has been the victim of her eloquence. On the other hand, she does not have much of a faith in the reformation of her husband. But the situation leaves her with no other course of action, except in giving her husband a chance. This is all the more interesting because of her earlier attitude towards Barrie and Blossom. She had hated her drunkard husband and had suddenly developed a total indifference towards her child. But in the present situation she is forced to reconsider that attitude.

Barrie meets Susan the next morning, in the house of Irene. Barrie is even ready to give it in writing that he will not take to drinks again. Susan makes it clear that if Barrie takes to drinking during this period, he must get her the divorce. Barrie accepts the condition and when they have reached the agreement, Blossom comes in. Susan tells her that they were thinking if they could live together for the summer. Barrie quickly adds that it is her mother's suggestion. Blossom is extremely delighted and asks again and again whether they are going to be together for the whole summer. Susan confirms it and Blossom embraces her, elated at the idea. Blossom is even prompted to ask her mother's opinion about inviting some of her friends for a weekend. Thus, it is agreed that Susan will spend the entire summer with Barrie and Blossom at their country home.

The experiment begins on a hopeful note. Susan shows her affection for Blossom and tries some hairstyles on Blossom with her own

hand. The impact of the experiment is made clear through Susan's report to her friends in their weekend meeting. Among the friends, Clyde is the only one who feels that Susan's belief in the new Movement may possibly help her and husband. On the other hand, the skepticism of others can be seen in Mike's sarcastic comment that Susan has at last got a disciple in her husband. Susan, during the course of their conversation, tells them that she has got divine help in coming to an understanding with Barrie. She also says that what Barrie has done is not unpardonable. This is in sharp contrast to her earlier attitude towards him. Her friends are pleasantly surprised about this development. Some of them even think that she is bluffing.

The increasing faith of Susan in Barrie is borne out by another incident. Barrie goes out to get certain things for the house and does not return for some time. The others, including his own daughter, are worried that he may have gone for drinking. But it is Susan who tells them that they should not make Barrie aware of their suspicion and that he needs "faith -- all around him. He needs to know we believe he can do it" (220). When Barrie returns, he is able to read the minds of others and knows that even Susan might have secretly had that suspicion. He asks her whether she could not trust him even for few hours. He also asks her if she had been hoping that he would come home drunk so that she will not have the need to start off on their agreement. Susan denies this and says that they should be ready to face anything. Susan is happy that Barrie had thought of bringing some violets for her. The friends are extremely happy about this development of understanding and sympathy between the husband and the wife for each other.

Irene visits Susan at her house and expresses her gladness on seeing Susan, Barrie and Blossom together again. While Irene is surprised over the change in Susan, Susan herself attributes it to her belief in the Movement, which has sustained her so long. Though she did want to leave once, something in her stopped her from doing so. Even more encouraging to her is the fact that Barrie has not broken his promise even once. Susan is happy about Blossom too and she even arranges a party for her birthday, inviting many of her friends. She is also busy spreading the new Movement and organizing a meeting of the Movement at Newport.

Crothers reveals the lack of sincerity in Susan's efforts to reunite with her family on many instances. Susan is happy that she has saved Barrie. However, they cannot live together as she is far more spiritual and intelligent than him. She tell him that she loves him in a new spiritual way. Lady Wiggam had seen a very rare power in Susan and was sure that she could not fall in love with anyone or be an ordinary woman. And Susan got confirmed that she had this power when Mike

confessed publicly to her. She thus does not wish to be tied down by marriage but to be free and do whatever she likes and thinks is best for her. When Barrie asks what she would like to do, Susan expresses her desire to spread the Movement. Susan mistakenly believes that she possesses some extraordinary power and thus wishes to go out into the world and seek glory for herself.

Susan considers her involvement with the Movement more important than her role in the family. She is not ready to give up attending the meeting at Newport, but is ready to stay away from Blossom's birthday party. This is because on that very day she is going to lead the meeting at Newport where she is going to explain to others how she found God and how Barrie had changed. Susan does not mind talking publicly about the change in Barrie and this infuriates him. Barrie loses his patience and comes to the realization that he will never get Susan, whether he gives up drinking or not. The show and the emotional excitement attached to the Movement is what Susan really enjoys. Barrie leaves Susan in a fit of rage and discontentment.

Barrie's short stay away from home brings about a change in Susan and she begins to feel the familial bonds of love and understanding. She also suspects Barrie of having run away with Charlotte and hopes to get him back. Susan is now even ready to give up the Newport meeting. She feels depressed and is sure that the divorce, she so long wanted, will now be forced on her. It would be difficult for her since all summer she had both of them adoring her, depending on her. On Barrie's return, Susan blames Charlotte for the incident. However, on hearing Barrie's explanation, she understands that it is Charlotte who helped Barrie when he got drunk after the fight with Susan. Susan does not want the divorce which Barrie is now ready to give. She instead apologizes for her behavior and pleads with Barrie to give her a chance to build up their relationship again.

Susan, who evades being a member of her family, gets entangled with Lady Wiggam's Movement. But, ultimately she understands that it is in the role of a wife and a mother that she can find true happiness and also meaning in life. She prays to God that she may not be blinded by trivialities and misguided notions thereafter. The two main causes for Susan's changes are the Movement, under the influence of which she agrees to reform Barrie and stay with him and Blossom, and the affection she gets from Barrie and Blossom, which moves her heart.

Susan Trexel dominates the play and Crothers portrays her as a restless woman who has been running away from her 'self' and from her family. Though Crothers is satirical about Susan's conversion to the new Movement and her religious pretensions, she makes a sympathetic

rendering of Susan. Susan, who strays from her mundane existence, seeking a meaningful purpose for her life, is more misled than enlightened. But, she does return to her ordinary life in the end. Crothers emphasizes, through Susan, the necessity for women to first understand themselves and serve their family before going on to change the whole world.

Crothers describes Susan as “a woman with so much charm that it covers most of her faults -- most of the time -- for most people” (201). Stubbie too notes that Susan is excessively charming and that life has failed to discipline her. Susan is tired of her family life and is unable to put up with a husband who “drinks like a fish”. She thus leaves her family and goes abroad. On her return she is found a changed person and Susan says it is because of a “perfectly marvelous experience.” Susan refers to Lady Wiggam’s Movement which has revived her faith in life and has helped her to find joy by helping others to get closer to God. Susan finds it easier to save Humanity and to feel love for strangers than for her family -- her husband and child. Her wish to engage her life in some way other than by being a member of the family, leads her to become a follower of the Movement. Says Gottlieb:

Naive about the world’s complexities, plagued by fears and loneliness, searching for visible rewards for the expenditure of her energies, Susan is a perfect target for the strong emotional current of the new religious movement. (140)

Susan tries to be a reformer of America’s crumbling morality by first influencing those around her. She is eager to save her friends and wishes to convert them while her own family life is in jeopardy. While Susan herself is waiting to get a divorce from Barrie, she believes that the Movement would make divorces from Barrie a thing of the past and restore peace and happiness in the world. She is led to believe that she has religious powers and is so much carried away by it that she fails to see the conversion of Mike as a fake.

Susan has led a family life which has been quite different from the one she had imagined. When Barrie wishes to be given a chance, Susan tells him that they had seen qualities in each other which never existed really. Barrie asks her if they could not get back and she believes divorce is the only way out. She reveals, how, just as she arrived, she did not have any thoughts of divorce. She had thought that Barrie would have reformed.

She says:

I came back thinking I wouldn’t ask for the divorce.  
Something high and exalted came to me -- right on the boat -  
- right there by the railing - and I felt lifted up -- I wanted to

stay there -- live there. And when I saw that shore line with all those marvelous things sticking up I said - “After all, this is home -- Barrie’s there -- and may be he has bucked up” -- and then you walked in last night and I knew how utterly hopeless it all is. Nothing else will do, Barrie -- it’s got to be a divorce. (214)

Susan is thus not totally devoid of feelings such as love and understanding. She wants to leave the family only when her hopes are dashed to the ground. But Crothers sees this as no reason for Susan’s claim for a divorce and for becoming a member of the Movement. However, when Barrie is ready to put it in writing that he would never take to drinks again, she agrees to stay with him and Blossom for the summer. She has gone in quest of something outside her family only due to Barrie’s weakness for alcohol. She explains to Blossom that she has worked hard to fill her life with things outside her marriage and family, not because she wanted to but because she had to. But Crothers through Susan sketches the lives of modern women, who are in search of a support to grapple on to, as marital relationships are breaking and the family as a unit stands threatened.

Susan, who accepts to live with her family, does not totally forget her involvement with the Movement. She feels happy and important as she spreads the Movement and organizes its meeting on American shores at Newport. She returns to her family, not because she intends to do her duty by them, but only because she is caught giving a sermon on love, understanding and forgiveness. While staying with her family there is a conflict in Susan, between her need for fame and her duties as a domestic wife. Susan, who is ready to go and stay in their house, does not mind the filth in the place, the absence of servants or the non availability of food. She asks, “What difference does food make in a spiritual crisis? (219) However, she also tells Irene,

And they’re going to hang around my neck all summer and choke me to death. --I’m not made for this, Irene. I don’t know why I’m doing it --I don’t want to do it --at all --at all --At all. --I wish I’d never heard of God. (222)

Similarly, when Blossom throws her arms around Susan’s neck, thanking her for agreeing upon all of them to stay together, Susan tells her, “--Blossom! --You’re choking me!” (215). Thus we see that while Susan is on the one hand eager to stay with her family, on the other constantly conveys her feelings of dislike for the same. Crothers has very well portrayed the conflict in Susan by giving us an insight into both sides of her mind. Susan’s obsession for the Movement prevailing the better upon her, she prepares for her final break from domestic roles, in



order to assume her public role as evangelist. She wishes Barrie would marry Charlotte. Her plan to reveal Barrie's conversion at the meeting points out her inability to understand the feelings of others and her desire for personal glory.

Susan's stay with her family amidst an atmosphere of adoration and happiness and Barrie's absence from home for two days eventually leads to her belief in traditional and basic values of life. Barrie's absence makes her repent for her actions and she wishes to 'belong' to her family and feel the happiness of being loved. Susan, who sets out in search of peace, though does not find it where she hoped to, does find it within her family.

Barrie, a rich man, tries to cover his sense of futility under the influence of alcohol. He is thus responsible for the problem that has created a rift in his family. However, one cannot dismiss him as a bad husband for he loves Susan sincerely and earnestly wishes to be reunited with her. Barrie's love and concern for Susan is revealed by the way in which he pursues Susan from place to place. He first goes to Blossom's school to meet her and on hearing that she would first land at Irene's place, he rings up Irene to know about Susan's arrival. He even arrives there with Blossom, in order to meet Susan. Barrie's faith in Susan can be seen when he says, "Do you mean He can do something about me --if I ask Him? --If you do --I do ask Him" (211). Barrie's true love for Susan is also revealed by the act that he gives up drinking on her insistence. He also tries to be a good father when he takes Blossom to their home for a night and enquires about her school and the camps. It is Barrie who extracts from Blossom that she hates camps while we were earlier led to believe by Susan that Blossom loved to be in camps. Barrie also helps Blossom a great deal by asking Susan to stay together with them since Blossom too misses them a lot.

Barrie believes in Susan and is hopeful of getting her back until he realizes that living together has meant nothing for Susan. Though it is the Movement which is responsible for the initial change in Susan and makes her accept his plan of living together, it is Barrie who exposes Susan to her true self which has been shadowed by her ego. He makes one of the most important statements in the play when he says,

I don't think you know anything about God, Susan. It's colossal nerve for you to stand up and talk people who do.  
(227)

Further, disapproving of Susan's plan to narrate his conversion in the Newport meeting, he reveals bluntly, "I've tried with everything in me to believe this meant the real thing to you --but I can't. It's the show you like

--the emotional excitement” (227). Barrie hits the nail on the head as he says this, for Susan is more after fame than for saving the world. Crothers through Barrie mocks such movements like Lady Wiggam’s Movement and reveals the lack of sincerity in their approach. It is thus Barrie’s absence which brings about the transformation in Susan. Ultimately Barrie forgives Susan and they are thus reunited. Barrie too has undergone a transformation for he no more drinks as he used to earlier and is thus able to save his marital relationship from disintegrating further. One can say that Barrie who earlier said, “But somehow what we mean to be and that we are --are quite different” (206), in the end does become what he wants to be.

Crothers depicts the plight of the younger generation through the sympathetic and effective portrayal of Blossom. The pathetic condition of youngsters like her, in a society where social roles are changing and family ties are breaking, is well highlighted. Crothers also reveals how divorce can affect children, who yearn for the love of both the parents, the most.

Blossom, aged fifteen, is anxiously awaiting the arrival of her mother along with her father, in the beginning of the play. Not finding her mother in her school they go to Irene’s house and are again disappointed. Blossom tells her father that they can go back to school to see if her mother has come there. She does not mind going back to school now since all the girls would have left and there would be no problem for her even if she had to stay there. Earlier, she left the school with her father only because, “I didn’t want them to think I didn’t have any place to go” (205). Blossom expresses the feelings of children of her age, who like to have a home and are pained to be with their parents. She also reveals that she had lied to her friends that her father was sick, when he did not turn up on the last day exercises. In an age where marriage as a social unit is itself threatened, it is prestigious for children like Blossom to have a home and also parents to look after and care for. But, as most other children of her age, the camp and the boarding school was her home. Just as Susan thinks, Barrie too has been thinking that Blossom “liked the camp better than anything” (206), and tells that he had heard of the camp as a ‘nice’ and ‘healthy place’. However, Blossom reveals the truth when she says, “If I get any more healthy I’ll die! I hate the camp. I hate it!” (206). Further, when Barrie asks if she would like to stay at their house, she says with eagerness and joy, “That would be wonderful! I’d rather be there than any place in the world” (206). Blossom truly wishes to stay with her parents and wonders why it is not possible - “Why can’t we all be together once in a while? - Why can’t we be some sort of a family -- like other people ..... why--can’t--we?” (206). She also asks her Dad why he is not so good and loving to her always. Crothers tellingly portrays the fact that in this modern age of ours,

parents have little or no time to spare for their children when she reveals that during the course of this conversation, Blossom has been with Barrie, her father, for four hours, which is the longest ever she has been with her father. Blossom, who is fed up with camps and her stay in the school, is really happy when her mother agrees to live with them in their house. She is so overjoyed that she even asks her mother if she could arrange a weekend party.

Blossom truly, loves her father and feels sorry for him too. She understands how her father tried not to drink, but ended up a little drunk when he came to meet her mother. She makes her mother see it by saying,

Everything was perfectly all right till after dinner. Then I could see him getting restless and then -- it happened. I expect it was partly my fault -- because I wasn't very entertaining. But I know he tried not to do it. Really -- really I do -- Mother (216).

Blossom's concern for her father can be seen through many instances in the play. She hopes her father would find real happiness. She tells her mother, "There's one thing I do know. I'm sure -- sure -- sure of it" (217). Further she explains,

When you think somebody doesn't love you -- and then you find out they do --it does something wonderful to you. If that could only happen to Dad! -- Oh, Mother! (217).

Blossom, who has found happiness by living with her parents, wishes her father too to experience the same joy in his life. When her father leaves the house, after his fight with her mother, Blossom gets worried and is anxious to know about her father's whereabouts. She rings up "The House in the Woods", a bar, and inquires for her father. When her father does not return immediately and Susan begins to worry if she has to forcefully accept a divorce, Blossom nearly cries. Susan asks Blossom to accept it as any other child of that age would do for, "-- After all -- you've had the same father and mother longer than most people have" (228). Blossom agree saying, "-- yes -- I have. Nearly every girl in school has only got one of them -- at a time. Not both together at once" (228). But, according to Blossom, the problem arises only when the child likes both the mother and the father. Crothers once again gives yet another true picture of one of the serious problems facing the modern world -- children having to live in boarding schools and camps though both their parents are alive. The fact that a child is lucky if it lives with at least one of its parents is very well brought out. In this modern age of hurry any flurry, parents hardly have time to devote even to their

children. Blossom represents the younger generation who are left stranded in between the conflicting forces of the mother and the father.

Stubbie, Leonara, Clyde, Mike, Irene and Charlotte are all minor characters in the play. They serve to build up the romantic intrigues in the play. They also make some valuable observations and comments on Susan and Barrie which are helpful in our understanding of these characters. A remark of profound consideration is made by one of Susan's friends, while referring to the movement:

I don't think it makes much difference what it is as long as it's something to believe in or hang on to. (qtd. in Poupard 78).

According to Stubbie, "Barrie has too much money that he did not have to work for. Susan has too much charm. Life has never disciplined her at all" (200). Stubbie here reveals the weaknesses of both Barrie and Susan. Thus according to him both of them are equally responsible for the trouble in the family. Charlotte does not approve of Susan's intrusion into their personal lives and says, "What makes me so damned mad is Barrie and Blossom chasing round trying to find her -- while she's reforming us" (208). Charlotte thus thinks that Susan ought to first reform herself and look into her own life rather than interfere in their lives. Though these friends of Susan think that her agreement with Barrie will not click, they ultimately feel happy over their reunion.

Susan and God does not focus on a sexual theme unlike some of Crother's earlier plays in the decade. Instead, the play depicts the problems caused when a woman's search for independence turns inward, becoming a glorification of self. Crothers explores the restlessness of a woman in the post emancipation era, satirizing her involvement in a modern religious movement. On the one hand, Crothers deflates Susan's religious pretensions, making them ludicrous to the audience and then opens Susan's eyes to the hollowness of her religion. On the other hand, Crothers portrays the conflict between Susan's desire to leave her unsatisfactory husband and to seek fame and her inner conscience that suggests that her real place lies in the sphere of the family and the home. Lady Wiggam gives Susan ammunition for her fight to leave her domestic responsibilities. She has told Susan that, "God is working through you to reach thousands of souls. You mustn't limit it to one man and one child" (qtd. in Gottlieb 142). Susan thus hates to resist excitement and return to being an ordinary woman again. However, Crothers finally reveals that salvation is not externally visible and cannot be attained easily for it takes the effort to examine carefully one's own inner self. Susan admits:

I don't think God is something out there to pray to -- I think He's here -- in us. And I don't believe He helps one bit until we dig and dig and dig -- to get the rottenness out of us (232).

Crothers is equally scathing about public confession, a practice followed by members of the Movement. The attack against such confession can be seen when Susan, to the amusement of others, tells that her first public confession was that she had her hair touched in Paris.

Crothers not only focuses on Susan's weakness but also on Barrie's weakness for alcohol. The reconciliation takes place only after Barrie has reformed. Crothers thus stresses the point that both the man and the woman, the husband and the wife, should adhere to virtues and the basic values of life. Only then is it possible for the family to live in happiness. Also, Crothers reveals that unless a child receives the love and affection of both the mother and the father, the child cannot find happiness in life.

Crothers ultimately resolves the dilemma of Susan, a restless and dissatisfied modern woman, as conventionally and happily as many of her plays, by making her turn to Barrie for strength and guidance and stay with her adoring family.

Crothers thus examines the consequences that result when a woman exercises her new gained freedom. Reflecting the disordered social and family life of the modern age, Crothers emphasizes the necessity for a return to the basic values in social life. She also reveals that it is the responsibility of the individual to strengthen himself / herself first rather than work for a revolutionary change in the broader sphere of the world. Crothers seems to imply that such individual changes put together will itself result in a similar change all over the globe. She thus rejects such social, religious or political movements as preserver of humanity. The traditional ending emphasizes that a woman can find her happiness in her home, surrounded by a truthful and loving husband and adoring children.

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