

An Analysis of Themes and Sub-themes in Judy Blume's

Are You There God? It's Me Margaret

A Thesis

Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Attainment of the *Sarjana Sastra* Degree in English Language and Literature



by

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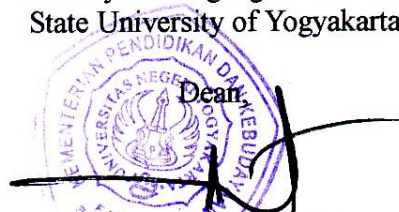

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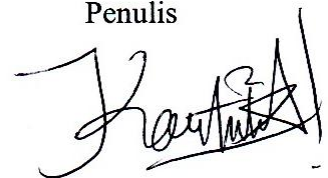
Are You There God? It's Me Margaret

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Penulis



Kartika Nurhandayani

DEDICATIONS

This thesis is lovingly dedicated to:

- My LATE lovely mother and bestest ever.
- My father who has showered me with his love, care and supported me with both material and non-material stuffs.
- My big brother, who loves me in his own way as he never expresses it overtly, and my sister-in-law and my nephew thank you for love and support.

MOTTOS

"If I have cared what people had thought of me and then I've walked on eggshells. I couldn't have done anything. Bad words or good words, these are just opinion. I keep doing my best so I think they will accept me someday."

(G-Dragon, BIGBANG)

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Finally, I realize that this thesis is far from being perfect. Therefore, I appreciate any comments and criticisms. I also hope that this thesis can bring some contributions in literature study.

Kartika Nurhandayani

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research are to identify the themes and sub-themes in Blume's novel *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*, and to figure out the types of the themes embodied in that novel. The researcher uses new criticism and childrens' literature theories to answer the formulated research questions.

The method used in this research was qualitative content analysis. The subject of this research was a novel entitled *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret* by Judy Blume. The data were some phrases, clauses, and sentences related to the themes and sub-themes. The key instrument of this research was the researcher herself employing the elements of literature theory by Leo Hamlian and Freddefick R. Karl and childrens' literature theory by Rebecca J. Lukens as explained in the analytical construct. The data analysis was conducted through six steps: identifying, reading and re-reading, coding and categorizing, sorting the data, making the interrelation between the description of the data and the theory, and making an interpretation of the findings. The indicators made were based on the employed theory. To gain the trustworthiness, the researcher used data triangulation technique by crosschecking the data with her consultants and other researchers.

The findings of the research show that there are four big themes in the novel, there are the process in reaching adolescence, family influence in reaching adolescence, the importance of friendship in the process of adolescence, and the process of searching for belief. In addition, the types of themes embodied in the main themes are implicit, and the sub-themes are expressed explicitly in maturing physically, rebellion, parenting, peer group, and friendship relationship, and implicitly in maturing emotinally, self anxiety, sexual feeling, parent-child relationship, intimacy with God, understanding of the existence of God, and understanding religion.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

People begin to write literature when they have ideas in their mind about anything they want to share with others. Literary works are representation of human experiences. It usually provides the reader with relevant facts and events. Human experiences are not simply a related group of events as they feel to the person living them (Stanton, 1965: 3). By reading literary works, people can get some experiences of life because many authors use their own experiences of life in their works.

Furthermore, authors might be use the experiences they remember best to get an idea for their story. The authors want us to see the meaning of the story and to feel a living experience that is presented by the authors in their story. However, an idea in a story could be anything and meaningful. Then, there is, sometimes, a readers' question about books they want to read; what book is all about, what is the author interested to, what is the author's concern, how the author views things, what is the author's visions of life and the world. Finally, all of these questions come down into question 'what is the importance or significance about the things that go on in the book?' The final question leads to the point in where authors drag readers to read the books. Since literary work reflects human experience, it might contain an essential idea about life that can be learned. It can be regarded as something essential since it contains about real life, people, thought, and the feeling about life (Hudson, 1958: 10). Literature also provides pleasure for the

readers, gives understanding, and provides experience through the experiences of the characters in literary works. Besides, literature shows human motives, reveals life fragmentation and helps the readers to reveal the institution of society (Lukens, 1999: 3).

The literary works, especially novel, commonly long written story. Every story has basic elements of plot, character, point of view, setting, tone, style, and imaginative work; together they constitute literature (Lukens, 1999: 10). Those elements make connection to each other. The author cannot use only one element in order to have good analysis because a short story or a novel will be totally understood if all parts of it are united. They are frequently employed by the author to give meanings and a logical framework to their works through language. They do not only beautify the piece of literature but also give deeper meanings to it, testing the very understanding of the readers along with providing them enjoyment of reading. Besides, they help readers visualize the characters and scenes more clearly. Considering a novel composed by elements of literature, forms in a novel cannot be separated from the content.

In addition, one of the important elements of literature is a theme. According to Gill (1995: 189), a theme emerges in and through the development of characters, dialogue, settings and the movement of the plot. Themes are not and should not be separated strands that somehow exist independently of the other elements in the novel. Therefore, those literary elements lead the readers to find out themes and to know how the author develops the story referring to themes. What the readers shall emphasize is the variety of ways in which the themes of a

book emerge. Theme therefore is a very broad term for the way books make meanings (Gill, 1995: 189). A theme for a literary text requires readers to examine the text closely and think beyond the superficial aspects of the text to its deeper and often hidden meanings. It's important for the readers to step away from the text after reading it, and think about the message it's trying to convey. To do these, readers must develop an overall understanding of the text, beyond its entertainment value. In understanding the novel, every reader may have a different interpretation for the same story. They may interpret the story in two entirely different ways. These kinds of conflicts demonstrate that many things in life are subject to interpretation and that, instead of being right or wrong, sometimes people just have different points of view. This revelation encourages readers to embrace diverse thinking patterns and, potentially, develop a sense of diplomacy.

According to Lukens (1999: 3) literature in general is a kind of texts that can prove the reader's pleasure. Moreover, she also states that literature can give understanding from the exploration of the human's condition and human nature in literary works. Besides, literary work also shows human motives for what they are, reveals life's fragmentation, helps us focus on essentials, reveals the institutions of society, and reveals nature as a force that influences us (Lukens, 1999: 5). Conventionally, literature is categorized into three genres: prose, poetry, and drama. However, as knowledge develops, there are some other genres appearing, one of which is children's literature. Children's literature is a literary genre which is created and controlled by adults or by children themselves and is read and consumed by children. Lukens (1999: 9) says that literature for children

as well as for adults can and should provide the same enjoyment and understanding. Basically, children's literature differs from literature for adults in degree but not in kind. In other words, children's literature and literature for adults are different in the complexity of structure, like plot, idea, diction but they still have similar subgenres, such as poetry, play, science fiction etc. The difference is caused by inexperienced children compare to adults so the expression of ideas delivered through literature must be simpler.

Furthermore, children's literature usually contains more didactic elements rather than literature for adults. Since it is read by children, it is more to tell the readers which one is good or bad, what are the effects of doing something inappropriate and so on. Parents, especially the strict one want their children to read proper things. That is why in some countries, children books with slightly inappropriate topics, like sex, are prohibited to publish.

Children's literature resembles literature for adults in kind, they are only different in degrees. Many factors impact the variation about children, but no factor counts more than age of the child for whom or about whom the author wants to write. Age impacts other aspects of a child's experience as well—appearance, psychology, emotions and world view (Suben and Amoss, 1999: 3). As an author, they must have a clear idea of the age of their ideal reader and must be able to visualize children character in concrete terms. That is why children's books character is important to define who are the children whom the author writing. It can be inferred that character of children's literature books can be

distinguished by making a list of topics or ideas from the age of children themselves.

Therefore, the view of childhood and the educational aspect of reading have been crucial for the evolution of children's literature (Nikolajeva, 1995: ix). Children's literature books should contain some aspects that children need such as; an interesting and entertaining story. Furthermore, children's books story should have an aspect that could educate the reader which is children themselves. Literature provides a means by which children can rehearse and negotiate situations of conflict without risk, trying out alternative stances to as they step into the lives and thoughts of different characters (www.mhhe.com/kiefer10e). It means that literature has contribution to the expanse of children's experiences, and to acknowledge the social life and also allows them to think of possibilities for their lives that are contrary to their prior experience and enables them to see the future in new ways. All the stories, the myths, the fables and the novels, including those addressed to children are, in fact, the result of this wish and this basic need: they help us live, survive; they help children to grow up and develop.

Joseph Conrad (in Goulding, 1987: xxxix) writes that every word in a good novel should contribute to the work's overall purpose. A great novel for either children or adults is like a symphony; it has many separate elements but they all work together to create a unified effect. Like literature in general, children's literature also has elements that turn on the words into a good story. One of them is the theme where theme, as defined in literature, as an idea about life that the author shares with his or her readers.

In children's literature, the role of the theme is more important rather than the other element. An author must have a clear idea of the age of their ideal reader and must be able to visualize children character in concrete terms. That is why themes in children's literature is important to define who are the children for whom and or about whom the author writing. From explanation above, it can be inferred that themes of children's literature can be distinguished by making a list of topics or ideas from the age of children themselves.

Furthermore, John Locke (in Hunt, 1992: 160) believes that the child is born with no knowledge, they could only learn from appropriate experience, with well designed children's books a particularly good way of providing such learning. There are books that furnish information and transfer knowledge on the world around us; others present an image of children's everyday life, or an image of their feelings and their conflicts, proposing how to solve them, also books which talk about the other, other cultures, other customs, other world or other creatures. Each of these books carries a message and a specific perspective which assists children in their learning process. The children learn to look at the features and the letters then they begin to read by words and carry up into sentences. They observe, recognize and identify them; reading and identifying real objects within the book.

Learning to read is not only learning to read within the book but also reading the experiences and the moments which offered by children's literature in their story to find the meaning of what is written. The young readers must grasp what they have read in order to integrate it into their own everyday personal

experiences. Jean-Marie Besse (in Stockar, 2006: 10) has stated that the origin of reading problems that so many adults have is found not only in failure to decode words and lack of text comprehension skills, but also above all in a total ignorance of the meaning and usefulness of written texts regarding our own life. Besides, developing all these complex skills and abilities; to read and identify, to integrate and understand stories, and to know how to communicate with others regarding what has been read, children's literature also teaches children to acknowledge the importance and actuality of knowing how to read within the context of their own life, and teach them to grasp the true meaning of what is written in the texts.

Nowadays, teenagers in the middle school have far more different experience than most of parents can imagine. Furthermore, teenagers of today seem much older than the parents did when they were that age. The preteen period is a very interesting time in a child's development. Puberty is the stage of adolescence in which an individual becomes physiologically capable of sexual reproduction which is one of the most remarkable events in the life span of an individual. In girls, it can begin as early as eight (one in six girls now compared with one in a hundred forty years ago) or as late as thirteen, but usually between nine and eleven.

In this era, when technology becomes very helpful to the people for seeking information and people become more individual with their life and parents become more busy making money than taking care their children, a lot of problems occur in their children especially teenagers. Teenagers' problems nowadays are more complex and complicated than before. The common problems

of teenagers tend to be social anxiety and maturity, but with social anxiety in teenagers in their development, it is quickly converted into a nervous disaster that can lead them to define themselves. The good news is what they exhibit confidence and streetwise attitude that is far beyond what most of parents had developed by that age.

Teenagers are often struggling with defining their self-worth as well as other identity issues; slapping them with social anxiety only seems to take away the obstacle from their life. Social anxiety in teenagers is something that should be eliminated as soon as possible. As a young person moves from childhood to adolescence, she/he comes face to face with a difficult challenge. They begin to search for the answer to the question, "Who am I?" This begins a crucial time for all early adolescents. Teens must continue the process of forming their own identity. They will be able to move on to other significant questions as the teen progresses from adolescence to adulthood. More specifically the questions of their anxiousness are "What am I going to do with my life?" and "Where am I going, and can I get there from here?". It is important to make sure that the teenager has a healthy social life and friends who inspire the teen.

In Blume's *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*, there is an issue of teen progresses form adolescence to adulthood. Here, in the story life is confusing enough for pre-teenager Margaret Ann Simon. She must try to fit in as "the new girl at school" when her family moves from New York City to New Jersey. She wonders if she will be the last girl in 6th grade to buy a training bra or get her period. She tries to seek her identity by having a personal relationship with God

and shares with Him her most intimate secrets where she has a blended family. A Christian mother and Jewish father make her feel confuse about idea of God because her parents let her to choose one or even not to choose any of them. In addition, Margaret is not forcing herself to have one of religion like their parents have and even if she is not in any religion at all her parents will be fine either.

Furthermore, there is something else that adults commonly believe children's need from their literature: protection, both from knowledge and from experience (Nodelmen, 2008: 158). It can be explained that children's literature exists in order to offer children this protection, to exclude things they ought not to know about. What has remained almost universally constant from the sixteenth century on is the idea that there is something or other that children should not learn, should not or cannot know—some knowledge they need to be protected from and that children's literature exists exactly in order to exclude. It can be defined that literature that gives children what they need by not being didactic about the wrong things—by not teaching them what they cannot or should not know (Nodelmen, 2008: 158).

This unusual issue contained in the novel brings controversy. The idea is far from the pattern where children's literature idea should be and might be have a simple idea. In her story, she explains a difficult situation, imperfection parents and human, a confusion and confrontation of a girl in her processes from adolescence into adulthood which may be happened in real life and experienced by many teenagers. She concerns about what really matters in teenagers and youth experience today. Yet some parents still believe that kind of topic is taboo to be

told and what she tries to convey in her story is across the boundaries. Blume (in West, 1988:6-7) explains that in the first time the novel was published, the elementary school principals refused to allow her books in their school's library. Blume was even called as a Communist by parents. The refusal was gotten, as, according to parents and librarians, the novel gave bad figure of teenager in order that parents called the novel as garbage, teenage trash, and even pornography. Adults and parents assume that children are normally and desirably not to be worried about their.

However, Blume says that "Some adults choose to forget what mattered to them when they were children. If remembering sexual development during puberty is important for children they should not have to wrap view of what is 'good' for children" (West, 1988:11). She intends to convince the readers that what she writes about growth and confusion in the stage of growing up would give a contribution for children to understand the adolescence stage in real life. Due to all the things above, the researcher tries to analyze the novel deeply through themes and sub-themes, and types of the themes explored by author through the development of the main female teenager character of the novel and also the contribution of themes in children development.

B. Research Focus

This research's title is the representation of the further analysis which will be discussed in the thesis. This research will find out the themes and sub-themes as the idea that carried by the author. The authors' idea is the way they spin the raw material into the something new and precious—the unique approach that the authors take to the subject matter which may be well known in its more familiar form.

The authors' life experiences may give them influence and ideas to create a story that may also have or are experienced by the readers. There are often some stories narrated with inferiorities on children's character in which adults assume children normally to be. There are also many stories depicting children as diligent, responsible, calm and obedient characters in order to reveal what adults want children to do and to be. The last but not least, there are also many stories giving certain characterization which adults desire to authorize view of children.

The researcher finds the unique idea that the author employs to create a book for children carries a theme as the main important topic, because themes also can be described as the idea which the writer wishes to convey about subject – the writers view of the world or a revelation about human life. Therefore, the first point of the research tries to analyze the novel deeply through themes and sub-themes.

The second point of this research is to figure out the types of themes that follow in the novel because sometimes the author states the themes either

implicitly or explicitly through the story. The researcher will use children's literature theory as the main approach of the study. Children's literature theory will be used to analyze the novel as the object of the study and need to get a deeper understanding the story. This study will also use qualitative approach in order to make deep interpretation and analysis in conducting the study. However, it is possible for the researcher to include the other approaches if the approaches are considered to be suitable to the study.

The significance of the theory/approach used in this research is to find out the features and representations in Judy Blume's *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*. The researcher will make some limitations of the study. The researcher will make the analysis the themes and the sub-theme embodied by the authors to be the main idea of the novel and the types of themes that follow.

C. Research Question

The research questions are formulated as follow

1. What are the main themes and sub-themes of Blume's novel *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*?
2. What are types of themes and sub-themes of Blume's novel *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*?

D. Research Objective

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. to identify the themes and sub-themes in Blume's novel *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*; and
2. to figure out the types of the themes that followed in Blume's novel *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*

E. Research Significance

The significance of this research is as follow

1. to give a better understanding to the next researcher about the themes and sub-themes that used by the author as the main idea in this novel, and
2. to provide information to the reader about the types of themes portrayed in this novel.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. New Criticism Study

New Criticism is a tool of criticism which emphasizes explication, or "close reading," of "the work itself." It rejects old historicism's attention to biographical and sociological matters. Instead, the objective determination as to "how a piece work" can be found through close focus and analysis, rather than through extraneous and erudite special knowledge (Abrams, 1999: 180-181).

Furthermore, New Critics also have function to examine the relationships between a text's ideas and its form, between what a text says and the way it says it. New Critics may find tension, irony, or paradox in this relation, but they usually resolve it into unity and coherence of meaning (Biddle, 1989: 100). Readers using patterns of sound, imagery, narrative structure, point of view, and other techniques discernible on close reading of the text to determine the function and appropriateness of these to the self-contained work. For New Criticism the most important and the only one that should be concerned is only the text itself. In interpreting literary works, the readers' do not need to know about author's life, biography, whether the text is related or a reflection of author's experience. Readers do not need to observe how the author is, the special character of particular author writing, diaries, etc. For New Critics, all the aspect outside the text doesn't influence them to interpret the text.

Bessler (1999: 43-44) asserts that the purpose of New Criticism is to reveal the structure of art and its interrelationship and to find out the idea developed from the work itself. He also mentioned that the New Criticism features the interrelation and interconnection of each element to reflect the work's as the main idea, thus the elements and the form of the work cannot be separable. To discover overall meaning or the form of a work, all the elements must be analyze and united first. According to Hamalian and Karl (1978: vii), the basic elements of a fiction consist of, plot, setting, characters, mood and atmosphere, and style, point of view and themes.

B. Theory of Children's Literature

1. Defining Children's Literature

The meaning of children's literature defines from two constituent terms, children and literature. These two terms qualify each other and transform each other's meaning as Hunt (1996: 16) explained in these lines:

the 'children' of 'children's literature' are constituted as specialized ideas of 'children', not necessarily related in any way to other 'children' (for instace those within education, psychology, sociology, history, art, or literature) and 'literature' of 'children's literature' is special idea of 'literature' not necessarily related to any other 'literature' (most particularly adult literature) Hunt (1996: 16)

In other words, children's literature are separable and more or less independent of one another, and that they are directly related to other children and literatures; critics often make use of, or refer to theories of education, psychology, sociology, history, art, or literature in stressing opinion. Rebecca Lukens (1999: 9) offers an explanation of sort of position

children are not little adult. They are different from adults in experience, but not in species, or to put it differently, in degree but not kind. We can say then of literature for young readers that it differs from literature for adults in degree but not in kind (Lukens, 1999: 9)

Lukens (1999: 9) also writes that literature for children must contain the same pleasure and understanding as the literature for adults or literature in general. Although children are same with adults in species, they are different in experience. That is why literature for young readers, although it contains the same pleasure and understanding, must have different degree. Since children only have limited experience in their life, they may not understand the same complexity of ideas as in literature for adults. Thus, the expression of the ideas must be much simpler. The author of children literature should use simpler language and form. The story should be more directly told and there is no complex relationship between characters and plot.

The fundamental context of children literature has a complex context of assumptions about language and visual imagery, about education, about pleasure, imagination and expression, and about the children themselves. Furthermore, Sutherland explained that

author of children literature books should be able to selecting what goes into the work and what does not, when developing plot and character, determining the conflicts and the resolutions, casting and depicting heroes and villains, evoking readers' emotional responses, eliciting readers' judgments, finding ways to illustrate their themes, and pointing moral (in Hunt, 1992: 18).

Hollindale (in Hunt, 1992: 33) said that authors should have ability to reshape their world to be strictly limited as the ideas of their story for children literature where the young reader believes in. The priority of children's books in

this world should not be to promote ideology but to understand it, and find ways of helping others to understanding it, including the children themselves.

In relation of children's literature to the social interaction, F. R. Leavis (in Nodelman, 2008: 157) believes that children's literature helps the readers to shape their understandings of themselves to the world and to the specific society they belongs to, as he said that children's books are purposed by adults as the imaginative forms of life which they may work with and turn into their future lives.

The purpose of children's literature is to show parents, teachers, students, and children what the virtues look like, what they are in practice, how to recognize them, and how they work. Furthermore, Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown in Nodelman (2008: 190) view children's literature as marked significantly by its subject. They state that,

children's books are about the experiences of childhood. It is true that text for children do most often purpose to be about the experiences of childhood, they are actually so only in relation to the extent to the which adult authors' reading of the nature of childhood experience accord with that of actual children themselves (Nodelman, 2008: 190).

2. Elements of Children's Literature Books

According to Rebecca Lukens (Lukens, 1999: 51),

the elements of literature, then, are important too, just as they are in other genres. By pinning pictures to words and words to ideas, the best text can enlarge the child's world in ways that even the most careful observation of picture cannot do.

In the quotation above, it can be understood that every story are grown from interaction of these constituent elements and connected to each other in term

of language and structure. It is always more than the sum of the individual parts because the unity of all these elements that produce story. Furthermore, by understanding every different parts or elements and how they work together can help the readers to become more analytical about literary works; and also can improve their judgment or interpretation toward literature.

a. Character

Character is the term which is generally used in the aggregate of mental, emotional, and social qualities that distinguish a person. In literature, however, the term character is used to mean a person, or in the case of children's literature, sometimes a personified animal or object (Lukens, 1999: 80).

Furthermore, Lukens (1999: 100) adds that adults find a great pleasure in reading about people like themselves or people they know, being wise and foolish, brave and coward, frightened and confident, lonely and secure. Children, as much as adult or perhaps even more, need the discovery of themselves as part of humanity through the pleasure of recognition. Conversely, they need the pleasure of discovering that humanity exists in them. If literature is to help children understand the nature of human beings, adults need reality in the portrayal of character.

b. Plot

Plot is the sequence of events showing character action. This sequence not accidental but is choose by the author as the best way of telling his or her story. If the author has chosen well, the plot will produce conflict, tension, and action that will arouse and hold readers interest (Lukens, 1999: 103).

Children want what more adults want in literature: action, happenings, questions that need answers, answers that fit questions, glimpses of happy and unhappy outcomes, discovery of how events grow and turn. The most usual plot structure found in children's books is chronological plot, which covers a particular period of time relate the events in order within the time period (Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson, 1999: 27).

c. Setting

Setting is the time when the story occurs and the places where it occurs to constitute setting in the story (Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson, 1999: 30). Setting is of two principal types. First, it may be a backdrop for the plot, like the generalized backdrop of a city, street, or forest against which we can see some of the action of a play. Second, setting may be an integral part of the story, so essential to our understanding of the plot, the characters, and the themes that readers must experience it with their senses (Lukens, 1999: 172).

d. Style

Style is basically words, how authors say something as opposed to what they say. In other words, style is the skilled writer chooses words that become setting, plot, character, and theme to make a piece of literature (Lukens, 1999: 195).

Style involves the use of comparisons of figurative language appropriate to the story; imagery that describes for the senses what is happening or how things look; exaggeration or understatement to entertain or to heighten feelings; allusions

to people or events already known; wordplay with puns or echoes; and sound devices to give pleasure and to heighten meaning.

e. Point of View

Point of view is determined when the writer chooses who is to be the narrator and decides how much the narrator is to know (Lukens, 1999: 176). Point of view is an integral part of storytelling, determines the view the reader gets of events, character motivation, suspense and climax, and theme.

There are four major kinds of point of view: first-person with an “I” narrator, omniscient with all-knowing writer, limited omniscient with focus on one or few characters, and objective or dramatic with a report only of what can be seen and heard.

f. Tone

Tone, the author’s attitude towards subject and readers, is an integral part of the story, since it is created by the writer’s choice of words (Lukens, 199: 242). It is not created by any single, obvious decision of the author; instead it is the result of all the choices made in telling the story. Tone can fill us with affection and acceptance, or rouse us to examine and to laugh at ourselves.

g. Themes (Sub-Themes, Types of Themes and Kinds of Themes)

1) Themes and Sub-Themes

According to Lukens (1999: 135), theme in literature is the idea that holds the story together, such as a comment about society, human nature, or the human condition. It is the main idea or central meaning of a piece of writing (Lukens,

1999: 135). She (Lukens, 1999: 138) also states about the function of themes in as the elements of literature as she says in these lines:

when we think of theme as “a moral” or “a lesson”, or even as “a message” we are repelled by the idea that we must learn how or how not to behave. But a good story is not meant to instruct us. Its purpose is to entertain us by its action and characters; at the same time, it gives us insight into people and how they think and feel, and enlarge our understanding (Lukens, 1999: 138).

Literature that has been written especially for children reflects the philosophy of the culture in which it is written. The purpose is to entertain, teach a valuable life lesson and lay a foundation for future learning. Childrens’ literature is intended to provide religious and moral education, but in modern times that purpose has diminished in importance, and the focus has turned to teaching children about valuing themselves and respecting others.

Furthermore, Tomlinson (1999: 48) states,

the theme of a story its underlying meaning of significant. Although we sometime think of theme as the message or moral of the story, it can just as likely an aesthetic understanding, such as appreciation of nature, or view point of social issue (Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson, 1999: 48).

He also writes that themes in children’s books should be worthy of children attentions and should convey truth to them. The themes should be based on high moral and ethic standards.

Stanton (1965: 19) in his book *An Introduction of Fiction* writes that theme of a story corresponds to the meaning of human experience that could make an experience memorable. Like the meaning of a human experience, a theme illuminates or comments upon some aspects of life, and thus has value outside the story (Stanton, 1965: 19).

A theme statement must be a broad enough idea that can be applied to life in a general sense, not only to the people in the work, but to the reader, to the student, and to all humankind. Furthermore, it is important to recognize the difference between the theme of a literary work and the subject of a literary work. The subject is the topic on which an author has chosen to write. The theme, however, makes some statements about or expresses some opinion on that topic. For example, the subject of a story might be war while the theme might be the idea that war is useless. Therefore, themes may be major/primary themes or minor/secondary themes or sub-themes. A major/primary theme is the main topic or the main idea the author returns to time and again. It becomes one of the most important ideas in the story. Minor/secondary themes or sub-themes are ideas that may appear from time to time or seems less important than the primary one (Lukens, 1999: 139-140).

In order to identify main themes, Gill (1995: 189) adds that there are some ways to identify main themes in which some cases, the main themes of the book are present in the title. It could be that the authors' have chosen the title in order to tell the reader something important about the book. Second is about how the characters change, grow and make up their minds shows that their interests include moral and psychological development. Third is about the function of symbol, a repeated symbol, or one used at an important moment, can give expression to a central theme of the novel. Symbols are important if they work alongside the characters and the settings. Authors also can give expression to the themes of novels by stressing certain words. Words used carefully can focus the

meaning of a novel and take the reader to the heart of the author's concerns. One of the clearest guides to the themes of a novel is what the characters say. Since some characters say a great deal, the readers will have to learn to detect those speeches that are particularly important. They can only do this if they know a novel well, but when they are acquainted with a novel, they will be able to see that particular speeches focus the main concerns of the plot. Novels are concerned with what happens as well as with what is said. Events, therefore, can express the themes of the novels. One of the pleasures of reading novels comes when the author handles the climax well. The readers enjoy the achievement of the author in making the events express the themes of the books. The last is about the treatment of ordinary events. Not all the significant events in a book have to be dramatic. An author can write about an ordinary, everyday event in such a way as to bring out that it is very important. A novel's theme can be present in the seemingly ordinary, and it is often the experience of the readers that they enjoy the way an author brings out the depth of meaning that can be found in everyday doings.

2) Types of Themes

In one story, there are some ways how writers convey a theme to the reader through their story. The way how the authors convey the themes are classified into the types of themes. The idea which is clearly and openly stated by the author and sometimes flatly stated by the statements from the text is an explicit theme. Explicit themes are common in children's literature because the writer may hope to be sure the reader finds the unifying truth. The other one is

implicit themes where the author does not state precisely and suggests such statements to create the readers' interpretation about the story and define the themes by themselves (Lukens, 1999: 137-139).

In explicit types of themes, narrator gives readers a choice, to think on situation on their own, and to ramble through the rest to the message their got from it, done up neatly, and condensed into final sentence, while in implicit types of themes, narrators make several general statements about the importance of language, writing, or reading throughout text.

3) Kinds of Themes

a) Adolescence

A standart definition of the coming-of-age is simply put a narrative which follows the development of a child or adolescent into adulthood. This pattern typically features a young protagonist either male or female who undergoes a troubled search for an identity by process of trials, experiences, and revelations (McClinton-Temple, 2011: 12). To focus on protagonist the range in years for coming-of-age narrative limited between ages of 12 until 19. Since a coming-of-age narrative is a dependent on a quest for an adult identity, the narrative is

closely linked to other areas of identity development, such as gender, race, social class, and national identity.

Kenneth Millard (in McClinton-Temple, 2011: 13) argues, a recurring element of the coming-of-age narrative is the way in which protagonist's adult identity is framed by historical events and points of origin and conditioned by social obligations and expectations.

b) Family

The families into which we are born and the families we create as we get older hold such an important for us because they are our primary sources of identification (McClinton-Temple, 2011: 31). From our family we get our beliefs and values, such as: religious, political, and social. From our family, we learn to function in the real world as adults. Family also takes responsibilities in basic education, instruction, and rules which taboo and forbidden to the young adult.

c) Friendship

Friendship in any society is bounded by a set of alternative relationships that mark off its specific dimensions and properties (Konstan, 1997: 6). Friendship is a personal relationship shared between each friend for the welfare of each other, in other words, it is a relationship of trust, faith and concern for each other feelings.

Friendship also takes its contours from other achieved relations that exist between mates and comrades, voluntary partnerships, neighborliness, and the special connection between foreign friends (Konstan, 1997: 7). A friend is one who knows you as a person and regards you for what you are and does not expect you to be anyone but who you choose to be.

d) Religion

Both religion and literature spring from a common impulse to explore and explain the fundamental mystery of human existence—of humankind’s place in the world and our relationship to the created universe, to the Divine, and to our fellow human beings (McClinton-Temple, 2011: 91). Literature, in its extraordinary power to mirror and mediate these passions and conflicts, finds both its source and its substance in religion, in the shape of themes, images, symbols, and the very language it uses to appeal to us (McClinton-Temple, 2011: 93).

C. Previous Research Findings

There are some theses having similar research object with this research. The first one is *sarjana* degree thesis from Sanata Dharma University by Alstonia Epafras (004214053), an English Department student, entitled “Message That Conveyed in *The Blind Pig* Related to Jackson’s View on Crime World: A New Criticism Study” (2008). Epafras discussed about the message revealed in the story. Furthermore, he focuses on the action of the characters and the setting of

the story. Other thesis is still a *sarjana* degree thesis entitled “An Analysis of Main Characters in Stephen Mayer’s *New Moon*” (2010) written by Umi Fauziah (080721019) from University Of North Sumatra. This research focuses on the main characters in Mayer’s *New Moon*. She analyzed the main characters more detail based on the problem of the analysis which are; how are the main characters potrayed in the novel, what are the differences identified through the main characters, and what are the moral values of the main characters potrayed in the novel.

The other research is conducted by Tyler Edward Anderson from University of Nebraska as his master degree thesis entitled “Examaning Early And Recent Criticism Of *The West Land*: A Reassessment” (2010). The aim of his work is to broader conclusions about the nature of literary criticism and how the ideas are proliferated, forgotten, or ignored within academia which has a central tenet of thesis about ideological characterizations of the earlier critics should never substitute actual close readings of the texts themselves.

Those previous researches have the difference in the focus of the research compared to this research. This research focuses on analyzing the novel deeply through elements of literature to find out the themes and sub-themes and. The other difference between this research and the previous ones is that this research uses *Are You There God? It’s Me Margaret* by Blume which is well known as a controversial children literature books for children.

D. Conceptual Framework

In this research, the New Criticism theory and Children's Literature theory taken from several books such as Bessler and Lukens is used. The researcher use New Criticism theory and Children's Literature theory to synchronize the same elements of literature which contains in the novel. These theories are also used as the basic understanding of the elements of literature in the literary works. Furthermore, to identify the themes, sub-themes, and types of themes in Blume's *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*, the reseacher employs Childrens' Literature theory by Rebecca J. Lukens. This concept is used to analyse the elements of literature in novel. It is considered as the appropriate concept because it can explain and gives the detail explanation about the elements of literature. The conceptual map of the theories used in this research can be seen in figure 1 below. Meanwhile, the main theories and indicators used in conducting this research are presented in the analytical construct in chapter III.

FRAMEWORK OF THINKING

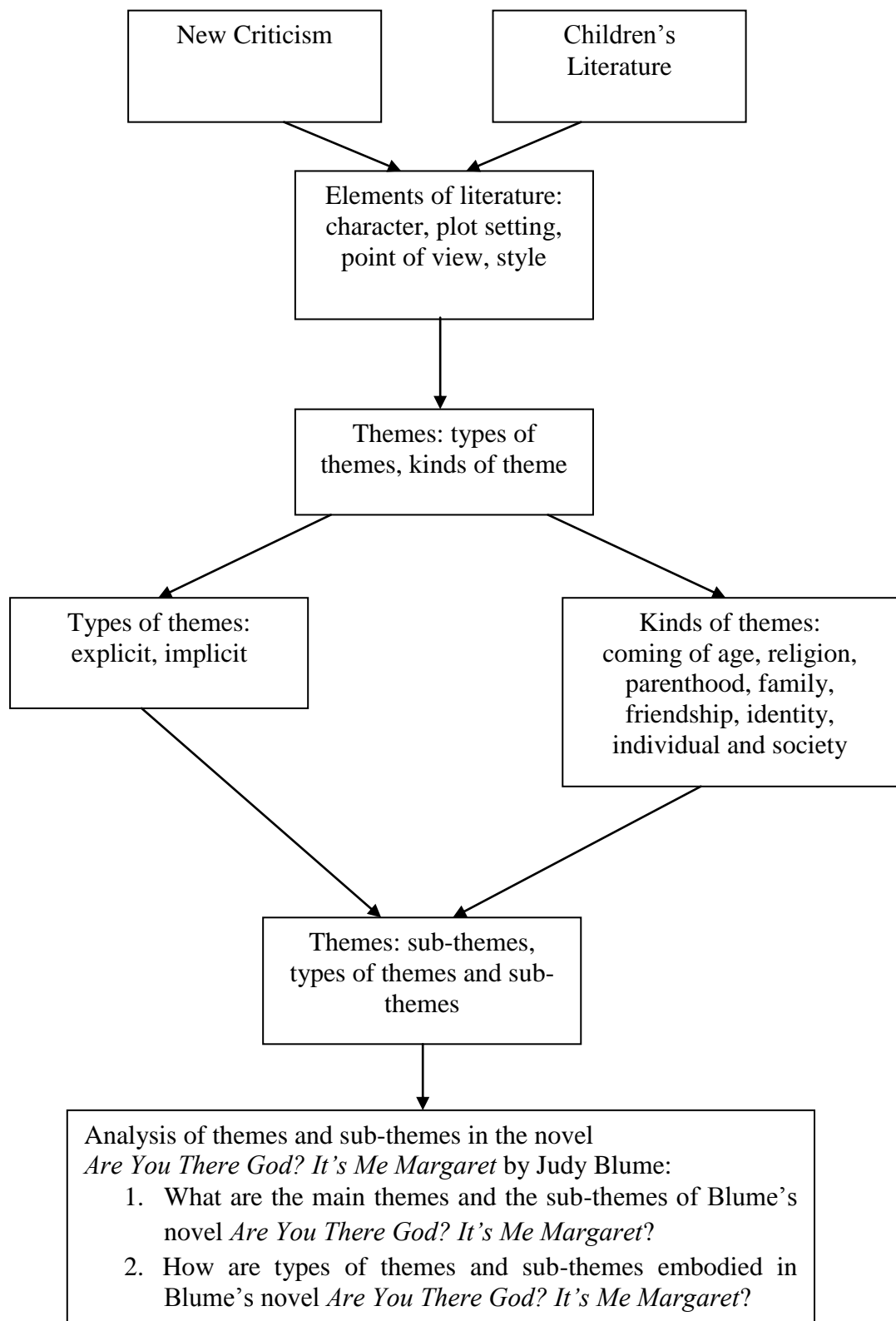


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

A. Research Design

This research employed the descriptive-qualitative method, because it emphasized on describing the phenomenon of the use of language in its context by interpreting the data. As stated by Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009: 166-167), a qualitative research is a research that is based on people's interpretation of their own experience. Related to its purpose, the qualitative research is more about how to make description than prediction of the data. That is why a depth understanding of researcher's point of view is the goal of this research design.

Hancock (2002: 2) states that a qualitative research is a type of research that tries to seek for the answers of several questions which start with: why? how? and in what way?. The objects of content analysis approach become clear whether it written or verbal texts, for example: books, essays, interviews, informal communication and any form of communicative language. It is also clear that this approach is aimed at identifying and making inferences of the text. In other words, the goal of this approach is to reveal the meaning of the text itself.

The method used in this research was qualitative content analysis since the data are nonnumeric. The data taken for this research are used to show the themes, sub-themes, and the types of themes also to find out the themes contributions to children development. Thus, the analysis of the data (the identification and

inference) can be used to describe the research well and to make the reader understand it well.

B. The Main Data Sources

The main sources of the data is taken from *Are You There Go? It's Me Margaret* which was published in 1970 and consisting of 25 chapters and 149 pages. The research data were the words, phrases, clauses and sentences expressed in this novel by Blume.

The main theories in this research are New Criticism theory and Children's Literature theory. However, some supporting information from articles, books, journals, and websites from internet about children's literatures was also taken to get information about new criticism, the elements of literature, and children's literature.

The researcher read and used *A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature* written by Rebecca J. Lukens in 1999. Besides, the researcher took the secondary data source from books, articles and information either written or electronic such as *An Introduction to Fiction* (Stanton: 1965), *Literary Critics: An Introduction To Theory and Practice* (Bessler: 1999), *The Hidden Adult: Defining Children's Literature* (Nodelman: 2008), *Exploring Children's Literature: Teaching the Language and Reading of Fiction* (Nikki Gamble and Sally Yates: 2002) and the other related sources to support the analysis on the main data source.

C. Data Collecting Technique

The data in this research were all taken from conversations and narrations in the form of words, phrases, clauses and sentences which related to category of themes and sub-themes. In order to get the clear understanding of the content of the text, the researcher collected the data, categorized the data, and analyzed the data by herself.

Basically, the significant way to collect the data in this research is by reading stories carefully and making notes after that. The researcher used the close reading technique by reading carefully more than once to get the detail information and data relevant to research questions. The researcher read the story then she collected the data by making notes relevant to the questions.

The process of data collecting technique consists of five steps, namely careful and comprehensive reading, note-taking, data interpreting, describing the data and categorizing. Firstly, the researcher read all stories in *Are You There Go? It's Me Margaret* written by Blume in order to understand the texts. Next, the stories were re-read several times more carefully. Meanwhile, the researcher took notes on the object to be analyzed. Another careful reading was done along with data interpretation. Afterwards the data were described further. Finally, the data were categorized into the units in line with the topic of the discussion. Besides reading the novel, comprehensive reading was also done to get the detail information indicating the themes, sub-themes and the types of themes exist in the novel.

During the recording of the data, the researcher used a particular form of note to easily see the development of her research focus. The researcher made a table to put the classified main data that in each category. The table of the data is presented in the table below:

No	Data	Page	Category

Table 1. The Data Sheet

D. Data Analysis

Based on *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*, the researcher tried to identify the themes and sub-themes, to figure out the types of the themes, and to find out how theme contributes to children development.

The data were analyzed in order to accomplish the researcher's goals. The data analysis dealt with the process of data reducing, data display and conclusion drawing. First, all data in the source were included the relevant data only. Next, those relevant data were displayed in the data sheet. The researcher categorized those data into several groups. Finally, after being displayed, those data were verifies and conclusions were drawn.

E. Data Trustworthiness

To prove the researcher trustworthiness, the researcher checked the validity and reliability of the data by employing data triangulation; that is by cross-checking the data with the relevant theories and sources and also the researcher cross-checked the data with other researcher. The researcher also

consulted the data to her consultants. The reliability of the study was gained by reading and re-reading the data until the researcher got certainty of the data about themes, types of theme and themes contribution to children development with valid interpretation. Its purpose was to maintain the consistency of the data.

F. Analytical Construct

No	Category	Definition	Indicators
1.	Adolescence	Adolescence narrative is a narrative which follows the development of a child or adolescent into adulthood, focus on 12 until 19 years old. A coming-of-age narrative is dependent on a quest for an adult identity. The narrative is closely linked to other areas of identity development, such as gender, race, social class, and national identity.	Maturing (growing up emotionally or physically), self anxiety, rebellion (rejection, disagreeing, protest), sexual feeling.
2.	Family	Family narrative is a narrative which is followed by basic beliefs and values, such as: religious, political, and social. Family narrative gives an explanation about education, rule, and instruction which are learned by	Parent-child relationship (affection, motivation, influence, support, comfort), parenting

		family members as sources to apply in the real world.	(educating, explaining, understanding)
3.	Friendship	Friendship is a personal relationship shared between each friend for the welfare of each other, in other words, it is a relationship of trust, faith and concern for each other's feelings. A friend is one who knows you as a person and regards you for what you are and doesn't expect you to be anyone but who you choose to be.	Peer group, relation of friendship (common interest, trust, honesty, encouragement, respect, experiment)
4.	Religion	Religion is a powerful source of both succor and conflict, emerging from the wellsprings of our most deeply human impulses and arousing our most passionate response. It becomes a lens through which issues of race, ethnicity, and identity are parsed.	Intimacy of God, understanding the idea of God, understanding religion.

Table 2. The Analytical Construct of Kinds of Themes

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter contains the findings of the research. The findings are formulated after the researcher collected the data. The data support the categories made based in the findings. This research focuses on the discussion of three points: 1) the identification of themes and sub-themes of Blume's novel *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret?* and 2) the types of themes and sub-themes revealed in Blume's *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret?*

To begin with, it is worth knowing that the novel was written in the first-person point of view of Margaret Simon as the main character and the narrator of the novel. From the very start of the book, she is an earnest and honest narrator, sharing herself freely with the readers. Her conversations with God, her self-consciousness next to her peers, angst about her sexuality, confusion about the role of religion in her life and her observations about the relationships around her provide readers the most insight into her life. Understanding the position of the narrator in the novel is important since she is the eyes and ears throughout the book, the person who helps the researcher to analyze the themes in the story.

A. Themes and Sub-themes in Are You There God? It's Me Margaret

1. The Process of Reaching Adolescence

Margaret has experienced lots of events that indicate her in transition to be an adult. The indicators for this stage are maturing (growing up emotionally or physically), self anxiety, rebellion (rejection, disagreeing, protest), and sexual feeling. The themes emerge as the results of her consideration and her behavior towards events that she experiences.

a. Maturing Emotionally and Physically

In this stage, Margaret's feelings and physical development are the clues to define that she is growing up into an adult. This development may seem seamless, but there are distinct things happening in emotional development that are helping her to behave. This emotional development is seen in her sensitivity and the way she thinks towards some events and others.

Children usually do not have a responsibility toward what they say. They may say lots of things which probably can hurt other people's feelings. The quotation below shows how Margaret takes responsibility about what she says to other people.

I was really being awful. And I hadn't even planned it. I sounded like Nancy. That's when it hit me that for all I knew Nancy made up that story about Laura. Or maybe Moose and Evan made it up just to brag. Yes, I bet they did! Moose was a big liar too! (Bume, 1970: 116)

In this time, Margaret says Laura is a slattern because she has heard that thing from Nancy. Nancy has told her that Laura is a girl who can sleep with every man. Laura who knows that is not true, she feels hurt. She does not want to

hear the explanation of Margaret and leaves her with all her guilty feeling. In the datum above, Margaret has experienced a hard time by disrespecting and insulting Laura Danker without knowing the truth. Even though she does not have a good relationship and does not really like her, Margaret feels that she has done a bad thing to other people. However, what Margaret feels about hurting Laura's feelings shows that she is being mature. She feels bad for threatening Laura Danker after she knows the truth that what she said to her is a lie.

She also shows her empathy towards Mr. Benedict even though she does not show her real feeling.

Poor Mr. Benedict. He was really disappointed. The way he talked to us I got the feeling we made him nervous. Nobody seemed scared of him at all and you should always be a little scared of your teacher. Sometimes he just sat at his desk and looked out at us like he couldn't believe we were really there (Blume, 1970: 45)

She is being aware with Mr. Benedict's feelings. Her sensitivity by recognizing Mr. Benedict's feelings indicates that her emotional feeling is being mature. As a child who is in transition to being an adult, Margaret starts to recognize and understand the world around her. She begins to think about how Mr. Benedict feels when everyone in the class ignores him a lot and nobody pays attention to him.

Her emotional development also changes when she is under pressure. Quotation below describes Margaret's thought in looking at her problem.

What was wrong with me anyway? When I was eleven I hardly ever cried. Now anything and everything could start me bawling. I wanted to talk it over with God. But I wasn't about to let him know that, even though I missed him (Blume, 1970: 144).

After the entire problems that she faces, Margaret begins to show her weakness. She clearly says that when she is eleven she hardly ever cry because she barely found a difficult problem. Although she finds it difficult, she still can handle it and control her emotion. In this time, when she is twelve, Margaret feels that she cannot endure everything and anything that happened in her life. She becomes someone who easily cries when she has to face some problems. As an adolescent girl, she starts to feel the pressure of the problem which makes her emotion changes.

Besides, emotional development, physical development is also one of the most important things in this stage. Physical development is the process that starts in human infancy and continues into late adolescent as well as puberty. For the girls the physical development can be determined by having a period or menstruation. Period or menstruation is the crucial moment in girls life when they reach their puberty. Some girls cannot wait to start their period, whereas others may feel afraid or anxious. Margaret is the girl who cannot wait to start her period because of her some friends have already got.

When my mother got to the bathroom she said, "What is it? What's the matter?" "I got it," I told her. "Got what?" I started to laugh and cry at the same time. "My period. I've got my period!" My nose started running and I reached for a tissue (Blume, 1970: 147).

Margaret experienced her very first time period which is she waited for long time. Now, along with she had been experienced, she can state to her peer group that she is a normal girl. It means that she also had her period like the other teenagers in her age.

Every girl in the stage of preteen always worries about physical development, especially when the other girl in her age start to have her physical development.

"Did you get it yet, Margaret?" Nancy asked. "Get what?" "Your period," Nancy said, like I should have known. "Oh—no, not yet. Did you?" Nancy swallowed some soda and shook her head, "None of us has yet." (Blume, 1970: 31)

Margaret and her peer group show their worries about their physical development. They try to comfort themselves by having a discussion about it and share the same feeling about their physical development which is not grown yet.

b. Rebellion

Rebellion in this stage is simply a personal behavior when someone starts breaking the rules. Rebellion in adolescence is completely natural and necessary as long as not related to crime. Rebellion can be caused by many things. Margaret as adolescent also breaks some rules to defend her opinion.

"I don't want to see them," I shouted. "It isn't fair! I want to go to Florida and stay with Grandma. Daddy—*please!*" "Don't look at me," my father said quietly. "It's not my fault. I didn't send them a Christmas card." "Mom!" I cried. "You can't do this to me. You can't! It's not fair—it's not!" I hated my mother. I really did. She was so stupid. What did she have to go and send them a dumb old card for! (Blume, 1970: 125)

Quotation above shows that Margaret tries to confront what her mother wants. Margaret feels that what her mother did to her is not fair. She does not want to meet her grandparents because she never meets them before even once. Besides, Margaret already has a plan to spend her holiday to visits her grandmother Sylvia in Florida but suddenly her mother wants her to stay. She tries asking for help for her father but he cannot help her. Margaret begins to take

blame on her mother because she send her grandparents a card and made this complicated situation. Margaret did some simple rebellion by protesting her mother because her mother abandoned her feelings and her opinion.

Margaret also starts to ignore what her parents say to her about something.

Now that's my point about my mother. I mean, if she understands so much about me then why couldn't she understand that I had to wear loafers without socks? I told her, "Nancy says nobody in the sixth grade wears socks on the first day of school!" (Blume, 1970: 24)

In the first day of school, Margaret went to school without wearing socks. She follows what Nancy said not to wears socks in the first day because she wants Margaret to join her in secret club, and if Margaret wears socks, Nancy afraid that the other kids might not want her to join. Even though she insists not to wear socks, her mother told her to wear socks because she will get blister by walking three quarter miles. Margaret begins to ignore what her mother suggests to her and prefers to follow what Nancy says not wearing socks.

c. Self Anxiety

Everybody feels anxious sometimes, especially when faced with unfamiliar, dangerous or stressful situations. Anxiety can include body signals such as a sinking feeling, tense or uncomfortable feelings, or nerves. It's a normal reaction to challenging situations. Self anxiety in adolescence might worry about starting first school, looking a particular way, fitting in with friends, body condition and the way of thought about something. Margaret shows some herself anxiety and something around her.

Are you there God? It's me, Margaret I hate to remind you God ... I mean, I know you're busy. But it's already December and I'm not growing. At

least I don't see any real difference. Isn't it time God? Don't you think I've waited patiently? Please help me (Blume, 1970: 81)

The quotation describes that Margaret is a person who is not feel confident with her condition. She is not confident because of her body. In the beginning of the story, Margaret is characterized as an adolescent who physically has not developed yet. She has differences in her body because she experiences late physical development. Margaret does not have a good posture as her friend. Because of her differences she begins worry about herself. Margaret worries about what her friends thought about her that she is not normal like the other friends. She even asks to God to make her physical changes grow quickly.

Although she worries about her physical development which is not grown up yet, she worries about being a teenager as well. Margaret finds being a teenager is kind a rotten because she needs to deal with more physical appearance problem like pimples and smell of your body. She emphasizes her feeling by saying “If you ask me, being a teenager is pretty rotten—between pimples and worrying about how you smell!” (Blume, 1970: 25).

Another thing that she worries is about the way how other people think about her. Margaret is a person who cares a lot about her image, physically and personality. She wants to make a good impression to the people around her so that they do not think that Margaret is kind a weird or an odd girl.

My parents don't know I actually talk to God. I mean, if I told them they'd think I was some kind of religious fanatic or something. So I keep it very private. I can talk to him without moving my lips if I have to (Blume, 1970: 14).

Even though to her parents, she wants to build a good impression in the

way she thought about God. She chooses to keep her relationship with God in private. Margaret never gets a lesson about a particular religion from her parents, they give Margaret a freedom to choose which religion she really beliefs. Knowing her parents are not really into one particular religion, Margaret does not want to make her parents worry by thinking of her that she is kind of religion or fanatic into one.

On the other hand, Margaret really wants to be a normal girl in her social life. She really wants to deem to be someone who is normal like the other person in her age.

I hoped he decided I was normal, after all. I lived in New York for eleven and a half years and I don't think anybody ever asked me about my religion. I never even thought about it. Now, all of a sudden, it was the big thing in my life (Blume, 1970: 39)

In the quotation above, Margaret shows her anxiousness of her thought about religion toward Mr. Benedict. Margaret is a girl who just moved from New York City to Farbrook, New Jersey. Margaret finds something different by living in two different places, in New York and in New Jersey. When Margaret was lived in New York she never thought about religion or something which is private, because people in New York barely ever ask something personal and detail. After she moved to New Jersey, she got a culture shock because some personal and detail questions asked by people around them. That condition forces Margaret to think about how she will explain about her religious status to people who live around her now.

d. Sexual Feeling

Sexual feeling is when a person who has a feeling toward another person, simply like a female has an emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to a male. During the years of adolescence, Margaret also concerns with a relationship with opposite sex. The first one is Phillip Leroy, Margaret's classmate.

On Monday I studied the boys in my class. I had to have some names for my Boy Book before three o'clock. I picked Philip Leroy because he was the best-looking one (Blume, 1970: 24).

One of the rule in Margaret's secret club is each member has to write the list of the boys she likes. Margaret chooses Phillip Leroy as a boy that she likes and will write it down in her Boy Book. Different with Phillip Leroy who she likes because of his best looking, Margaret does like Moose Freed. She meets this boy in Nancy's house. Unfortunately, she does not have any bravery to show what she feels.

I liked the way he sang as he worked. I also liked his teeth. I saw them when he smiled at me. They were very clean and white and one in the front was a little crooked. I pretended to be really busy reading a book but the truth is—I was watching Moose. If he looked toward me I put my nose back in the book in a hurry. Moose would be number one in my Boy Book if only I was brave enough, but what would Nancy think? She hated him (Blume, 1970: 24).

Quotation above shows that Margaret really has a feeling toward Moose Freed. It is also proof that Margaret does really like Moose Freed. Not only does she not have any bravery to show her feeling to Moose, she also afraid to tell her friend, Nancy, who does not like Moose very much. In front of Moose, Margaret tries to behave naturally. It can be seen when Moose works in Margaret's home to cut the grass. She watches Moose carefully but she acts as if she busy with her

reading.

2. Family Influence in the Process of Adolescence

Family, especially parents, has responsibilities to give the right information to their children as a tool in understanding a social life. In addition, family also should provide love, protection and guidance to help children build their confident and self-esteem. There are some indicators which are show how Margaret's family takes responsibility and provides her with love and care.

a. Parent-child Relationship

The quality of parent-child relationships shows considerable stability over time. The parent-child relationship that Margaret and her parents have is a good relationship. Margaret's parents always give support when Margaret wants to do something.

"You said I could choose when I grow up!" "But you're not ready to choose yet, Margaret!" "I just want to try it out," I argued. "I'm going to try church too, so don't get hysterical!" "I am *not* hysterical! I just think it's foolish for a girl of your age to bother herself with religion." "Can I go?" I asked. "I'm not going to stop you," my mother said. "Fine. Then I'll go." (Blume, 1970: 56)

The quotation above shows that Margaret as a girl who can make a decision for herself and has bravery to tell what she wants. It can be seen when Margaret tells her parents that she wants to go to the church. In addition, Margaret also tells her parents that she wants to go to the temple as well. It sounds odd for her parents hearing Margaret's decision. They regard it as a wrong time for Margaret to choose religion, but Margaret insists them on allowing her to go to a religious service. However, Margaret's parents allow her to go if she really wants

to go anyway.

Support that Margaret's parents give to her is not only to an important matter but also to a simple matter.

Finally my mother told me to have a good day. She kissed my cheek and gave me a pat on the back. I walked down to Nancy's house (Blume, 1970: 25).

Margaret's mother gives a support to her when she has to face her first day school in new place. She kisses Margaret and pats her on the back, also wishes her have a good day in school.

Another simple support that Margaret's parents give to her is when she tells her mother that she wants to wear bra. Margaret's mother appreciates her decision to use bra and promises that will bring her to buy bra on Saturday. Not only Margaret's mother who appreciates her decision to wear bra, her father also has his thought on it. My father congratulated me at dinner. "Well, you're really growing up, Margaret. No more little girl." (Blume, 1970: 44)

Besides, Margaret's mother also comforts her when she starts to worry about something. The biggest anxiousness that Margaret has is about her period. She always complains why her period is not coming yet.

"How old were you Mom—when you got it?" "Uh ... I think I was fourteen." "*Fourteen!* That's crazy. I'm not waiting until I'm fourteen." "I'm afraid there's not much you can do about it, Margaret. Some girls menstruate earlier than others. I had a cousin who was sixteen before she started." "Do you suppose that could happen to me? I'll die if it does!" "If you don't start by the time you're fourteen I'll take you to the doctor. Now stop worrying!" (Blume, 1970: 100)

Quotation above describes Margaret's anxiousness about period that she does not get yet. She worries a lot knowing her friends already get their period. She even complains and asks her mother when she got her period for the first time. Her mother tells Margaret that she gets it when she was fourteen. Margaret

is afraid that her friends will think that she is not normal because she does not even get her period. Therefore, Margaret's mother tries to comfort Margaret by explain to her that every girl has her own period time, some girls menstruate earlier and some others menstruate a bit late. She tells Margaret not to worry about that because she still has a few time to wait her period comes but she cannot wait any longer. She says that she will die if she needs to wait until she is fourteen. At the end, Margaret's mother says that she will take her to the doctor if Margaret's period does not start by the time in her fourteen.

b. Parenting

Parenting is about how Margaret's parents educating, explaining, and give some understanding to Margaret.

That's another thing. My mother's always talking about when I'm a teenager. Stand up straight, Margaret! Good posture now makes for a good figure later. Wash your face with soap, Margaret! Then you won't get pimples when you're a teenager (Blume, 1970: 25).

The quotation above shows how Margaret's mother teaches Margaret how to be a teenager. Margaret's mother tells her to stand up straight so that she will get a good figure later. She also tells Margaret to wash her face with soap then she will not get pimples. Margaret's mother is educating her to be more concern with her body when she turns to be a teenager later because her physical body will change. There will be a lot of things that Margaret needs to maintain if she still wants to look good when she turns to be a teenager.

Another thing about parenting is shown when Margaret goes to Nancy's home and finds what Nancy's to do with her cosmetics.

Nancy studied herself in the heartshaped mirror. She rubbed her lips together. "Well, maybe you're right." She wiped off the lipstick with a tissue. "My mother would kill me if I came out like this anyway. I can't wait till eighth grade. That's when I'll be allowed to wear lipstick every day." (Blume, 1970: 8)

In the quotation above, it shows that Nancy is a girl who likes to do some experiment with adult stuffs. Margaret surprised to see Nancy has many cosmetics that she keeps in her drawer in her room. Nancy even knows how to use them. Margaret as an innocent girl, she does not know and never thought about having some cosmetics when she turns to be a teenager. Besides, Margaret mother's never teaches her about how to use cosmetic. However, Nancy even says that her mother would kill her if she knows that Nancy applies some cosmetics into her face. Both Margaret's and Nancy's mother, they are not give allowance to their children to apply some cosmetics because Margaret and Nancy are still twelve years old girls. They still need more years to become teenagers. It is not appropriate to let them apply some cosmetics when they are still twelve.

Not only teaching Margaret about how to be a teenager, her mother also gives her some understanding about religion. "My mother says God is a nice idea. He belongs to everybody" (Blume, 1970:4). Margaret lives in a blended family where her father and her mother have different beliefs. She is raised with no religion and no one of her parents teaching her about religion. Margaret only

knows that God exists without believing in a certain religion. Margaret's mother never forces her to have one certain religion, she only gives Margaret some understanding about God. As long as Margaret knows and believes that there is God inside everybody and everything, Margaret's mother lets her to choose by herself. Whatever religion Margaret will choose, as long as she knows there is God in it, her mother will give her permission.

3. The Important of Friendship in the Process of Reaching Adolescence

Friendship also has an important role in the process of reaching adolescence. Friendship is the first step in Margaret's social life that can teach her how she has to deal with the society around her. Some indicators of the importance of friendship can be seen below.

a. Peer group

During Margaret's adolescent years, peer groups become increasingly important as teens experience more closeness in these friendships and more gratifying relationships with her peers as a result. Margaret now turns to one another, instead of her families, as her first line of support during times of worry or upset. This increased reliance on friendships is yet another way that she demonstrates her growing independence.

In her age, Margaret as a girl who starts to make a close relationship with her peer group.

"Let's have a snack and you can tell me all about your first day of school,"

she said. "I can't," I told her. "No time now. I've got to go to Nancy's house. I'm joining her secret club." (Blume, 1970: 28)

When Margaret goes back from school, her mother wants her to tell her first day at school. Margaret cannot talk with her mother because she is in a rush to go to Nancy's house since she has to meet her new secret club. This quotation indicates that there is a change in Margaret's social relationship. She thinks to join a secret club with her peer group. She considers that meeting her friends is more important rather than talking to her mother. Margaret begins to leave family-based relationship.

Margaret considers as a friendly person because she easily blended with her new friend in new place. Although Margaret sometimes she does not really feel comfortable in some situations.

"Gads, Margaret! I don't know where a bathing suit is in this mess." I walked back to the front door and told Nancy, "I can't find my bathing suit." "You can borrow one of mine," she said (Blume, 1970: 5).

Quotation above shows that Nancy as her new neighbor and classmate tries to make friend with Margaret. She asks Margaret to join her to go sunbathing in her house. Unfortunately, when Margaret asks her mother where she can find her bathing suit, her mother cannot find it because of the condition of their house after moving out. Afterwards, Nancy says that she will lend her bathing suit to Margaret then she can join Nancy to go sunbathing in her home. Margaret never feels doubt to accept Nancy's invitation, Margaret is a person who loves to make friend with anyone.

By the time, Margaret even shows her uncomfortable feelings toward Nancy when she wants to change her clothes to bathing suit.

"Thank you," I said, taking the suit. "Where should I change?" Nancy looked around the room. "What's wrong with here?" "Nothing," I said. "I don't mind if you don't mind." "Why should I mind?" "I don't know." (Blume, 1970: 6)

In quotation above, Margaret shows her uncomfortable feeling toward Nancy. Although Nancy is also a girl, Margaret does not really like Nancy when Nancy starts to watch her changes her clothe. Margaret does not want to let Nancy to see that she is not growing up yet because in Margaret's opinion growing up things is a private matter, not other people business. Margaret does not like other people to interfere her private life. Besides, Nancy also is a new person who comes in to Margaret's life. Margaret just knew Nancy, she does not know yet about Nancy's personality and what kind of person Nancy is.

In her adolescence, Margaret also has a peer group, they mingle into a secret club which called PTS. In Margaret stage of adolescence, it is important to have some friends who have same feelings and interest toward something. With her peer group, Margaret can share and discuss freely about what she feel toward something. In addition, Margaret also begins to learn about sex in her peer group. She, together with her friends, becomes curious with the matter of sex. She prefers to fulfill her curiosity toward sex through her friends than through her parents.

We sat on the floor in a circle with the book opened to the male body. "Do you suppose that's what Philip Leroy looks like without his clothes on?" Janie asked. "Naturally, dope!" Nancy said. "He's male, isn't he?" "Look at all those veins and stuff," Janie said. "Well, we *all* have them," Gretchen said. "I think they're ugly," Janie said. "You better never be a doctor or a nurse," Gretchen told her. "They have to look at this stuff all the time." "Turn the page, Gretchen," Nancy said. The next page was the male reproductive system (Blume, 1970: 69-70)

It is when Margaret and her friends meet in Gretchen's house that they look at Gretchen's father's anatomy book. They study the male body and reproductive system. Then, they compare it with the body of their boy friends. Not only have they taken an anatomy books, but also a *Playboy* magazine. In that magazine, they study a grown-up female body.

She also will learn what is on her friend's thought and how she defines her friend's personality by having discussion. Therefore, Margaret finally will accept and appreciate her friends with their personality that they have.

In her friendship Margaret also learns about the way to kiss someone. She cannot get this thing from her parents.

"Watch this." Nancy grabbed her bed pillow and embraced it. She gave it a long kiss. When she was done she threw the pillow back on the bed. "It's important to experiment, so when the time comes you're all ready. I'm going to be a great kisser some day. Want to see something else?" (Blume, 1970: 7)

Margaret surprised when she looks at what Nancy has done. She only sees what Nancy practices. Therefore, all the things changes Margaret not to be an innocent girl anymore. She knows some new things that cannot be found from her parents.

b. Relation of Friendship

Everyone needs friends, a friend is a person can be very close to their parents and family, but they feel more comfortable and it is often easier to share feelings and regard with affection, trust, and respect. As Margaret get older, some of her friendships will start to change, and some may grow deeper. She might also begin to know many more people, although not all of them will be her close

friends.

Margaret starts to join secret club with some friends. She spends most of her times with friends. Margaret starts to deal with many kinds of problems that appear in her friendship relationship with her peer group. Margaret experiences feeling disappointed toward Nancy.

"From the dispenser on the wall, dear. Nancy's menstruating." "Does she always act like that?" "It's her first time," Mrs. Wheeler explained. "She's frightened." Nancy was still crying and there was a lot of whispering going on. I couldn't believe it! Nancy, who knew everything! She'd lied to me about her period. She'd never had it before! I didn't know what to say. I mean, what can you say when you've just found out your friend's a liar! (Blume, 1970: 107)

Quotation above shows when Margaret feels disappointed toward Nancy because she lies to Margaret about her period. Actually, Margaret is really mad to Nancy, Margaret does not believe why Nancy can do that kind of thing to her. She regards Nancy as her good friend she trusted her in many things.

All of this time, Margaret believes in everything that Nancy said to her. She even believes when Nancy told her about Laura, until Margaret knows the truth about Laura from Moose.

"You know what Moose! You're a liar! I don't believe you ever took Laura Danker behind the A&P." "Who said I did?" "What do you mean who said it!" "Well, who?" "Nancy told me that Evan told her that you and Evan—" I stopped. I sounded like an idiot. Moose shook his head at me. "You always believe everything you hear about other people?" he asked. I didn't know what to say. Moose kept talking. "Well, next time, don't believe it unless you see it! Now if you'll move out of my way, I've got things to do!" (Blume, 1970: 146-7)

After having conversation with Moose, Margaret knows that what Nancy said about Laura is lie. Margaret is a person who believes in everything what

people say. She seems like innocent. She never has a thought that everyone can tell a lie even they so seem close to her. Moose gives an advice to Margaret that better for her to do not easily believe when someone says about something unless she really sees it by herself.

Margaret and her peer group experiencing some unstable relationship. Sometimes they are having some good times together but sometimes each person also has a conflict with the other member. Even though sometimes they have conflict in their peer group, best friends are always staying.

Nancy, Gretchen, Janie and I had lunch downtown by ourselves and talked about how it would feel to go to Junior High. Janie was afraid she wouldn't be able to find her way around and she'd get lost. Gretchen said probably the teachers would all be mean and Nancy said suppose we weren't in any classes together and then we all went home and cried (Blume, 1970: 146).

The quotation above happened when Margaret and her friends having farewell party in her school. They are now in their sixth grade, soon they will be got to Junior High. They share their anxiousness about how it would feel to go to Junior High. Some of them are afraid that they would not be able to have some friends like they have had. Deep within themselves, they share the same feeling, they afraid of losing their friendship.

4. The Process of Searching for Belief

In Margaret stage of adolescent, she starts to have a thought about having a certain religion. Margaret has experienced a lot of things in her process of searching for belief. There are some indicators that show in the process of searching for belief.

a. Intimacy to God

In the most of the novel, it can be seen that Margaret always talks to God. She always shares and talks everything that happened in her life to God; from a small thing to big problem. Margaret always puts every single thing in God's hand including the small thing.

Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. We're moving today. I'm so scared God. I've never lived anywhere but here. Suppose I hate my new school? Suppose everybody there hates me? Please help me God. Don't let New Jersey be too horrible. Thank you. (Blume, 1970: 1)

Margaret experienced a moving out from New York to New Jersey. For other people, moving out is something simply move to one place to another one, maybe having a little problem with some luggage, packing and unpacking without worrying what will happened next in the new place. Anyhow, moving out for Margaret is such a big deal for her lifetime because she needs to adapt with her new environment. Margaret shares her worries about her new place for living to God. She worries a lot about the people there, about her new school and about how she will live in New Jersey. Margaret has asking for some help to God, to make her life going well in the new place.

Another thing that she shares with God is about her parents, the important people in her life.

Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. My father's had an awful accident. Please help him God. He's really very kind and nice. Even though he doesn't know you the way I do, he's a good father. And he needs his hand God. So please, please let him be all right. I'll do anything you say if you help him. Thank you God (Blume, 1970: 16).

Quotation above describes about how Margaret begged for help to God

when her father had an awful accident. When Margaret's father tries to cut the grass, he accidentally cut his hand. Knowing the situation, Margaret hoped her father will be alright. She even asks God to take a good care of him. She explained that even her father maybe not religious and does not have thought about God, he is a very kind and nice person. Margaret makes promise that she will do everything what God wants in condition to make her father alright.

b. Understanding the Existence of God

Margaret even shares her experience visiting a church and temple, in addition to seek the existence of God itself.

Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. I'm going to temple today—with Grandma. It's a holiday. I guess you know that. Well, my father thinks it's a mistake and my mother thinks the whole idea is crazy, but I'm going anyway. I'm sure this will help me decide what to be. I've never been inside a temple or a church. I'll look for you God (Blume, 1970: 56).

Margaret tells God that she never visits church and temple before. Now, she will try to visit both of them just to make sure about the existence of God itself. She hopes that it will help her in the way she decides what she wants to be. Margaret asks God to make it easy when she comes to make a decision.

Her mother also gives influence in the way Margaret thought about God. Since Margaret comes from a blended family which is her father is Jewish and her mother is Christian, her mother never teaches Margaret about a certain religion.

She gives Margaret freedom to choose any of religion that she believes when she is ready to make a decision. Her mother only tells Margaret one positive thing about God that God is a nice idea. He belongs to everybody (Blume, 1970: 14). It indicates that Margaret's mother tries to say that as long as you believe in God in yourself that God exists within yourself, you do not really need to be in a certain religion because you already know about the basic idea of God.

Margaret goes to church with her friend, Janie Loomis. After going to the church, Margaret feels disappointed because it is not like what she expects. By going to church she hopes she can find something that is different from what she gets in the temple.

Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. I just came home from church. I loved the choir—the songs were so beautiful. Still, I didn't really feel you God. I'm more confused than ever. I'm trying hard to understand but I wish you'd help me a little. If only you could give me a hint God. Which religion should I be? Sometimes I wish I'd been born one way or the other (Blume, 1970: 94).

Quotation above shows that Margaret does not feel satisfied with what she gets during the ceremony. Margaret feels that it was just like in temple. However, this ceremony is better than Jewish service since they use English in all parts of the services. After Margaret follows the ceremony she still feels nothing, just like what she feels when she joins Jewish ceremony.

Margaret goes to the Catholic Church for all the confession. She goes to the church so that she can talk to God and confess all what she has done to Laura.

I've been looking for you God. I looked in temple. I looked in church. And today, I looked for you when I wanted to confess. But you weren't there. I didn't feel you at all. Not the way I do when I talk to you at night. Why God? Why do I only feel you when I'm alone? (Blume, 1970: 120)

From the quotation above, it can be seen that Margaret realizes that she is looking for God. Unfortunately, she does not feel it. Margaret feels disappointed because she feels that all she has done in looking God is useless. She cannot feel the existence of God when she is going to the temple, church and the confession. Those three religions cannot make Margaret feel God as what she feels when she talks to God alone. After her religious experiment, still Margaret does not belong to any religion. Even though she has not come to any conclusion about what religion she wants to be, she gets a new concept in seeing her religious problem.

c. Understanding Religion

In the years of her adolescence, Margaret starts to think about religion that she should belong to since Margaret is raised with no religion. Question about religion such as what religion she belongs to pushes her searching for a religion. In searching religion, Margaret begins to learn some religions such as Christian, Jewish and Catholic.

Margaret goes to temple with her grandmother, Sylvia. She is interested in Jewish because it is the religion of her father and grandmother. When Margaret goes to temple, she tries to follow the ceremonies though it is hard for her because some parts of the services are in Hebrew. Since, during the ceremony Margaret understanding nothing, she does not pay attention to what Rabbi talks about. She is busy counting the colored hats. Margaret feels that everything just passes by.

Then we all stood up again and everyone sang a song in Hebrew that I didn't know. And that was it! I expected something else. I don't know what exactly. A feeling, maybe. But I suppose you have to go more than once to know what it's all about (Blume, 1970: 59)

Quotation above shows that Margaret does not find something that she expects. When she arrives at home, her parents ask Margaret's opinion after joining the ceremony. Margaret only can say that it is interesting but actually she knows nothing what the ceremony is about.

Different with the way of thinking Margaret and Margaret's mother, Margaret's grandparents who are parents of her mother say that Margaret needs to have a certain religion.

"Look," my mother explained, "we're letting Margaret choose her own religion when she's grown." "If she wants to!" my father said, defiantly. "Nonsense!" Grandmother said. "A person doesn't choose religion." "A person's born to it!" Grandfather boomed. Grandmother smiled at last and gave a small laugh. "Some Margaret is Christian!" she announced, like we all should have known (Blume, 1970: 133).

Quotation above shows how Margaret's mother explained to her grandparents that her mother lets her to choose her own religion. Anything religion Margaret chooses according to what she believes her parents will support her even she will not choose between Christian and Jewish, Margaret's mother will let her to have it. However, Margaret's grandparents insist that Margaret needs to have a certain religion as her guidelines. In Margaret's grandparents' opinion, a person cannot live without having a certain religion. A person does not choose religion, because she/he already born with it. In other words, Margaret's grandparents want Margaret to be a Christian, but her parents do not think that Margaret supposed to be a Christian since she has parents who have different beliefs.

I have not really enjoyed my religious experiments very much and I don't think I'll make up my mind one way or the other for a long time. I don't think a person can decide to be a certain religion just like that. It's like

having to choose your own name. You think about it a long time and then you keep changing your mind. If I should ever have children I will tell them what religion they are so they can start learning about it at an early age. Twelve is very late to learn. Sincerely, Margaret Ann Simon (Blume, 1970: 143).

Quotation above shows Margaret new concept in looking he religious matter. She realizes that choosing a religion is not a simple thing as what people do when they are choosing a name. She realizes that she is wrong when she thinks choosing religion is an easy thing. She becomes aware that it is not as simple as what she thinks. She knows that she has to know and learn the religion deeper before she decides to be in one religion. In addition, she considers parents should teach religion to their children from the early age. In Margaret's opinion what has happened to her is wrong. Her parent should teach her a religion from her ealy age because twelve is too late.

B. Explicit and Implicit Themes and Sub-Themes

There are some categories that show how the researcher divides the types of themes in novel *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*. There are two types of themes of category made by the researcher which can be seen below.

1. Implicit Themes

Most of themes in this novel are categorized into implicit theme. The form of implicit sentences that stated in this novel has implied meaning that make the researcher have to define the true meaning by herself. Some statements that indicate implicit themes can be seen below. "My mother says God is a nice idea. He belongs to everybody"(Blume, 1970: 4). From the quotation, the researcher

can conclude those sentences have an implied meaning. The researcher not only defines the meaning based on the real words but also connect it with the background of the story. From the Margaret's statement, the researcher knows the implied meaning of the sentences that Margaret's mother tries to teach her children, Margaret, to know about the existence of God in her life. However, she does not insist Margaret to have a certain religion whether Margaret has to choose the same religion with her parents. Margaret's mother gives her freedom to choose a certain religion that she wants.

Another statement that shows implied meaning can be seen in the dialogue below.

What reminded me of Moose was that he cut our grass and cleaned up our leaves and said he'd be back in the spring. So unless I bumped into him at Nancy's house I wouldn't see him all winter. Not that he even knew I existed—I'd had to hide from him ever since that *We must—we must* incident. But I watched him secretly from my bedroom window (Blume, 1970: 62).

The quotation above has implied meaning because the meanings of the sentence are not stated clearly from the words written in the text, but the researcher has to define the true meaning by connecting to the story of the novel. Looking at the story of the novel, the researcher can describe the true meaning of the sentence is about Margaret's feeling toward Moose in which Margaret does not have confidence to show her special feeling to Moose, so she has to be a secret admirer.

2. Explicit Sub-Themes

Some sub-themes that are found in the novel are expressed explicitly by

the author. They are maturing physically, rebellion, parenting, peer group and friendship relationship. It can be seen in some statements and dialogues below.

a. Maturing Physically

The maturing physically can easily recognize as an explicit types of themes because many of them are clearly stated by the author. The lines below show how the author stated openly about maturing physically.

When my mother got to the bathroom she said, "What is it? What's the matter?" "I got it," I told her. "Got what?" I started to laugh and cry at the same time. **"My period. I've got my period!"** My nose started running and I reached for a tissue (Blume, 1970: 147).

From the sentence, the researcher directly knows the real meaning of the sentences because those sentences are clearly stated by the author, so that it can be categorized into explicit types of themes. The utterances of Margaret describes that she already reaches her adolescent in which it can be seen clearly when she said "My period. I've got my period!".

b. Rebellion

Further, explicit themes can be seen when Margaret has some arguments with her parents in the dialogue below.

"I don't want to see them," I shouted. **"It isn't fair! I want to go to Florida and stay with Grandma. Daddy—please!"** "Don't look at me," my father said quietly. "It's not my fault. I didn't send them a Christmas card." "Mom!" I cried. **"You can't do this to me. You can't! It's not fair—it's not!"** I hated my mother. I really did. She was so stupid. What did she have to go and send them a dumb old card for! (Blume, 1970: 125)

The meaning of the dialogues above can be interpreted clearly by the researcher just looking at to the written words of the sentences. Therefore, the researcher categorized those sentences into explicit types of themes. The text of

the sentence can be interpreted directly on how Margaret confronts her mother. Margaret's statement which shows her confrontation to her mother can be seen in the bold lines above. Margaret shows her emotion to her mother directly. Margaret even yells to her mother that what she did to her is not fair.

c. Parenting

I wore my brown loafers without socks. My mother thought that was dumb. "Margaret, you have to walk three quarters of a mile." "So?" "So, you know you get blisters every time you go without socks." "Well then, I'll just have to suffer." **"But why suffer? Wear socks!"**(Blume, 1970: 24)

The quotation above is openly stated by Margaret's mother. Therefore, it can be interpreted directly from the written words of the sentence and categorized into explicit types of theme. From the written sentence above, we can know how Margaret's mother insists her to wear socks then she will not get blister.

d. Peer Group

"If you ever want to get out of those baby bras you have to exercise," she told us. "What kind of exercise?" Gretchen asked. "Like this," Nancy said. She made fists, bent her arms at the elbow and moved them back and forth, sticking her chest way out. She said, "I must—I must—I must increase my bust." She said it over and over. We copied her movements and chanted with her. "We must—we must—we must increase our bust!" "Good," Nancy told us. "Do it thirty-five times a day and I promise you'll see the results." (Blume, 1970:46)

The statement above is categorized into explicit types of themes because the meaning of the sentences is clearly stated from the written texts of the novel. The meaning of the dialogues describes about the activity of Margaret and her peer group when they are doing an experiment to make their baby bra looks more bursting out. Nancy says that they need to do an exercise by taking some steps

such as: making fists, bending her arms at the elbow and moving them back and forth, so her chest is sticking way out. Nancy even chanted "I must—I must—I must increase my bust." By then, all the members follow her movement and chant together like what Nancy tells before.

e. Relation of Friendship

"I practice a lot though," Nancy said. "Practice what?" I asked. "Kissing! Isn't that what we were talking about? *Kissing!*" "How can you practice that?" I asked. **"Watch this." Nancy grabbed her bed pillow and embraced it. She gave it a long kiss.** When she was done she threw the pillow back on the bed. "It's important to experiment, so when the time comes you're all ready. I'm going to be a great kisser some day (Blume, 1970: 7).

The researcher finds that the dialogues above are categorized to explicit types of themes. The meaning of the quotation can be directly interpreted through the written texts. The written texts above describes on how Nancy teaches Margaret about kissing a boy. As known Nancy is Margaret's friend. The bold lines above show how Nancy teaches Margaret the way how to kiss.

3. Implicit Sub-Themes

a. Maturing Emotionally

Maturing emotionally, self anxiety, sexual feeling, parent-child relationship, intimacy of God, understanding the existence of God, and understanding religion are sub-themes that are implicit. Some expressions that tend to be expressed implicitly are explained in some statements below.

I was really being awful. And I hadn't even planned it. I sounded like Nancy. That's when it hit me that for all I knew Nancy made up that story about Laura. Or maybe Moose and Evan made it up just to brag. Yes, I bet they did! Moose was a big liar too!(Blume, 1970: 116)

The quotation above tends to be implicit because the true meaning cannot be interpreted directly from the written words, but the researcher has to connect the sentence with the contexts of the story. As a result, the researcher needs to make an interpretation of the sentence meaning by herself. The meaning of the sentence has implied meaning that Margaret feels guilty to Laura because she accuses Laura with wrong judgment about her. Margaret feels disappointed because she seems like Nancy who always makes up something that is not true. These implicit meaning can be categorized into maturing emotionally because these sentences reveal about Margaret feeling, especially guilty feeling.

b. Self Anxiety

..You know God, my new friends all belong to the Y or the Jewish Community Center. Which way am I supposed to go? I don't know what you want me to do about that (Blume, 1970: 37)

Quotation above cannot be defined directly because there is implied meaning behind the written words along the sentences. After connecting the sentences and the context of the story, the researcher makes an interpretation about the meaning of the sentences. By then, the sentences can be categorized into implicit types of theme. The sentences imply Margaret's consciousness about what other people think of her as a person who belongs to no religion. She begins recognizing that she is different from other kids. She is not a religious adherent while her friends are. Margaret wants to be normal like her friends who have a certain religion, particularly Jewish Community Center or to Sunday school. Meanwhile, Margaret does not know about what religion she wants to believe.

c. Sexual Feeling

The way author shows sexual feeling as the sub-themes in this novel is implicit. The lines below show how the author tells the reader about the implicit themes.

...I pretended to be really busy reading a book but the truth is—I was watching Moose. If he looked toward me I put my nose back in the book in a hurry. (Blume, 1970:40)

Quotation above tends to be implicit types of themes because Margaret statement that describes her special feeling toward Moose is not expressed openly. Yet, it is expressed implicitly. The true meaning of the sentence shows that Margaret really has a feeling toward Moose. Even though Margaret never states that she likes Moose, it is implied in the way she acts in front of Moose. Margaret tries to behave naturally by pretending to be really busy reading a book. In fact, Margaret secretly gives attention to Moose.

d. Parent-Child Relationship

Parent-child relationship in this novel, in some ways express by the implicit themes by the author.

She even knits me sweaters that have labels sewed inside saying *Made Expressly for You ... by Grandma*. And she doesn't do all that because we're poor. I know for a fact that we're not. I mean, we aren't rich but we certainly have enough. Especially since I'm an only child (Blume, 1970: 2).

The quotation above tends to be implicit because the true meaning of the sentence is not clearly stated by the author. The researcher has to interpret the true meaning by herself. The researcher finds that the true meaning of the sentence shows about how Grandmother's Margaret expressed her love and care toward

Margaret by knits her sweaters that have labels saying *Made Expressly for You*.

e. Intimacy of God

Margaret always puts every single thing in God's hand including the small thing. This can be seen in the statement below.

Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. We're moving today. **I'm so scared God.** I've never lived anywhere but here. Suppose I hate my new school? Suppose everybody there hates me? **Please help me God.** Don't let New Jersey be too horrible. Thank you. (Blume, 1970: 1)

The true meaning of the quotation above is not clearly stated by the author. Yet, there is implied meaning from the above quotation. The sentence above defines how Margaret asks the intervention of God in her daily life. She unconsciously always asks for help to something beyond the human strength which is God.

f. Understanding the Existence of God

Actually, even though Margaret belongs to no religion, deep inside her heart she believes in God.

I've been looking for you God. I looked in temple. I looked in church. And today, I looked for you when I wanted to confess. **But you weren't there. I didn't feel you at all. Not the way I do when I talk to you at night. Why God? Why do I only feel you when I'm alone?** (Blume, 1970: 120)

The quotation above tends to be implicit because the true meaning of the texts is not openly stated by the author. From the quotation above, it can be seen that Margaret realizes that she is looking for God. Unfortunately, she does not feel it. Margaret feels disappointed because she feels that all she has done in looking God is useless. She cannot feel the existence of God when she is going to the

temple, church, and the confession. Those three religions cannot make Margaret feel God as what she feels when she talks to God alone.

g. Understanding Religion

Then we all stood up again and everyone sang a song in Hebrew that I didn't know. And that was it! **I expected something else.** I don't know what exactly. A feeling, maybe. But I suppose you have to go more than once to know what it's all about (Blume, 1970: 59)

The quotation above tends to be implicit types of themes because the true meaning of the texts is not openly stated by the author. The author has to define the implied meaning that embodied in the above texts. The researcher finds that the true meaning of the above texts is when Margaret goes to temple, she tries to follow the ceremonies though it is hard for her because some parts of the services is in Hebrew but after all, Margaret does not find something that she expects. She feels disappointed because she feels there is nothing precious that she gets from the ceremony to be able to help her understands religion.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion in Chapter IV, some conclusion can be drawn related to the researcher focus and objectives of the problem stated in Chapter I. The conclusions are derived into the following points:

1. There are four main themes that researcher found in Judy Blume's *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*. The lists of four main themes are shown below.
 - a. The process of reaching adolescence, adolescence is the most important stage transition in children life. The novel explores the trials and tribulations of that turbulent period called adolescence. During this stage in life, puberty takes control, and hormones and emotions run rampant as young people try to cope with growing up physically and trying to fit in socially all at the same time. Adolescence is certainly a struggle for Margaret, who feels that she is behind her peers in many ways, but she handles it the best she can. While Margaret's adolescent stage does not come to a conclusion in the novel, Margaret does seem to have a better grasp of her own identity by the final chapter.
 - b. Family influence in the process of adolescence, though Margaret's family situation, Margaret's parents and grandparents still play important roles in her development. Margaret's family structure is a bit unusual for her time; she has two loving parents, yes, but no siblings and only one grandmother who speak to her (and who can sometimes be a little too doting). The Simons' family

bonds are tested when her Margaret's distant maternal grandparents come to visit, and this meeting certainly does not end with a happy reconciliation. In the end, however, Margaret realizes that the people who are truly important that always ready to provide her with all the love and affection she needs is her family.

- c. The important of friendship in the process of adolescence, the very first person to reach out and welcome Margaret to her new home, Nancy, becomes Margaret's best friend, and through her, Margaret makes other friends who are crucial to her development. Margaret's friends make her feel that she belongs, and she regards their offered advice and wisdom with great seriousness. Her friendship with Nancy is tested when she learns that Nancy lied about getting her period, but Margaret realizes that their friendship is more important than holding a grudge. In Blume's narrative, friendship is a crucial component of growing up, and Margaret would not have confronted the challenges of adolescence quite as easily without her friends by her side.
- d. Understanding the existence of God, religion plays an important role in Margaret's life. Rather than adhering to formal religious principles, Margaret does not have a set faith. Throughout the novel, she tries desperately to discover where she fits Judaism or Christianity and deals repeatedly with the pressures and biases of the family around her. However, Margaret's true connection to religion comes not when she sits in a mass or at temple, but when she is alone and talks to God on her own. In such private conditions, she truly feels a sense of religious devotion.

2. There are two types of themes have been found in this research. Regarding to the data which found in the most statements and dialogues are not openly stated by the author, the types of themes the main themes in the novel *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* is an implicit. In addition, the sub-themes has two types of themes embodied in this novel, first is explicit, there are maturing physically, rebellion, parenting, peer group, and friendship relationship. Second are implicit types of themes that embodied in maturing emotionally, self anxiety, sexual feeling, parent-child relationship, intimacy of God, understanding the existence of God, and understanding religion.

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APPENDIX I

The Synopsis of *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*

The novel begins when Margaret and her family move from New York to New Jersey. Margaret is a twelve years old girl who sits in sixth grade. In her new environment, Margaret has to adapt to her surroundings. On her first day, she meets her neighbor, Nancy, who is also her classmate in her new school. From this meeting, Nancy asks Margaret to join her secret club that consists of Nancy, Gretchen and Jennie. Margaret agrees to join Nancy's secret club. Together with her friends, Margaret does many things that have never been done before. She learns how to practice kissing using a bed pillow, she practices the movement in order to make her breast looks in full development. She also studies male and female's bodies from book and *Playboy* magazine. Margaret and her friends make the first meeting on Nancy's house to discuss some rules. The first rule is to wear a bra. Second, the first member who gets her period should tell the other the feeling of getting period and third, they have to write down the names of boys that they like.

The first rule, which is about wearing a bra, encourages Margaret to tell her mother that she wants to wear a bra. When she tells her mother for the first time, her mother gets surprised, but Margaret's mother finally can understand what Margaret wants and buys some bras for Margaret. The second rule makes each member feel afraid of being the last person who gets the period. Gretchen is the first member who gets her period and she has told the other how it feels. Nancy is the second and Margaret is the third. Afraid of being the last member

who gets the period, Nancy lies to Margaret by saying she has got her period. When Margaret knows that Nancy lies, Margaret feels disappointed. In addition, Nancy also lies to Margaret by saying that Moose, the boy Margaret likes, has run fingers over Laura's body. When Margaret does not get her period, she also feels disappointed to God. She feels like that because God does not make her well developed and does not create her as a religious adherent. She does not want to talk to God since she feels that God does not love her and does not care for what has happened to her.

Margaret is raised with no religion since her parents have different religion. Her father is a Jewish, while her mother is a Christian. They decide to let Margaret chooses her own religion when she grows up. In her new environment, Margaret acknowledges that people regards her as 'unusual' person since she is not a religious adherent. When Margaret tells her condition to her friends and teacher, they get surprised because what they know that everyone should belong to certain religion. This condition leads Margaret to do a religious experiment. She comes to Jewish ceremony, church and goes for the confession. Otherwise, she gets nothing. She cannot feel the existence of God as what she feels when she talks to God alone.

Margaret also feels disappointed to her grandparents because she feels they cannot understand her condition of being no religion. One day, her grandparents visit her for the first time. In this first meeting, they discuss Margaret's condition. They blame Margaret's parents for letting Margaret grows up with no religion. They insist Margaret to be a Christian. Meanwhile, her

parents do not want to talk about it. Heard the quarreling, Margaret runs to her bedroom. She is sad because she feels her grandparents do not want to understand her. After that night, even though she misses God, she never talks to God because she promises to herself that she never talks to God anymore. She feels God does not help her much.

One day, she asks Moose for what Moose has done to Laura. Nancy even said to Margaret that Moose has run his fingers to Laura's body. Margaret wants to know the truth. She feels glad because she knows that what Nancy says is only a lie. On that day, Margaret goes to the bathroom, and then she sees that there is a blood on her underpants. She gets her first period. She is so happy because she is not the last member who gets the period. She is sure that she grows and almost be a woman now. She thanks God for what has happened to her. She realizes that God will never miss all things that happened in her life. Margaret is aware that God knows the right time to give her something.

APPENDIX II

The Data Findings of Category of Themes in *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*

Note: E : Explicit Types of Themes ; I : Implicit Types of Themes

1. The Process of Reaching Adolescence

No.	Data	Page	Types of Themes	Category of Sub-Themes
1.	I was really being awful. And I hadn't even planned it. I sounded like Nancy. That's when it hit me that for all I knew Nancy made up that story about Laura. Or maybe Moose and Evan made it up just to brag. Yes, I bet they did! Moose was a big liar too!	116	I	Maturing (emotionally)
2.	Poor Mr. Benedict. He was really disappointed. The way he talked to us I got the feeling we made him nervous. Nobody seemed scared of him at all and you should always be a little scared of your teacher. Sometimes he just sat at his desk and looked out at us like he couldn't believe we were really there	45	I	
3.	What was wrong with me anyway? When I was eleven I hardly ever cried. Now anything and everything could start me bawling. I wanted to talk it over with God. But I wasn't about to let him know that, even though I missed him	144	I	
4.	Now some kids might think, who cares about seeing a grandmother? But Sylvia Simon is a lot of fun, considering her age, which I happen to know is sixty.	3	I	
5.	My mother went to the counter and told the saleslady we were interested in a bra. I stood back and pretended not to know a thing. I even bent down to scratch a new mosquito bite.	41	E	
6.	I flung open the door and ran down the aisle and out of the church. I made my way back to school, crying, feeling horribly sick and scared stiff I would throw	119	I	

	up. Then I saw my mother waiting in the car and I got in the back and explained I was feeling terrible.			
7.	When my mother got to the bathroom she said, "What is it? What's the matter?" "I got it," I told her. "Got what?" I started to laugh and cry at the same time. "My period. I've got my period!" My nose started running and I reached for a tissue	147	E	Maturing (physically)
8.	"Did you get it yet, Margaret?" Nancy asked. "Get what?" "Your period," Nancy said, like I should have known. "Oh—no, not yet. Did you?" Nancy swallowed some soda and shook her head, "None of us has yet."	31	E	
9.	We all were. "What size did you get, Janie?" Gretchen asked. "I got a Gro-Bra," Janie said. "Me too," I said. "Me too!" Gretchen laughed. "Not me," Nancy said, proudly. "Mine's a thirty-two double A." We were all impressed.	46	E	
10.	I looked. There were a million little bottles, jars and tubes. There were more cosmetics in that drawer than my mother had all together. I asked, "What do you do with all that stuff?" "It's another one of my experiments. To see how I look best. So when the time comes I'll be ready."	8	E	
11.	"Oh, you're still flat." Nancy laughed. "Not exactly," I said, pretending to be very cool. "I'm small boned, is all." "I'm growing already," Nancy said, sticking her chest way out. "In a few years I'm going to look like one of those girls in <i>Playboy</i> ."	6	E	
12.	She was very tall (that's why I thought she was the teacher) with eyes shaped like a cat's. You could see the outline of her bra through her blouse and you could also tell from the front that it wasn't the smallest size. She sat down alone and didn't talk to anyone.	25	E	
13.	"I don't want to see them," I shouted. "It isn't fair! I want to go to Florida and stay with Grandma. Daddy— <i>please</i> !" "Don't look at me," my father said quietly. "It's not my fault. I didn't send them a Christmas card." "Mom!" I cried. "You can't do this to me. You can't! It's not fair—it's not!" I hated my mother. I really	125	E	Rebellion

	did. She was so stupid. What did she have to go and send them a dumb old card for!			
14.	Now that's my point about my mother. I mean, if she understands so much about me then why couldn't she understand that I had to wear loafers without socks? I told her, "Nancy says nobody in the sixth grade wears socks on the first day of school!"	24	E	
	I was really surprised when I came home from camp and found out our New York apartment had been rented to another family and that <i>we</i> owned a house in Farbrook, New Jersey. First of all I never even heard of Farbrook. And second of all, I'm not usually left out of important family decisions.	1	I	
	The first thing I noticed about Nancy's room was the dressing table with the heartshaped mirror over it. Also, everything was very neat. When I was little I wanted a dressing table like that. The kind that's wrapped up in a fluffy organdy skirt. I never got one though, because my mother likes tailored things.	5	E	
15.	"I am shocked at your behavior. <i>Simply shocked!</i> " Mrs. Fishbein said. "I don't know what kind of children you are. I'm not going to send you home because your parents expect you to be here until nine and it's only seven now. But I'm telling you this—any more hanky-panky and I'll call each and every one of your mothers and fathers and report this <i>abominable</i> behavior to them!"	87	E	
	..You know God, my new friends all belong to the Y or the Jewish Community Center. Which way am I supposed to go? I don't know what you want me to do about that	37	I	Self anxiety
16.	Are you there God? It's me, Margaret I hate to remind you God ... I mean, I know you're busy. But it's already December and I'm not growing. At least I don't see any real difference. Isn't it time God? Don't you think I've waited patiently? Please help me	81	I	
17.	"If you ask me, being a teenager is pretty rotten—between pimples and worrying about how you smell!"	25	E	

18.	My parents don't know I actually talk to God. I mean, if I told them they'd think I was some kind of religious fanatic or something. So I keep it very private. I can talk to him without moving my lips if I have to	14	I	
19.	I hoped he decided I was normal, after all. I lived in New York for eleven and a half years and I don't think anybody ever asked me about my religion. I never even thought about it. Now, all of a sudden, it was the big thing in my life	39	I	
20.	I thought a lot about it, but I didn't know anything meaningful that I was willing to share with Mr. Benedict. I mean, I couldn't very well come up with a year-long study about bras and what goes in them. Or about my feelings toward Moose. Or about God. Or could I? I mean, not about God exactly—I could never tell Mr. Benedict that—but maybe about religion.	52	I	
21.	I couldn't help thinking about what Nancy said—that all they were interested in was dirty books and naked girls. I held my towel tight around my in case they were trying to sneak a look down my bathing suit.	12	I	
22.	On Monday I studied the boys in my class. I had to have some names for my Boy Book before three o'clock. I picked Philip Leroy because he was the best-looking one	24	I	Sexual feeling
23.	I pretended to be really busy reading a book but the truth is—I was watching Moose. If he looked toward me I put my nose back in the book in a hurry. Moose would be number one in my Boy Book if only I was brave enough, but what would Nancy think? She hated him	40	I	
24.	Did you ever kiss a boy?" "You mean really kiss? On the lips?" I asked. "Yes," Nancy said impatiently. "Did you?" "Not really," I admitted. Nancy breathed a sigh of relief. "Neither did I.	7	E	
25.	What reminded me of Moose was that he cut our grass and cleaned up our leaves and said he'd be back in the spring. So unless I bumped into him at Nancy's house I wouldn't see him all winter. Not that he even knew I existed—I'd had to hide from him ever since that <i>We must—we must</i> incident. But I watched him	62	I	

	secretly from my bedroom window.			
26.	"Because he's fourteen. All boys of fourteen are disgusting. They're only interested in two things—pictures of naked girls and dirty books!" Nancy really seemed to know a lot. Since I didn't know any boys of fourteen I took her word for it.	11	E	

2. Family Influence in the Process of Adolescence

No	Data	Page	Types of Themes	Category of Sub-Themes
1.	"You said I could choose when I grow up!" "But you're not ready to choose yet, Margaret!" "I just want to try it out," I argued. "I'm going to try church too, so don't get hysterical!" "I am <i>not</i> hysterical! I just think it's foolish for a girl of your age to bother herself with religion." "Can I go?" I asked. "I'm not going to stop you," my mother said. "Fine. Then I'll go."	56	E	Parent-child relationship
2.	Finally my mother told me to have a good day. She kissed my cheek and gave me a pat on the back. I walked down to Nancy's house	25	I	
3.	My father congratulated me at dinner. "Well, you're really growing up, Margaret. No more little girl." "Oh, Daddy!" was all I could think of to say.	44	I	
4.	"How old were you Mom—when you got it?" "Uh ... I think I was fourteen." " <i>Fourteen!</i> That's crazy. I'm not waiting until I'm fourteen." "I'm afraid there's not much you can do about it, Margaret. Some girls menstruate earlier than others. I had a cousin who was sixteen before she started." "Do you suppose that could happen to me? I'll die if it does!" "If you don't start by the time you're fourteen I'll take you to the doctor. Now stop worrying!"	100	E	
	"Just remember, Margaret ... no matter what they said ... you're a Jewish girl." "No I'm not!" I argued. "I'm nothing, and you know it! I don't even believe in God!" "Margaret!" Grandma said, "Don't ever talk like that about God." "Why	140	E	

	not?" I asked. "It's true!" I wanted to ask God did he hear that! But I wasn't speaking to him and I guess he knew it!			
5.	When she came in to kiss me goodnight I said it. "I want to wear a bra." Just like that—no beating around the bush. My mother turned the bedroom light back on. "Margaret ... how come?" "I just do is all." I hid under the covers so she couldn't see my face. My mother took a deep breath. "Well, if you really want to we'll have to go shopping on Saturday. Okay?" "Okay." I smiled. My mother wasn't bad. She turned out the light and closed my door halfway. Was I glad that was over!	36	I	
6.	She even knits me sweaters that have labels sewed inside saying <i>Made Expressly for You ... by Grandma.</i> And she doesn't do all that because we're poor. I know for a fact that we're not. I mean, we aren't rich but we certainly have enough. Especially since I'm an only child.	2	I	
	I wore my brown loafers without socks. My mother thought that was dumb. "Margaret, you have to walk three quarters of a mile." "So?" "So, you know you get blisters every time you go without socks." "Well then, I'll just have to suffer." "But why suffer? Wear socks!"	24	E	Parenting
7.	That's another thing. My mother's always talking about when I'm a teenager. Stand up straight, Margaret! Good posture now makes for a good figure later. Wash your face with soap, Margaret! Then you won't get pimples when you're a teenager.	25	E	
8.	Nancy studied herself in the heartshaped mirror. She rubbed her lips together. "Well, maybe you're right." She wiped off the lipstick with a tissue. "My mother would kill me if I came out like this anyway. I can't wait till eighth grade. That's when I'll be allowed to wear lipstick every day."	8	E	
9.	My mother says God is a nice idea. He belongs to everybody.	4	I	
10.	She got me out of the first bra and into the next one. I wondered how I'd ever	42	E	

	learn to do it by myself. Maybe my mother would have to dress me every day. The next bra was softer than the first. My mother explained it was made of dacron. I liked the way it felt. My mother nodded. The third one was fancy. It was lace and it made me itch. My mother said it was impractical.			
11.	On Thursday morning I got up early but I had trouble eating. My mother said it was natural for me to feel uneasy on the first day of school. She said when she was a girl she felt the same way. My mother's always telling me about when she was a girl. It's supposed to make me feel that she understands everything.	24	E	

3. The Importance of Friendship in the Process of Reaching Adolescence

No	Data	Page	Types of Themes	Category of Sub-Themes
1.	"Let's have a snack and you can tell me all about your first day of school," she said. "I can't," I told her. "No time now. I've got to go to Nancy's house. I'm joining her secret club."	28	E	Peer group
2.	"Gads, Margaret! I don't know where a bathing suit is in this mess." I walked back to the front door and told Nancy, "I can't find my bathing suit." "You can borrow one of mine," she said	5	E	
3.	"Thank you," I said, taking the suit. "Where should I change?" Nancy looked around the room. "What's wrong with here?" "Nothing," I said. "I don't mind if you don't mind." "Why should I mind?" "I don't know."	6	I	
4.	We sat on the floor in a circle with the book opened to the male body. "Do you suppose that's what Philip Leroy looks like without his clothes on?" Janie asked. "Naturally, dope!" Nancy said. "He's male, isn't he?" "Look at all those veins and stuff," Janie said. "Well, we <i>all</i> have them," Gretchen said. "I think they're ugly," Janie said. "You better never be a doctor or a nurse," Gretchen told her. "They	69	E	

	have to look at this stuff all the time." "Turn the page, Gretchen," Nancy said. The next page was the male reproductive system			
5.	"Watch this." Nancy grabbed her bed pillow and embraced it. She gave it a long kiss. When she was done she threw the pillow back on the bed. "It's important to experiment, so when the time comes you're all ready. I'm going to be a great kisser some day. Want to see something else?"	7	E	
6.	"If you ever want to get out of those baby bras you have to exercise," she told us. "What kind of exercise?" Gretchen asked. "Like this," Nancy said. She made fists, bent her arms at the elbow and moved them back and forth, sticking her chest way out. She said, "I must—I must—I must increase my bust." She said it over and over. We copied her movements and chanted with her. "We must—we must—we must increase our bust!" "Good," Nancy told us. "Do it thirty-five times a day and I promise you'll see the results."	46	E	
7.	"Listen, Margaret—Gretchen went to all the trouble of sneaking out her father's medical book. The least you could do is show us <i>Playboy</i> ."	71	E	
8.	"From the dispenser on the wall, dear. Nancy's menstruating." "Does she always act like that?" "It's her first time," Mrs. Wheeler explained. "She's frightened." Nancy was still crying and there was a lot of whispering going on. I couldn't believe it! Nancy, who knew everything! She'd lied to me about her period. She'd never had it before! I didn't know what to say. I mean, what can you say when you've just found out your friend's a liar!	107	I	Relation of friendship
	Did you ever kiss a boy?" "You mean really kiss? On the lips?" I asked. "Yes," Nancy said impatiently. "Did you?" "Not really," I admitted. Nancy breathed a sigh of relief. "Neither did I."	7	E	
9.	"You know what Moose! You're a liar! I don't believe you ever took Laura Danker behind the A&P." "Who said I did?" "What do you mean who said it!" "Well, who?" "Nancy told me that Evan told her that you and Evan—" I stopped. I sounded like an idiot. Moose shook his head at me. "You always believe	146-7	E	

	everything you hear about other people?" he asked. I didn't know what to say. Moose kept talking. "Well, next time, don't believe it unless you see it! Now if you'll move out of my way, I've got things to do!"			
10.	Nancy, Gretchen, Janie and I had lunch downtown by ourselves and talked about how it would feel to go to Junior High. Janie was afraid she wouldn't be able to find her way around and she'd get lost. Gretchen said probably the teachers would all be mean and Nancy said suppose we weren't in any classes together and then we all went home and cried.	146	I	
12.	"Because he's fourteen. All boys of fourteen are disgusting. They're only interested in two things—pictures of naked girls and dirty books!" Nancy really seemed to know a lot. Since I didn't know any boys of fourteen I took her word for it.	11	E	

4. The Process of Searching for Belief

No	Data	Page	Types of Themes	Category of Sub-Themes
1.	Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. I want you to know I'm giving a lot of thought to Christmas and Hanukkah this year. I'm trying to decide if one might be special for me. I'm really thinking hard God. But so far I haven't come up with any answers.	75	I	Intimacy of God
2.	Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. We're moving today. I'm so scared God. I've never lived anywhere but here. Suppose I hate my new school? Suppose everybody there hates me? Please help me God. Don't let New Jersey be too horrible. Thank you.	1	I	
3.	Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. I'm going to temple today—with Grandma. It's a holiday. I guess you know that. Well, my father thinks it's a mistake and my mother thinks the whole idea is crazy, but I'm going anyway. I'm sure this will help me decide what to be. I've never been inside a temple or a church. I'll look	56	I	

	for you God			
4.	Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. I'm so miserable! Everything is wrong. Absolutely everything! I guess this is my punishment for being a horrible person.	126	I	
5.	Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. I just told my mother I want a bra. Please help me grow God. You know where. I want to be like everyone else. You know God, my new friends all belong to the Y or the Jewish Community Center. Which way am I supposed to go? I don't know what you want me to do about that.	37	I	
6.	Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. My father's had an awful accident. Please help him God. He's really very kind and nice. Even though he doesn't know you the way I do, he's a good father. And he needs his hand God. So please, please let him be all right. I'll do anything you say if you help him. Thank you God	16	I	Understanding the existence of God
7.	Are you still there God? It's me, Margaret. I know you're there God. I know you wouldn't have missed this for anything! Thank you God. Thanks an awful lot ...	149	I	
8.	"Look," my mother explained, "we're letting Margaret choose her own religion when she's grown." "If she wants to!" my father said, defiantly. "Nonsense!" Grandmother said. "A person doesn't choose religion." "A person's born to it!" Grandfather boomed. Grandmother smiled at last and gave a small laugh. "Some Margaret is Christian!" she announced, like we all should have known	133	E	
9.	My mother says God is a nice idea. He belongs to everybody.	14	I	
11.	Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. What would you think of me doing a project on religion? You wouldn't mind, would you God? I'd tell you all about it. And I won't make any decisions without asking you first. I think it's time for me to decide what to be. I can't go on being nothing forever, can I?	53	I	
12.	Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. I just came home from church. I loved the choir— the songs were so beautiful. Still, I didn't really feel you God. I'm more confused than ever. I'm trying hard to understand but I wish you'd help me a little. If only you could give me a hint God. Which religion should I be?	94	I	

	Sometimes I wish I'd been born one way or the other.			Understanding religion
13.	I've been looking for you God. I looked in temple. I looked in church. And today, I looked for you when wanted to confess. But you weren't there. I didn't feel you at all. Not the way I do when I talk to you at night. Why God? Why do I only feel you when I'm alone?	120	I	
14.	Then we all stood up again and everyone sang a song in Hebrew that I didn't know. And that was it! I expected something else. I don't know what exactly. A feeling, maybe. But I suppose you have to go more than once to know what it's all about.	59	I	
15.	I have not really enjoyed my religious experiments very much and I don't think I'll make up my mind one way or the other for a long time. I don't think a person can decide to be a certain religion just like that. It's like having to choose your own name. You think about it a long time and then you keep changing your mind. If I should ever have children I will tell them what religion they are so they can start learning about it at an early age. Twelve is very late to learn. Sincerely, Margaret Ann Simon	143	E	
16.	Are you there God? It's me, Margaret. I'm really on my way now. By the end of the school year I'll know all there is to know about religion. And before I start junior high I'll know which one I am. Then I'll be able to join the Y or the Center like everybody else.	61	I	

APPENDIX 3
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