2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In chapter 2 I present some related theories that are helpful to understand the novel and develop the analysis in the next chapter. They are the literary theories of characterization and the conflict. Besides the concept on school-aged children is also presented in this chapter to make clear the condition of Nat, who is a school child.

2.1. Characterization

Character is an important aspect in fiction, particularly in a novel. A fictional character in literature is an author's representation of a human being, specifically the inner qualities that determine how an individual reacts to various conditions, or attempts to shape his characters (Robert, 1977, p. 51). It means, the various qualities of characters that live in a story are the fictional persons created by the author. A good characterization is important in fiction since the fictional persons might become livelier and therefore makes the readers enjoy their reading.

Characterization itself means the method an author uses to present the readers with his or her characters. According to *Dictionary of literary terms*, "characterization is the delineation images of fictional character which makes the character appears to the audience as real" (Shaw, 1972, p. 16). Since characterization plays an important role in enlivening a story to attract and fascinate the readers, so its existence is a must in every literary work. Without character, there will be no plot, and thus no story. Briefly, characterization is needed in order to understand a story better.

Methods of characterizations are the techniques an author uses to reveal the personality and character of a fictional person. Some various methods can be used in describing a character. According to the book *Handbook to literature*, a character can be described through "dramatic and analytic methods" (Holman, 1996, p. 538). In the dramatic method, known also as the indirect presentation, the author presents the characteristic of the imaginary person through his or her speech and actions, and through what other characters thinks or says about him or

her. In this indirect presentation, one needs a further judgment and evaluation to interpret and describe what the character is like (Holman, 1996, p. 540).

In the analytic method, the characteristic of a character is presented through what the author says or comments about the character, through what the author tells about the character's manner and motive, through what the author thinks and through physical descriptions such as the person's appearance and clothes. In this direct presentation, one can directly know about the qualities of a character. The indirect one should support the direct method, because if not, it will give us not a character but an explanation (Perrine, 1983, pp. 66-67). In *Little men* Louisa May Alcott uses both direct and indirect presentations. She sometimes reveals the character's character traits by using the character's actions and by what the character thinks or says and at other times she directly tells the character traits of the character through other characters.

Basically, character is divided into two types, round and flat characters. A round character is a character that demonstrates his capacity to change or to grow. For example, the character grows from coward to brave. The round character is usually the main character of a story. The fully developed character is presented to the readers with contradiction, conflicts and doubts experienced in his life (Roberts& Jacob, 1986, p. 36). After reading *Little men*, I find out that Nat can be considered as the round character, because he goes through some changes in his character traits. To discuss Nat's character development I will analyze Nat's speech, thought, and action.

The second type is the flat character, who is usually the minor character of a story, and remains the same until the end of the story. In other words, the character does not undergo any changes in his character trait. The personality of a flat character can often be expressed in a single sentence such as calm, self-sufficient and tolerate. He is easy to recognize since he is not changed by circumstances, does not develop, and is easily remembered by the readers (Holman, 1930, p. 30).

2.2. Conflict

The word "conflict" comes from the Latin word "contra" which means against and "fligere" means to strike, (Barry, 1966, p. 23). Conflict is the struggle that grows out of the interplay of the two opposing forces in a plot. It means that someone will be in conflict when someone or something strikes the intention of a character. This kind of conflict is also defined as the process of social interaction in which two persons struggle with one another for some commonly value (Popenoe, 1971, p. 29). A conflict provides the element of interest, suspense and tension in any forms of fiction, whether it be a drama, novel, or a short story (Holman, 1936, p. 105). The relationship among different characters will apparently arouse conflicts. In a conflict, there is always a beginning, a development until it reaches a climax and then the end. The climax is usually the most exciting and tense part of the story. In general, a conflict often ends in unhappiness. Yet, a conflict can serve as a force that integrates people on each side of the conflict, bonding them firmly in a group. A conflict may also lead to a needed social change, forcing the people to face up to their problem (Popenoe, 1971, p. 30).

According to Harry Shaw, conflicts are divided into four types. Firstly it is called physical or elemental conflict, which is a struggle between man and the physical world. Secondly, it is called social conflict, a struggle between man and man. Thirdly is the internal or psychological conflict, which can be seen in the struggle between the desires within a person. Lastly, it is a variant form of social conflict, a protagonist's struggle against society and the struggle between fate and destiny (*Dictionary of literary terms*; 1972, p. 74-75). Furthermore, the four types of conflict can be categorized into two, the internal and external conflicts. The internal conflict is the character's conflict against him/herself. In other words, the opposing forces are in the mind and heart of a character. The outer conflict is the conflict between the character and the outside forces such as the society, other character, and nature.

In *Little men*, the very first conflict that happens is an internal conflict or the conflict between Nat and himself. The story describes that Nat is trapped in dishonesty in order to cover his shame of his past life. Later on, Nat's internal conflict extends to outer or social conflict, as he has to receive the consequences

of his dishonesty in the form of punishment and being expelled from the friendship bond in Plumfield.

2.3. Psychological Concept on Character Development of School-Aged Children

Developmental periods of school-aged children are an essential period where a child learns to adapt with a new environment. Through exposure to adults other than parents, children encounter new modes of socialization and also begin to learn about the range of social roles which adults may hold. And school itself is the source of new knowledge, of new ways of applying and using intellectual skills (Strommen, Mc.Kinney & Fitzgerald, 1983, p. 105). In the course of these new experiences children grow and develop in a variety of ways. Their development during the school years is heavily influenced by the events of the early years of their lives. Strommen, Mc.Kinney & Fitzgerald found that a great deal of development is added during the school years, and the outcomes of this period will serve in the turn as the foundation for development in adolescence and in the subsequent periods of adult life (1983, p. 107).

One of some important essences of life is conscience. Strommen, Mc.Kinney, and Fitzgerald (1983) describe conscience as a concept familiar to most people as sort of monitor that prevents one from doing wrong, as though there were some inner system that warned against forbidden acts or punished them if done (having a "guilty conscience"). One major set of "ground rules" is the generally accepted moral standards by which people are judged as good or bad.

It is known that preventing children from misbehavior and teaching them not to do wrong are areas of much concern to parents in the first place. For the most part, whether or not children lie, or cheat, or steal, depends chiefly on the situation in which they find themselves. Strommen, Mc.Kinney & Fitzgerald's 1983 study found the following:

> Children (adults too) are much likely to transgress when they badly want some outcome, such as a good grade or special recognition. In a child's eyes, humiliation or rejection by peers may be a much more serious outcome than punishment by parents or discipline by teachers (p. 173).

A lie to avoid embarrassment may be a quite different matter than a lie to save another person's life. The authors maintain that during the school years, children's definitions on transgression become more general - lying is saying something that is not true; stealing is taking anything that belongs to someone else - and also more similar to the definitions which most adults would hold (Strommen, Mc.Kinney & Fitzgerald, 1983).

Children whose parents regularly use physical punishment and deprivation techniques are less likely to show evidence of strong conscience development than are children whose parents typically use other techniques. Strommen, Mc.Kinney & Fitzgerald state that:

> parents who use predominantly power-assertive techniques are likely to have children who are submissive, dependent, and compliant. And children who are abused are likely to learn behavior patterns such as inability to communicate effectively, fear of authority, avoidance of social interaction, and low self-esteem; their social and intellectual development are often delayed (1983, p. 178).

All children are born good and innocent. They are unique and special. Here, the role of parents is emphasized on helping every child to face their unique challenges since parents cannot take away children's unique problem and challenges. It is true that children need compassion and help from parents, but they also need their unique challenges to grow. For every child, the healthy process of growing up means there will be challenging times. By learning to accept and embrace the limitations imposed by their parents and the world, children can learn such essential life skills as forgiveness, delayed gratification, acceptance, cooperation, creativity, compassion, courage, persistence, self-correction, self-esteem, self-sufficiency, and self-direction (Gray, 1999, p. 4).

Such negative emotions as anger, sadness, fear, sorrow, frustration, disappointment, worry, embarrassment, jealousy, hurt, insecurity, and shame are not only natural and normal, but important part of growing up. Negative emotions are always okay and they need to be communicated, and in Nat's case, the Bhaers are the mediator of Nat to express his real feeling and make it well solved, rather than only buried deep within his sensitive heart. The Bhaers think they need to

encourage Nat to follow his dreams and develop his unique talents and artistic abilities. For artistic intelligence to flourish, Nat needs opportunities to practice and develop his intelligence with lots of encouragement and appreciation from his parents, the Bhaers.

In analyzing Nat's character development, I have to find out the factors that bring about the development. To be able to do so I make use the theories of characterization and conflict and also the concept of school-aged child's development. And this is done the chapter 3.