CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

There are many developing countries in Asia and India is one of them. With its richness of culture, tradition and religion, India is facing a changing society caused by modernization. As a result, there is a wide gap between the rich and the poor, as portrayed clearly in The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga and Slumdog Millionaire by Vikas Swarup. The authors of the novels describe the reality of India through the eyes of their protagonists and how they survive the world of poverty in India.

Balram Halwai is the protagonist of The White Tiger, a novel set in modern India. As a poor man that has served the rich since he was a young boy, Balram lives a very tough life. He sees the life of the rich and wants to live like them, taste the fancy and modern things that he never has in his poor life. Aravind Adiga has developed Balram to be a strong character in the corrupt world of India, a character who survives poverty and is willing to do anything, even commit a crime, to succeed. Balram becomes a winner in the end, starting from a lowly servant to becoming a successful entrepreneur.

Ram Mohammad Thomas, the protagonist of Slumdog Millionaire, is another character who lives in the rough parts of India. He is a poor boy who has

had to struggle alone since his childhood. However, his life experiences have brought him to a big fortune, winning the top prize of a television game show. In this novel, Ram manages to survive the cruel life in India and reaches happiness in the end.

The characteristics of both protagonists are formed by the situation and condition of their lives, and they manage to improve their living condition while struggling for survival. My reason for choosing these two novels is that they tell stories about people who can survive difficult situations and reach their goals. I admire some of the protagonists' characteristics that bring them to success and happiness. How the protagonists live their lives is defined by their characteristics.

I would like to discuss the themes of <u>The White Tiger</u> and <u>Slumdog Millionaire</u> through the protagonists. Analyzing the characteristics of the protagonists is significant in revealing the theme. The themes of the two novels are related to someone's characteristics in deciding the way of living, especially in surviving difficulties. In <u>How to Analyze Fiction</u>, Kenney states, "Theme is the meaning of the story. By a theme we mean some sort of comment on the subject, whether the comment is stated explicitly or remain implicit" (88-90). Based on Kenney's statement, I would like to analyze what is implied in the novels through the portrayal of the protagonists. I will reveal the themes so that I can see the meaning of the stories and learn from the protagonists' life experiences.

Statement of the Problems

The problems of this study are stated as follows:

1. What are the themes of the two novels?

2. How are the themes of the two novels revealed through the protagonists?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the statement of the problem, this study is conducted

1. to reveal the themes of the two novels.

2. to show how the themes of the two novels are revealed through the protagonists.

Method of Research

The method I use in writing this thesis is library research. I begin by reading Aravind Adiga's <u>The White Tiger</u> and Vikas Swarup's <u>Slumdog Millionaire</u> as the primary texts. Afterwards, I read William Kenney's <u>How to Analyze Fiction</u> to widen my knowledge and to reveal the theme through the protagonists. All the information and knowledge gathered is then used to analyze the theme of the novels. As a final point, I draw some conclusions of the research I have done.

Organization of the Thesis

I divide this thesis into three chapters, which are preceded by the Acknowledgments, Table of Contents and Abstract. Chapter One contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problems, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains the analysis of theme through the protagonist in Aravind Adiga's <u>The White Tiger</u>. Chapter Three contains the analysis of theme through the protagonist in Vikas Swarup's <u>Slumdog Millionaire</u>. The last chapter, Chapter Four, is the Conclusion of what has been discussed in the previous chapters. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which contain the synopses of the novels and the biographies of the authors.