CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTIONS

This chapter consists of the background and objectives of the writer in choosing this translation project.

1.1 Background

At the moment of writing this, the world is currently in the middle of a pandemic. This has been the biggest pandemic in many years. Coronavirus disease has spread around the globe, infecting and killing many people. Many countries are under lockdown for a prolonged amount of time. Citizens were forced to stay in their homes and not leave. Offices are closed, and the workers must work from home. Children could not attend school and must attend online meetings. Many public spaces are closed, and people are advised to only leave their homes when necessary.

Coronavirus is a global problem. Epidemiologists and virologists worldwide are doing their best to understand and prevent the spread of the coronavirus. However, there is another issue that appears as a side effect of this pandemic: the mental health pandemic. In their recent article 'The hidden disaster of COVID-19: Intimate partner violence', Buttell and Ferreira (2020) wrote, "In an ironic twist, many of the strategies that are critical to ensuring our collective public health during this pandemic may put people at greater risk for . . . mental health issues."

Researchers in China had sent out questionnaires to citizens locked down in their homes. Wang et al. (2020) found out that in several studies with over 10,000 respondents, people were experiencing worse mental health problems than before the pandemic. The responders reported having high symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Other countries also confront the same issue. In a study in Spain, González-Sanguino et al. (2020) surveyed nearly 3,500 people in March when the country ranked second in the world in COVID-19 deaths. They found that many people met the criteria for clinical mental health problems. nineteen percent of them can be diagnosed with depression, almost a quarter of the people surveyed suffer from anxiety, and 16 percent suffer from PTSD.

In America, Mc Ginty et al. (2020) found that 14 percent of Americans were experiencing severe psychological distress in April 2020. This is more than triple the rate in 2018. Researchers used the Kessler 6 Psychological Distress Scale, with the validated measure of severe distress defined as a score of 13 or higher on the 0- to 24-point scale. They also measured the proportion of respondents who reported that they always or often feel lonely in response to the item "How often do you feel lonely?" with response options always, often, sometimes, rarely, and never. They surveyed 1468 adults aged 18 years or older. In April 2020, 13.6% of US adults reported symptoms of serious psychological distress, relative to 3.9% in 2018. Among the subgroups examined, in April 2020, symptoms of psychological distress were highest among

young adults aged 18 to 29 years, adults with a household income of less than $35 000 per year (19.3%), and Hispanic adults (18.3%). The corresponding prevalence estimates for these three groups in 2018 were 3.7%, 7.9%, and 4.4%, respectively. The lowest prevalence of serious psychological distress among the subgroups examined in April 2020 was observed in adults aged 55 years or older (7.3%). In April 2020, 13.8% of US adults reported that they always or often felt lonely.

A study in Slovenia found over half of the thousands of people had a high level of stress (Kavčič et al., 2020). Within five days after Slovenia declared epidemics, they sent out surveys to 2722 participants, with 75% of them being females. It was an online survey measuring mental health and perceived stress. They found that younger and less educated women had higher odds for less favorable psychological functioning during the COVID-19 outbreak. In addition, poorer health indicators and COVID-19 infection concerns predicted diminished psychological functioning. They mention that the crucial factor in promoting good psychological functioning during the COVID-19 pandemics was resilience, additionally buffering against detrimental effects of demographic and health-related variables on mental health and perceived stress. While previous research suggests that mental health problems increase during pandemics, one way to prevent these problems and bolster psychological functioning is to build individuals' resilience. The interventions should be targeted particularly at younger adults, women, less educated people, and individuals who subjectively perceive their health to be rather poor.

However, this is not an absolute case. Some people do not suffer from poor mental health because of this lockdown. Folk et al. (2020) held a study covering Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom to track changes in individuals' feelings of social connection during the COVID-19 pandemic. They found that people experienced relatively little change in feelings of social connection in the face of the initial reshaping of their social lives caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. They also suggest that by using exploratory analyses. They found that relatively extraverted individuals exhibited larger declines in social connection. However, after controlling for levels of social connection before the pandemic, the negative effect of extraversion reversed or disappeared.

Considering the worsening mental health condition because of the pandemic. The writer believes that by reading *Stand Still Stay Silent* (SSSS) the readers can have some form of solace or entertainment in this difficult time. Reading as a form of therapy is often called Bibliotherapy. Shrodes (1949) defines bibliotherapy as a process of dynamic interactions between the personality of the reader and literature as a psychological field that may be utilized for personality assessment, adjustment, and growth. By translating SSSS into Indonesian, the writer hopes this webcomic will be a positive influence on the mental health of Indonesian people. However, the writer still advises people who have mental health issues to seek professionals. In no way, reading this fiction will solve mental health issues which are often if not always complex.

1.2 Project Objectives

The main objective of this project is to translate an online Webcomic by Minna Sundberg's *Stand Still Stay Silent* (SSSS). The series length is 1534 pages and ended in March 2022. It would be impossible for the writer to translate the whole webcomic considering the time restriction. The writer decided to translate from page 1 to page 68. These pages contain the prologue of the webcomic. The prologue covers the first outbreak of the virus and the breakdown of society. However, despite this catastrophic event, humanity persists and thrives as seen at the end of the prologue. The writer believes this to be a great starting point to inspire interest in Indonesian readers. The story of SSSS and the current situation of the world have a lot of similarities: a sudden appearance of a virus which threatens humanity, people being forced to stay inside because of quarantines, and global effort to defeat this new threat.

This webcomic began in November 2013 and is normally updated on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. In 2015 SSSS won the Reuben Award for "best online comic-long form". This webcomic is published by Hiveworks Comics. Hiveworks Comics is a creator-owned comic and graphic novel publisher focused on free-to-read webcomics.

The story is set in a post-apocalyptic world where the majority of humans had perished under a strange new disease. Most of the surviving population live in Iceland, the largest safe area in existence, while the safe settlements in the other Nordic countries; Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, are small and scarce.

There are seven main characters in total: Lalli, Tuuri, Emil, Sigrun, Mikkel, Reynir, and Onni. They are hired as a group to explore the world beyond the protected area. Their task is to collect books or records of the previous world which is called the "Old World". Countless mysterious and unspoken dangers lurk outside the safe areas, the Silent world, and hunters, mages and cleansers will spend their lives defending the settlements against the terrifying beings. Because of a great fear towards everything in the Silent world no official attempts to explore the ruins of the old have been made, and most of the information about it has turned into ancient lore, known by few.

The writer wants to translate the webcomic *Stand Still Stay Silent* (SSSS) from English to Indonesian so that the Indonesian people will gain a form of entertainment and mental sustenance. Many studies show the effects of reading fiction on the human brain. When a person is immersed in a story they can relate to a fictional character. This empathy with a character in a story can help ease the mental burden.

SSSS is an optimistic story. Despite living in a post-apocalyptic world, the characters are not depressed or pessimistic. Instead, they fought and find joy in their perilous journey. They develop friendships and create meaning in a world that is no longer so welcoming. The writer believes that by reading SSSS, people may be able to find comfort and joy in this trying time. So that they can see that despite the seemingly bleak future there is always hope and we can always find joy even in the darkest of times.