

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The Covid-19 pandemic has happened for more than a year and a half, and the virus still occurs in human life even now. Moreover, the SARS-CoV-2 virus also has been mutating over and over to make new variants. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2022), reports that there are a lot of variants such as Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, up to Zeta which are classified as Variant Being Monitored, and also Omicron that are classified as Variants of Concern. According to CDC, what makes a virus categorized as the Variants of concern is because the changing of its structure that makes them able to fight back the against vaccine, which makes the vaccine less effective against the virus. Indeed, humans already have a vaccine that has the purpose to fight the virus, but because of the rapid and consistent mutation of the virus, humans need to catch up with the structure changing of the virus so that the vaccine can fight the virus.

It is not just Covid-19 that caused their outbreak, The World Health Organization (WHO) also declared that the monkeypox virus becomes a public health emergency of international concern (NPR, 2022). Even though the virus is not as fatal as Covid-19, researchers are worried that this virus could mutate and become more dangerous. WHO even reports that monkeypox virus, which back then could only

spread through physical contact, is now able to spread if an individual touches item surfaces that the carrier already touched or even just by saliva transmission through close contact with the carrier.

By looking at lots of virus outbreaks these days, it somehow looks like a ‘war’ between us, mankind, and the viruses. Mankind makes a vaccine to defeat the virus, and the viruses change their strategy and form to defeat the vaccine that humans made. The one thing that concerns the writer is this ‘war’ keeps happening for a long time – humans keep updating the vaccine, and the virus keeps mutating. It happens on and on until the virus reaches the stage where they are resistant to the vaccine, which indicates that the vaccine is no longer able to defeat the virus.

However, the writer’s biggest fear is that the virus is actually winning against mankind, not because the virus is resistant to the vaccine, but because the virus becomes undetectable through mutation. Viruses can evolve and mutate by changing their genetic code and also by recombination of two genetic codes to form a new variant (CDC, 2022). With that, there is a possibility that the virus can change its structure or even combine its structure with other viruses so that they become undetectable virus. An example of a virus being undetectable is Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV can become undetectable if the level of the virus is below the limit detected of the test (Land, 2018).

Thus, besides the virus becoming ‘too smart’, the ability of humans to detect the virus through methods, tests, and technology has to be considered. Antigen tests for detecting SARS-CoV-2 in a person can be taken as an example. In detecting SARS-CoV-2, there are antigen tests and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests, but

researchers in Germany say that 20% of antigen tests available on market are failed to detect the virus, making them less reliable than PCR tests (Freund, 2021). Sadly, antigen test is still common to people because it is cheaper, easier, and takes less time than the PCR test to detect SARS-CoV-2. So, financial problems can also become another factor aside from the mutation that can lead to the virus being undetectable.

Based on that reason, the writer wants to make a fiction novella *R.O.S.E.* to portray the future impact if this event is happening – the virus is already mutated to a stage where it cannot be detected – and how humans will try to use their intelligence, and technology to defeat the virus. The mutation that the writer will use is something that is not overwhelming that makes the virus noticeable, and to do that, the writer wants to make the virus only attack some functions in the human brain that are related to emotion and feelings. It makes mankind unable to feel any emotion anymore, which the writer says: ‘mankind lost their ‘humanity’.

## **1.2 Objective of the Project**

Because the novella is all about portraying the future where the virus is mutated to its optimal mutation, there are two objectives of the writer making this project. The first one is to portray what might happen in the future if the virus is ahead of us, by changing the structure of the virus until it cannot be detectable, which will be shown through the setting of the story. The second one is to portray the difficulty of making decisions in a short time and difficult times. This will be portrayed by what mankind will do to save ‘humanity’, which will be shown in the main story of the novella, a project to save mankind from the virus.