

**AROUND THE FALL OF SOEHARTO: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF  
RICHARD MANN'S PLOTS AND SCHEMES THAT BROUGHT DOWN  
SOEHARTO (PSBDS)<sup>1</sup>**

By

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**Abstract**

The real cause of Soeharto's fall from the Indonesian presidency remains a mystery. Richard Mann (1998) launched three significant rhetorical questions, *i.e.* (1) Was President Soeharto toppled by student demonstrators and people's power? (2) Was he brought down by the withdrawal of support from the United States? (3) Or, was his sudden fall brought about by all of the two plus large doses of Oriental plotting and scheming?

This paper attempts to analyze Richard Mann's PSBDS in terms of its macrostructure in order to find out the real cause of Soeharto's fall. The analysis is substantiated by different resources as linguistic evidences, to justify the validity of the findings. The study critical reading is the key to successful comprehension of a text, of which crosschecking with other resources is one.

Key Words: rhetorical questions, people's power, oriental plotting and scheming, macrostructure, critical reading

**INTRODUCTION**

The fall of Soeharto from Indonesian Presidency remains a mystery. Richard Mann, a British political scientist and economist, author and publisher, specializing in Asian affairs, especially Indonesia (Mann 1998:5) wrote a political textbook entitled 'Plots and Scheme that Brought down Soeharto'. The book was published in the UK by Gateway Books in 1998.

With respect to the significance of the textbook, as illustrated in its Preface, it is no mere academic exercise. Other parties, such as politicians, business-persons, even layman may also be interested in reading to find out why President Soeharto, a 32-year-in-power regime, was brought down and by whom. Those, in favour of political reform, may be surprised to find out the evolving attitudes and policies of the United States towards Soeharto and particularly the evolving policies of the Indonesian military. Another issue of interest in this textbook is that it

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Adapted from the macroanalysis of Purwanto's Dissertation (2007)

deals with who holds the power there and who influences the power holders. In addition, the textbook shows ‘a detail, event by event, account’ of all that led to the fall of Soeharto; and is more interestingly produced in record time. Significantly, the textbook was written in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, but fortunately the author was in Indonesia during the month of May 1998 and at other critical time. The author, in the writing of the book, has drawn on 20 years association and knowledge of Indonesia as well as over 30 earlier publications about investment, business and tourism (Mann 1998:5).

As an English language educator, the writer is interested in analyzing the macrostructure of Mann PSBDS to find out the real cause of Soeharto’s fall from Indonesian Presidency in terms of the generic structure of PSBD as a political textbook. The study, though supported by adequate linguistic evidence is interpretative in nature, and thus subject to further verification and justification.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

It has been touched upon that the study deals with the generic structure of Mann’s PSBDS. Therefore, the writer reviews the genre theory as the basis of analysis supported by other relevant theory.

### **Genre Analysis**

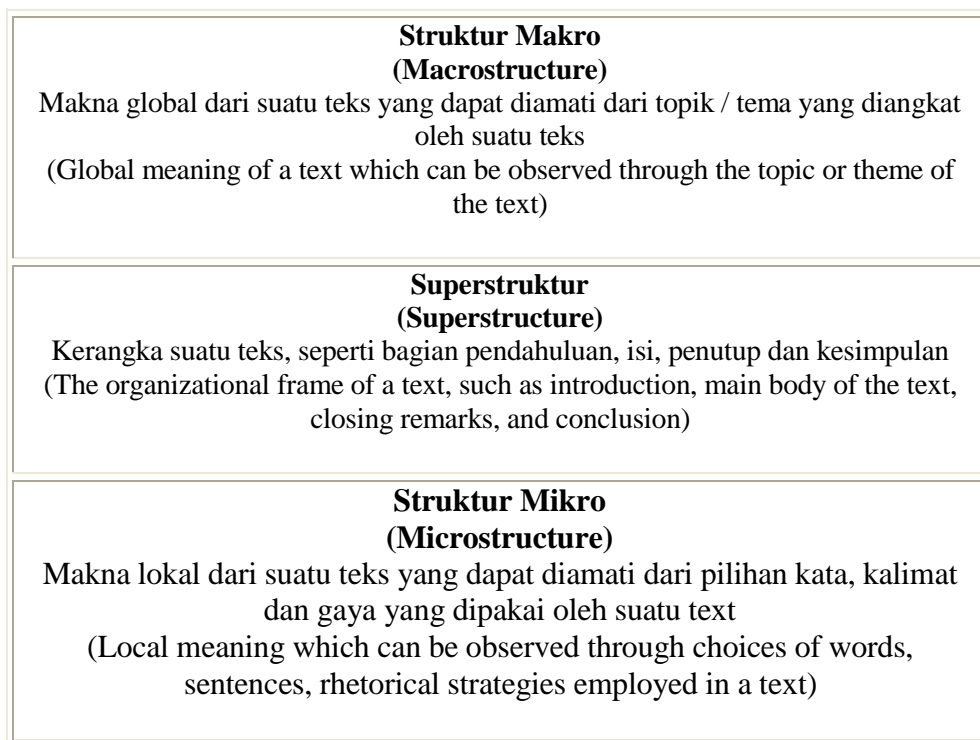
Martin and Rose (2003:7-13) exemplified genre analysis in their *Working with Discourse—meaning beyond the clause*. A genre, in this respect, refers to a staged, goal oriented social process. This is due to the fact that an individual socially participates in genres with other individuals in order to get things done by stages (step by step) to reach the goal.

Therefore, a text of any form can be analyzed in terms of its generic structure in order to decide to what genre the text belongs. With this, the overall organization of the text can be identified and used as a basic frame (macro-structurally established) by means of which further in-depth analysis of the text can be executed, such as locating hegemonic ideology. However, the process of genre analysis is not as easy as it reads. Each text is differently organized, depending on the type and goal of the text. In Martin and Rose’s (2003) genre analysis, the text is cut by stages of development. The basic organization of a text is the Orientation ^ Incident 1-n, ^ Interpretation, ^ Coda Pattern with each analysis of variables in each stage of development.

Furthermore, in an argumentative text, Martin and Rose exemplified another pattern: Thesis ^ Arguments 1 ^ ground 1 ^ Conclusion 1 ^ Argument-n ^ ground-n ^ Conclusion-n. This is only part of genre analysis, as Martin and Rose wrote: ‘In Tutu’s original text, Helena’s story follows the first Argument, supporting its conclusion, and the whole exposition is part of a longer debate’ (2003:11). Thus, the generic structure of a text follows a particular pattern

### Text Structure

In the analysis of macrostructure, it is important to know the text structure as outlined below.



**Figure 1 Text Structure** (Adopted from Eriyana (2001:227))

The above figure clearly indicate the macrostructure is a grand part of structure which consists of superstructure and microstructure.

It should be noted, however, that this paper, being a part of a larger form of a dissertation, focuses only on the macrostructure of the text under study, just to respond to Richard Mann's rhetorical questions printed on the back cover of PSBDS. In other words, the analysis is of phylogenesis where power is contested and negotiated. Conveniently, as the above aims suggest, the paper describes the macrostructure of Mann's based on the superstructure, but ignoring the microstructure as being irrelevant.

### **Synopsis of Mann's PSDBS**

In order to have a general picture of the text book under study, the writer presents the synopsis of Mann's PSBDS, as follows:

As of 1997 marked with the General Election which managed to secure Soeharto's 7<sup>th</sup> term of presidency, Indonesia had not been in a good condition—economically, socially and politically. Social unrests due to the practice of KKN (corruption, collusion and nepotism) were everywhere beyond anyone's control. Even worst, political activists were kidnapped by 'unknown' gunmen, two released: Pius Lustrilanang of NGO and Haryanto of PDIP. Pius travelled around the world for anti-Indonesian campaign, telling the world about human rights violation, political repression and economic show-down under Soeharto's regime. ABRI (Indonesian Army) was divided into Soeharto loyalists and non-loyalists. Academicians, under the motor of Amin Rais and supported by retired Generals and several NGO rallied to ask for the resignation of Soeharto through MPR's special session.

Due to Jakarta massive unrests, Soeharto had to shorten his state visit to Cairo where he was quoted as 'ready to quit' and to return to Jakarta. In Jakarta Soeharto said he did not mean to quit, but it was OK if people did not want him to be the President. The situation became worse upon Trisakti tragedy which killed student demonstrators. Amien Rais planned another massive demonstration but cancelled it due to ABRI's extra-alert. Prabowo hoped to be praised by Soeharto upon cancellation of Amien Rais' planned demonstration but was reprimanded by Soeharto's family for letting the students occupy MPR building. Gen. Wiranto, the ABRI Commander in Chief was a kind of double faces—one appearing to support the reform struggle, and the other being still under the full control of Soeharto. Harmoko, the Chairman of MPR, upon being forced by reformists, finally asked Soeharto to step down. Soeharto actually had been granted to use a special power of whatever means to

crack down ‘disturbance’, but he did not do it; he even said that he would not maintain his presidency by means of ‘guns’.

With the economic crisis still haunting despite the help of IMF, Soeharto was busy planning his plots and schemes to cling to power, such as ‘buying time’ tactics and dividing the reformists’ strength. However, Indonesian people had been of one thought ‘the Change of national leadership’. The final and most crucial step by Soeharto was to form ‘reform committee’ supposedly chaired by Dr. Nurcholis Madjid. No one joined the committee, including Dr. Nurcholis Madjid; he refused to chair the committee. Even worst, 14 ministers signed a letter of resignation. Soeharto was left without friends to work with him, even his used-to-be Yes Sir friends.

With this chaotic situation, Soeharto **constitutionally resigned** from his Presidency, and handed down the power to Vice President B.J. Habibie for a transitional period prior to another General Election. It was at 9.00 a.m. on May 21, 1998 in Credential Room of the State Palace, Jakarta.

During Habibie’s government, he opened up the faucet of democracy and freedom of speech and press. A number of political prisoners under Soeharto’s regime were released. A number of new political parties were founded and ready for a democratic fight in the upcoming General Election. Some human right violators were on trial. Prabowo was fired from the military service. One province, Timor Timur was let go during Habibie’s regime. So confident was Habibie in restructuring his government to be in true democracy that he was quoted as saying that he had yet to decide whether or not to run again for the presidency.

Once again Indonesia was a nation in waiting—waiting for the announcement and agreement of political reforms represented in a free and fair election. Foreigners could see that Indonesia’s economy had been mangled and that that generational change was expected in the political structure. Those interested in Indonesia needed a clear road map of the economic and political problems and prospects immediately ahead.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The superstructure of Mann’s PSBDS can be shortly described in the following generic table.

**Table 1 The Generic Structure of Mann’s PSBDS**

Chapter	Title	Generic Function
I	Sow What Ye Shall Reap	(Orientation) To introduce in general possible causes of the fall of Soeharto. It contains (1) human right violation (2) security approach as a tool to maintain the status-quo, (3) several events of unrests (4) economic crisis (5) process of transfer of power from Sukarno to Soeharto (6) ABRI’s resentment
II	In the eye of the currency storm	(Mounting Incidents 1) To focus on the economic crisis, such as falling exchange rate, high prices, IMF helps, social unrest, ousting of Megawati, supports of reform
III	The Ides of March—good reason to be aware	(Mounting Incidents 2) To focus on Soeharto’s the seventh appointment as president, Habibie, vice president, followed by social unrests (pro-democracy), ABRI’s resentment, reformers speaking out to struggle.
IV	Pius blows the whistle	(Mounting Incidents 3) To focus on human right violation: kidnappings, missing people, further social unrests, calls for emergency session of MPR
V	Tragedy at Trisakti	(Mounting Incidents 4) To focus on further human right violation: killings, rapes, lootings ABRI divided: Pro-Prabowo and Pro-Wiranto (doubled faces), Amien’s Challenge to ABRI’ choice
VI	“I quit” says Soeharto	(Climax) Amien Rais’ and other reformists’ Struggle, Harmoko’s requesting President’s resignation, Soeharto’s attempts to cling to power (failed), Soeharto handed over power to Habibie
VII	Full Circle	(Resolution 1) To compare the transfer of power from Sukarno to Soeharto and from Soeharto to Habibie, Soeharto’s biggest mistake, Soeharto’s mismanagement of natural resources
VIII	The Habibie Government	(Resolution 2) Doubts over Habibie’s reform program, social unrests, agreement to give him a chance, Habibie’s strategies to convince people, appointment of ministers, preparation of a fair, multi-parties general election, release of political prisoners.
IX	One nation united	(Resolution 3) Habibie’s strategies to convince people, possible return of capital flight, fair treatment of ethnic Chinese
X	Many lids of many boxes	(Resolution 4) Demands for investigation of human right violation,

		Prabowo got sacked from the military
XI	Prognosis	(Ending/Recommendation) Release of more political prisoners, threats, opportunities, suggestions for investment

The above generic structure indicates how Mann organized event by event that led to the fall of Soeharto in rhetorical perspectives. The events indicate the ontogenetic development of the movement up to the fall of Soeharto. The eleven chapters are coherently tied together to make a unified whole. Within a paragraph, the sentences are cohesively tied employing well-structured cohesive devices.

### Macrostructure Analysis

Based on the above generic structure of Mann's PSBDS (Table 1), it is clear that Richard Mann's PSBDS is organized in 11 (eleven) chapters with 354 (three hundred and fifty-four pages) of which Chapter VI entitled "**I Quit**" says Soeharto is meant to be the climax, followed by Habibie's regime; and finally the book ends up in Chapter XI entitled PROGNOSIS.

The cover picture is President Soeharto in black suit, a white shirt with a grey necktie. Right on his chest is written the title of the book '**Plots and Scheme that brought down Soehato** (PSBDS) printed in red, below of which the author's name '**Richard Mann**' is printed on a red banner. The picture was printed by permission from the Courtesy of Sekretariat Negara, Government of the Republic of Indonesia. Behind his right shoulder is a Red and White National Flag of the Republic of Indonesia.

As illustrated by Gazelle Book Services Limited commented, the book has the following specifications:

**Title** : Plots and Schemes that Brought Down Soeharto  
**Author** : Richard Mann  
**ISBN** : 0921333706  
**Format** : Paperback  
**Size** : 145x210  
**Pages** : 354  
**Published by** : Gateway Books (UK)  
**List Price** : 9.99 Pounds Sterling  
**Availability** : In Print  
**Subjects** : Political leaders & leadership: Indonesia

(Gazelle Book Services Limited, Web: [www.gazellebooks.co.uk](http://www.gazellebooks.co.uk)).

Interestingly, on the back cover are, as I have mentioned earlier, printed Richard Mann's rhetorical questions which challenge people to (buy) and read the book:

Was President Soeharto toppled by student demonstration and people's power?

Or, was he brought down by the withdrawal of support from the United States? Had the outrageous business shenanigans of his family and the human rights record of his government become so shocking that US government felt it could no longer back him, much less give him financial bailouts[?] Was the US angry with Soeharto over the cancellation of military purchases and training and his turn instead to Russia? Was the truth that he had been evicted from the presidency by a combination of people's power and the power of the people's champion, the United States?

Or, was Soeharto's sudden fall brought about by the above plus large doses of Oriental plotting and scheming? Had the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of 1930s [1980?] coupled with bitter medicine from the IMF, pushed Soeharto into such a tight corner that he felt obliged to resort subterfuge to save Indonesia and his own position? Did he elements loyal to him deliberately provoke anarchic riots to demonstrate that IMF's policies were impossible to apply and to pave the way to a consolidation of power through a widespread political crackdown? Was his son-in-law pursuing agenda of his own? Aware that there would be no help or bailout for Indonesia under Soeharto, to save the state and the nation, did the military switch sides, backing reformists' demands that the ageing president step down?

(Printed on the outer back cover of Mann's PSBDS)

The above rhetorical questions have really stimulated people to read the book in order to know the answers to the questions. In Fairclough's term, it is a kind of commodification of discourse.

The answers to Richard Mann's rhetorical questions are presented along with the linguistic evidence quoted from PSBDS and other resources (as a means of triangulation) to justify the accuracy of the answers.

### **The True Story of Soeharto's Fall**

Actually, Richard Mann's rhetorical questions printed on the back cover of the book were actually meant for commercial purposes since potential readers would be encouraged to



'buy' and read the book. There are three paragraphs printed on the back cover of PSBDS each of which starts a rhetorical question as the topic sentence. The rhetorical question in Paragraph 2 are further elaborated by three other rhetorical questions. The rhetorical question in Paragraph 3 are further elaborated by four other rhetorical questions.

In this respect, the writer I would only deal with the rhetorical questions which are the topic sentences of the three paragraphs. The other rhetorical questions that elaborate the topic sentences are left unanswered since they are not significant and have been implicitly answered along with the analysis.

To facilitate the process of analysis, the three rhetorical questions are converted into statements of which the truth can be rejected or accepted by means of linguistic justification through critical reading of the book. Thus, the statements which are derived from the rhetorical questions are:

- (1) President Soeharto is toppled by student demonstrators and people power.
- (2) President Soeharto is brought down by the withdrawal of support from the United States.
- (3) President Soeharto's sudden fall is brought about by all the above plus large doses of Oriental plotting and scheming.

Each of the statements will be approached one by one in order to arrive at one unified answer. With respect to Statement 1 'President soeharto is toppled by student demonstration and people power, I think it is not true that President Soeharto was toppled by the student demonstration and people power. A representative example of student demonstration and people power is the case of Ferdinan Marcos who was forced out of office then flew to escape. President Soeharto constitutionally handed down 'power' to Vice-President Habibie. Thus, Statement 1 is rejected.

The rejection of Statement 1 is also supported by Suryakusuma. She wrote:

... People power has not emerged in Indonesia—it was not even really the students that brought down—romantic notion thought it may be. The withdrawal of support he [Soeharto] had formerly relied on made him realize his position was no longer tenable. It was surprising that the military did not seize the opportunity to stage a coup...(Suryakusuma 2004:17).

Of course, it is true that student demonstrators to some extent contributed to the reflection of social unrests indicating dissatisfaction over the Government's handling of monetary crisis and the wide-spread hegemonic practice of collusion, corruption and nepotism at all levels of governance. It was argued that '...Objectivity was everywhere replaced by subjectivity, connections and favouritism. Corruption, collusion and nepotism flourished as never before, from the largest deals involving the most powerful people right down to the smallest unit of government and social responsibility in the village...' (Mann 1998:7). Thus, it can be inferred that student demonstrators functioned as a prelude to the fall of Soeharto. Besides, student demonstrators were normally nullified by the security forces until the ultimate end of Soeharto Era where some of ABRI members took the students' (reformists') sides, letting the students occupy the Parliament Premises.

Statement 2 stating that 'President Soeharto is brought down by the withdrawal of support from the United States.' is also rejected. US's withdrawal of support only slowed down the process of bailing-out by IFM, which directly influenced the economic recovery. This, of course, to some extent, contributed to the occurrence of more sporadic riots, more criticisms, but not the fall of Soeharto. At this point, the government critics, the Parliament, Wiranto's group persuaded President Soeharto to constitutionally resign.

It is interesting to note that Wiranto was a kind of doubled faced. On the one hand, he seemed to support the reformists; on the other hand, he seemed to be loyal to Soeharto. He was very skilful in playing a 'wait and see' political game. It was argued that.

...He [Wiranto] soon appeared on television screens to say that the call for President Soeharto to resign from the House of Representatives faction leaders had "no legal basis" because they represented only themselves and not the Parliament. He called for planned mass demonstrations [led by Amien Rais] to be called off. The public was confused. Whose side was ABRI on? It looked as if Soeharto's time was up and as if ABRI supported the reformists but here was the ABRI commander apparently defending him!' (Mann 1998:241).

With respect to Wiranto's stance, a similar view was expressed by Suryakusuma. She wrote that 'People were stunned at Wiranto's statement [about Harmoko's request for Soeharto's resignation] as he [Wiranto] had been considered a populist and openly supportive of the people demands for reforms' (Suryakusuma 2004:13).

Thus, it can be inferred that US's withdrawal of support was another prelude to the fall of Soeharto. It is also supported by Suryakusma's commenting that '... However, external factors were also at play. The international market place had revenged the rupiah, plunging Indonesia into its worst economic crisis since Soeharto took charge' (Suryakusuma 2004:4).

Statement 3, combined preludes to the fall of Soeharto plus overdoses of Oriental Plotting and Scheming is also rejected. Had the oriental plotting and scheming been successful, Brabowo and his men would be able to take control of the country. He could have been the President until 2003 or at least the ABRI's high commander serving for President Habibie. The fact turned otherwise.

Since Saturday, overwhelming forces had been marshalled against the President. Wiranto's argument that it was impossible to against such a weight of public opinion now carried the day. ABRI's high command took the decision to ask President Soeharto to resign. Wiranto and his men were safe. The Soeharto/Prabowo loyalists were finally finished...(Mann 1998:248).

Furthermore, it was argued that 'General Wiranto publicly declared that ABRI was united in its approval of Soeharto's resignation and of the constitutional hand over of power to Habibie. The use of the word "united" pointed to a final defeat for Soeharto loyalists' (Mann 1998:249).

Upon the rejection of the three statements, the remaining question is by whom Soeharto was really brought down. Prior to answering the question, it is necessary to highlight what is meant by Oriental Plotting and Scheming. Luhulima wrote.

Soeharto memendam prasangka buruk bahwa Prabowo bersama-sama Habibie sedang menggagalkan persengkongkolan untuk menumbangkannya. Sebagaimana tradisi dalam riwayat raja-raja Mataram yang dikudeta oleh kalangan istana sendiri, maka "putra mahkota Prabowo agaknya tengah mengatur siasat untuk mendongkel sang raja (Luhulima 2001:135).

(Soeharto suspected that Prabowo together with Habibie had been engineering strategies to topple him. As, it had been traditionally applicable to kings of Mataram to be brought down by an individual within the palace, Prabowo seemed to be planning strategies to topple the king).

Luhulima (2001:135) continued to write, quoting Sumitro, that ‘... Tutut dan Mamiiek marah-marrah kepada Prabowo, “Kamu ke mana saja dan mengapa membiarkan mahasiswa menduduki Gedung MPR/DPR?” Prabowo dengan sengit balik bertanya apakah ia harus menembaki para mahasiswa itu! (...Tutut and Mamiiek scolded Prabowo “Where the hell have you been, and why did you let the students occupy the MPR/DPR Building? Prabowo angrily asked back whether he had to shoot the students dead!).

It was finally realized that Prabowo’s Plots did not work. According to Luhulima (2001:228-229), parts of the chronological orders as follows:

(Wednesday, May 20, 1998)

Hour: 21.50

Saadilah Mursjid masuk menemui Soeharto dan melaporkan bahwa Komite Reformasi belum bisa terbentuk. Lalu, Saadilah menyodorkan surat pernyataan ke-14 menteri itu kepada Pak Harto. Setelah membaca, Pak Harto langsung mengatakan “Kalau begitu saya berhenti.” Saat itu juga Pak Harto memerintahkan Saadillah untuk mempersiapkan agar pengunduran diri sebagai presiden sesuai dengan konstitusi. Rencana pengunduran diri Soeharto mulai tersebar.

(Saadilah Mursjid entered to meet Soeharto dan reported that Reform Committee had not yet been formed. Then, Saadilah submitted a letter of withdrawal statement by 14 ministers to Pak Harto. After reading it, Pak Harto directly declared “If that’s the case, I quit.” At the same time, Pak Harto ordered to arrange his resignation as President in accordance with the Constitution. Soeharto’s plan to resign soon became known all over.)

Thus, Richard Mann is very skilful. He launched rhetorical questions which encouraged potential readers to ‘buy’ and read the book. However, when the questions were turned into statements, they are all rejected. In fact, critical reading using intertextual framing has finally revealed that Soeharto’s resignation was due to the fact that nobody wanted to work with him. He failed to form the Reform Committee in addition to the withdrawal of 14 ministers under his cabinet and occupation of MPR/DPR building by group of students and pro-democracy activists.

Soeharto also realized that clinging to power at the moment would only destroy the nation and the people. He resigned from his presidency on May 21, 1998, very **solemnly, honourably and indeed constitutionally**. Richard Mann described the fall of Soeharto as follows:

President Soeharto agreed to go. At 9 am on Thursday, May 21, 32 years after coming to power, one of the world's longest serving leaders announced: "I quit." He had seen, he had taken advice, he had pondered, he tried to cling to power but, by the early hours of Thursday morning it must have been clear that his remaining could now lead only to the total destruction of his country—along the lines of the denouement of a Jame Bond movie. The prospect was for more riots, more destruction, more bloodshed and unspeakable suffering for jobless, penniless and hungry people. Around his birthplace villagers were dying of starvation'

In his resignation speech, referring obviously to the fact that no one would serve on the Reform Committee, to defections from the cabinet as well as the public position of ABRI and the Parliament, Soeharto said that it had become impossible for him to carry out his state duties. No one wanted to work with him...(Mann 1998:248-249).

It is therefore clear that Mann himself would answer "no" to all his own rhetorical questions. That is to say that all events were all preludes to one climax event: 'The failure to get his trusted people to work with (for) him.' However, it is important to highlight **what plots and schemes** Soeharto had planned to cling to power.

Over 30 years of power had indicated how skilful Soeharto was to cling to power. He had successfully executed his plots and schemes against President Sukarno, and from there on, he institutionally implanted his "vested ideology and interests " at all levels of his Government. Only in the seventh term of his presidency had Soeharto miscalculated and therefore made a number of blunders leading to his fall from presidency. It was argued that '...Soeharto's biggest mistake had been the unseating from the leadership of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) of Megawati Sukarnoputri' (Mann 1998:260). He simply miscalculated! In addition, upon GOLKAR's predictable victory in 1997, Soeharto had sought to pack its governing committee with family and cronies to ensure his re-election in March 1998. Again, he miscalculated ! It was further argued that.

Kepercayaan rakyat yang disampaikan Harmoko selaku Ketua Golongan Karya (Golkar), pada 19 Oktober 1997, menyebabkan Soeharto bisa dilantik kembali menjadi presiden, tetapi justru Harmoko selaku Ketua Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (MPR) yang harus menurunkan Soeharto sebagai presiden atas desakan rakyat (Artha 2007:182).

(The People's trust expressed by Harmoko as the Chairman of Golongan Karya (Golkar) on October 19, 1997 caused Soeharto to be reappointed the president, however, it was Harmoko as the Chairman of MPR (People's Consultative Assembly) who, upon pressure by the People, requested Soeharto to resign).

From the quotation above, it is clear how Soeharto felt betrayed by Harmoko who at first as the Chairman of Golkar supported Soeharto to accept the 7<sup>th</sup> term of presidency; but then Harmoko himself did otherwise, requesting Soeharto to resign upon pressure by the People. It was further argued that

Membaca lakon Soeharto ini, tampaknya kasihan sekali. Pertama, ia sudah tak lagi didampingi Tien Soeharto. Kedua, rakyat tiba-tiba tak lagi mempercayainya... Lantas siapa yang berbohong? Benarkah rakyat mempercayai Soeharto menjadi presiden atau Harmoko yang tidak jujur menyampaikan dan manipulasi dukungan? Ketika itu Soeharto mempercayakan kepada Ketua Golkar untuk mengecek, membuat kajian, penampungan Soeharto sebagai presiden lagi Soeharto bertanya, apakah benar penampungan aspirasi rakyat oleh Golkar (Artha 2007:183).

(Soeharto deserved to be pitied with respect to his life. First, he was no longer with his wife, Tien Soeharto. Second, the People suddenly did not trust him... Then, who lied? Was it true that the People trust Soeharto to be the President or Harmoko did not express honestly but engineered the data? At that time Soeharto authorized the Chairman of Golkar to investigate whether or not the People still wanted him to be the President again. Soeharto asked whether the People's aspiration viewed by Golkar was correct.

This is another evidence that Soeharto was really hurt when he had to step down from his Presidency. Therefore, he tried to hold his position to save himself, his family and his cronies from ruins. He also felt betrayed by Habibie as can be seen that

...He [Soeharto] shook hands with the new president and at the moment of doing so he must also have realized that Habibie knew this was going to happen, that his staunchest and most loyal supporter, his adopted son, had, like Brutus, finally turned against him. Habibie tried to talk to Soeharto but he was never forgiven and every approach was rebuffed' (Mann 1998:249).

In trying to cling to power, Soeharto was bidding to split and weaken the reform movement, dividing it between those who wanted immediate change and those who feared immediate change and would prefer a gradual transition (Mann 1998:235). Again he miscalculated. In fact he made the reformers all the more determined.

Another strategy which Amien Rais termed as ‘buying time’ was meant for Soeharto to cling to power. It was noted that ‘Amien Rais...most fiery and persistent critic slammed the President’s latest offer as another bid to buy time. He was quoted as saying: “His statement [about ‘soon’ general election and Reform Committee] shows that he is not willing to step down and that he’s ignoring the aspirations of his own people” (Mann 1998:235).

It was a good thing that nobody wanted to join the Reform Committee, including Dr. Murcholis Madjid, and that fourteen ministers signed a Statement of Withdrawal. **Then, Soeharto, a five-star general who had been in power for over thirty years finally resigned wisely and constitutionally owing to his plots and schemes that turned otherwise against him.**

### **Richard Mann’s Stance**

Despite being non-Indonesian national, Richard Mann is very knowledgeable about the Indonesia politic and economy as previously mentioned that he was in Indonesia during the month of May 1998 and at other critical times, and had drawn on 20 years association and knowledge of Indonesia as well as 30 years earlier publications about investment, business and tourism. He is actually a British political scientist and economist, author and publisher, specialising in Asian affairs, especially Indonesia.

However, in writing his PSBDS, Richard Mann had a vested interest and ideology influencing his rhetorical strategies (RSs). He presented a political propaganda worldwide— since the book was written in English. I assume that the book has been read by interested people all over the world. He posted a special marketing website to achieve high sales of the book. The book can be purchased via internet-shopping. With such a high-tech advertisement, it can even be inferred that Mann has performed institutional propaganda. It is argued that

In our society advertising is institutional propaganda at its most obvious level. It serves as a constant reminder that we are being bombarded with messages intended to bring us to a certain point of view (Jowett and O'Donnell 1986:149).

The point is that as it is propaganda, it is then necessary to read critically whatever information Richard Mann presented. It is further argued that '...and so we have to learn to cope with this enormous information overload' (Jowett and O'Donnell 1986:149). Thus, critical reading has now become important—that is to say, sorting out necessary information and leaving out the unnecessary one.

Despite being suspected of being a propagandist, one of his interesting rhetorical strategies is that Mann has positioned himself as an outside observer. The first person singular pronoun (I)—which would show 'subjectivity'—was not used throughout the book, and neither was the first person plural (we)—which would ask the readers to get involved in the discussion, and neither was the second person singular / plural—which would assume the readers to be the one(s) involved in the events around the fall of Soeharto. He employed a bird-eye-view in describing the events by mentioning names (actors), places, dates and other necessary data. Again it can be said that the book is meant for international readership.

Richard Mann's main vested interest and ideology can be seen from the diction he employed in describing the events. In terms of writing attitude, Soeharto's regime was negatively approached while the reformists were positively approached. Most importantly, Richard Mann wanted to show to persuasively the world that it was high time Soeharto's regime had ended. Those—he warned—interested in investment in Indonesia needed a clear road map of the economic and political problems and of the prospects immediately ahead.