

READERS' POSITIONING IN RECHARD MANN'S PLOTS AND SCHEMES THAT BROUGHT DOWN SOEHARTO (PSBDS): A STUDY ON INTERPERSONAL MEANINGS¹

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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 article tries to investigate the readers' positioning in Mann's Plots and Schemes that Brought Down Soeharto (PSBDS) with a view to describing the Appraisal system used in the textbook to achieve the desired interpersonal meanings, employing the analytical framework of Appraisal Theory (Martin and Rose 2003; White 1998), an extended mode of Halliday's Functional Grammar (1994) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (Eggins 1994). The study yields some rhetorical strategies (Strayers 2004) with which to align the readers. As well, the study pedagogically implies that readers should be aware of the writer's strategies as to what direction the readers are positioned in text, resulting in the importance of critical reading and cross-referencing in order to fully understand a text.

Key words: readers' positioning, interpersonal meanings, appraisal, rhetorical strategies

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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 and launched for international readership.

This study is intended to analyze the readers' positioning in Mann's PSBDS in order to come up with the rhetorical strategies which reflect the stance of the author of PSBDS with respect to the interpersonal meanings by means of the APPRAISAL theory (Martin and Rose 2003, White 1998).

DISCUSSION

A. Readers' Positioning

In order to know the readers' positioning employed by Mann, here is a sample of a paragraph.

Over the years a strong sense of injustice had developed among Indonesia's people, from many classes of walks of life. As the Soeharto years accumulated, morality and legality not only did not show any signs of improvement but in the eyes of many people, actually declined. Small benefits could be taken as easily from the hands of the poor as big benefits could be stripped capriciously from the rich, or perhaps taken from one set and given to another. Objectivity was everywhere replaced by subjectivity, connections and favoritism. Corruption, collusion and nepotism flourished as never before, from the largest deals involving the most powerful people down to the smallest unit of government and social responsibility in the villages. A sense that nobody was watching what went on in business or, if they were, that nobody really cared, led to the most blatant and dangerous manipulation of the business system as a whole, including banking. After Soeharto's fall, villagers were as fast in riding themselves of corrupt officials as were their sophisticated urban counterparts. In Jakarta, the capital, Soeharto had created a ruling elite and while they might decry the excesses of his family, there

were as many who feared his departure as those who prayed for it. Soeharto's network of patronage stretched through the bureaucracy, the military and into every corner of the casino of business. There were many with their own hefty stakes in the house that Pak Harto built. Intellectuals generally had no such stakes and could speak out (Mann 1998: 7-8)

This paragraph is an elaboration of what happened for decades as represented in the first sentence of the paragraph: "Over the years a strong sense of injustice had developed among Indonesia's people, from many classes of walks of life" with a textually marked theme 'Over the years' and a subject theme 'a strong sense of injustice'. There is also an amplifying force of attitude in the subject theme 'a strong sense of injustice'. It also serves as the main idea of the paragraph (topic sentence), thereby it is printed in bold-underlined. The next sentence "As the Soeharto years accumulated, morality and legality not only did not show any signs of improvement but in the eyes of many people, actually declined". further elaborates what is meant by 'injustice.' It is represented by the theme-rheme2 structure morality and legality "not only did not show any signs of improvement but in the eyes of many people, actually decline". which is overshadowed by the theme-rheme1 structure (As) the Soeharto years accumulated, with the textual function of 'As' put between brackets.

The finite verb 'declined' is attitudinally amplified by an appreciating lexical item 'actually'. This will lead the readers to believe Mann's strong statement as 'true' without reserve.

The next sentence "Small benefits could be taken as easily from the hands of the poor as big benefits could be stripped capriciously from the rich, or perhaps taken from one set and given to another" is another supporting detail, which describes what kind of 'decline' performed by Soeharto's regime. The words "easily" and "capriciously" are attitudinal lexical items which, in APPRAISAL system, gives appreciation to the actions. The use of passive voice also indicates that Mann wants to hide the known agent by focusing on the object of discussion.

This supporting detail is further emphasized by the next sentence "Objectivity was everywhere replaced by subjectivity, connections and favouritism." in which — in APPRAISAL system referred to as

“generalized”— the word “everywhere” gives a special force to the statement. This sentence is elaborated by another sentence “Corruption, collusion and nepotism flourished as never before, from the largest deals involving the most powerful people down to the smallest unit of government and social responsibility in the villages” only to justify the attitudinal lexis “everywhere”.

The next sentence “A sense that nobody was watching what went on in business or, if they were, that nobody really cared, led to the most blatant and dangerous manipulation of the business system as a whole, including banking” justifies morality decline, especially represented by the negative evaluation the most blatant and dangerous manipulation of the business system as a whole, including banking. This kind of evaluation is meant to lead the readers to further give a negative judgment to Soeharto's regime.

Most interestingly, after exposing the situation during Soeharto's regime, Mann proceeded to exposing the situation after the fall of Soeharto by presenting the next sentence “After Soeharto's fall, villagers were as fast in riding themselves of corrupt officials as were their sophisticated urban counterparts.” with a clear new theme After Soeharto's fall and the theme (news) “villagers were as fast in riding themselves of corrupt officials as were their sophisticated urban counterparts”. Further intensified reasoning was presented in the next sentence In Jakarta, the capital, “Soeharto had created a ruling elite (and while) they might decry the excesses of his family, there were as [many who// feared his departure as those who// prayed for it.]”

The next sentence “Soeharto's network of patronage stretched through the bureaucracy, the military and into every corner of the casino of business” presents another interpersonal contribution with the use of the connotative meanings of lexical items functioning in the group, such as in “Soeharto's network of patronage”, and “every corner of the casino of business”. Such metaphoric uses of words contribute directly to a negative attitude toward Soeharto's regime. The concluding sentence of this paragraph is “There were many with their own hefty stakes in the house that Pak Harto built. Intellectuals generally had no such stakes and could speak out.” which functions as further restatement of the previous sentences in which there form two groups of 'pros' and 'cons' to the fall of Soeharto.

There is one attitudinal type of Epithet that is the word “hefty” which modifies the word “stakes”. This further contributes to a negative evaluation of Soeharto's regime and at the same time aligns the readers to think negatively toward President Soeharto. By so doing, the readers are encouraged to read more in order to find out the plots and schemes that toppled down Soeharto from his over 30 year-long lucrative presidential position. The following table will clarify.

Lexical items	Type of Evaluation	Type of Alignment
Soeharto's network of patronage (<i>grammatical metaphor</i>)	NEGATIVE: to indicate dictatorship of Soeharto's regime	The readers are aligned to believe that Soeharto is a dictator
stretched	NEGATIVE: to indicate strong movement of action	The readers are convinced by the fact of Soeharto's strong movement of action
The bureaucracy, the military, and every corner of casino of business (<i>grammatical metaphor</i>)	NEGATIVE: to indicate that nothing can escape from his control	Soeharto's excessive power reigns everyone, everything, including the readers (if they are Indonesian)
The paragraph is concluded as		
There were many with their own hefty stakes in the house that Pak Harto built.	NEGATIVE: to indicate that Soeharto and his cronies have piled up a huge sum of money.	The readers are supposed to be astonished at fact of the over-corrupt government
Intellectuals generally had no such stakes and could speak out.	POSITIVE towards reformists	The readers are given some hope of the possible struggle against Soeharto's hegemony.

Table 1:
Readers' Alignment

The next two paragraphs are worth analyzing in terms of microstructure so as to discover the readers' positioning. The paragraphs go as follows:

<1>From the Government's point of view, no price had apparently been too high to pay for political and social stability, including the use of overt and clandestine brute force—against political opponents, against workers asking for at least a living wage or even against peasant farmers to protect their land from developers. <2>Members of any of these categories often ended up branded as “subversive.”

<1>The New Order Government was generally believed to be capable of just about anything in the name of 'Development,' 'Stability' and 'Unity.' <2>The requirements of 'development' often seen as only making a handful of Government-backed rich richer, usually overrode all other considerations; the quests for stability at all cost usually meant the capping of all debate hostile to Government and the determination to maintain a unitary republic led to war conditions in three provinces. What was known as the “security approach” to politics ensured that everybody, everywhere towed the New Order line or paid a high price for disobedience (Mann 1998: 8).

The readers are aligned or framed into a thought that Soeharto was a dictator by means of the two paragraphs above. This can be seen from Sentence <1>. First of all, the use of a marked theme and subject theme “From the Government's point of view, no price” indicates the focus of talk, that is the Government's point of view. The subject theme “no price” indicates what is going to be the issue. The Rheme (News) “had apparently been too high to pay for political and social stability, including the use of overt and clandestine brute force” clearly indicates the Government's viewpoint. As well, the use of attributive attitudinal phrase “overt and clandestine brute” indicates a negative attitude toward the Government, and at the same time leads the readers to believe in the author's judgment about Soeharto's regime.

Sentence <2> of this paragraph which, in APPRAISAL terms of JUDGMENT is labelled as 'social sanction' presents consequences (attitude: affect) for a disobedient group of communities, plainly stated in a normal thematic structure.

Sentence <1> of the second paragraph functions as the main idea of the paragraph. A main idea is predictive in terms of what follows next. Thus,

the readers are led or encouraged to go on reading so as to have a complete comprehension of how hegemony in Soeharto's regime had been negatively maintained.

In APPRAISAL respect termed as ENGAGEMENT, it is apparently clear that Richard Mann ignored the diversity of view-points and negotiated an interpersonal space or as White (1998) terms it as 'generalise' by using a modal 'generally' in a passive voice proposition — indicating hidden agent. Another hedging phrase “just about anything” creates further distance with the readers.

As analyzed above, it seems that Mann tried to be balanced in evaluation of attitude. Mann's attitudes towards Soeharto's regime can be tabulated below.

Kind of Attitude	Positive	Negative
Judgement	<p><1> <i>undoubtedly</i> <2> <i>a reaffirmation that he was still Indonesia's favorite son, that the mandate of power was still his</i> <3> <i>a unanimous, resounding mandate</i></p>	<p><1> <i>the target of an unprecedented barrage of demands to resign or retire</i> <2> <i>a disaster</i> <3> <i>worn out</i> <4> <i>cut from under his critics' feet</i></p>
Appreciation	<p><1> <i>informal sounding-out of</i></p>	<p><1> <i>the most fundamental criticisms</i></p>
Affect	<p><1> <i>accepted</i> <2> <i>secured</i></p>	

Table 2:
Mann's Attitudes towards Soeharto's regime

A. Rhetorical Strategies

With respect to the rhetorical strategies employed in Mann's PSBDS, it is necessary to link the above findings on readers' positioning to the perspective of critical reading.

A critical reader will not easily jump to infer that Mann's attitudes towards Soeharto's regime is really positive. This is due to the fact that he used what is termed as 'counter-expectation'. It can be seen from the use of implicit conjunction as indicated below.

The President was undoubtedly looking forward to the March election. [but] He had been the target of an unprecedented barrage of demands to resign or retire and his Government subjected to the most fundamental criticisms. [and therefore] What he needed was a reaffirmation that he was still Indonesia's favourite son, that the mandate of power was still his. [meanwhile] His nomination was already assured and the Armed Forces had specifically said that their informal sounding-out of opinion at grass-roots level across Indonesia indicated that this was the choice most people wanted. [moreover] Not only could the President be assured of re-election but his nominee for vice president, B.J. Habibie, had been accepted by all factions [however] The foreign media were saying that President Soeharto had worn out his welcome and that as vice president, Minister Habibie would be a disaster. [moreover] If the president now secured a unanimous, resounding mandate for a new five-year term, some of the ground would be cut from under his critics' feet, at home and abroad.

Mann's use of positive attitudes toward Soeharto's regime anticipates the use of negative attitudes, defaming the Government. This type of rhetorical strategy is termed as downplayer. Thus, this is Rhetorical Strategy No. 1 (RS-1) identified, as downplayer (RS-1). The following three paragraphs represent the moments approaching the fall of Soeharto, a strong man of more than 30 years in absolute power over millions of Indonesian people.

<1>Some hotels especially near the airport, were booked solid—in effect, with refugees. <2>Others were doing business than they would normally—thanks to the rush of ethnic Chinese and foreigners to get out of the way of the massive pro-democracy demonstrations expected to roll through the week in an attempt to force the resignation of President Soeharto and his Government. <3>Convoys of cars moved incessantly toward international

airport, bearing away capital, purchasing power and skills so badly needed in Indonesia. <4>Wednesday was clearly D-Day.' Those who could escape.

<1>Those who elected to stay behind and who felt threatened turned their homes into personal fortresses and avoided non-essential travel. <2>Barricades were up in ethnic Chinese neighborhood and the men were as armed as it was possible to be—sticks, bats, golf clubs, iron bars, machetes. <3>Schools, universities, shops, offices—all were to be closed from Wednesday onward. <4> Everyone was extra vigilant.

<1>Amien Rais had said he would bring millions of pro-democracy activists. <2>The students had said "We are going to march." <3>The capital was anything but 'normal.' <4>On Wednesday, the 'people' were coming. <5>With whom would they stop? <6> Where would they stop? With what would they stop? <7>What would it be like? <8>What would the targets be? <9>Would it be just speeches? <10>Or would an angry, throbbing, frenzied human tide seek to tear down the President and the Parliament and install a provisional president and assembly in their stead? Would the military stand back? <11>Or would they resist the tide? <12>Could there really be a second Tiananmen Square in Jakarta? (Mann 1998: 230).

From the three paragraphs, it is clear that Mann attempted to describe the hectic situation in Jakarta. In the first paragraph for example one event was described after another, and another to give the image that the events actually occurred at the same time. As well, implicit conjunctions were used in order for the event to stand out from the others.

Sentence <1> (first paragraph) was written to respond to the previous paragraphs describing the chaos of Jakarta. It is therefore a kind of 'cause ^ effect' relationship. The readers will be aligned to emotionally think about the effect of the Jakarta chaos—fully booked hotels.

Mann, used 'vague language' (appraisal term) in Sentence <2>. In his vague language, Mann challenged the readers to find out who "others" were; and what was meant by 'better business' which was due to 'the rush of ethnic Chinese and foreigners to get out of the way of the massive pro-democracy demonstrations expected to roll through the week in an attempt

to force the resignation of President Soeharto and his Government'. Such a rhetorical strategy to protect a claim from criticism is referred to as weaslers (SR-2).

Mann left this mystery to the readers to guess since he continued the paragraph by presenting Sentence <3> which actually describes the scene of escaping refugees along with their wealth. However, critical readers soon identify that Sentence <1> and Sentence <2> actually give a clue to answering the mystery that "Hotel owners and car rentals might have doubled their revenues due to the chaotic situation. Sentence <4> 'Wednesday was clearly D-Day.'" "Those who could escape." ended up the paragraph. This sentence, be it done on purpose or not, violates the traditional grammar rule. If it was, then Mann wanted to draw more attention from the readers; if it was not, then Sentence 3 should be re-written as "Wednesday was clearly D-Day (for) those who could escape."

The second paragraph launches a main idea "Those who elected to stay behind and who felt threatened turned their homes into personal fortresses and avoided non-essential travel." in order to present another type of group of people. In the first Paragraph, there are two types of group of people, namely 'those who escaped as refugees, and those who doubled revenues in business', have been identified.

The main idea in the second paragraph is further enhanced with a supporting sentence <2> only to show that Mann described a group of ethnic Chinese who preferred staying to escaping. In terms of Attitude (of APPRAISAL system), a number of tools that were used can be appreciated as representing wealthy people. Such a rhetorical strategy is termed as dysphemism (RS-3) in which Mann used words to express negative attitudes.

At the same time, Mann also provided other important information in Sentence <3> as an approach to restating a situation in Sentence <4> (the last) of the Paragraph, which in APPRAISAL system is referred to as generalized-positive judgement which belongs to a rhetorical strategy of innuendo (RS-4) which suggestively means negative attitudes.

Furthermore, Mann argued why "Everyone was extra vigilant" in the third Paragraph launching Sentence <1> as another main idea for the rest of

the paragraph. It is further enhanced by Sentence <2> which varies in the lexico-grammatical choice, i.e., 'quoting', a verbal process of parataxis.

Sentence <3> provides an environmental engagement (of APPRAISAL system) in which the word "normal" written in a single quotation marks may ironically means 'not normal'. Or, it is also possible to infer that by normal is meant normal chaos as usual in Jakarta prior to the fall of Soeharto. This is another euphemistic rhetorical strategy called euphemism (RS-5).

Sentence <4> restates the D-Day. The word "people" written in a single quotation marks means people of pro-democracy. Mann ended up the third paragraph <3> in ten rhetorical questions to encourage or rather persuade the readers to go on reading the textbook in order to find out the answers to the ten rhetorical questions. Such a strategy of rhetoric is called loaded questions (RS-6) in which Mann used rhetorical questions that will be answered by himself in the description that follows.

Another RS that Mann used is "horse laugh"(RS-7). He used a particular word for the meaning of 'other' meaning (intended to ridicule) in negative sense as shown in the following (part of) paragraph:

Military leaders said that they would talk to the students as "equal partners" in Indonesia's development process. Minister of Defense and Security, Armed Forces Commander, General Wiranto, was quoted as saying: "The dialogue is of national importance for mutual understanding." In the event the students refused to take part (Mann 1998: 123).

The use of the phrase "equal partners" indicates that Richard Mann used "horse laugh" with respect to the word "equal". Actually the intended meaning of the word is the opposite (not equal). It can be justified by the use of double quotation marks and the course of history of the Armed Forces, which is never equal to any institution. As everybody realizes, during the Soeharto's era, the Armed Forces are considered more superior and somehow repressive to any 'move' against the current hegemony, all under the powerful umbrella of 'stability'. It is also further justified by the next sentence 'In the event the students refused to take part', which is also clear in the students' opinions that it is never going to be equal.

To sum up, I will outline and further describe the RSs used by Richard Mann in the following table, noting that I prefer to separate euphemism from dysphemism, rather than a combined one as proposed by Strayers (2004).

No	Strategy	ID #	Purpose
1	Downplayer	RS-1	To diminish the Government with respect to any effort to restore order
2.	Weaslers	RS-2	To play with words to protect claims from criticism (hedging) especially when Mann was not sure about particular information.
3	Dysphemism	RS-3	To argue negatively with people, actions, and things.
4	Innuendo	RS-4	To suggest negatively by means of positive values
5	Euphemism	RS-5	To cover with words something negative in such a way that it sounds good
6	Loaded questions	RS-6	To motivate or challenge the readers to read more
7	Horse laugh	RS-7	To ridicule any 'democratic' solution offered by the Government so as to remain in power

Table 3:
The Rhetorical Strategies Used in Richard Mann's PSBDS

With the above rhetorical strategies, Mann attempted, as far as he could to align the readers into a particular ideological belief of what he had presented, claiming that whatever he offered to the readers would be nothing but facts. If opinions happened to be presented, they must have undergone justification or at least they were the opinions of trustworthy people. However, the aligned readers are free to re-act to his writing. Upon completion of reading Mann's PSBDS, however, a critical reader should have found out President Soeharto resigned from his presidency, solemnly honorably and indeed constitutionally as also supported in Suryakusuma saying that "it was not even really the students that brought down" (2004: 17). Secondly, "US' withdrawal of support... contribute ...but not the fall of Soeharto" (Purwanto 2007:254). Thirdly, "ABRI's high command took the decision to ask President Soeharto to resign" (Mann 1998:248). Thus, the

above facts negate Richard Mann's own rhetorical questions purposefully launched for marketing purposes. Richard Mann is a skillful author.

CONCLUSION

The writer has so far described how Richard Mann used seven rhetorical strategies (in Strayer's terms, 2004) to align the readers into a negative attitude toward President Soeharto's regime, and positive attitude towards the reformists' movements to justify Mann's stance. However, whatever strategies have been employed, the textbook, Mann's PSBDS (1998), supported by other resources, finally concludes that the Five Star General Soeharto resigned from Presidency honorably and constitutionally. This study, therefore, supports the importance of critical reading (CR) in order for readers to be aware of how they are positioned within a text.

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