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## Looking for Recognition: Mimicry as a Strategy for Equality Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Jejak Langkah*

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## Looking for Recognition: Mimicry as a Strategy for Equality in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Jejak Langkah*

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### Abstract

*This research investigates mimicry as a postcolonial strategy for achieving equality in Toer's *Jejak Langkah*, drawing on Bhabha's theoretical framework. This research examines how the pribumi strategically use mimicry within the Dutch East Indies to negotiate power. *Jejak Langkah* reveals multiple layers of how mimicry operates across colonial society. From a colonial power discourse, mimicry appears at the societal level in the adoption of colonial model shaping education and political structures. At the community level, it emerges through patterns of interaction with one another. At the personal level, it is reflected in the choice of attire, style, and cultural expression. This research argues that mimicry is not merely imitation or cultural submission but an elaborate strategy used by the colonized to be perceived as an equal. Through Minke's transformation, Toer symbolizes how the pribumi adopt the culture of the colonizer to gain recognition and authority. This interpretation exposes mimicry not only as a sign of defeat but also a larger approach born out of necessity within colonial society. The findings contribute to postcolonial studies by examining how the pribumi characters navigate cultural dynamics within the colonial environment and how mimicry becomes a tool for survival, recognition, and liberation from oppression. This led to a better understanding of the social context and how conflict emerges within the Dutch East Indies. The findings suggest the use of mimicry is not one-dimensional but layered to serve a means and purpose for the colonized.*

**Keywords:** colonized; colonizer; mimicry; pribumi

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## Introduction

Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Jejak Langkah* follows the story of Minke, a *pribumi* of Javanese descent who began his education as a doctor under the Dutch East Indies colonial institution. During his study, he began his experience with his encounter with various intellectuals from different social and cultural backgrounds. Influenced by this encounter, Minke's ideology of equal rights for all human beings later on creates a demand for justice for his fellow people. His efforts to be recognized as an equal could be determined from his ideas, manner of speaking, and attire. *Pribumi*, under the framework of the Dutch East Indies colonial government, is seeing a new historical age. With the development and expansion of new education and political opportunities, the given room creates an identity gap, which ultimately leads to the emergence of mimicry.

Post-colonial theory of Homi K. Bhabha's (1994) concept of mimicry is a way to imitate both sounds, color, shape, and other aspects. It is also described as "almost the same, but not quite" suggests that the colonized do not imitate the colonizer completely identical. On the other hand, mimicry arises from the lack of access granted to the *pribumi* by the Dutch colonial government. At the same time, the Dutch held their culture as superior and above the *pribumi*. This condition creates a paradox in the context of colonial government in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, where a rigid class system based on ethnicity existed.

Through the Dutch Ethical Policy, the Dutch colonial government creates a system that is modeled after the European institutions. This creates the limited possibility for the *pribumi* to use and access the Dutch instrument, for instance: education, Western clothing, and political space. This condition facilitates the environment in which mimicry is used by *pribumi* to access that recognition and equality. However, this binary opposition will be maintained by the colonizer to reinforce the idea that European colonizers are superior, intelligent, and civilized, while representing the *pribumi* as the "Other" (Bhabha, 1994; Abdullah & Rabbani, 2022).

The discussion about mimicry has attracted various academic attention and discussions in studying *Jejak Langkah* and other Pram's works that highlight the result of cultural encounters between colonizer and colonized. Hardiningtyas (2018), for instance, finds some forms of cultural assimilation products resulting from the interracial interactions between the Dutch colonizers and Indonesian *pribumi* in Toer's *Buru Quartet*, particularly in the form of mimicry. Similarly, another study by Dermawan and Santoso (2017) demonstrates how mimicry is utilized by the *pribumi* as a strategy to fight against the Dutch colonial authority through knowledge, artistic expression, and language system. The third related study conducted by Asyafi et al. (2020) highlight five phenomena of mimicry, namely: mimicry of language, transportation tools, lifestyle, art, and dress style. Lastly, Nensilianti et al. (2024) unveiled Minke's resistance toward achieving Indonesian independence is expressed not only through physical struggle but also intellectual struggle.

Based on the related studies mentioned above, this present research examines the *pribumi* perspective on mimicry, which has not been discussed further by the other researchers. Despite these valuable scholarly contributions, these related studies primarily focus on mimicry as a cultural strategy to resist the oppression of the Dutch colonizer. Moreover, they have not clearly discussed how mimicry was performed from the perspective of *pribumi* in colonial structure. Importantly, the ways in which mimicry functions on a personal level is still underexplored. This niche leaves a gap of the study in how the colonized imitate colonizer's culture not merely to negotiate their identity but also to survive the colonial system.

This reform led to the *pribumi's* ability to access instruments that were exclusively controlled by the Dutch colonial government before. This new benefit is then used by the *pribumi's* intellectual class to determine their rights as human beings. The *pribumi* in *Jejak Langkah* are exhibiting their agency and attempting to get recognition. By examining mimicry on multiple layers, this research aims to answer two questions: "How is mimicry identified in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Jejak*

Langkah?” “In what way does mimicry operate at the structural, communal, and personal levels in Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s *Jejak Langkah*?”

## Methodology

This research is a descriptive qualitative method, with a data collection method of documentation. The data consist of textual evidence from Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s (1996) *Footsteps*. This library study tried to unveil how colonial power was resisted through Minke’s act of imitation. Through close reading, the evidence was analyzed using a postcolonial lens to expose the Dutch’s colonial hegemonic power.

In the analysis process, the passage that illustrates mimicry within the novel was highlighted using Homi K. Bhabha’s theory to unveil the oscillation that draws Minke between colonial authority and *pribumi* resistance. In this discourse, mimicry is an important postcolonial concept that shows how colonial and colonial relations are dynamic (Anantama et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Sociological theory was the secondary theory that frames and contextualizes this research. By applying this framework, this study aimed to uncover how Minke’s mimicry works as a weapon to make a stand against the oppressive colonial force (Wibisono et al., 2018). The formulation of the data was divided into two parts, namely: general identification and societal context.

## Results and Discussion

Bhabha, H. K. (1984) denotes a term called “almost the same, but not quite.” The characteristic of this term is a colonized subject adopting the colonizer’s items, such as institutions, culture, attire, etc. This happens while they are still living in an unequal, structured society (Toer, 1996). Minke is depicted as a native who wears European clothing. Minke’s appearance showcases that “almost the same, but not quite” serves as symbolic capital within colonial society. This also highlighted the benefit of “almost the same, but not quite” for it gave limited

privilege, functional perks, and recognition. This research focuses on identifying benefits from mimicry, specifically “almost the same, but not quite,” and looks deeper into the context in which the mimicry happens in all layers of the colonial society, for instance: personal, communal, and structural levels.

### 1. Mimicry as a Strategy for Recognition

Guerin et al. (2011) state that colonized people often imitate their oppressors by adopting their languages, clothing, or religions. Mimicry or the imitation towards the oppressors then created implications for the emergence of the local genius to confront the Dutch influence (Wardani, 2019). Therefore, to discuss the manifestations of mimicry, this section highlights the process of mimicry in imitating Western culture, particularly in the use of European clothing, language, and technology.

#### a. The Adoption of European Clothing

In *Footsteps*, Minke adopts European clothing, which is an open strategy for recognition in the colonial social hierarchical system. When the native’s culture is devalued, “they abandon (or hide) their own cultural practices to adopt (imitate) those of the assumedly ‘superior’ one” (Dobie, 2002). By imitating this cultural marker, Minke also attempts to negotiate his identity in the “third space,” which functions as a strategy to fight the Dutch colonizer (Wibisono et al., 2018). As it is highlighted by Bhabha (1994), the in-between space allows two cultures to be intertwined, interacted, and continuously negotiated. The interaction and the meeting of these two cultures later produces hybrid culture and identity (Wardani & Widyahening, 2020).

On the other hand, in this liminal space, the colonized does not only imitate the culture of the colonizer but also shifts the colonial symbol to challenge the dominant culture. Furthermore, Brameswari et al. (2022) claim that this space illustrates how the colonized try to negotiate their position and to resist the more powerful forces. This dynamic can be seen in the following textual evidence.

That's him, Minke, the "modern man"! Yes, that's him, sitting there in the corner by himself. That one, with the beginnings of a mustache, but his chin still bare. Yes, that's him all right, the Native who prefers European clothes, who carries on like a *sinyo*. He even travels in "white class" first class (Toer, 1996, p. 13).

The passage above illustrates that Minke is being singled out by others for wearing Western clothing. The text also shows that mimicry provides privilege, which is shown through Minke who is traveling in the first-class carriage. This class is typically reserved for European passengers. It gives more benefits at the cost of paying extra. Minke riding in the first class proves that Mimicry is being utilized for the native benefit. This benefit could be pragmatic and could be for greater recognition. By occupying the space for Europeans, Minke has disrupted the rigid European social order that separates the ruling class from the *pribumi*. His appropriation of Western culture also represents the strategic form of mimicry where he tries to negotiate the acceptance from the colonizer.

The clothing is also an angle that could be observed. Minke is wearing Western clothing, which also proves that this appearance mimicry gave a benefit to the native. Minke is known for his clothing, which highlighted that clothes give recognition. Furthermore, this finding aligns with Asyafi et al. (2020), who argue that the use of European clothing functions as a marker of social identity, reflecting his social status as an educated *pribumi* and his alignment with European cultural norms.

Under mimicry theoretical framework, this passage depicts Bhabha's "almost the same, but not quite" notion. There is a disapproving tone toward Minke's attire and choices, which reveals how his mimicry destabilized European's cultural hegemony when the cultures were being appropriated. On the other hand, this mimicry also generates discomfort since Minke appropriates European culture, which prevents him from being fully accepted as part of European culture. This ambivalence uncovers unstable

colonial authority as the colonized simultaneously reproduces European cultural hegemony.

Even if that were the truth about modern cities, I still considered myself a modern man, among the most advanced of the age. You don't want to be involved with progress? Then you must accept being trampled into dust (Toer, 1996, p. 16).

The quotation above reflects Minke's internal thought as he suggests that progress is necessary for people. He monologued his observation when he saw the Gambir train station. This depicts how Minke embraces European culture as a survival strategy to avoid the colonizer's oppression and marginalization. This moment also shows how Minke associates modernity with technological progress and embraces it to avoid "being trampled into dust" (Toer, 1996, p. 16). In addition, his belief depicts how western modernity and the advancement of European values is his claim to be a "modern man".

Minke's realization is pointing out that progression is necessary for adaptation and represents the native progression. They realize that adaptation and mimicry are not necessary as the act of imitation but functions for them to survive from the Dutch marginalization. This cultural endorsement mirroring the ambivalence of embracing European culture, which leads to the dilemma in the assimilation of the two cultures (Wedhowerti, 2023).

Furthermore, the use of European clothing by *pribumi* to imitate the colonizer cannot change their stereotype as the colonized (Lestari, 2016). The argument: "You don't want to be involved with progress? Then you must accept being trampled into dust" (Toer, 1996, p. 13). This highlights the urgency to survive for the native population.

Back at the school, angry and offended, I went into the room and...farewell to you all, my European clothes! First, my shoes, my trousers, my stockings. In place of my felt hat was the *destar*. I hadn't worn a *destar* for years. My honored feet, once clothed in

shoes and stockings, were now chicken claws in their nakedness. (Toer, 1996, p. 18).

Minke is pictured as departing from his European clothing. The specific clothing that he regrets departing is his shoes. This is necessary because the medical school policy requires the student to wear their native clothing. Minke mentioned that his feet are naked like a chicken's.

This points to the pragmatic effect of European clothing. The functionality is shown when Minke mentions that it covers his feet. This also provides some kind of status, the sentiment to *pribumi* who study in the medical school without their shoes and stockings (Toer, 1996, p. 18) shows that as Javanese they must be barefoot. Thus, shoes are employed as a status mediator and item for recognition.

This highlights "almost the same, but not quite" will be. Minke attempts to be recognized as a modern man, but is disapproved of for he is still seen as a *pribumi* in European clothing, not as a fellow human being. As also stated by Faruk (2001) that when the colonized try to imitate and build the same characteristic, the colonizer will try to maintain the differences.

"Perhaps he's legally Dutch, a *londo godong*." Someone else offered his opinion. "He owns only European clothes!" (Toer, 1996, p. 20).

The passage shows a moment when Minke is confronted by bullies at the Medical school. One student assumes Minke is legally *European*. The reasoning for this assumption is from Minke's possession on European clothing. This shows how Minke has blurred the binary between the modern and traditional, the civilized and the backward, the Dutch colonizer and the colonized *pribumi* (Bhabha, 1994).

This highlights the importance of European attire in the Dutch East Indies' social context. Minke's ownership of European attire shows that it provides recognition. Thus, the application of colonial items provides the native a tool to be recognized as an equal.

They all wore Native dress. It was only the Menadonese and Indos who wore European clothes. The Javanese and Sundanese were different only in the kind of *destars* they wore. There was only one Malay; he wore a *songkok* and a short *sarong*. The *destars* were in the majority (Toer, 1996, p. 22).

Minke's analysis exposes the social standing based on the attire of a certain group. The group that must be highlighted is the *Indos and Manadonese*. They have the privilege of wearing European clothing. Thus, give them certain statuses comparable to the native who must use their local attire, for instance: *destar*.

This highlights the importance of status and a colonial item like European attire, adopted at the communal and individual levels. The use of Western clothing depicts colonial culture as a marker of prestige within *pribumi* communities. As a result, this example strengthens this research argument that natives are using the employment of mimicry to gain their own benefit and find the colonizer's recognition.

"A time of great natural calamities, he said, and a time of great decadence and destruction among the Native communities wherever the Dutch were not in control.... And so the Natives lost all their healers and there was nobody to take their place...and so the people of Java fell victim to the thousands of parasites that inhabit the equatorial region. So now the government, as an act of goodwill, is providing you all the opportunity to work for humanity, to fight these diseases, to lighten the suffering of the sick..." (Toer, 1996, p. 41).

The quotation shows the conversation between Minke and Partokleooo. They talk about doctors' contributions in the Dutch East Indies. They talk about the native population. The argument is that the native people lack healers who could help from parasites and sickness. Thus, the doctors from the Dutch-educated system play a huge role in combating the sickness.

This highlights the significance of mimicry in the colonial narratives. The urgency of

addressing sickness and its evolution is significant for the *pribumi* in combating them using effective medical knowledge. This proves that mimicry serves the *pribumi* population in providing them with items to combat the unknown in this context, an unfamiliar health problem. Thus, mimicry helps the *pribumi* to gain more access and adopt Western medical materials, procedures, and knowledge to overcome the diseases.

In this case, mimicry enables the natives to adopt colonial medical practices and resources that help them confront unfamiliar health problems. Therefore, mimicry functions as a strategic means through which the native population gains access to knowledge and materials necessary to combat previously unknown diseases.

#### **b. The Adoption of European Culture and Language**

The adoption of European culture and language can be seen as a form of mimicry that emerges from the colonizer's education system. Through this process, the colonized are encouraged to embrace new identities that lead them to fight the colonizer by using the colonizer's knowledge and intellectual framework (Bhabha, 1994; Wibisono et al., 2018). The following excerpt highlights how mimicry operates in this act of resistance.

The Natives of the Indies have only been using them for a little while. They started copying the Dutch. Everything pleasant brought in by the Dutch is immediately copied, especially by those cotton-brained priyayi. The English laughed at the Dutch for using the *guling* (Toer, 1996, p. 43).

The quotation above highlights *guling*. The story is about how *guling* first entered the Dutch East Indies, the functionalities, and the importance of such items to the native population. This is shown through the way the bolster is adopted and used following its arrival in and introduction to the Indies. This finding aligns with Artawan and Yasa (2015) as well as Cahyono and Ratnawati (2018), who argue that mimicry functions as an act of resistance against Dutch colonizer authority.

The following example strengthens the argument that mimicry could be beneficial for the *pribumi* population. The adoption of colonial items proved their values for the *pribumi* in everyday life. In this context, the benefits of these items serve as comfort and convenience for the *pribumi* population. This is not only a symbolic action but also an effective strategy in which the *pribumi* can improve the quality of their living conditions.

Most of the students had to study Dutch, except for me and two others. On the other hand, we were obliged to learn one of the regional languages. I chose Malay. I was also freed from studying English, German, and French. I had no chance to do any writing. (Toer, 1996, p. 44).

The excerpt above shows exposition on language in the medical school. The Dutch language is shown as a must-learn language to study for students. There is also an obligation for them to learn regional languages, namely: Malay and other European languages, and the others languages are English and French.

The evidence highlights how mimicry in the context of language helps the native. Through this process, the native population could develop deeper understanding of colonial items and cultural practices and acquire more knowledge from the adoption of colonial language. This also works if the native wants to express themselves in the colonial languages.

There was a more fundamental reason—every student needed a family. There he could get out of his traditional clothes, change into European clothes, and become a *sinyo* once again. In European clothes, we could wander wherever we wanted, neutral in identity, especially when chasing after the *nyai* (Toer, 1996, p. 46).

The quotation depicts the important role of family outside the Medical schools environment, especially on the influence of family and personal relationship. The quote above also implies that *pribumi* students have the freedom to change their clothes for their personal reasons, for instance seeking romance or expressing affection. Moreover,

the adoption of and change in Western thinking and language is also a form of hybridity (Wardani & Widyahening, 2020).

This proves that mimicry provides items for recognition that the native could benefit from. Clothing is shown as status, and this applies to gaining access and love interest. This is shown in, *wherever we wanted, neutral in identity, especially when chasing after the nyai*. Clothes in the Dutch East Indies Society could neutralize identities and prevent prejudice.

But at the moment, yes, now, with pocket money of ten guilders a month, food and board provided by the school, a young man could do whatever he liked to his full satisfaction. He could pay off the most expensive bicycle, or send home five guilders a month to his family, or send his younger brother to school, or marry and set up a household in Betawi (Toer, 1996, p. 45).

The context of this quotation is about salary and how much a person could gain as a student and how much they could expand. In addition, the possession of a bicycle shows the evidence of how the ownership of modern transportation mode also related to the colonial instrument, symbolizing European progress and modernization

This overview of the economic system in the Dutch East Indies provides this research on another colonial item that is utilized by the native population. Minke points out how money is used, shown in *with pocket money of ten guilders a month, food and board provided by the school, a young man could do whatever he liked to his full satisfaction*. This highlights that mimicry serves a purpose for the native population.

## 2. Mimicry in Multiple Levels of Society

This section highlights how mimicry is utilized in three different levels of society that operate on a personal, communal, and structural level. This act of imitation is not only a form of replication but operates to challenge the colonial power that serves both as a subversion action and strategy to survive (Wibisono et al., 2018). Furthermore, Huggan

(1998) argues that mimicry also refers to a broader process of representation that involves the mediation between different worlds and people.

### a. Personal Level

At the personal level, mimicry occurs as depicted as an individual act of expression. Minke consciously adopts a European appearance that is not forced by the colonial administration. This suggests that mimicry can act as a personal strategy aimed at social mobility and recognition. However, this is still performed under a colonial framework that equates Europeans with progress.

That's him, Minke, the "modern man"! Yes, that's him, sitting there in the corner by himself. That one, with the beginnings of a mustache, but his chin still bare. Yes, that's him all right, the Native who prefers European clothes, who carries on like a *sinyo*. He even travels in "white class" first class (Toer, 1996, p. 13).

From the novel, Minke's preference shows mimicry on a personal level. This could be seen in the decision that is taken by an individual. There is no enforcement at the structural level, and there are no communal influences. Thus, the decision is based on Minke's own decision to mimic the Dutch.

"Wearing European clothes, she said, perhaps with a bike. A Native boy, brown hat, called Minke." (Toer, 1996, p. 69).

From the passage above, Minke is sticking to his decision on wearing European clothing on a personal level. This shows mimicry on a personal level. This is an example of how mimicry came from personal desire. These are not enforced by the colonial government, and individuals have the freedom to enact them.

### b. Communal Level

Mimicry in *Footsteps* also operates at the communal level. This can be identified in the way communities and ethnic groups strategically apply mimicry for their own strategic purposes, such as progress, social

mobility, and recognition within colonial society.

There was a more fundamental reason—every student needed a family. There he could get out of his traditional clothes, change into European clothes, and become a *sinyo* once again. In European clothes, we could wander wherever we wanted, neutral in identity, especially when chasing after the *nyai* (Toer, 1996, p. 46).

This evidence shows that the practice of mimicry is not only limited in the individual level but also works in the collective practice among *pribumi*. The changes of their cultural identity can be seen from the use of European attire, which indicates the blur of the cultural boundaries in the colonial cultural hierarchy.

Furthermore, from this evidence, it can be seen that those *pribumi* who dress as Europeans can gain more personal and social benefits and are perceived as people with a higher social status. These practices are more preferred among *pribumi* intellectual classes and those who have greater educational or economic capital. Mimicry in this communal level shows how *pribumi* in this group employed colonial symbols to access higher social status and gain recognition from the colonizer.

The stereotype that they will work for the Dutch or be paid a lot of money reflects their benefit. This shows mimicry at the communal level. The structure does not enforce them; however, there is a stereotype that is capitalized by every individual of that community. Align with Wedhowerti's (2023) finding that underlines being equal before the Dutch colonizer means being financially equal by possessing "a political position in Dutch government...and adopting the lifestyle of the Dutch in education, economy, politic, and even culture."

"They all wore Native dress. It was only the Menadonese and Indos who wore European clothes." (Toer, 1996, p. 22).

This passage shows that Manadonese and Indo are wearing European attire. This shows the community within the Dutch East Indies.

Mimic their colonial master in their community. This put them in recognition among the colonial society. Community within the colonial society mimics its colonial master on a communal level.

### c. Structural Level

At the structural level, mimicry is administered through colonial government. The colonial institutions create a mechanism in which the *pribumi* population must internalize the colonial system and structure in order to become part of a modern society. This showcases that mimicry is not only an individual choice but also structurally generated by the colonial policies and government.

"He spoke enthusiastically about his organization and explained that, providing no unexpected obstacles arose, they would be starting a Dutch language primary school in the next year." (Toer, 1996, p. 208)

From the quotation above, it can be seen that there is a proposal to establish a school that uses Dutch language as the primary language instruction for teaching. This reflects colonial educational institutions that shape the educational system through the implementation of Dutch language. This initiative is within the Dutch capability and structural responsibility to provide education and encourage the *pribumi* to adopt the Dutch linguistic systems.

In addition, the colonial government is formally obligated to provide education opportunities under the framework of ethical policy. The passage highlights the colonial policy that functions to transfer Western knowledge and values where mimicry can be found at the structural level.

"Most of the students had to study Dutch, except for me and two others. On the other hand, we were obliged to learn one of the regional languages." (Toer, 1996, p. 44).

The evidence above highlights how the Dutch colonials used education and language to civilize the *pribumi*. Align with Said's (1994) statement that claims how Western culture,

knowledge, and power are used to colonize the mind and maintain colonial domination. Their framework of civilization is modeled after their own government and culture. This led to *pribumi* having access to Dutch instruments and creating the condition of mimicry at the structural level. On the other hand, this also underlines that colonial mimicry is the desire to be recognized by the Other (Bhabha, 1994; Setyowati, 2018).

Furthermore, the passage is an enforcement of the ability to speak. The evidence shows that students must apply language. The structural level enforces the Dutch language to be mastered and spoken by the *pribumi*. This shows the structural level that enforces mimicry to the colonizer. "You've got to have a wage more than four hundred guilders." (Toer, 1996, p. 16).

The excerpt in the novel shows that a purchase is conducted with *gulden*. The usage of Dutch currency controls the economic and purchasing power of colonial subjects. *Pribumi* is now forced to use the Dutch method of trade and abandons its own way and unique currency. The enforcement also facilitates mimicry at the structural level. This happened because of the Dutch colonial government.

## Conclusion

This research has examined how mimicry is portrayed in Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Footsteps* through the theoretical framework of Homi K. Bhabha. The analysis focuses on the context of the Dutch East Indies colonial framework. The research attempted to analyze the type of mimicry and how mimicry manifested in colonial society.

The finding indicates that there are many types of mimicry in *Footsteps*. This includes, but is not limited to, "almost the same, but not quite", ambivalence, and performative identity. This mimicry happens under the frame of recognition and a situation that is dictated by the colonizer. The analysis proves that *pribumi* have to apply mimicry to gain recognition from fellow humans and highlights the theme of identity in *Footsteps*.

This research also analyses society and how mimicry happens within its framework. The analysis dives into individual, communal, and structural levels. The analysis finds that mimicry happens in all layers of colonial society. Thus, it allows the condition for mimicry, and it is often enforced by the Dutch themselves.

Ultimately, this research highlights how Pramoedya's narrative gives voice to the *pribumi*'s struggle for equality within the Dutch East Indies. This happens from the portrayal of mimicry as a strategy for survival and a necessary evil for the *pribumi* to adopt. The systematic enforcement of the Dutch system and language is also highlighted as an enforcement of uniformity.

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