



The Meaning and Cultural Value of the Empty Horse Phenomenon in Cianjur Regency

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Abstract: The Empty Horse tradition in Cianjur Regency of West Java of Indonesia holds an anthropological allure that symbolizes the courage, resilience, and aspirations of the local community in navigating historical social and political challenges. However, modernization has led to the diminishing recognition of its profound values, especially among younger generations. This study aims to explore the symbolism embedded in the Empty Horse tradition and its connection to the cultural identity of the Cianjur community, as well as strategies for its preservation through education and modern media. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research collected data through in-depth interviews, field observations, and literature reviews. Analysis was conducted using Lévi-Strauss' structuralism perspective to uncover the symbolic meanings and values inherent in this tradition. The findings reveal that the Empty Horse tradition is not only a symbol of diplomacy and wisdom in Cianjur's history but also an essential tool for strengthening social cohesion and local identity. The study concludes by emphasizing the importance of concrete measures such as documentation, cultural education, and the promotion of this tradition at both local and global levels. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of local cultural heritage and highlights opportunities to integrate it into the global cultural framework.

Keywords: anthropology; cultural identity; cultural preservation; local wisdom; structuralism.

1. Introduction

Culture is a collective identity that reflects the noble values and local wisdom of a society (Christian, 2017). In every culture, there is a heritage of traditions that are not only entertaining but also contain moral, historical, and spiritual messages that enrich the lives of their communities (M. T. Rahman, 2011). In the era of rapidly developing globalization, the phenomenon of cultural homogenization is increasingly real (Fatharani et al., 2023). Traditional values are often displaced by the influence of foreign cultures that are more popular and considered modern. Local traditions such as the Empty Horse in Cianjur Regency are one example of cultural heritage that is threatened by this dynamic. The Empty Horse tradition has a unique attraction as one of Cianjur's typical cultural heritages. In major events such as the celebration of the Anniversary of Cianjur Regency or Indonesian Independence Day, the Empty Horse procession is always the center of attention. However, many people only see it as a cultural performance without understanding the deep meaning behind it. In this tradition, the Empty Horse is often associated with the legend of Eyang Surya Kencana, the spiritual guardian of Mount Gede Pangrango which is believed to have originated from the jinn people. This legend describes the close relationship between the Cianjur people and local spirituality and belief in myths that have been passed down from (Mutaqin, 2017).

The symbolic meaning contained in the Empty Horse not only reflects courage and struggle against colonialism but also shows the harmony between humans and nature and the spiritual world. As a cultural manifestation, this tradition shows the collective values that are characteristic of the Cianjur community. However, challenges arising from globalization,

modernization, and the limitations of cultural preservation due to the pandemic have kept this tradition away from the younger generation (Brand et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, limited the holding of in-person cultural events, which led to a decrease in the exposure of this tradition among young people.

On the other hand, the uniqueness of the Empty Horse culture also offers the potential as a subject of study in the academic realm, both on a national and international scale. This tradition can be analyzed through various theoretical approaches, one of which is the structuralism approach popularized by Claude Lévi-Strauss. According to Lévi-Strauss, myths and traditions play an important role in understanding complex social realities as well as resolving contradictions in people's lives (Lévi-Strauss, 2014). By utilizing this approach, the deep meaning of the symbolism of the Empty Horse can be systematically revealed. In a global context, this approach also helps to see how local cultural heritage is related to universal patterns that exist around the world.

Furthermore, the Empty Horse tradition has an anthropological attraction that depicts the struggle of the Cianjur people in facing social and political challenges in the past. This procession is a symbol of courage, struggle, and hope that unites the community. However, changes in people's lifestyles due to modernization often make the noble values behind this tradition forgotten. The younger generation, who are supposed to be the main inheritors of this culture, often lack understanding of the deep meaning of the tradition (Nardiati et al., 2023).

Therefore, the preservation of the Empty Horse tradition requires concrete steps, including documentation, cultural education, and promotion through modern media. This effort will not only ensure the sustainability of the tradition but also provide an opportunity to position this tradition as a cultural asset that can attract the attention of the world. Additionally, education-based approaches, such as including material on local traditions in the school curriculum, can be an effective way to introduce younger generations to their ancestral heritage (Telaumbanua et al., 2025).

With all its challenges and potentials, this research is very important to be carried out. The structuralism approach will be used to explore the relationship between the symbols in the Empty Horse tradition and the cultural identity of the Cianjur community. In addition, this research also aims to explore how this tradition can be a medium to strengthen local identity in the midst of the rapid flow of globalization. By understanding the Empty Horse tradition more deeply, we are not only preserving local cultural heritage but also opening up opportunities to integrate it in a global context. This tradition can be an example of how local culture can make a significant contribution to building a stronger community identity and being proud of its ancestral heritage (Effendy, 2004).

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenological methods to understand the cultural phenomenon of Empty Horses in Cianjur Regency. This approach focuses on the process and meaning of outcomes and explores the relationship between human elements, objects, and institutions (Rahman et al., 2022). Phenomenological research aims to describe the subjective human experience related to the observed phenomenon without questioning its cause or objective reality (Mujtahidin & Oktariato, 2022). In this case, the researcher seeks to explore the meaning and essence of the Empty Horse culture, in accordance with the principles expressed by Husserl in phenomenology (Hardiman, 2015). The data used consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews with key informants and supporting informants, while secondary data was collected from literature studies and previous research. Data collection techniques include literature studies, field observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out with an interactive approach, through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. This research took place in Cianjur Regency, West Java, which is the location of the Empty Horse culture to be studied (Riasnugrahani & Analya, 2023).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Empty Horse in the Perspective of Levi-Strauss Structuralism

Findings and analyses related to the discussion of Levi-Strauss's structuralism in the Empty Horse phenomenon in Cianjur Regency reveal a very deep symbolic dimension in the context of local history and culture (Hénaff, 2017). Based on an interview with Dadang, the researcher delved further into the history of the Empty Horse to get a more detailed understanding. According to the interview, the display of Empty Horse art hints that Cianjur was never colonized by the Kingdom of Mataram. In terms of moral message, Cianjur showed a prudent attitude of diplomacy in facing the challenge from the Kingdom of Mataram during the reign of Amangkurat II, instead of opting for confrontation or open battle (Bankoff & Swart, 2011).

As part of history, the Cianjur civilization is reflected in the efforts of the local government to avoid wars between fellow Indonesians, except against Japanese and Dutch colonizers (Perdana & Rinaldo, 2022). At that time, the Kingdom of Mataram sent threats to Cianjur to surrender, but the Cianjur government, led by Dalem Tarikolot and several other regional officials, chose to respond with diplomacy (Muharam & Fajar, 2020). One of the diplomatic steps taken was to send a *kali fiber*, a reply letter that was finally replied with wisdom by King Amangkurat II (Haris, 2024). Behind this challenge, Cianjur replied symbolically, sending tribute in the form of three grains of rice, pepper, and cayenne pepper seeds, which illustrates the simplicity but courage of the Cianjur people to maintain their dignity.

One of the key moments in this story is the gift of a horse by King Amangkurat II to Dalem Aria Tanu Datar II, which shows a symbol of equality (Haris, 2024). The gift of a horse, complete with clothes and a dagger, is accompanied by the meaning that the kingdom that receives the gift is seen as equal or *sawawa*. The incident shows the trusting nature of the people of Cianjur, who are reluctant to ride the horse because it is not their right. After the journey back to Citarum, the people of Cianjur celebrated this victory by participating in Dalem Aria Natadimanggala in a carnival or carnival, which became the forerunner of the Empty Horse cultural procession (Abdurrahman, 2020).

The Empty Horse Show is now a cultural symbol that commemorates the success of Cianjur in facing the threat of the Mataram Kingdom. This commemoration was held on Indonesian Independence Day and was also part of the celebration of the anniversary of Cianjur Regency. Based on this phenomenon, the Empty Horse procession can be classified as a myth in the context of Levi-Strauss structuralism because behind the procession are various symbolic concepts and messages that are the guidelines and cultural heritage of the Cianjur people (Lévi-Strauss, 2014). According to Levi-Strauss, myths consist of units that form a unit to reveal hidden meanings. In this case, the Empty Horse myth can be analyzed through two layers of structure: surface structures that relate to external or empirical features and internal structures that are discovered through the analysis of various outer structures (Hénaff, 2017).

The Empty Horse Procession then became a symbol of Cianjur's glory in facing threats and was held on major days, including Indonesian Independence Day, Islamic holidays, and the anniversary of Cianjur Regency. In this procession, steamed or burned incense not only serves as a spiritual means but also has a symbolic meaning (Sahid, 2016). The horse in this procession symbolizes a leader who must have value or fragrance for his people. The appearance of the Empty Horse should be a reflection of the current leaders of Cianjur and whether they already have the value coveted by their people.

The philosophy behind Empty Horse is very profound, describing the community's expectation that the leader who leads Cianjur must be able to lead this area in a better direction by paying attention to the interests of the people. In every event, the Empty Horse is always covered by the Great Umbrella, which reminds us that Cianjur's leaders must not be separated from religious values and morality (Dalimunthe, 2023). This history teaches that Cianjur can be independent without violence, by showing calmness, intelligence, and wisdom in making decisions.

Figure 1. Empty horse procession in Cianjur



Source: Disparpora Cianjur, 2022

Through this story, you can understand the background, important characters, and steps that must be taken to solve the problem. The next step is to separate this story into several more detailed episodes, each representing the units that make up the Empty Horse phenomenon. The preparation stage of the empty horse tradition begins with deliberations involving various elements of society, including regional leaders, community leaders, and residents. This deliberation aims to plan all activities related to the empty horse tradition, such as determining the amount of money needed, the structure of the committee, and the time and place of the event. The determination of the committee is carried out as usual in large events, namely by electing the chairman, secretary, and treasurer. However, the most important thing is to choose a leader who will direct the entire series of events, from the preparation stage to the implementation of the empty horse tradition. This leader is usually a community leader or someone who has a deep understanding and experience in the implementation of the empty horse tradition.

The Empty Horse tradition in Cianjur is one of the cultural heritage that has a deep philosophical meaning. This tradition is a reflection of the values of leadership, responsibility, and harmonious relationships between humans and the environment and ancestors. Empty Horse is not just an annual ceremonial but also a medium to maintain local identity in the midst of the onslaught of modernization. From the perspective of cultural anthropology, this tradition reflects Clifford Geertz's concept of culture as a system of meaning. Each element in this tradition contains symbols and values that represent the life of the Cianjur people, as well as a tool to strengthen social cohesion (Geertz, 2022).

The preparatory stage in the Empty Horse tradition is an important moment to show the value of cooperation and collective responsibility. All tasks are clearly divided, starting from preparing horses that resemble royal horses to determining the roles of the soldiers and Dalem Cianjur. This shows how people practice the principle of cooperation in tradition, which according to Emile Durkheim, is a form of mechanical solidarity that is typical in traditional societies (Durkheim, 2018). Nowadays, this tradition is usually held every August 17 as part of the commemoration of Indonesia's Independence Day. However, the Covid-19 pandemic that hit for the last two years had stopped its implementation. This is proof of how social dynamics and global challenges can affect the preservation of local culture.

This tradition begins with a procession of prayers and *tawasul* led by elders or traditional leaders. Before the tradition begins, all equipment and participants gather at a predetermined location. This procession involves the recitation of *tahlil*, prayers, and prayers together, accompanied by the burning of incense. Incense is not only used as a fragrance, but it also has a deep philosophical meaning. In the context of the Empty Horse tradition, incense symbolizes a life full of benefits and brings goodness to others. Symbolically, incense also represents the role of a

leader who must be an example and provide benefits to his community. According to Victor Turner, this kind of ritual is a liminal community that strengthens solidarity and collective identity in society (Turner, 1987).

After the prayer procession, the horses that will be used in the procession are bathed by the Regent of Cianjur using water from the Cikundul spring. This ritual has a very strong symbolic dimension. The water from the spring is believed to bring purity and blessings, symbolizing self-renewal and purification (Aditya & Deni, 2024). In the past, this procession was carried out at night to create a sacred atmosphere, but now it is carried out in the morning to maintain the health and hygiene of horses (Eliade, 1991). In the tradition of agrarian societies, such as in Cianjur, the relationship with nature is often articulated through rituals that show respect for natural resources. This is in line with the ecological view that humans are an integral part of the larger ecosystem.

The properties used in the Empty Horse tradition are also loaded with symbolic meaning. The horse, as the main element, represents strength, courage and fighting spirit. The type of horse used is a large racehorse that resembles a royal horse. The horse's back is decorated with green cloth, a symbol of hope that the Cianjur government will always bring peace and affection. In addition, the tribute consisting of three chili seeds, pepper, and rice reflects courage, fighting spirit, and produce as a source of life for the community. The spear and dagger symbolize courage and strength, while the separate tree represents a peaceful life. The Great Umbrella, as a symbol of divine protection, indicates that every leader should act under the auspices of spiritual and moral values (Ardhianti et al., 2023).

Figure 2. A horse is paraded without anyone riding him



Source: Disparpora Cianjur, 2022

The clothes worn by the participants also have their own meaning. The black and white pivot symbolizes harmony and purity, while the green robe reflects the wisdom of a leader. The batik-patterned headbands worn by the participants represent local identity and cultural pride. In Pierre Bourdieu's view, these elements are part of the habitus that forms the cultural identity of the Cianjur people. This tradition is not only a means to preserve ancestral values, but also a tool to teach the younger generation about the importance of maintaining social harmony and respecting cultural heritage (Bourdieu, 1986).

The philosophical meaning of the Empty Horse tradition deepens when we see it as a reflection of leadership values. According to an interview with Dadang Ahmad Fajar, this tradition describes a leader who is trustworthy, responsible, and able to bring positive change to his community. The procession to Mount Gede, which was carried out as a tribute to Eyang Surya Kencana, also shows how the community maintains a relationship with their ancestors. From a sociological perspective, this reflects the importance of collective memory, as stated by Maurice Halbwachs. This collective memory serves to strengthen cultural identity and provide meaning in people's lives (Halbwachs, 2020).

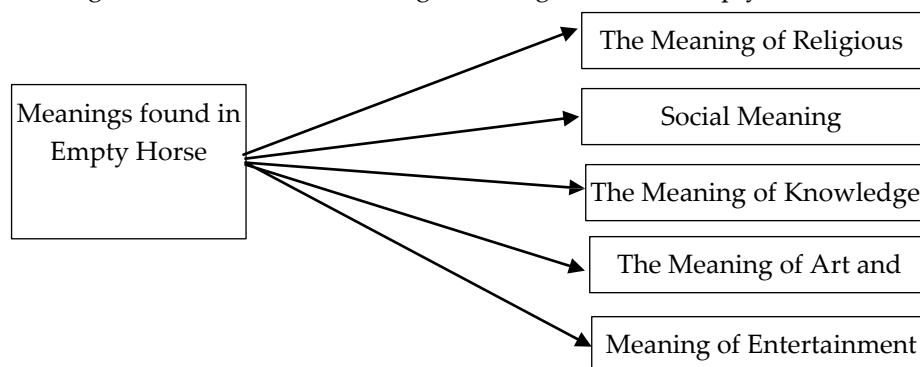
The Empty Horse tradition is also a reflection of the dynamics of the multicultural community in Cianjur. As an area inhabited by various ethnic and religious groups, this tradition serves as a tool to strengthen social harmony. Through universal symbols, this tradition teaches values such as cooperation, tolerance, and respect for differences. In this context, the Empty Horse tradition

functions as a cultural brokerage mechanism, namely bridging cultural differences and creating space for harmonious interaction (Mortier et al., 2021). This is in line with the theory of intercultural communication which emphasizes the importance of symbols and rituals in building cross-cultural understanding.

However, the preservation of this tradition also faces challenges, especially in the modern era. Globalization and modernization often bring changes in values and lifestyles that can threaten the continuity of local traditions (Fadhilah et al., 2024). Many young generations are starting to lose interest in this tradition, preferring popular culture that is considered more relevant to their lives. In this case, more serious efforts are needed from the government and the community to ensure that the Empty Horse tradition remains relevant. One way is to integrate this tradition into the local education curriculum so that the younger generation can understand its meaning more deeply (Jati, 2022).

3.2. The Meaning of Empty Horses in Cianjur Regency

Figure 3. Structuralist meaning field diagram on the empty horse



Source: Analysis from the field, 2022

The Empty Horse tradition in Cianjur Regency not only has a cultural and historical dimension but is also loaded with deep religious meaning. The rituals that begin this tradition, such as *tawasul* and joint prayer, reflect the community's respect for spiritual values and recognition of the power of God Almighty (Dede et al., 2022). Before the main procession begins, all traditional equipment is brought to a certain location to be held a joint prayer, led by elders or community leaders who understand the sequence of the Empty Horse ritual. *Tawasul*, a practice rooted in Islamic tradition, is not only a form of gratitude to Allah but also a means of asking for salvation for the community and the smooth running of the event (Hasan et al., 2023).

The symbolic elements in this tradition also reinforce its religious message (Ardhianti et al., 2023). For example, the great umbrella used in the procession symbolizes the leader who must always be under the Great Umbrella, namely the protection and guidance from God. This symbol not only reflects wise and loving leadership but also teaches that every leader should carry out his or her duties with religious values as the main guideline.

The interpretation of this traditional symbolism shows the close relationship between religious values and the social life of the Cianjur community. The Empty Horse tradition serves as a collective reminder to get closer to God, maintain harmony, and uphold spiritual values in living daily life. This is in line with the views of spiritual thinkers such as Emile Durkheim, who argue that religious rituals and traditions play an important role in strengthening the social solidarity and collective identity of a community (Durkheim, 2023).

This religious dimension is also seen in the philosophy of the incense that is lit during the procession. Apart from being a fragrance, incense has a deep philosophical meaning: a fragrant and virtuous life. This fragrance is not just an aesthetic, but a reminder that every human word, action, and intention must reflect a good that brings benefits to others. In a religious context, incense is a symbol of life oriented to moral and spiritual teachings (Astraguna, 2022).

Furthermore, the ritual of bathing horses using water from the Cikundul spring shows respect for nature as God's creation. This practice teaches that maintaining the cleanliness and welfare of living beings is part of worship. In Islam, this concept can be associated with the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, namely compassion that covers the entire universe (Adrian & Junanah, 2023). The horse bathed with great respect reflects man's responsibility as the caliph on earth to take care of the environment and fellow living beings.

Meanwhile, the Empty Horse tradition also contains the values of deep knowledge. As one of the key informants explains, this tradition teaches the important principle that everything in the world has an owner. Before starting the procession, the community consistently applies the culture of asking for permission from God, ancestors, and fellow humans. This reflects a deep respect for ethics in action, a teaching that is very relevant in maintaining social harmony (Sarbaitinil et al., 2023).

The value of knowledge contained in this tradition instills the awareness that every action must be based on respect and consideration for others. This concept is in line with the philosophy of Sundanese society which prioritizes reciprocity, reciprocity, and mutual nurturing—loving each other, learning from each other, and guiding each other (Thohir, 2013). Through this principle, the Empty Horse tradition becomes a means of learning that is firmly rooted in the collective consciousness of the community. The culture of asking permission before doing something is not only a symbol of respect but also a concrete form of moral education oriented to social life.

The process of understanding the symbols in this tradition is also a form of knowledge transfer between generations (Yani, 2013). For example, elements such as the grand umbrella, incense, and procession reflect philosophical values that require a deep understanding to be applied in everyday life. When one studies symbolism in this tradition, one not only respects cultural heritage, but also gains lessons about universal life values, such as responsibility, tolerance, and justice (Seff et al., 2022).

As a means of learning, the Empty Horse tradition also builds the community's collective awareness of the importance of maintaining social harmony. Rituals and processions involving various elements of society show that cooperation and mutual respect are the keys to success. This is in accordance with Emile Durkheim's theory, which states that social rites serve to strengthen collective solidarity and build a common identity (Durkheim, 2018). In the context of Empty Horses, this tradition not only strengthens relationships between individuals but also strengthens the cultural identity of the Cianjur people.

More than that, this tradition teaches that community life requires a balance between respect for traditional values and adaptation to the dynamics of the times. By understanding the meaning and symbolism of the Empty Horse, the public is invited to reflect on the importance of maintaining tradition as part of cultural identity as well as applying these values in the context of modern life (Wangi, 2024). The value of knowledge contained in it instills awareness of the importance of respect, responsibility, and cooperation in building social harmony (Darong et al., 2021).

The interaction between the performers and the audience in this performance reflects a harmonious social relationship. The performers not only show their artistic skills but also carry a message about human life that is always linked to social dynamics. In this context, the Empty Horse tradition emphasizes that humans as social creatures need relationships with others, both to meet daily needs and to face various life challenges (Mundiasari, 2022).

This social aspect is also seen in the organizational structure that supports the implementation of the Empty Horse tradition. The existence of roles such as chairman, secretary, and treasurer reflects a well-organized social system (Seedat & Roopchund, 2024). This structure is a small reflection of the broader social order, where each individual has a certain responsibility and role in maintaining the continuity of tradition. With good collaboration and coordination, this performance is not only entertainment but also a symbol of strong cooperation among the

community.

The results of interviews with key informants show that the Empty Horse tradition has a significant social purpose. One of the informants stated that the social system in this tradition aims to create a harmonious community, by instilling values such as helping each other, reminding each other, and respecting each other (Rukmana, 2011). This association is an important element in maintaining social harmony in the midst of a society that continues to develop. In this context, the Empty Horse tradition is not only a cultural celebration but also a vehicle to strengthen relations between residents.

In addition, the social system that supports this tradition is also reflected in kinship relations and local government. The participation of various parties, ranging from the general public to cultural and government figures, shows that this tradition involves all elements of society. This collaborative process creates a deep sense of togetherness, where each individual feels a responsibility to support the continuation of this tradition. In the view of structural functionalism theory, this tradition plays a role as a social integration mechanism that strengthens community solidarity (Gomez, 2022).

Community participation in the Empty Horse tradition is also a tangible form of a social system that prioritizes mutual cooperation and togetherness. Performers, spectators, community leaders, and cultural figures work together to ensure the smooth running of the event, while support from local governments and organizations strengthens the social structures that support this tradition (Rahmansyah et al., 2020). This shows that the Empty Horse tradition not only has a symbolic meaning but also becomes a real means to strengthen social relations in the Cianjur community.

Furthermore, the social values in this tradition provide important lessons about the importance of cooperation and a sense of belonging. When people gather to witness and support the Empty Horse event, they not only celebrate their culture but also strengthen a sense of solidarity and collective identity (Siddiq et al., 2024). The meaning of art in the Empty Horse tradition is evident in the aesthetic aspects displayed, such as clothing, accessories, and other properties. The clothes of the players, for example, are not only designed for beauty but also contain strong cultural symbols. The players who play Dalem Kidul and his followers wear black clothes, white clothes, and green clothes with typical Sundanese ikat. The colors and designs of these clothes reflect the deep cultural identity of Sundanese culture. The existence of the grand umbrella used in this tradition is also an important symbol, depicting the greatness and wisdom of Cianjur leaders who must be under the auspices of noble values.

In addition to clothing, the accessories worn by horses in this tradition add a distinctive artistic dimension. The accessories are designed with traditional patterns and motifs, which not only beautify the horse's appearance but also contain a symbolic message (Endraswara, 2013). A key informant explained that every element in this tradition, including clothing and accessories, has cultural values that must be respected and preserved. The use of these elements cannot be arbitrary, the informant said, emphasizing the importance of understanding the meaning behind every artistic detail in the Empty Horse tradition.

Another artistic beauty can be seen in the skill of the players in bringing the story to life through movement and dance. The dance performed by the performers is not only a form of artistic expression, but also a means to convey the story of the struggle and noble values of Cianjur's ancestors. The movements carried out have their own meaning, reflecting courage, wisdom, and harmony. In this case, the Empty Horse tradition serves as a cultural education medium, which teaches people to appreciate local values while understanding their history (Hasanah & Andari, 2021).

The meaning of entertainment in this tradition also reflects the role of culture as a means to strengthen social relationships (Alzahra & Safitri, 2024). The Empty Horse tradition is not only a spectacle but also a medium of interaction between residents, strengthening friendships and creating a space of mutual happiness. For many people, this event is a moment to forget

for a moment the routine of daily life and enjoy the happiness brought by cultural performances.

Furthermore, this tradition shows how local culture can adapt and remain relevant in the face of changing times. The entertainment presented in Empty Horse not only relies on historical stories but is also packed with interesting art elements, such as traditional music and dance, that arouse the enthusiasm of the audience. Thus, this tradition has succeeded in blending elements of entertainment, history, and cultural values, creating a fun and educational experience for the community (Sutisna et al., 2024). The Empty Horse tradition is also proof that entertainment does not always have to be modern or commercial. Traditional entertainment like this has a unique appeal because it is able to bring warmth, nostalgia, and togetherness that is often difficult to find in modern entertainment. By maintaining the essence of its tradition, Empty Horse has succeeded in becoming a form of entertainment that is not only fun but also meaningful for the people of Cianjur.

Table 1. Symbolism of the Empty Horse in Cultural Meaning

No	Clothes	Cultural Values
1	Pivot	Pangsi is a traditional Sundanese men's clothing that reflects simplicity. Black: Symbolizes courage, love of nature, strength, passion, and dexterity. White: Symbolizes purity, cleanliness of heart and mind, as a symbol of the sincerity of the community and leaders in Cianjur.
2	Bandana	Serves as a head covering and a pivot complement. Describes the philosophy of <i>opat kalima pancar</i> , which is self-union with the main elements of nature (wind, water, fire, earth). It symbolizes attachment to Sundanese culture and an invitation to surrender to the Creator. In this tradition, bandana shows a close relationship with religion and culture.
3	Rope/Green	The green robe is worn by the horse guide on the right. Green: Symbolizes coolness, teaching that leader must be able to create an atmosphere of peace and patience and not be influenced by lust.
4	Sarong	The sarong is worn up to the knee, called the tall robe (high sarong). It symbolizes agility and strength. Teaching that society should not be left behind by the times, but still maintain cultural and religious elements in life.
5	Great Umbrella	A spiritual symbol that reminds leaders to submit to the rules of the Almighty. <i>Papayung Nu Maha Agung</i> means that leaders must exercise leadership with the awareness that God's rules limit all actions.

4. Conclusion

Thus, based on the description above, the Cianjur Empty Horse tradition has a deeply symbolic and philosophical meaning, intertwining history, culture, and leadership values. Rooted in Levi-Strauss structuralism, this cultural phenomenon illustrates the deep relationship between the symbolic form and identity of the Cianjur people. Historically, this reflects Cianjur's diplomatic approach and resilience in overcoming challenges, such as those posed by the Kingdom of Mataram. Symbolically, it depicts leadership ideals, such as trust, responsibility, and commitment to moral and spiritual values, as seen in the use of ceremonial elements such as the Great Umbrella and the horse itself. In addition, this tradition fosters social cohesion and collective identity through rituals that embody cooperation, tolerance, and respect for heritage.

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