

Suitcase as Paradox

(by Nomas, a writing as a form of response of the suitcase idea)

suitcase ('su:t,kers, 'sju:t-)

— *n*

a portable rectangular travelling case, usually stiffened, for carrying clothing, etc
(<http://dictionary.reference.com>)

When we view it from function perspective as an object with the purpose to be carried during a travel, then the suitcase has made into a form based on its feature as “a host”, why a host? For the reason of suitcase that provides a space to all the stuff that will be put inside, that will be ‘the guest’ for it such as cloths, trousers, shoes, etc. Nonetheless, suitcase has also act as the guest at the same time. Becoming the guest because it travels into plenty of places, new places in the other part of the world that “it” visited. Seems like suitcase has shown its ability to become a “double agent”! Two different and contradict roles work in the form of a suitcase, in which at the same time can become a gust as well as the host.

Suitcase as a ‘guest’ means it can adapt itself with new places. Suitcase need to be able to adapt and synchronise itself with new characteristic of it’s new place, as it is also part of the responsibility as a ‘guest’. Suitcase as a ‘host’ means becoming an individual that has authentic identity. Therefore it can show whom it is in front of the ‘guests’ that come to visit inside the suitcase.

However suitcase that has portable and mobile characteristic has then indirectly made it as a figure of ‘eternal guest’. Eternal guest is like an object that continuously changing it’s characteristic, suitcase that continuously travels will constantly change by adapting itself with its new houses that keep changing based on where the place visited. Eternal guest is a strange figure with unknown origin, no return home desire, constantly moving from different house to another. As if suitcase has remove its identity, fused itself by continuously move, refuse to settle, meet many faces with diverse new identity that its visit.

But suitcase at the same time has become a house for its guests that come and go. A host facilitates and serves the guest’s arrival until the guests are inside and feeling comfortable and safe. However each host will become an identity that has it’s own characteristic and it will give memory and impression for the guests. Therefore, the guests have certain memory of its visiting experience and they can share it to others.

In the end, suitcase has become a paradox form because of it’s own conditions. Inside it become a ‘host’ for its guest, outside it become the guest for many places that it’s visited. Suitcase has its own **authentic identity** but at the same time it has **identity crisis** inside.

That’s how paradox works; it represents two different situations and opposite each other but exist at the same time. The presence of paradox seems to damaging humans’ logic reasoning.

However, paradox has to be differentiated with contradictions, because contradiction only represents one action and its origin from 'inconsistency' condition.

Trying to view it from Indonesian traditional society perspective that has different perspective of logical reasoning of modern society, in which can be found a paradox situation based on their belief system of their faith.

“Traditional society in Indonesia (even in the whole world) in each tribe from sabang until merauke, have the same belief that something with divine nature will exist in the presence world in the form of paradox”

(Jakob Soemardjo, 2010)

Based on the quotes above, the paradox condition can be reflected with the example of the existence of shaman in traditional society such as in Dayak tribe, in which shaman exist as a central figure inside a structural procession of belief rituals of divinity, therefore the shaman has to be hermaphrodite both 'male and female'. In Sundanese a container to place rice that's made by woven bamboo (*boboko*) is also form a paradox because of the circle form of the upper mouth become one with the lower base container with square form. Circle in current mathematic science means as an infinity space and angle, while box has a finite angle. Therefore '*boboko*' is infinity and finite at the same time. A paradox condition, because they believe divine energy will exist in the form of paradox, as the result the rice that is put inside '*boboko*' will exposed by divine energy.

In the end is about my own perspective as an artist in addressing paradox as something that interest me and is used mostly as a method of my working practice in making artwork. Where in the last two ambivalent were presented as something grey or vague which is not sad but not happy or even both sad and happy. It's a situation in which logic stop and finds a boundary limitation; therefore in the end the situation deliver my awareness to enter the other territory that has a reflective nature.

Through suitcase as subject discussion, therefore as an artist I process it into an artistic expression art form that could be negotiate to become an art object that has reflective potential for the appreciator through paradoxical perspective that contain inside the suitcase as described above.