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Property Usage in the War Boat Performance of the Ebedebiri People of Bayelsa State

Ernest Jackson WERIDONGHAN & Kenneth Efakponana ENI

Abstract
This paper on property usage in the war boat performance of the Ebedebiri people examines the effectiveness of properties as a form of communicative art. Additionally, it analyzes the roles and functions of these properties within the context of the performance. Current research available has failed to adequately address the ways in which the Ebedebiri people use properties in communicating their cultural identity, social status, and historical narratives during these performances. This study aims to show that property use in the war boat performances of the Ebedebiri people is a unique aspect of performance aesthetics that should be given proper emphasis in scholarship. The study adopts the artistic and sociological methods of research. The study is very important because by examining the material culture and performance aspects of the Ebedebiri war boat performance, valuable insight into the preservation and promotion of Ebedebiri cultural heritage is achieved. The study finds out that property plays creative and interpretative roles in war boat performance. It concludes that property usage helps in the smooth running and understanding of performances by the audience. As such, prop plays creative and interpretative roles in the performances. It recommends therefore that future designers of property in the war boat performances need an understanding of the people's culture and identity to put a befitting design.
Key Words: props, property usage, war boat performance, Ebedebiri people.

Introduction

The use of properties or props in the war boat performance of the Ebedebiri people plays a crucial role in enhancing storytelling, educating, shaping, and enriching the audience's experience. It transcends mere decorative purposes; it is a language unto itself. Each prop can evoke memories, anchor moments in time, and provide context that enriches the narrative. Therefore, this paper will explore the multi-faceted role props play in the war boat performance of Ebedebiri people with a focus on the artistic and utility functions. This paper will analyse how these properties not only support the plot but also serve as symbols that deepen the audience's understanding of the characters and the performance in general.

The Ebedebiri War Boat Performance

The war boat performance of the Ebedebiri people portrays, propagates, preaches and projects the culture of the Ebedebiri people. It also serves as a medium for documenting history. Ebikapa Weridongha, a former Community Development Committee Chairperson of the Ebedebiri community, could not say exactly when

the war boat performance started. However, he explained that he grew up to meet the performance. Akpos Adesi explains that war boats are embedded in the culture of the people as a means of protection because of their sea-faring occupation. According to Okiyeazi Weridongha and Tamarapreye Orukekeme, the war boat accompanies the annual ritual (sacrificial boat). Cleansing communities at the end of the year is common to most African communities. Sunday D. Abraye and Rudolph Kansese state that "many Ijaw communities adopt the Owu-sei (masquerade dance) as a ritual means of cleansing the community from evil and negative spirits. The cleansing rite is carried out either at the beginning or at the end of every year. A masker representing the river deity performs especially at the village playground to the delight of spectators" (332). Similarly, Dapo Adelugba states that the Bori dances are held in time of national or communal crisis such as epidemics, crop failure, and lack of rain, when opening new or closing old markets and on market days, in return for blessings from the gods (207). This ritual is visible in Femi Osofisan's *The Strong Breed*. Ebedebiri is not different to this practice. The *Ekian-aru* (ritual boat) is arranged to convey the evils of the community to the outskirts of the town. In the boat are items that signify the past and the coming year's unwanted things, such as death, poverty, plague, etc. The carrier disposes of all the items in the boat into the river on the outskirts of the community, performing some rituals. After all necessary rituals are done, the person who was in the *Ekian-aru* is transferred to the *Omu-aru* (war boat) that accompanied the *Ekian-aru* to dispose of the evils and dance back in their boat to break the good news of successful cleansing. Tamarapreye Orukekeme, a former warlord who manned the Ebedebiri *Omu-aru* for over a decade, explained that the reason why the *Omu-aru* is necessary is that neighbouring communities do not want the *Ekian-aru* close to them and therefore tend to shoot at it. Nevertheless, the presence of the war boat manned by warriors drives off neighbouring communities, always ready to fight or shoot at the *Ekian-aru*. Orukekeme explained that the reason the *Ekian-aru* is taken to the outskirts of the community is that if the *Ekian-aru,* with all its evil deposits, stopped in a place inhabited by persons or disposes of the evils in a community, there would be lots of death and hardship in that community in the coming year. Hence, villages are battle-ready to prevent *ekian-aru* from coming near their village.

Another time a war boat is prepared and performed is during inter-communal battles or wars. Fred Brisibe, in an oral interview, said that war boats in Ijaw communities, such as Ojobo on the Burutu axis and Ebedebiri on the Tarakiri clan, are done for revenge (*sowei-bi*). For instance, if someone dies in the circumstances related to murder, the deceased/murdered person's kinsmen will prepare a boat to go on a mission of revenge (*sowei-bi* in Ijaw dialect). This Anderson attests to by

stating that "feuding in Ijaw villages sometimes become so entrenched that villages incorporate buffer zones to ease tensions. In extreme situations, a hurting faction either moves to the opposite side of a river or resettles further away (91).

The Ebedebiri people have no standing armies, nor do they fight wars of expansion and conquest. However, they organise themselves into guerrillas and are ready to fight and die when a community fails to offer appropriate compensation for accidental deaths or refuses to pay adultery fees and gambling debts. Anderson explains further by saying that:

> The Ijaws regard war and hunting as supreme trials to prove the real quality of a man. They are ready to fight and annihilate their opponents until an aggrieved party is given a balance which will substitute the loss. In the case of death, a young girl or girls replace their victims and in other situations covenants are made to end fighting (93 & 94).

A resistant act of the other community may lead to inter-communal warfare. During coastal communal or intertribal wars, Angba, Alu and Onyeku cite Angba as saying that charmers are invited to partake in the war boat. The charmer's responsibility is to invoke dew or fog during battle to prevent the opponents from seeing the approaching boat. The charmer fortifies the warriors by putting a white cloth with the charm (osei) on the boat's front deck, and then the warriors begin to jump over it (4). Martha Anderson attests to warriors using charms on the war canoe, revealing that, "they fortified themselves with real charms and herbal concoctions; some wear carvings that represent bulletproofing charms" (96). She explains further that:

> In one of the battles, a warrior (Iyo) slept on a trash heap for seven days before he mounted his war canoe to keep his enemies' spirits and charms from finding him and driving him mad. Other times, he bathed his warriors and himself with medicines from different pots, each with its name. A small calabash endowed him with amazing powers, which ensured nothing like gunshots or arrows would harm him and his slaves who accompanied him to battle. (98)

This revenge mission is visible in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart.* Ikemefuna, a fourteen years old boy is handed to Umuofia as recompense after men in another village kill a woman from Umuofia. This is done in order to settle a dispute with a

neighbouring community. Often, the emissaries on the revenge mission in Ijaw land comprise young men, agile, energetic and battle-ready to kill and conquer opposing forces. To anger the youths, Martha Anderson says, "Women sang processional war songs that have lyrics that echoed insults, challenging them to show their prowess and strength on the battlefield" (94).

The people believe the war boat prepared for a revenge mission in Ebedebiri should never turn around or retreat. Retreating is only for cowards, and Ebedebiri is full of warriors. Therefore, the paddlers only turn around when it becomes necessary to paddle in reverse direction. When the boat is to turn back, the paddlers quickly turn and face backwards, making those previously behind to become the front paddlers. This philosophy of never retreating strengthens and emboldens the warriors.

Frequently, a warrior is always positioned to guard the village crown (*epi*) in all types of war boats prepared by the community. The guard must be a very ruthless, unforgiving person. The reason for him to be very ruthless is so that he can kill anyone who attempts to cut the *epi*. Those who believe and use a spiritual enhancement to challenge the Ebedebiri warriors are neutralised and rendered powerless by the god (*Kunowei)* to maintain her dignity. When the person's power is neutralised, the guarding warrior must ensure he is killed.



Plate 1: Warrior guarding *epi* in the War boat performance of the Ebedebiri people of 22/4/23 (*Photo by Mike Ekiye)*.



Plate 2: Warriors attempting to cut *epi* in the War boat performance of the Ebedebiri people of 22/4/23 (*Photo by Mike Ekiye).*

Every performer in the boat has a function; the priest stands as a spiritual guard; he is the bridge between *Kunowei* and her warriors; the singers and drummers are an inspiration to the warriors; the paddlers ferry the boat forward, and the warriors are in the boat as fighters. In most cases, after the priest has done incantations, propitiation and prepared the warriors, the sky darkens or fog covers the warriors, and a heavy breeze blew, signaling that it is time for the boat to depart the village; therefore, it can be said that the boat departs when the deity says they should depart and this is intensified with boisterous drumming and singing.

However, to meet evolving social trends, the Ebedebiri war boat is now performed in secular ceremonies devoid of its ritual proclivity and mystical occurences. Secular occasions where the war boat can be performed include burial of kings or warriors, coronation of a new king, and performed in honour of a revered visitor to Ebedebiri community to highlight the rich history and culture of the people. The secular war boat performance has no restriction on who the audience can be as a result attracts larger patronage. This is because its entertainment functions have overwhelmed all other objectives associated with it. It is also because the public performance is the main interest of the spectators. The War boat performance of the Ebedebiri people considered in this work is the secular performance, the performance that does not have restrictions on audience participation.

Properties in the Theatre

Adakole Abdulmalik Amali contend that a property, also known as stage prop, is necessary for performance since it fosters imagination and helps bring a performance to life. It advances the story and improves the performers' overall physical and imaginative presentation (247). Vernie Koski defines prop as "any item that an artist utilises to further enhance or communicate the plot or storyline" (2). According to Roth Emily, a prop is anything that actors utilise when performing on stage or in front of a camera (17). In other words, props are often used to enhance the theatricality of the performance and add to the visual picture of the performance.

Using props in theatre or performance helps create a more realistic setting, highlight a particular scene or tell a story. Likewise, it aids the exaggeration of gestures and is an indicator of cultural identity. Props in performances are designed, manipulated or used to enhance the performance. Performers hold props like a walking stick, cutlass, hand fan, whip, etc., to aid action, set the mood and tell the story. For instance, a performer shaking, pointing or stamping his walking stick on the ground does that to make a point. Similarly, some Ijaw masquerades carry cutlasses or whips to cut or threaten audience members in order to emphasize their fearsome nature. This action of the masquerade performer, aided by the use of a prop such as a cutlass or a whip, helps tell the viciousness of the masquerade, thus supporting the realisation of the performance. Apart from aiding dramatic action, props may be tools for aesthetics, place and period indication. In a play such as *Song of a Goat* by John Pepper Clark, a fishing net may be brought to the set and placed on top of Zifa or Tonye's hut. This net, though a prop, can serve the purpose of scenic aesthetics. Its placement on set may tell the audience about Tonye and Zifa's occupation and cultural background. For instance, if a war boat performance is to be done, a prop like a paddle is very important. The reason is that the paddle is used by performers to aid the boat's movement, thus supporting the performance. However, paddle traditionally indicates occupation and environment (identity) in most Ijaw communities. With performers walking with paddles, a Nigerian audience already knows that the setting is riverine.

According to Koski, props are used during a performance to support, amplify, or complete the artist or the artistic picture. An example is a dane gun or native pot usage as a prop in a performance. Native pots and Dane guns are not commonly used in contemporary African society; therefore, their use in performance indicates period and provides information about the setting. Props may be used to exaggerate gestures, create rhythms, and convey ideas or feelings. Qiang Chen supports Koski by stating that "props can create an artistic image with unique

charm" (110). This distinction according to Amali places the character, the act, and the art in their proper contexts during a performance (247).

Property Usage in the War Boat Performance of Ebedebiri People

Generally, the properties used in the War boat performance of the Ebedebiri people give the audience a more comprehensive understanding of the characters and the roles each play. Character delineation is easy in the war boat performance because hand properties like machete, guns, paddles, smoking pot indicate the users. The combined appearance of the properties and costume increases the theatricality of the performance. No property in the Ebedebiri war boat is redundant, and all have meanings. They are also lively, confirming Fletcher's assertion that properties in theatre performances are always lively and constantly in motion (1). It must be emphasized that the properties deployed during the war boat performance transcend the default function of stage objects: they convey visual information about the world of the performance. Though they may enhance mimetic action, set the mood, and tell the story, most are signifiers that illustrate aspects of the performance.

The properties used in the War boat performance of the Ebedebiri people are drawn from the repertoire of two Ijaw traditions: warfare and performance. It has been alluded to in previous chapters that the environment influences Ijaw warfare. The people live predominantly in the delta, where water takes up a significant portion of the environment. Wars, therefore, are fought mostly with dugout boats. As a result, all the equipment and implements for war are selected to be consistent with aquatic warfare. A better emphasis is that the war boat is a replication of the tradition of warfare in Ijaw Land. Therefore, the weapons used in those wars must have a place in the reenactments. In other words, because the war boat performances reenact the wars previously fought, these weapons appear in the collection of properties in the war boat performance tradition.

Some of the weapons are related to fishing, which is the people's main occupation. Fishing tools are primarily used because the Ijaw man considers fighting and fishing actions to require the same techniques, skills, and instruments. This is particularly so because equal honour is given to the individual who takes the head of an enemy during a battle and the individual who kills a monstrous creature, whether in the forest or from the sea. They are treated equally because wild animals such as hippopotamus, octopuses, and sharks in the sea are considered threats to human life. Therefore, those who wield bravery and courage to kill them are rated as powerful humans. They are both acknowledged as heroes and belong to the same cult of heroes. The basic weapons for Ijaw aquatic warfare are the machetes and the spears. These weapons are similarly used for major fishing expeditions.

The performance tradition also influences the properties of the war boat, and it is the second source from which war boat performance properties are drawn. It must be noted that Ijaw performances are usually founded on rituals. Rituals are integral to the Ijaw performances, including masquerade festivals, funerals, marriage and circumcision ceremonies, and other cultural activities practiced by them. As expected, the selection of warriors/performers for the war boat brings to the fore the ritual foundation of the tradition. Whether imitated for aesthetic purposes or implicated for efficacy, moments are reserved for rituals during the performance. The properties used in the rituals are carried along in the war boat to signify the ritual roots of the performance. Usually, these properties are sacred outside the performance and used for religious purposes. They help in communication and communion with the world of the spirits. Their utility value connects the war boat to the ritual ambience around it.

Utility (usage) is the criterion used to classify properties for the War boat performance of the Ebedebiri people. Hence, this study categorises properties for the war boat into two groups: Hand pops and Artistic props. Hand props are those properties the performer holds in his hand and uses as weapons of engagement to gain a tactical, strategic, and psychological advantage over a rival. Artistic properties are properties that function as ornaments and decorations to accentuate the visual quality of the performance. The categorisation is strictly for proper clarification and identification of the properties in this study. Below is a properties plot and chart of warfare and artistic props done by this Egemeze Emeku for 2019 War boat performance of the Ebedebiri people in honour of Hon. Seriake Dickson, the then governor of Bayelsa State.

Performers	**Hand Props**	**Artistic Props**
Warriors	Canoe, five single double barrel guns, five single barrel gun, five machete, packs of banger, three daggers and two Spears.	Fresh tendrils of palm fronds, flag, *epi.* Calabash, the flag on a bamboo pole.
Paddlers	Canoe, fifteen paddle	Fresh tendrils of palm fronds, flag, *epi.* Calabash, the flag on a bamboo pole.

Commander *(Olotu)*	Canoe, Double barrel gun, a pack of banger, totemic staff/scepter, and dagger.	Fresh tendrils of palm fronds, flag, *epi*. Calabash, flag on a bamboo pole.
Attendants/ Arch bearer	Canoe, Calabash of charms	Fresh tendrils of palm fronds, flag, *epi*. Calabash, the flag on a bamboo pole.
Orchestra/ Dancers	Canoe, Drums, spears and swords.	Fresh tendrils of palm fronds, flag, *epi*. Calabash, the flag on a bamboo pole.
Seer/Priest	Canoe, White hand fan with mirror and totemic staff	Fresh tendrils of palm fronds, flag, *Epi*. Calabash, flag on a bamboo pole.

Table 1: Properties Plot of Ebedebiri War Boat, by Emeku Egemeze, 11/3/2019.

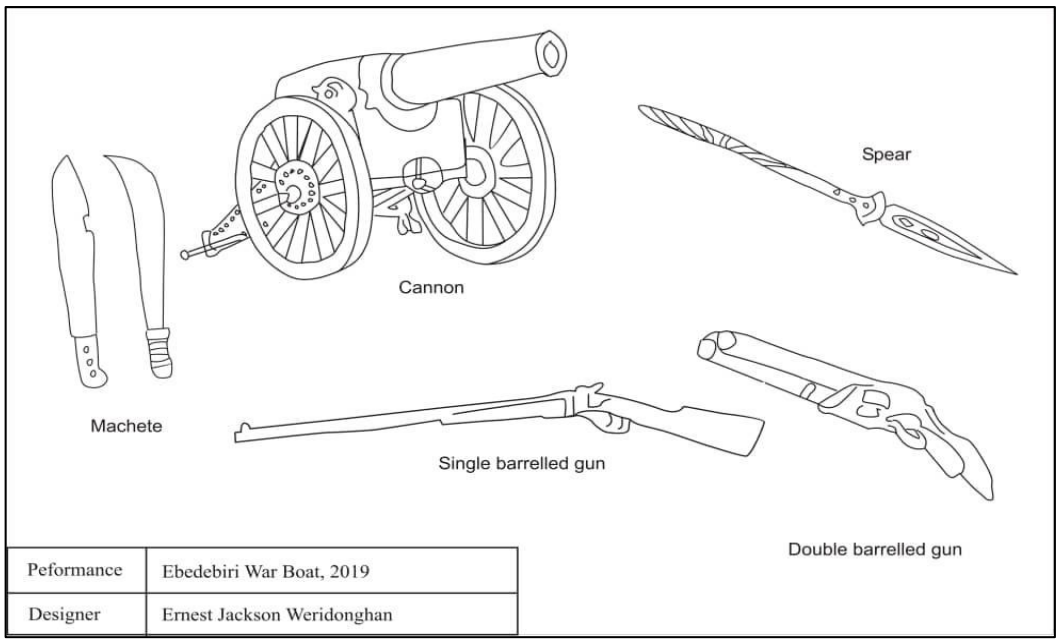


Chart 1: **Properties Chart of Ebedebiri War done by Egemeze Emeku, 11/3/2019.**

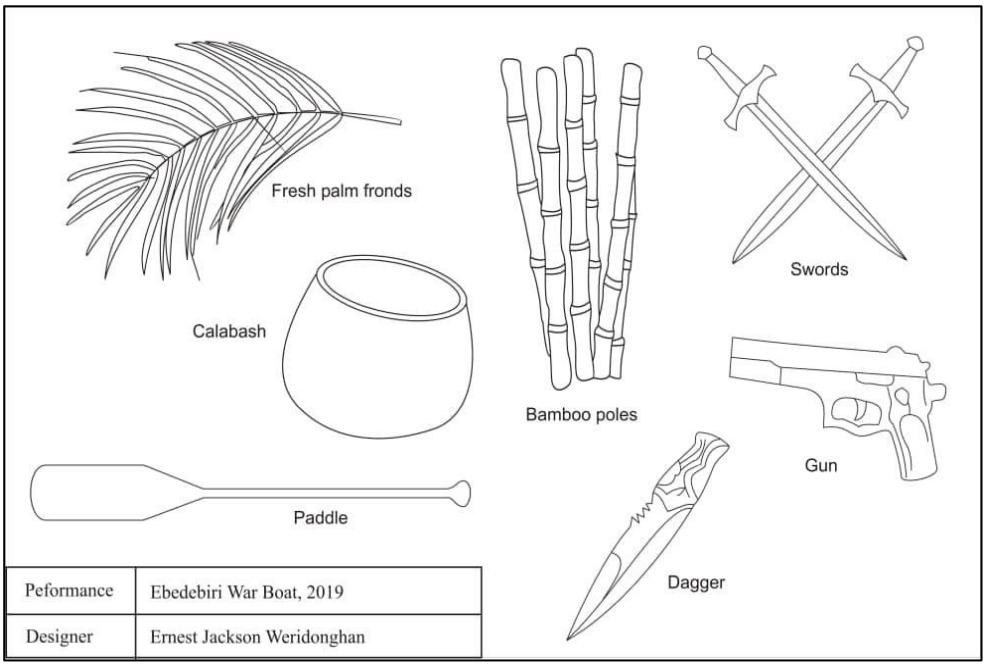


Chart 2: Properties Chart of Ebedebiri War (Courtesy: Fred Brisibe, 11/3/2019)

Hand Properties

They are used as means of achieving characterization. The kind of hand prop used has much to do with the character in the War boat performance of the Ebedebiri people. Using hand properties help performers imitate effectively and efficiently self-defence and attack scene. The weapons give confidence to the performers and place them in a superior and more compelling situation than those without them. Hand properties are constructed, moulded or woven, depending on the object, and used to deter, threaten, harm, injure, or kill. For performance, hand properties are forged to resemble the original copies so actors can parody the combatant characters. In this sense, creating properties is part of the overall art of imitation that permeates the war boat performance tradition. A necessary aspect of the performance is selecting and constructing or building the various properties, which usually takes days. Experts with a reputation for mastery in wood carving perform the carving or construction.

All properties produced, constructed or carved are done with care. The idea is that whatever property a performer carries must look real. The idea of authenticity comes into play hugely in this regard. The more realistic the property looks, the more impressed the performer feels about his role. A well-produced property also attracts the appreciation of the audience. And a poorly made one shows the low quality of the entire performance. In other words, the properties' quality contributes to the appeal of the performance. In recent performances, plastic versions have been introduced. The wooden and plastic properties are used only during the performance to forestall any accidents. Using objects made from steel, metals, and stones put the performers at a high risk of injuries due to unprofessional handling. Besides, recreating these objects is part of the art of imitation.

The hand properties commonly featured in the War boat performance of the Ebedebiri peoples are spears, machetes, dane guns, rifles, and swords. This category has other properties, such as paddles, clubs, stones, flotsams, ropes, and nets. The group is considered secondary because, even in actual warfare, they are only rarely deployed. They also have multiple functions but are relevant during aquatic battles. Their role in the performances is to help the performance reach its climax. Paddles are used in situations where rivals meet face-to-face and engage in a fight. The clubs are also used in similar circumstances. The flotsams are used when there is a need to lure an enemy troupe from their place of hiding. Floating them on the water gives the opposing party the impression that they have departed, prompting them to appear from hiding. It is a strategy of aquatic warfare.



Plate 4: Warriors during an *ogele* to the river, 14/11/2022 performance of the war boat (*Photo by Paul Ebikeseye).*

Nets and ropes are also used strategically to trap the opponents and their boats. The ropes are woven into a noose and thrown around the neck of the rival to capture him. They are used to tie victims who are captured during the war and hauled home. Sometimes, these victims are huddled together with ropes and taken as enslaved people. Using the ropes in this manner heightens the tension in the performance and shows the superiority of one party over another. Nets are also used in different ways. One purpose is to recover corpses in the water. In the performances, nets are brought to obstruct enemies' movement. Spies usually do this. In battles where the warriors come into close contact, the nets are cast on the boat, targeting it to capsize it. The enactment of these actions makes the performance dramatic and more entertaining.

The secondary properties, such as paddles, clubs, stones, flotsams, ropes, and nets, do not require improvisation. They are brought in their natural state but are histrionically mimed during the performance. Other hand properties, especially the machetes, spears, and swords, are made from wood and painted black. The machetes differ from the types known for farming and domestic purposes. They are generally called *Owei-Apia,* men's machetes. The sizes are bigger in length and width and are sharp on both edges. *Owei-Apia* is most frequently applied when Ijaw fishermen go for giant sea animals. Headhunters and warriors also use it. Machetes are crucial as a hand property because traditionally, it is only when a victim is killed with a machete that qualifies a warrior as a hero. This is especially true if the killer must be conscripted into the Ogbu (hero) Cult in Ijaw. To be accepted into the heroes' cult, a warrior must have beheaded his target using the machete. Therefore, the machete is used as a weapon of defence and decapitation. During the performance, the cutlasses are artistically brandished to frighten the opponents, create fear in their minds, and give them the impression of a warrior.

The spears and daggers are designed in such a way that they can be used to thrust against opposing fighters. Some performers prepare to display daggers during dancing to create some beauty in their dances. Others simply stick their daggers to their waist belt, where they are usually kept when there are no actions. Daggers are also carved from wood and painted to resemble the original steel form. The colours for daggers differ; some are painted black while others painted grey. The spears require no special design: a simple long stick that terminates in a head that branches into one, three, or seven-pointed parts. The spears are laid close to the edge of the canoe and are lifted if there is a use for them.

Swords are considered superior to other small tools because they distinguish the chief warriors from the others. It is rated highly and prestigious in the collection of warfare properties. Because of this special status it is accorded, the

handling of swords is reserved for a few. Only three characters use swords in the War boat performance of the Ebedebiri people. The spiritual leader who hangs it across his shoulder while engaging in other magical activities, the champion who finds pride in brandishing it, and the warrior guarding the *epi* are customarily permitted to use swords. In the war boat, swords are used for one-on-one engagements, particularly when the arena is open for the parties' leaders to engage in a close-range fight. Like other tools, swords also come in wooden form during performance for the same reasons of avoiding accidents and weight. The sizes are mostly different, but the design and colour follow a similar pattern.

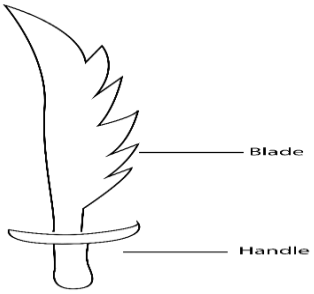


Plate 6: An artist's impression of sword for war boat perfomance (Rendered by Braokubo Ebisindei)

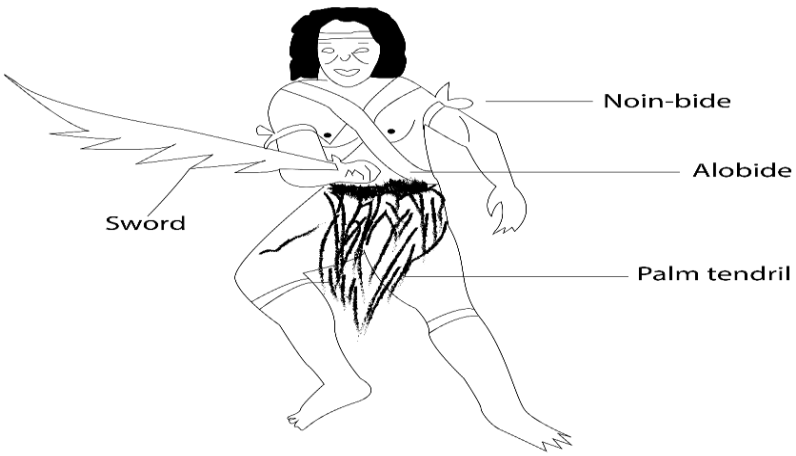


Plate7: An Artist Impression of a Performer yielding the sword (Rendered by Braokubo Ebisindei)

Another weapon of relevance is a cannon. Cannon has three basic functions in the war boat. It is a decoration, a speed control mechanism, and a weapon. When not in use, the cannon is an ornament, providing aesthetic beauty to the boat and colour to the performance. However, it is a hand property because performers use it to scare away enemies and control the boat's speed. The sound of the cannon also introduces the performance and closes it by giving the necessary signals to the audience. Two cannons are usually displayed in the Ebedebiri war boat. One is laid at the front of the boat, and the second is mounted at the back. The one at the back increases the speed, while the one at the front reduces the pace when the boat moves too fast. Cannons are significant to the war boat; the type referred to here is locally constructed.

It must be emphasised that the properties discussed here as warfare properties are hand properties, easily lifted and manipulated by holding in hand except the canon. These properties provide stability, easy movement, and adequate characterization of the performers in a war boat during performance. They are grouped under this new terminology because they are recognised as engagement weapons in the war boat performance parlance. Therefore, it is a good course of action to categorise them in that order. They are properties, but they are used specifically for fighting. The approach is generally to put the properties according to their recognised functions in the performance and outside it. This is one way of identifying their cultural, social, and environmental significance.

Artistic Properties

They are decorations on the boat. However, they symbolically connect the human world to the world of the gods. In a sacred war boat performance, these properties are sacred, therefore, used as weapons and for fortification; to serve religious purposes. But in a secular performance like that discussed in this study, the religious functions are imitated during a performance. As much as possible, the fetish elements are discarded, reduced to an insignificant minimum, or converted to increase the theatrical quality of the performance. In extreme cases, performers symbolise them. Examples of artistic properties are the fresh tendrils of palm frond, the pot of charms, and the flag (*epi*).

The fresh tendrils of palm frond are called *munumunu* when applied to the war boat or any religious object, such as masks and totems. In the war boat, it is

neatly tied around the boat from the edges. The boat is dressed in this way to fence off evil contacts and external pollution. It is also designed to make the boat and the performers on it appear special, weird, and indestructible. The freshness of the fronds and the bold yellow colour, when combined with the dominant black of the boat, give an appearance of beauty that defines the enigmatic nature of the boat. It must be said that the aesthetic quality is higher than whatever religious connotations the fronds embody in the performance. The sacred quality is evident when strands of the tendrils are used during sanctification rites. The priest uses bunched strands of fronds to sprinkle water on the performers from a calabash before launching out the boat for performance. Fern leaves are more frequently used in this regard.

The charm pot is another efficacious property of the war boat. The pot either smokes or flames from inside. The priest uses this charm pot to perform magic and communicate with invisible personalities. It is believed to be the carrier of the power of the community deity in the boat. Usually, a teenage boy bears it when the performance is ongoing. The boy's assigned duty is to protect it and pass it to the priest when needed. Incantations and prayers are made by the priest holding the pot towards the sky. These actions are sometimes performed for dramatic effect. The clay pot has been replaced with calabash because of its weight. The calabash is preferred now because it is light and amenable. To avoid accidents, using actual fire is discouraged in the performance of war boats in Ebedebiri. The pot is decorated with the tendrils of palm fronds to suggest its efficacy, sacredness and power to ward off evil. The artistic properties help the performers in the interpretation of their various roles. The smoking pot, for instance, helps the priest interpret his role while moving around with it to fortify warriors.

The flag is also both religiously and aesthetically significant to the performance. The flag is traditionally called *epi*. What is called *epi* is a combination of a bamboo pole, a long and flowing white cloth, and a small calabash. The pole, carrying the white cloth, stands at the back of the boat, close to the rear seat. The white cloth (*alo*) dangles down from the pole to the water, while the small calabash (*atu*) bounces on the water. The calabash is tied to the cloth at the lower end. The importance of this object is its function as a symbol of authority and communal identity to navigate freely on any water.

Conclusion

Properties are one of the most synthetic elements of the war boat performance of the Ebedebiri people. They help in the smooth running and understanding of performances by the audience. As such, property play creative and interpretative

roles in the performances. Its application in the war boat performance of the Ebedebiri people shows that creative ingenuity can negotiate with culture therefore recommends that future designers should consider the community's culture and identity in their designs to put a befitting war boat performance.

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