



Baybayin: The Role of a Written Language in the Cultural Identity and Socio-Psychological Well-Being of Filipinos

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Baybayin: The Role of a Written Language in the Cultural Identity and
Socio-Psychological Well-Being of Filipinos

Allan Torres Camba

A Thesis in the Fields of Anthropology & Archaeology
for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

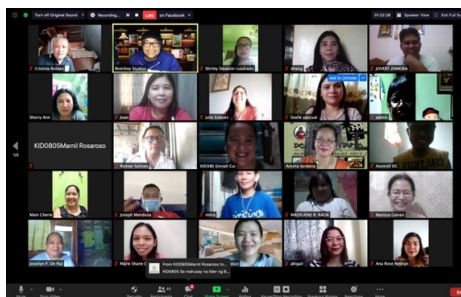
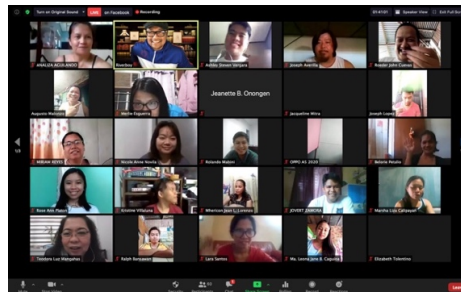
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Abstract

The lingering problem of inferiority complex due to colonial mentality and the increasing threat of globalization as dominant cultures becomes the referenced culture is a growing concern to many Filipinos. This research aims to investigate the connection between the Baybayin writing system with the cultural identity and socio-psychological well-being of Filipinos. Using a phenomenological research method, this study analyzed the Baybayin writing system's role in the cultural identity and socio-psychological well-being of Filipinos who still uses the writing system and processed their answers through horizontalization. In the horizontalization process, certain statements were lifted out of the transcripts and recorded on a separate piece of paper—forming core themes from the participants' answers. It was found that with the lingering problem of inferiority complex due to colonial mentality, the Baybayin provides; 1) a cultural/national visual identity or symbol to the Filipino people, 2) a unifying factor that offers a sense of communal pride, belongingness, and social connection among various communities of Filipinos in the Philippines and abroad, and 3) a sort of emotional expression and psychological upliftment to people. This research definitively answers the correlation between the Baybayin writing system with the cultural identity and socio-psychological well-being of the diaspora of advocates, artists, and scholars. Further studies are needed to have a greater understanding of the Baybayin's role in the cultural identity and socio-psychological well-being of the other groups of Filipinos who still uses the Baybayin like the Mangyan tribes in Mindoro.

Frontispiece



വെളിച്ചം കണ്ടു. ഞാനും
 എന്റെ കൂടെയുള്ളവരും
 വെളിച്ചം കണ്ടു. ഞാനും
 എന്റെ കൂടെയുള്ളവരും

The greatest part that came out of my study is the part where
 I was given the chance to share my learning.

Dedication

I dedicate this to my children Angeleeya & Aleeyana, my wife Anita, and my mom Lilia.

Acknowledgments

I would have been a total mess if not for my ever so loving and supportive family. To my mom, who joined my family and me in this academic journey: Thank you! To my wife, who calms my inner menace and pushes me to climb the steepest mountains and soar through the thickest clouds: Thank you! To my children whom I have stolen much of my time from: I thank you! I also thank my sisters and relatives, who were supportive of my passion for wisdom.

I greatly thank all the participants who joined this research. To Kuya Jay Enage, who helped me with some of my research materials: Thank you! To Christopher Miller, who provided me with great insights: Thank you! To Kristian Kabuay and Norman de los Santos, who is ever-present online since the early beginnings of Baybayin online: Thank you! To Tim Brookes, Taipan, FlipOne, Kuya Leo Emmanuel Castro, Dr. Rolando Borrinaga, and Dr. Bonifacio Comandante: Thank you for the precious time you spent with me during our interviews!

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Last but never least, I thank the Church Administration of our Church, the Iglesia ni Cristo, for the spiritual guidance that kept me strong in all aspects of my life. To GOD, our Father, and Jesus Christ, His Son: I offer to You my biggest THANK YOU and every bit of success I have in life!

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Many Filipinos are disoriented due to a lingering problem of cultural identity. This is due to a long history of colonization and occupation of the Philippines. Spanish influence began in the Philippines on March 16, 1521, at the arrival of Ferdinand Magellan's exploration, and the Spanish colonialism followed around 44 years later during Miguel López de Legazpi's expedition on February 13, 1565, and remained occupied by Spain for 333 years (1565-1898).¹ Following the Spanish colonization, the United States of America occupied and ruled the country for 48 years (1898-1946).² During the US occupation, the Japanese also invaded the Philippines—bringing more outside cultural influences to the people, from 1942 to 1945. Indeed, there is no question of the outside cultural influences that governed the Filipino people for a long time and the threat of those influences to their culture and their identity. Though we cannot negate the fact that influence can sometimes be good—as it promotes cultural pluralism and diversity when everyone learns from each other through collaboration and cooperation—we also cannot neglect the danger of such influences, especially when those influences are forcefully imposed, can cause threat or danger to one's native cultural identity.

¹ T. A. Agoncillo, *Philippine History* (Sta. Cruz, Manila: Inang Wika, 1962), 45.

² G. F. Zaide, *Philippine History: Development of Our Nation* (Manila: Bookman, 1969), 309.

How important is it for one to have a clear cultural identity? A recent study suggests that having a clear cultural identity is essential for one's identity, self-esteem, and well-being.³ This unclear cultural identity and the lack of self-esteem are indeed prevalent among many Filipinos, as Alex Tizon beautifully portrays it in his book, *Big Little Man: In Search of My Asian Self*.⁴ In his book, Tizon expresses the different types of inferiorities he felt when he migrated to America, as he suffered from the Filipino colonial mentality. Such a mentality is still prevalent among the *Pinoy psyche*⁵ due to a seriously threatened cultural identity due to an imposed culture. With this, a notable aspect of cultural identity that seems to have been lost among the people is the use of the *Baybayin*⁶. *Baybayin* is the written language that was used by the *pre-Hispanic people*—the natives. But as the Spaniards colonized the Philippines, the written languages of the natives were slowly replaced by the Latin alphabet. According to the sources that are available, the existence of the *Baybayin* was first noted through a report attributed to the commander of the Legazpi Expedition (1564-1565), Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, to King Felipe II of Spain while he was giving an account of their conquest. Legaspi's account

³ E. Osborne and D. M. Taylor, "The Role of Cultural Identity Clarity for Self-Concept Clarity, Self-Esteem, and Subjective Well-Being," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 36, no. 7 (2010): 883-897. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0146167210372215>.

⁴ A. Tizon, *Big Little Man: In Search of My Asian Self* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2018).

⁵ *Pinoy Psyche*: A term coined for the first time in this paper, is a characteristic imbedded in the Filipino consciousness and habitus that they, themselves, are aware of that they share as part of their cultural identity. An example of this is the knowledge of the prevalent colonial mentality that exists among Filipinos.

⁶ *Baybayin*: the term Baybayin here will be use in this paper as the collective name of the various versions of the indigenous writing systems that was originally used by the *pre-Hispanic people* in the Philippines.

was later noted in San Agustín's *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas*, published in 1698.⁷ In addition to Legaspi's account, Antonio de Morga—a Spanish lawyer, historian, and a high-ranking colonial officer—who was also in the Philippines, noted in his book, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, how the natives read and write well with their language.⁸ More details and other accounts of the *Baybayin* will be talked about in the later chapter of this paper. Today, the *Baybayin* is slowly being revived by artists, advocates, and scholars. Still, this great cultural heritage seems to remain been isolated deep within the jungles of the Philippines—like the remaining Mangyan tribes that still use them—the Buhid and Hanunoo—using them in their variation. The sad part is that even the tribe elders are beginning to lose knowledge of the scripts.⁹

1.1 Background of the Problem

In today's increasing technological advancements, migration, and globalization, one cannot help but imagine the grave threat these are to the local cultural identities as dominant cultures become the referenced culture due to social and/or economic reasons, the significance of the minority cultures and their identities becomes compromised—causing adverse effects to the social and psychological well-being among the minorities.

⁷ Gaspar de San Agustín, *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas (1565-1615)*, ed. Manuel Merino (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Enrique Florez, 1975), 292.

⁸ Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*. Mexico, 1609, trans. and ed. J. S. Cummins. The Hakluyt Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 269.

⁹ A. Lowe, "Fighting to Keep Alive the Philippines' Ancient Script" (August 27, 2014). Retrieved October 19, 2018, from <https://www.thenational.ae/world/asia/fighting-to-keep-alive-the-philippines-ancient-script-1.465473> (The National: World: Asia).

In a research conducted by E. Osborne and D. M. Taylor, they argue the importance of cultural identity as an available reference group and comparative mechanism for an individual to build his/her personal identity and experience positive self-esteem and well-being.¹⁰ In a social context, this research is also supported by research done in 2013 by Basu, which states that group identity and sense of integration into society can be used as one's productivity and capability.¹¹ But, as Mustafa Koc mentioned in the introduction of his 2006 article, "the concept of identity turns out to be more problematic and complicated than ever before."¹² Indeed, this is true! In a study conducted by Kim et al. among Mexican immigrants, their findings suggest that as Mexican immigrants experience acculturative stress, their self-esteem was negatively affected—decreasing their psychological well-being—but with high self-esteem, the debilitating effects of acculturative stress on psychological well-being was alleviated.¹³ However, ethnic identity, according to the same research of Kim et al., aggravated the negative impact of acculturative stress on psychological well-being. This latter finding supports the types of acculturative stress that Alex Tizon detailed. He talked about his inferiorities and how he

¹⁰ E. Osborne and D. Taylor, "The Role of Cultural Identity Clarity for Self-Concept Clarity, Self-Esteem, and Subjective Well-Being," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 36, no. 7 (2010): 883-897.

¹¹ K. Basu, "Group Identity, Productivity and Well-being Policy Implications for Promoting Development," *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 14, no. 3 (2013): 1-18.

¹² Mustafa Koc, "Cultural Identity Crisis in the Age of Globalization and Technology," *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology* 5, no. 1 (2006) 37.

¹³ E. Kim, I. Hogge, and C. Salvisberg, "Effects of Self-Esteem and Ethnic Identity: Acculturative Stress and Psychological Well-Being Among Mexican Immigrants," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 36, no. 2 (2014): 144-163.

tries to conform to the dominating American culture by looking more *mestizo* or whiter.¹⁴ This topic on cultural or ethnic identity is not new! In a Google Ngram Viewer search, a chart shows the simultaneously increasing frequency of the use of "cultural identity" and "ethnic identity" on books since the 1950s, which serves us a good hint on the aggregating concerns on the topic of cultural and ethnic identity.

For many Filipinos in the Philippines and abroad, the disoriented cultural identity's current and pressing issue continues to impair their social and psychological well-being. This has been a much-increasing concern among many Filipinos in the past half a century. In a social sense, Filipinos seem to be more inspired by other cultures more than their own and therefore distancing their relationship among their family/ethnic group and in psychological

sense, Filipinos seem to be affected by the *Pinoy Psyche* that negatively affects the way they think of themselves. The social and psychological effect of the disoriented cultural identity among Filipinos due to colonization was justly expressed in the introduction of the book, *Filipino Americans: Transformation and Identity*, which states:

"colonization ravaged the souls and psyche of the indigenous people.... Trauma fragments and fractures the essence of our being and self-knowledge; it disconnects us from each other." ~ Maria P.P. Root.¹⁵

Indeed, the lasting impact of the colonization persists, as the *Pinoy psyche* is aware of the prevalence of the Filipino colonial mentality that fosters that feeling of inferiority. In fact, as a result of the colonial impact, Professor Renato Constantino—a Filipino historian

¹⁴ Tizon, *Big Little Man*.

¹⁵ Maria P. P. Root, *Filipino Americans: Transformation and Identity* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997). ix.

even pointed out in a 1959 essay that Filipinos have been "mis-educated" as Filipinos embrace everything that comes from the West—including the mandatory usage of the English language in education which he said is the start of miseducation.¹⁶ From the beginning of their education, young Filipino children were already introduced to embracing not their own culture that defines their own identity but those that are foreign to them. Jessica Hagedorn, a Filipino-American writer and playwright, states as she thinks back to her experience in the Philippines:

"I was taught to look outside the indigenous culture for inspiration, taught that the label 'Made in the USA' meant automatic superiority; in other words, like most colonized individuals, I was taught a negative image of myself."¹⁷

Neils Mulder, a Dutch anthropologist, said that the Filipino intelligentsia is aware of this damaged Filipino identity—saying that the Filipino identity might even be lost.¹⁸ Quoting an introducer's comment on Mulder's lecture at Manuel S. Envergo University:

"We take after whatever reaches us from the West, from America. We are imitators who have lost authenticity. How can we ever be self- confident Filipinos who stand identifiably on their own?"

Thus, due to the obscuring of cultural identity, these social and psychological struggles persist among Filipinos in the Philippines and abroad. For that reason, it is

¹⁶ Renato Constantino, "The Mis-education of the Filipino," in Renato Constantino, *The Filipinos in the Philippines and Other Essays* (Quezon City: Malaya Books, 1966).

¹⁷ Juan Aguilar-San, *The State of Asian America: Activism and Resistance in the 1990s*. Race and Resistance series (Boston: South End Press, 1994).

¹⁸ N. Mulder, "Filipino Identity: The Haunting Question," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 32, no. 1 (2013): 55–80.

imperative to provide interventions that aim to clarify the Filipino cultural identity to improve their social and psychological well-being. According to a study conducted by Taylor and Osborne (2010), interventions such as the revival of a traditional language to clarify cultural identity may play a positive role in promoting well-being.¹⁹ For that purpose, this research will conduct a study on how the revival of the Baybayin gives clarity to the Filipino cultural identity, which in turn shows us its role in the social and psychological well-being of the Filipinos in the Philippines and abroad. This will be done by exploring the cultural identity of the Mangyan tribes that are still maintaining the use of the ancient writing to their children and by interpreting the efficacy of the revitalization of the Baybayin in promoting sociopsychological well-being among the diaspora of scholars, advocates, and artists.

1.2 Research Aims and Objectives

In this research, we will look into how the *Baybayin* script plays a role in the cultural identity and socio-psychological well-being of the groups of people who still use the writing system. Concerning this, it is also imperative to first explore the people's identity to clearly understand the role of the *Baybayin* in their cultural identity and socio-psychological well-being. Furthermore, since various groups in different places are now revitalizing the Baybayin, it is also essential to know the efficacy of revitalizing the *Baybayin* for the sake of cultural identity, and socio-psychological well-being of the

¹⁹ D. M. Taylor and E. Osborne, "When I Know Who 'We' Are, I Can Be 'Me': The Primary Role of Cultural Identity Clarity for Psychological Well-Being," *Transcultural Psychiatry* 47, no. 1 (2010): 93-111.

diaspora of scholars, advocates, and artists who are promoting the revitalization of the written language.

I hypothesize that the revival of the *Baybayin*, as an aspect of Filipino cultural identity, is playing a positive role in giving a clearer cultural identity and better socio-psychological well-being to the Filipino people who still use it as it. I expect to find that socially, by having a clearer knowledge of their own cultural identity through the *Baybayin*, people among the said groups who continue to use the script, would create a greater sense of belonging to their cultural group, greater social connections among the people in their cultural group, and bring greater recognition from others for having a written language of their own. I also predict that psychologically, by having a clearer understanding of their cultural identity, people's groups would have a much better *Pinoy psyche*—giving them better self-esteem and pride in their own culture.

Finally, this research's importance is not only a personal reason but also a contribution to a national and global understanding of the significance or insignificance of preserving a written language. Language—spoken or written—is an essential aspect of a nation or groups' identity. In fact, many countries have had many efforts and movements to revitalize their languages. Take, for instance, the Celtic languages: despite many efforts, many of their languages continue to decline in usage.²⁰ In a personal context, this study will help Filipinos have a greater understanding of their cultural identity. In a national context, this research hopes to help the Philippine government in the deliberation of two current proposed bills (House Bill No. 1022, Senate Bill 433). In a

²⁰ J. Oliver, "Young People and Gaelic in Scotland: Identity Dynamics in a European Region" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Sheffield, 2002).

global context, this research hopes to contribute to the global promotion and discourse on language revitalization.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This introductory chapter presented the history of colonization and occupation of the Philippines and the influence on it to the Filipino people's culture. Also discussed in this introductory is the background of the problem and the aims and objectives of this study. This last part of the introduction will provide an overview and introduction of the succeeding chapters and serve as a mind map for the entire thesis.

Chapter 2 History and Theory of Writing. Section 2.1 of this chapter will quickly discuss various scholars' different views on the definition of a writing system. Section 2.2 will look into the antecedents of writing systems like cave paintings, clay tokens, etc., and the discourse surrounding the original writing systems' origin. Section 2.3 presents the early beginnings of writing systems from the invention of the original writing systems in various places such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, Mesoamerica, and the Easter Islands. Section 2.4 describes the different uses of writing systems in multiple locations. Section 2.5 talks about the life of a writing system from its early conception to its last inscription.

Chapter 3 The Characteristics, Development, Origin, and Pre-Hispanic Use of the *Baybayin*. Section 3.1 discusses the different theories of the Baybayin origin from Gardner to Comandante. Section 3.2 focuses on the character and the development of the *Baybayin*. Section 3.3 presents the various pre-Hispanic artifacts displayed at the

Baybayin Gallery section inside the National Museum of Anthropology in the Philippines. Section 3.4 discusses the various pre-Hispanic use of the *Baybayin*.

Chapter 4 The Baybayin During and Since the Spanish Colonial Period. The chapter discusses the 16th-18th century accounts of the Baybayin as witnessed by the Spanish navigators, conquistadors, and missionaries. Section 4.1 renders the early accounts of the Baybayin during the colonial period while introducing what possibly guided the colonizers' school of thought before sailing to the west and into the east. Section 4.2 describes how the Spanish colonizers used and modified the Baybayin to introduce Christianity to the natives. Section 4.3 illustrates the missionaries' frustrations with the Baybayin, which triggered the eventual use of the Latin alphabet to represent the Tagalog spoken language. Section 4.4 explains the gradual disappearance of the Baybayin in the vernacular. Section 4.5 discusses the condition of the Baybayin, starting from the early 1900s to the present day.

Chapter 5 Writing Systems and Efforts of Preservation and/or Revitalization. This chapter looks into the value of language preservation and/or revitalization and understand the writing systems' role in various efforts. Section 5.1 talks about the creation and preservation of the Cherokee syllabary and describes its role in the Cherokee population's lives. Section 5.2 discusses the creation and preservation of the Pahawh Hmong writing system and looks into the role played by the script in the lives of the Hmong people. Section 5.3 considers the continuous efforts on revitalizing Sanskrit language and the role of the writing systems in the creation of various literature, which serves as the breathing life of the Sanskrit language. Section 5.4 discusses the successful revitalization and modernization of Hebrew in Israel through the revernacularization of

the Hebrew language and writing. Section 5.5 reflects on the various efforts of revitalization and the underrated focus on the study of writing systems in academia.

Chapter 6 Baybayin Language Today and the Current Revitalization Efforts. This chapter focuses on the various efforts to promote and/or revive the ancient Philippine script called Baybayin. Section 6.1 starts by presenting the movement that began around 1953 and continues to discuss the advocacy through online and social media that started around the early 1990s. Section 6.2 considers the advocacy through the Philippine government by introducing the National Script Act of 2011. Section 6.3 illustrates advocacy through the use of various arts and other commercial products. Section 6.4 describes the various yet occasional advocacy through the academy.

Chapter 7 Research Method. Expounded in this chapter is the phenomenological research method that was used to conduct qualitative research. Also mentioned here are the original plans and the research protocol's adjustments due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Section 7.1 explains the various research limitations that were encountered before and during the research.

Chapter 8 Findings, Discussion, and Conclusion. Section 8.1 begins the chapter by introducing the participants and their role in language revitalization. Section 8.2 discusses the approach in organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing the data transcriptions of the interviews. Also provided in section 8.2 is the table of the core themes from the participants' statements on the role of a written language in Filipinos' cultural identity, social well-being, and psychological well-being. Section 8.3 details the research findings' summary while focusing on the participants' significant/similar statements. Section 8.4

explores through a discussion regarding the results and other insights for future research.

Finally, Section 8.5 presents the conclusion of the thesis.

Chapter 2

History and Theory of Writing

2.1 What Is a Writing System?

Chasing the proper definition of a writing system can be very difficult, primarily because of the eluding definitions that we get from scholars. In a chapter written by Andreas Stauder in the book *Visual Language*, he said, "Writing is classically defined as a conventional system of visual communication representing speech."²¹ Further, Stauder explains that such a definition is problematic, especially considering the early stages of the conception of writing. Indeed, it is practically more complicated because, according to other scholars, writing systems were not invented initially to reproduce speech²²; Instead, it could have started recording units of accountancy like that of the clay tokens in the Middle East and the clay tablets from Mesopotamia.²³ It could also have started representing creatures like that of the pictograms from Mesopotamia, Egypt, and China.²⁴ Besides, others say writing is born of speech.²⁵

²¹ C. Woods, G. Emberling, E. Teeter, and University of Chicago. Oriental Institute. *Visible Language: Inventions of Writing in the Ancient Middle East and beyond*. Oriental Institute Museum Publications; no. 32 (Chicago, Ill.: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2010).

²² *Ibid.*, 85

²³ A. Robinson. *Writing and Script: A Very Short Introduction*, no. 208 (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Woods, *Visible Language*, 21

2.2 Proto-Writing.

Before the birth of any writing system, cave paintings illustrated different images like the paleolithic drawings in the Chauvet Cave in France, El Castillo in Spain, and Sulawesi in Indonesia ~40-35 thousand years ago.^{26 27} Aside from the cave paintings that depicted animals, cave arts represented mathematical sets and lunar calendars like that of the Aurignacian Culture of Europe ~32,000 BC.²⁸ Following these paleolithic drawings were geometric clay tokens found Near and the Middle East from Khartoum to the Indus Valley River ~8 thousand years B.C.²⁹ These pictograms were once thought to have been the precursor of writing.³⁰ Ignace Gelb, who pioneered the study of writing systems, theorized that all of the famous ancient scripts, such as Sumerian, Egyptian, Chinese, etc., developed into a linear form from its picture form.³¹ The claim that the ancient writings developed from picture forms was later assessed in the study of Stephen Lieberman and deemed it "unjustified on chronological and geographical grounds, imprecise or incorrect

²⁶ H. Pike, P. García-Diez, A. De Balbín, . . . Pike, "A W G. U-series dating of Paleolithic art in 11 caves in Spain," *Science* (New York: 2012): 1409-1413.

²⁷ M. Aubert, A. Brumm, M. Ramli, T. Sutikna, E. W. Saptomo, B. Hakim, . . . A. Dosset, "Pleistocene cave art from Sulawesi, Indonesia," *Nature*, no. 514 (London: 2014): 223-227.

²⁸ Soderman/NLSI Staff, "Solar System Exploraton Research Virtual Institute website," *NASA*. Accessed November 18, 2020, at <https://sservi.nasa.gov/articles/oldest-lunar-calendars/>.

²⁹ J. DeFrancis, *Visible Speech: The Diverse Oneness of Writing Systems*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989).

³⁰ I. Gelb, *A Study of Writing: The Foundations of Grammarology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

in terms of many of the purely formal comparisons which have been made, inadequate as an explanation of the appearance of writing, and based on a classification error."³²

Daniels & Bright also stated that since language incorporates many other aspects that cannot be represented by pictures, pictography is not writing, nor did writing develop from pictography.³³

2.3 The Earliest Writing Systems.

Writing is known to have been independently invented at least four times in different places, according to the recent book edited by Christopher Woods.³⁴ According to Woods, writing systems were invented in Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, and Mesoamerica.³⁵ In addition to the four mentioned places of origins of the independently invented writing systems, Melka's article suggests another independently invented writing system from Easter Island.³⁶ In Mesopotamia, the cuneiform—a term coined by Thomas Hyde³⁷—meaning "wedge-like" writing was likely invented to represent the Sumerian language in the 4th millennium B.C.³⁸ It was also said to have been the source

³² S.J. Lieberman, "Of Clay Pebbles, Hollow Clay Balls, and Writing: A Sumerian View." *American Journal of Archaeology* 84, no. 3 (1980): 339-358.

³³ P.T. Daniels and W. Bright. *The World's Writing Systems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

³⁴ Woods, *Visible Language*, 7.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ T.S. Melka, "On a 'Kinetic'-like Sequence in Rongorongo Tablet 'Mamari'." *Writing Systems Research* 5, no. 1 (2013): 54-72.

³⁷ A. Robinson, *The Story of Writing* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1995): 72

³⁸ Woods, *Visible Language*, 86.

of inspiration for the Egyptian hieroglyphic writing. On the other hand, the Egyptian hieroglyphs were dated by Barry Powell³⁹ to be from c.3250 B.C. The earliest-known of its kind was discovered in Tomb U-j Umm el-Qa'ab.⁴⁰ Though the exact "moment of conception" of the Egyptian writing is still inaccessible and is the source of many debates among contemporary scholars^{41 42}. In China, the earliest-known Chinese writing was found in Anyang around the thirteenth-century B.C.⁴³ The Chinese writing was said to have started from picture writing but later began representing sounds. In Mesoamerica, the oldest known writing is associated with the Olmec civilization, dating back to 1000-800 BC.⁴⁴ Moreover, Woods suggests that the writings in Mesoamerica was highly likely to have been invented around 1200-600 BC and was developed from the writing that was initiated by the Olmec and Zapotec.⁴⁵ In Easter Island writings—the 'RongoRongo' which means 'chants or recitations'—was said to have either 1) independently invented by the islanders, 2) acquired the knowledge from another country such as Peru or China, or) invented after the European visits to Easter Island in 1770.⁴⁶

³⁹ B. B. Powell, *Writing: Theory and History of the Technology of Civilization* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2009).

⁴⁰ Woods, *Visible Language*, 118.

⁴¹ Ibid. 115.

⁴² Houston, Stephen D. *The First Writing: Script Invention as History and Process*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 172.

⁴³ Woods, *Visible Language*, 215-216.

⁴⁴ J. Skidmore, "The Cascajal Block: The Earliest Precolumbian Writing," *Mesoweb Reports & News*, (Mesoweb, 2006).

⁴⁵ Woods, *Visible Language*, 225-227.

⁴⁶ A. Robinson, "The Death of RongoRongo," *Writing and Script: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

2.4 Uses of Writing Systems

The initial use of writing systems seems to vary from one place to another. Writing appears to have arisen as societies develop into a more complex civilization.⁴⁷ This similar case seemed to be what also occurred in Mesopotamia, where the earliest inscriptions found at Uruk consist of records of livestock, code of laws, lists of people's names, their tasks, and shares, etc.⁴⁸ Though they emphasized administration to a lesser degree, these similar types of artifacts were found in Egypt—its neighboring region—where more artifacts consisted of ceremonial practices and rituals, showing their religious use.⁴⁹ Records of divination rituals, requests to their gods, etc. were excavated in China, indicating their religious use of their writing system. Though the hieroglyphic writing in Mesoamerica was also motivated by their religious beliefs, many artifacts were found to consist of astronomy, calendrical records, cycles of life, etc., indicating the various uses of their writing system.⁵⁰

2.5 The Life of a Writing System

From the conception of writing systems in various places, scholars estimate that only a few were literate in its early stages—limited to less than one percent of the ancient population—in fact, it was even rare for royalty to know how to write and/or read.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Woods, *Visible Language*, 7-18.

⁴⁸ Daniels and Bright, *The World's Writing Systems*, 5.

⁴⁹ Woods, *Visible Language*, 7.

⁵⁰ Daniels and Bright, *The World's Writing Systems*, 5; Woods, *Visible Language*, 7.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Though people have become more likely to be literate with their spoken language today, spoken languages, according to Andrew Robinson, have disappeared more quickly than scripts.⁵² The benefit of scripts or writing systems over the spoken language is that it has a more significant advantage in space and time—through many technological advancements, spoken languages can now be recorded through audio recordings and thus gained an advantage in space and time. Still, writing systems have been much tested when it comes to their more tremendous advantage in space and time, and we have the Egyptian and Mayan hieroglyphs—carved on stones—to prove that. Yet, the fate of writing systems or scripts also depends on many aspects such as political, economic, religious, cultural, prestige, and the existence of significant literature, etc.⁵³ For example, cuneiform survived for more than three thousand years after its invention ~3,000 years B.C. until its last inscription during the first century A.D.⁵⁴ On the other hand, the Chinese script remains to be in use today—making it the only ancient script to continue to survive among the ancient writings systems independently developed.⁵⁵

⁵² Robinson, *The Story of Writing*, 69.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Woods, *Visible Language*, 33.

⁵⁵ Woods, *Visible Language*, 215-216.

Chapter 3

The Characteristics, Development, Origin, and Pre-Hispanic Use of the Baybayin

Researching the Baybayin is like diving into the treacherous water of the South China Sea. It is no wonder there are few academic papers on it as it is not a well-studied or well-researched language like that of Indo-European languages. Various scripts were possibly used in the Philippines. Still, it is also debated whether they are entirely different

Figure 3.1 A Comparative Table from Don Pedro Alejandro Paterno (1857-911)

CUADRO PALEOGRAFICO DE LAS ISLAS FILIPINAS
COMPARADO POR
DON PEDRO ALEJANDRO PATERNO

Alfabeto	A	B	D	E-I	G	H	K	L	M	N	NG	O-U	P	S	T	V	Y
De Marayuanes
"Tagbanua"
"Tagalog (en general)"
"Cominlang (particular)"
"Bulacan y Tondo (id.)"
"Visaya"
"Pampango"
"Pangasinan"
"Ilocos"
"Ataka"
"Toba"
"Bugui"
"Borneo"
"Java antiguo"
"Arabia"
"Hebreo"

TAGBANUA

1 Usá
2 Dow
3 Taid
4 Usá
5 Usá
6 Usá

MANGUIAN

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TAGALOG

...
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Figure 3.1 A Comparative Table from Don Pedro Alejandro Paterno (1857-1911). The table includes the variations of the Baybayin writing system along with some other writing systems.

from each other. They are just variant versions of one writing system used in the archipelago before the Spanish arrival. In this chapter, generally, on this research, the focus will be on the origin of the Baybayin writing system—whose known variance

includes those of the; Mangyans, Tagbanuas, Tagalog, Visaya, Pampanga, Pangasinan, Ylocos (Ilocos), etc., visually representing the various indigenous languages in the Philippines. We will also look into the characteristics, development, pre-Hispanic artifacts, and pre-Hispanic use of the Baybayin. Resources for this chapter were scarce as there are not many reliable publications in this study. This was also possible because there seems to be no mass interest in the topic. But, on a promising note, an analysis of a chart on Google Ngram shows people's increasing interest in Baybayin starting from 1999.

3.1 Theories of Origin

K.F. Holle, a Dutch researcher, once noted that the alphabet in the Philippines does not indicate the place of origin.⁵⁶ That may be the case during his time since there were not many studies on the Baybayin then. But, slowly, throughout the years, scholars came up with theories to trace the origins of the Baybayin and among the theories include; India (Gardner 1943),⁵⁷ South Sumatra in Indonesia,⁵⁸ South Sulawesi in Indonesia (Scott 1984; Caldwell 1988),⁵⁹ Cham in Cambodia,⁶⁰ Gujarati/Devanagari in

⁵⁶ K.F. Holle and Tabel Van Oud- En, "Nieuw-Indische Alphabetten." *Bijdrage Tot De Palaeographie Van Nederlandsch-Indië* (Batavia: W. Bruining &, 1882).

⁵⁷ F. Gardner, *Philippine Indic Studies* (San Antonio, Texas: Witte Memorial Museum, 1943).

⁵⁸ J. Francisco, "Philippine Palaeography," *Philippine Journal of Linguistics Special Monograph*, no. 3 (1973).

⁵⁹ W.H. Scott, *Prehispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History*, rev. ed (Quezon City: New Day, 1984); I. Caldwell, "South Sulawesi A.D. 1300-1600: Ten Bugis Texts," (1988): 17.

⁶⁰ G. Wade, "On the Possible Cham Origin of the Philippine Scripts." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, no. 1 (Singapore: 1993): 44-87 (Cited in Miller, 2010)

India,⁶¹ and the Taklobo (Tridacna) or Giant Clam theory.⁶² That said, it is also important to note that the accuracy of one theory does not necessarily diminish the reality of the other theories as the Baybayin writing could have been derived from more than one script.

Fletcher Gardner (1943) used paleographic and geographic evidence to relate the Philippine scripts to other Indic scripts such as the Asoka and Nagari writing systems. In a paleographic study, he compared the similarities in the straight strokes of the vowel signs in both writing systems. He also noted the great similarities between the Asoka alphabets and Mindoro and Palawan scripts.⁶³ Gardner also suggested that the Nagari or Devanagari writing systems, of later origin than the Asoka, might have had an influence in the various islands in the Philippines due to the voyages of visiting missionaries in Palawan, Sebu (Cebu), Mindoro, Tablas, and settlement around the city of Manila.⁶⁴

Juan Francisco (1973) based his opinion of the origin of the Philippine scripts on paleographic and comparative study between the early Indian-inspired scripts against the other Southeast Asian scripts. Francisco dedicated an entire chapter of his book, *The Philippines and India*, (1971), examining the idea that the Tagalog syllabary or the

⁶¹ C. Miller, "A Gujarati Origin for Scripts of Sumatra, Sulawesi and the Philippines," *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society* 36, no. 1 (2010): 276; C. Miller, "Devanagari's Descendants in North and South India, Indonesia and the Philippines," *Writing Systems Research* 6, no. 1 (2014): 10-24.

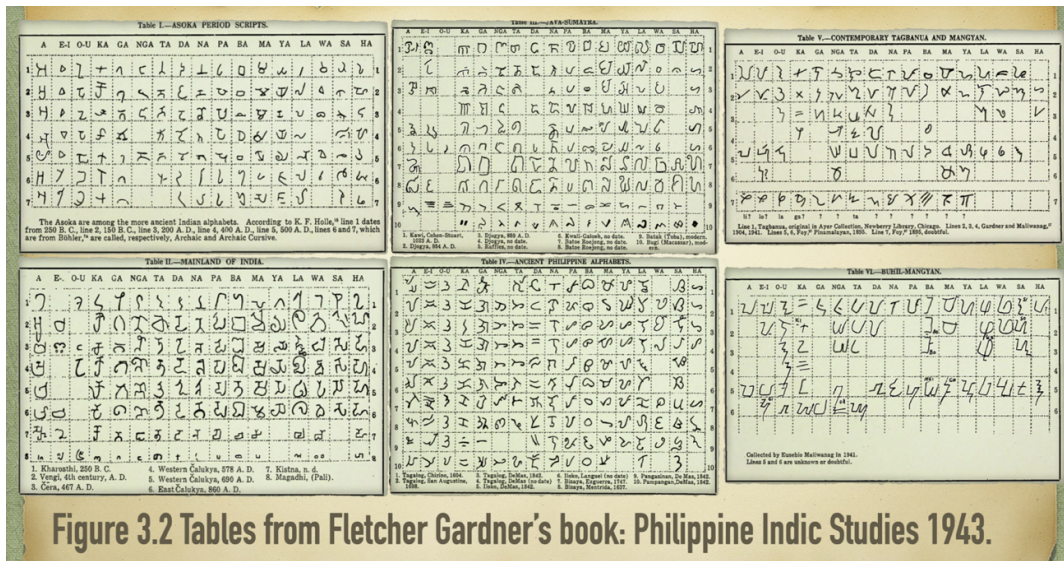
⁶² B. Comandante, *Baybayin: Sinaunang Sulat Pilipino/Ancient Filipino Script* (Cainta, Rizal: Glad Tidings, 2019).

⁶³ Gardner, *Philippine Indic Studies*, 93.

⁶⁴ Gardner, *Philippine Indic Studies*, 93-94.

Baybayin has been derived from Dravidian-Pallava, Chera, and Kadamba.⁶⁵ Francisco believes that the Philippine scripts "belong to the same family as the Sumatran systems"—noting there is a "high degree of correspondence between Sumatran and Philippine Indic scripts."⁶⁶

Figure 3.2 Tables from Fletcher Gardner's book



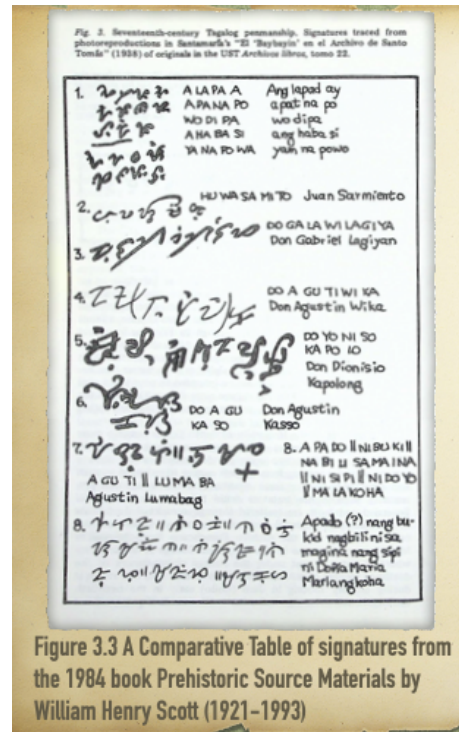
William Henry Scott (1984) provided a great insight in regard to the relationship between the pre-Hispanic Baybayin and the Sulawesi scripts. He pointed out that due to the "inability" of the pre-Hispanic Baybayin script to end with a consonant—like that of the Buginese, Makassarese, and Mandar alphabet of Celebes (Sulawesi)—it is likely that its prototype was the scripts used in Sulawesi. Seconding Scott's study, Ian Caldwell (1988) stated that Scott's research serves as important evidence that the pre-Hispanic

⁶⁵ J. R. Francisco, *The Philippines and India; Essays in Ancient Cultural Relations* (Manila: National Book Store, 1971).

⁶⁶ J. Francisco, "Philippine Palaeography," *Philippine Journal of Linguistics Special Monograph*, no. 3 (1973): 84-87.

Baybayin script is derived from the South Sulawesi scripts. Furthermore, Scott also added that the fact that Baybayin failed to meet its phonetic needs, the Baybayin script must have been a recent introduction in the Philippines islands.⁶⁷

Figure 3.3 A Comparative Table of signatures from 1984.



Geoff Wade (1993) also presented paleographic and historical evidence suggesting that the origin of the Philippine script is most likely the Cham script in Southeast Asia. In a paleographic study, Wade stressed the much closer relationship of the Philippine scripts to the mainland Southeast Asian scripts compared to the Javanese scripts or any scripts of the Southeast Asian islands. Wade also pointed out several historical pieces of evidence showing the maritime relationships and cultural influences between the Southeast Asian nations from the beginning of the Iron Age. In his research, Wade also supports the idea of the Indic influence throughout Southeast Asia—making its way to the Philippines as suggested in the study of Francisco (1973)—but poses a relevant question of where in Southeast Asia was the Baybayin

⁶⁷ Scott, *Prehispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History*, 11; Caldwell, "South Sulawesi A.D. 1300-1600: Ten Bugis Texts," 17.

derived from. For Wade, the Baybayin must have come from mainland Southeast Asia and to be exact; it is derived from the Cham script of Cambodia.⁶⁸

Figure 3.4 A Comparative Table presented by Christopher Miller

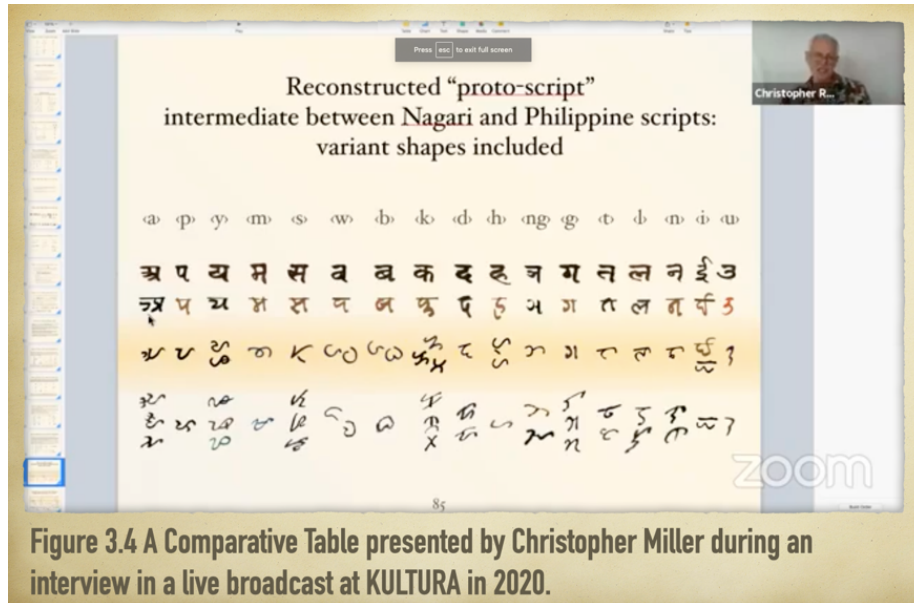


Figure 3.4 A Comparative Table presented by Christopher Miller during an interview in a live broadcast at KULTURA in 2020.

In a more recent study on the topic of the Baybayin, Christopher Miller presented evidence of a new theory that an early variation of the Gujarati script from India, was the antecedent of the indigenous scripts in the Philippines.⁶⁹ In a comparative study, Miller points that the "general structure of the letters provides a basis for comparison"—referring to the Gujarati script (likely its early variants) and the Baybayin. Miller also pointed out that the observed systematic nature between the relationship of the said scripts is without other reasonable origin. Comparing the resemblance between the old Philippine and Gujarati scripts along with the reformation of their early variants, Miller holds that the evidence of their relationship is strong. In further research, Miller traced

⁶⁸ Wade, "On the Possible Cham Origin of the Philippine Scripts," 44-87.

⁶⁹ Miller, "A Gujarati Origin for Scripts of Sumatra, Sulawesi and the Philippines," 276.

the origin of the Baybayin to the Devanagari script, which is the antecedent of the Gujarati script.⁷⁰

On the other hand, in a 2009 Ph.D. dissertation of Bonifacio Comandante Jr., a Marine Biologist, suggests: "Baybayin symbols may have evolved from activities with giant clams which pervaded ancient Filipino consciousness."⁷¹ To give credence to his theory, Comandante was said to have traced history, science, and language. His most

Figure 3.5 A table showing the Baybayin script forms from giant clams.

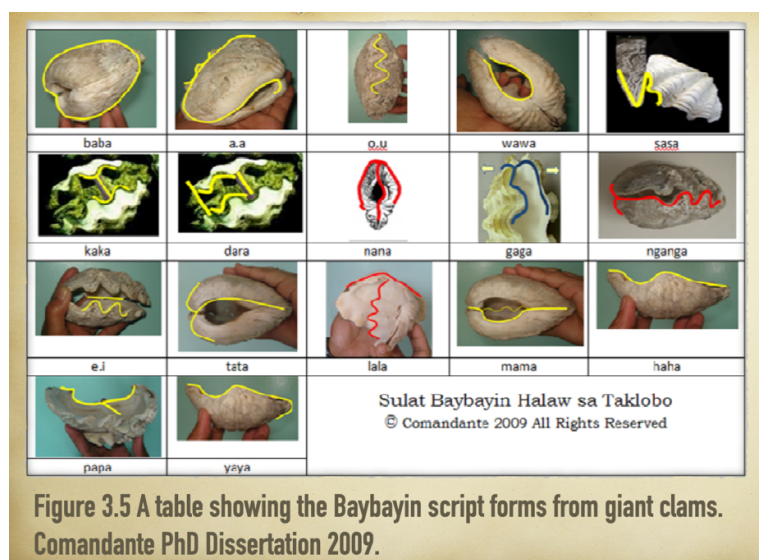


Figure 3.5 A table showing the Baybayin script forms from giant clams. Comandante PhD Dissertation 2009.

significant evidence for his theory is based on the work of Arsenio Manuel in his 1971 book, *A Lexicographic Study of Tayabas Tagalog of Quezon Province*.⁷²

Comandante took note of the word "haha" on

page 133 of Manuel's book, which means *hiwang malaki* (wide cute) and also the word "hahain" meaning *bukain ang manglit* (open the manglit or giant clam). Though the

⁷⁰ Miller, "Devanagari's Descendants in North and South India, Indonesia and the Philippines," 10-24.

⁷¹ Comandante, *Baybayin: Sinaunang Sulat Pilipino/Ancient Filipino Script*, 10-16.

⁷² E. Manuel, "A Lexicographic Study of Tayabas Tagalog of Quezon Province," *Diliman Review* 19, no. 1-4 (Quezon City: Diliman Review, 1971): 133.

relationship between the Baybayin and the shapes of the giant clams is a stretch, due to the insufficient studies surrounding the topic, we are not leaving it outside the realm of possibilities.

Figure 3.6 A Baybayin Chart from KULTURA



Figure 3.6 A Baybayin Chart from KULTURA

3.2 The Characteristics and the Development of the Baybayin

The Baybayin writing system has three vowels and 14 consonants. The three vowels are a, e/i, and o/u. The 14 consonants are ba, ka, da/ra, ga, ha, la, ma, na, nga, pa, sa, ta, wa, and ya. It is an abugida (alphasyllabary) writing system which—in the case of the Baybayin—all of its consonants naturally include the "a" vowel. To change the vocalic sound to e/i, a diacritic mark is added at the top of the symbol, while to change the vocalic sound to o/u, a diacritic mark is added at the bottom of the symbol. The other

Indic scripts, more or less, share these same characteristics.⁷³ Reading and writing Baybayin is likely to be easy for Filipino and/or English readers because, unlike Hebrew and many East Asian scripts, the Baybayin, like the Latin and Roman alphabet, is written and read horizontally from left to right, starting each line from top to bottom.

Garner (1943) dedicated an entire chapter on the controversy regarding the direction of writing, where he later suggested possibilities that the ancient Philippine writings might have been written in two manners; vertical and horizontal.⁷⁴ He explained that the orientation of their writing might have depended on the medium on which they write. During the first period, when they wrote on palm leaves and bamboos, they wrote vertically, and when paper became the widely used medium, they wrote horizontally.

Indeed, even the recent studies show that the origin of the Baybayin, along with other Southeast Asian scripts, is difficult to trace.⁷⁵ And even though there have been several studies and theories since Holle, scholars remain unclear of the origin of the Baybayin.

⁷³ Gardner, *Philippine Indic Studies*; Francisco, "Philippine Palaeography"; Caldwell, "South Sulawesi A.D. 1300-1600: Ten Bugis Texts," 17.

⁷⁴ Gardner, *Philippine Indic Studies*, 10.

⁷⁵ Miller, "A Gujarati Origin for Scripts of Sumatra, Sulawesi and the Philippines."

Figure 3.7 Pre-Hispanic Artifacts



3.3 Pre-Hispanic Artifacts

There are only a few archaeological pieces of evidence that show the early beginnings which led to the Baybayin that we have now. Several artifacts with inscriptions include the Laguna Copper-Plate (10th Century), the Butuan Ivory seal (10th-13th Centuries), the Butuan Metal Paleograph (14th-15th Centuries), and the Calatagan pot (14th-15th Centuries).

Found in the Lumban River, Laguna, in 1986, the Laguna Copper-Plate (10th Century) is an artifact documenting payment of a debt by a noble named Namwran. The scripts that are inscribed on the copper—probably done using a hammer—were identified by Dr. Antoon Postma, a prolific Dutch anthropologist who married into and lived among the Mangyan people, to be an Old Javanese script (Sanskrit Kawi)—a rarely used script by 900 A.D.⁷⁶ These Old Javanese (Sanskrit Kawi) script could also have been among

⁷⁶ A. Postma, "S.V.D. The Laguna Copper-Plate inscription (LCI): A Valuable Philippine Document," *National Museum Paper* 1. no. 2 (1991): 1-25.

the antecedents of the Baybayin. Together with Dr. Johannes Gijsbertus de Casparis, a Dutch paleographer, and orientalist, Dr. Postma recognized that the inscriptions visually represented languages such as Old Malay mixed with Sanskrit, Old Javanese, and old Tagalog terms.⁷⁷

The Butuan Ivory Seal (10th-13th Centuries) was found in the 1970s by a gold panner* in Ambangan, Libertad, Butuan City.^{78 79} Looking at the seal, there are obviously two registers—the upper and lower register—where the legible part of the upper register seems to state "ba" and "wa" (the diacritics are not obvious). Dr. Postma identifies the inscription to be an ancient Javanese or stylized Kawi script that reads "But-ban," while Dr. De Casparis decoded it as "But-wan"—both referring to Butuan, the name of the site where it was found.⁸⁰

Recovered along with trade ware ceramics dating between the 14th-15th Ming Dynasty inside a wooden coffin, the Butuan Metal Paleograph was found in Butuan, the Philippines, by pot hunters in the late 1970s.⁸¹ An Indonesian paleographer, Dr. Boechari, identified the script to be similar to a Javanese similar to that of the 12th-15th

⁷⁷ A.P. Bautista, M.J.L.A. Bolunia, M.P. Tauro, and G.G. Bautista, *Baybayin: Mga Sinauna at Tradisyunal Na Panulat Sa Pilipinas = Bayayin: Ancient and Traditional Scripts in the Philippines*, (Manila: National Museum, 2014).

⁷⁸ A. P. Bautista, "A Zooarchaeological Perspective n the Ambangan Site, A Prehistoric Settlement in Butuan, Agusa del Norte, Southern Philippine Indo-Pacific Prehistory," no.1 (1990): 167.

⁷⁹ Bautista, Bolunia, Tauro, and Bautista, *Baybayin: Mga Sinauna at Tradisyunal Na Panulat Sa Pilipinas = Bayayin: Ancient and Traditional Scripts in the Philippines*, 16.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

century Javanese scripts showing an influence of Hindu-Buddhist. The inscriptions on the said metal paleograph or the entire artifact itself have rarely or never been studied, according to a book published by the Philippine National Museum in 2014.⁸²

The Calatagan Pot (14th-15th century A.D.) was recovered by local diggers in an archaeological site in Talisay, Calatagan, Batangas in 1958 and in 1961 was donated to the National Museum where it is currently displayed.^{83 84} Engraved around the shoulder of the pot are 39 inscriptions. Though most of the said inscriptions are recognizably Baybayin, the language that is visually represented remained undeciphered for decades since its recovery, and though scholars have been trying to decipher its language, scholars continue to have different interpretations, according to a book published by the National Museum in 2014.⁸⁵

3.4 Pre-Hispanic Use

As we have seen, there are not that many artifacts to show the widespread use of the ancient writing system throughout the archipelago prior to the arrival of the

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Rolando O. Borrinaga. "The Calatagan Pot: A National Treasure with Bisayan Inscription." *The Journal of History* 57.1 (2011). Web. 29 December 2015.

⁸⁵ Bautista, Bolunia, Tauro, and Bautista, *Baybayin: Mga Sinauna at Tradisyunal Na Panulat Sa Pilipinas = Bayayin: Ancient and Traditional Scripts in the Philippines*, 16; R. O. Borrinaga, "The Calatagan Pot: A National Treasure with Bisayan Inscription," *Journal of History* 57, no.1 (2011); Quintin Oropilla Y Fortich, *Deciphered Secrets: The Calatagan Pot: A Philippine National Treasure: Ancient Inscriptions* (Quezon City, Philippines: Quintin Fortich Oropilla, 2008).

Spaniards, though these archaeological pieces of evidence are somewhat enough to get a hint on how the ancient writing systems may have been used in the archipelago.

Also, as Gardner noted, "...the ancient Filipinos do not seem to have used their writing on permanent materials"⁸⁶; thus, we could only work with what we have. We know for sure that the 10th century Laguna Copperplate inscriptions—deciphered by Postma and de Casparis⁸⁷—the ancient writing was used to create a document and also the inscription on the Butuan Ivory Seal that was also deciphered by Postma⁸⁸, the ancient writing was used to create a mark of identity and

ownership. Also, according to the promising decipherment of the Calatagan Pot inscriptions by Rolando Borrinaga, ancient writing could possibly have been used in a ritual or ceremony.⁸⁹ But, on the other hand, since some of the artifacts have not been fully

Figure 3.8 The Boxer Codex indicates that the ancient writings were written on bamboos using a stylus.



Figure 3.8 The Boxer Codex indicates that the ancient writings were written on bamboos using a stylus—noting how that they people are not so quick in writing and they write in missives.

⁸⁶ Gardner, *Philippine Indic Studies*, 2.

⁸⁷ Bautista, Bolunia, Tauro, and Bautista, *Baybayin: Mga Sinauna at Tradisyunal Na Panulat Sa Pilipinas = Bayayin: Ancient and Traditional Scripts in the Philippines*.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ R. Borrinaga, "The Calatagan Pot: A National Treasure with Bisayan Inscription," (*Paper presented at the Philippine National Historical Society's 31st National Conference on Local and National History* (Family Country Hotel and Convention Center, General Santos City: October 21-22, 2010).

deciphered yet, we could only speculate on how the ancient writing systems were used prior to the arrival of the Spaniards, who began taking into account the use of the ancient writing system.

The 10th Century Laguna Copperplate gives us great details of a transaction between individuals regarding payment of a debt—possibly similar to how records were kept at Uruk in Mesopotamia and in Egypt around the 4th millennium BC. What makes this blackened and crumpled 20 x 20 cm "document" of acquittal (the Laguna Copperplate) special is that it mentioned not only the names of those involved in the transaction but also the date (not very common for Southeast Asian documents/artifacts) and place of jurisdiction.⁹⁰ Being the oldest written document found in the Philippines, it showed a rather socially stratified, organized, advanced—a well-civilized society in the archipelago centuries before the arrival of the Spanish colonizers.

The 10th to 13th-century inscriptions in the Butuan Ivory Seal show how the ancient writing system were used to personalize an object and at the same show the identity of the owner. Seals are used as social objects which symbolize human relationships with other people. It is likely that the Butuan Ivory Seal may have been used during trades of raw or semi-processed materials with other surrounding islands around the southern region of the Philippines or even around Southeast Asia. It bears the inscription "ba" and "we" or according to Antoon Postma and de Casparis "But-Wan"⁹¹ using the ancient writing in the seal, we are provided with a description—in the case of

⁹⁰ A. Postma, "The Laguna Copper-Plate Inscription: Text and Commentary," *Philippine Studies* 40, no. 2 (1992): 183-203.

⁹¹ Bautista, Bolunia, Tauro, and Bautista, *Baybayin: Mga Sinauna at Tradisyunal Na Panulat Sa Pilipinas = Bayayin: Ancient and Traditional Scripts in the Philippines*, 16.

the Butuan Ivory Seal; the relationship of the owner to the Butuan location—which serves as an identity of the bearer. It is also undeniable that the seal is for administrative use, whether it is for economic, political, or religious purposes like that of the ancient civilizations in the Near East, Egypt, the Aegean, and other South Asian countries.⁹²

In the case of the 14th to 15th-century inscriptions on the Calatagan Pot, it shows how the ancient writing system was used to document a monologue for ritual practice.⁹³ This ritual pot is used to burn native incense or oil or as a water container for a live ritual drama to retrieve a soul that has just crossed over to another realm and to return to its earthly body.^{94 95} Borrinaga also said in his 2010 paper on his decipherment of the Calatagan Pot that the same ritual pot was probably used for rituals in retrieving victims of *bugkut*—an individual who was believed to be abducted by fairies. Such ceremonial practices and rituals could be likened to that of those performed in Egypt and China with their artifacts.⁹⁶

⁹² G. Jamison, S.J. Scott, M. Ameri, and S.K. Costello, *Seals and Sealing in the Ancient world: new approaches to Glyptic Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

⁹³ Borrinaga, "The Calatagan Pot: A National Treasure with Bisayan Inscription."

⁹⁴ W.H. Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth-century Philippine Culture and Society* (Quezon City, Manila, Philippines: Ateneo De Manila University Press, 1994): 88 (as cited by Borrinaga 2010).

⁹⁵ F.I. Alcina, *History of the islands and Indians of Visayas, 1668* no. 3:35-37, trans. Victor Baltazar, *University of Chicago Philippine Studies Program* (1962). (as cited by Borrinaga 2010).

⁹⁶ C. Woods, G. Emberling, E. Teeter, and University of Chicago. Oriental Institute. *Visible Language: Inventions of Writing in the Ancient Middle East and beyond*. Oriental Institute Museum Publications; no. 32 (Chicago, Ill.: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2010):7; P. T. Daniels and W. Bright. *The World's Writing Systems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 5.

Chapter 4: The Baybayin During and Since the Spanish Colonial Period

In this chapter, we will discuss the 16th-18th century accounts of the Baybayin as witnessed by the Spanish navigators, conquistadors, and missionaries during the early contact. Many historians and scholars suggest that the Baybayin—that we have now—have just recently arrived in the islands prior to the age of contact.^{97 98 99 100} However, there may be several arguments surrounding the sources from where the early arrival of the writing system has stemmed from. Such arguments will be discussed in this chapter. I would also like to note that though it was difficult to find primary sources, we were able to get many of them while the rest were cited from secondary sources.

⁹⁷ F. I. Alcina, *History of the islands and Indians of Visayas, 1668* no. 3:35-37, trans. Victor Baltazar, *University of Chicago Philippine Studies Program* (1962). (Cited in Scott 1994: 96, 289).

⁹⁸ W. H. Scott, *Prehispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History*, rev. ed (Quezon City: New Day, 1984): 55, 61.

⁹⁹ W. H. Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth-century Philippine Culture and Society* (Quezon City, Manila, Philippines: Ateneo De Manila University Press, 1994): 94.

¹⁰⁰ C. Miller, "Devanagari's Descendants in North and South India, Indonesia and the Philippines," *Writing Systems Research* 6, no. 1 (2014): 22.

4.1 Early Accounts of the Baybayin during the Colonial Period

First, in order for us to further understand the later arguments in this chapter, it is imperative to put forth this quote that could have possibly guided the colonizers' school of thought prior to them sailing to the west. In 1492, prior to the Spanish conquest, the Spanish humanist Antonio de Nebrija published his *Gramatica de la Lengua Castellana* in the University of Salamanca (the intellectual center in Spain during the 15th & 16th centuries and was likely where the Kings and Popes consulted for their plans)¹⁰¹—dedicating his work to Queen Isabella of Castile in Spain—claimed; "language has always been the perfect instrument of the empire" (cited in Rafael 1988).¹⁰²

Indeed, we can mark Nebrija's words as the succeeding years of the Spanish conquest; language became the "instrument" as the Spanish empire extended its reign across the Atlantic and into the Pacific.

As mentioned, prior to the arrival of the Spanish colonizers, enthusiasts and even historians and scholars had this idea that literacy was fairly new in the Philippines as some natives, especially in the Visayas region, were said to be "not literate" or amazed to

Figure 4.1 The original cover of the Grammatica Antonii Nebrissensis.



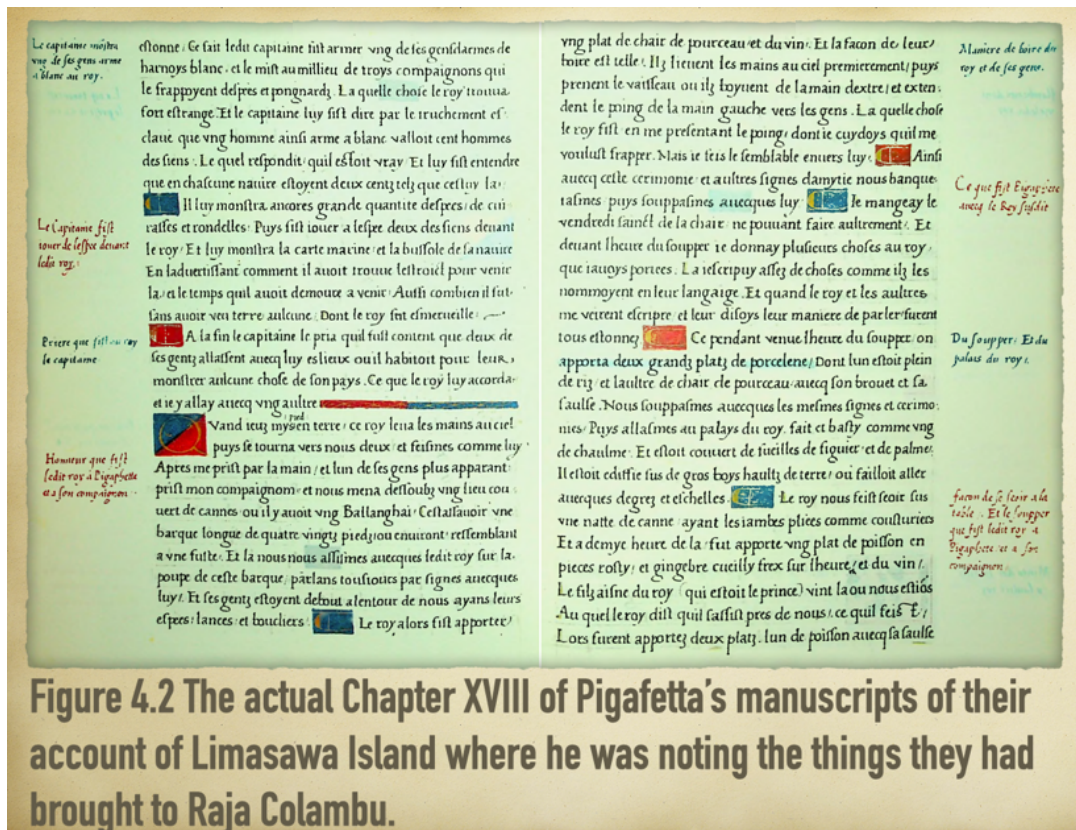
Figure 4.1 The Original Cover of the Grammatica Antonii Nebrissensis (1550)

¹⁰¹ E. Bazaco, *History of Education in the Philippines: Spanish Period, 1565-1898* 2nd ed. (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1953).

¹⁰² V. L. Rafael, *Contracting colonialism: Translation and Christian conversion in Tagalog society under early Spanish rule* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988): 3

see writing "for the first time in 1521."¹⁰³ Such widely accepted interpretation seems to have stemmed from the diary of Antonio Pigafetta when he was at the Limasawa island.

Figure 4.2 The actual Chapter XXIII of Pigafetta's manuscripts.



On March 29, 1521,¹⁰⁴ Good Friday, while Antonio Pigafetta—the geographer, scribe,

¹⁰³ P. Morrow, "Baybayin - The Ancient Script of the Philippines." (2002). Accessed November 19, 2020. <http://paulmorrow.ca/bayeng1.htm>; Scott, *Prehispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History*, 55; and Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth-century Philippine Culture and Society*, 94.

¹⁰⁴ Unsure of the accuracy of the date because of the needed adjustment. August 16 – Narciso Claveria, Governor-General of the Philippines, makes a decree announcing that Monday, December 30, 1844 will be immediately followed by Wednesday, January 1, 1845. (Tuesday, December 31, 1844 was removed from the Philippine calendar because from 1521–1844, the Philippines was one day behind its Asian neighbors).

chronicler in Magellan’s crew—was writing down the many things they had brought which were possibly gifts to Raja Colambu, the leader in the island of Limasawa (Visayas region), he said:

"Before the supper hour, I gave the king many things I had brought. I wrote down the names of many things in their language. When the king and the others saw me writing, and when I told them their words, they were all astonished."¹⁰⁵

Reading from this referenced account, it seems as if scholars might have had a different interpretation of Pigafetta’s report as he only noted that they were "astonished" and not "not literate" nor "amazed to see writing for the first time" as they illustrated on their writings. It also seems like no scholars have ever really taken note of this possible misinterpretation or misrepresentation of Pigafetta’s account in regard to this part of literacy of the natives at Limasawa. But, also, this is not surprising as many of the Spanish records on the literacy of the natives seem to be conflating. For instance, in an

Figure 4.3 San Agustin's Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas (1698).

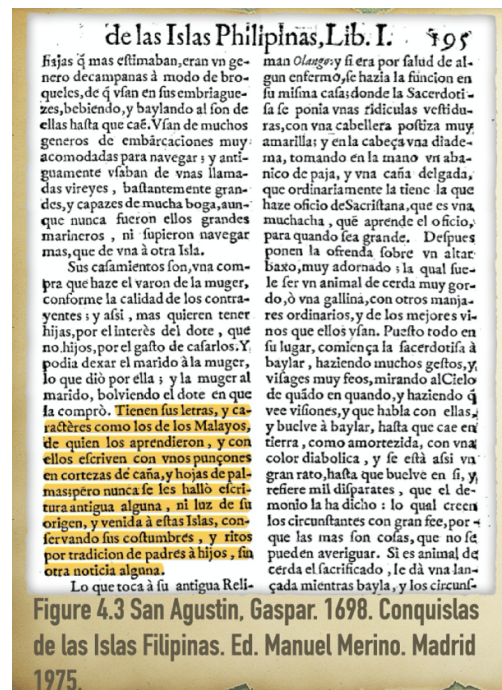


Figure 4.3 San Agustín, Gaspar. 1698. Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas. Ed. Manuel Merino. Madrid 1975.

¹⁰⁵ A. Pigafetta, and T. Cachey, *The first voyage around the world, 1519-1522: An account of Magellan's expedition*, Lorenzo da Ponte Italian library (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007): 36; A. Pigafetta, R. Skelton, and Beinecke "Rare Book Manuscript Library," *Magellan's voyage; a narrative account of the first circumnavigation*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).

account attributed to Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, the Spanish navigator who established the first settlement in Cebu at the Visayas region, Philippines in 1565, in the book

Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas by Gaspar San Agustin (1698)¹⁰⁶, he states:

"They have their letters and characters like those of the Malays, from whom they learned them; they write them on bamboo, bark and palm leaves with a pointed tool, but never is any ancient writing found among them nor word of their origin and arrival in these islands, their customs and rites being preserved by traditions handed down from father to son without any other record" (San Agustin 1698, 292; cited in Scott 1994, p94).^{107 108}

In contrast to the interpretations of the Pigafetta 1521 manuscripts, this account from 1567 clearly states at the beginning that the natives "have their letters and characters," yet a possibly conflating statement follows, saying, "never is any ancient writing found." The latter statement can easily be confused with the lack of ancient script. But, reading it in context, the statement is clearly referring to the lack of ancient pieces of literature, books, reference materials, etc. Similarly, Miguel de Loarca, among the first conquistadors and earliest encomenderos appointed by Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, in his report to King Phillip II in 1582, said;

"In like manner, they have two different beliefs concerning the beginning of the world; and since these natives [referring to the Pintados or those in the Visayas region] are not acquainted with the art of writing, they preserve their ancient lore through songs, which they sing in a very

¹⁰⁶ Gaspar de San Agustín, *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas (1565-1615)*, ed. Manuel Merino (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Enrique Florez, 1975).

¹⁰⁷ Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, "Bando sobre los que hubiesen abierto sepulchros y extraido de eUos oro.joyas y otras preseas," no.2 (Cebu, 1565): 355-357.

¹⁰⁸ Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth-century Philippine Culture and Society*.

pleasing manner—commonly while playing their oars, as they are island-dwellers."¹⁰⁹

Like Legaspi, Loarca noted how the natives of the Visayas region were not acquainted with the art of writing, and they preserved their ancient traditions and knowledge orally through songs.

On the other hand, the Boxer Codex—a collection of manuscripts acquired (through an auction) by the Orientalist Charles R. Boxer, subsequently called the Boxer Codex¹¹⁰ --states the following account:

"They count the year by moons and from the harvest to another. They have certain characters that function as letters with which they write what they want. They are very different in appearance from any others we have seen. It is common for women to know how to write with them, and when they write, they do it on a sort of tablet made from the bark of the kind of bamboo that is found on those islands. In using these tablets, which are four fingers wide, they do not write with ink but rather with burins that

Figure 4.4 Page 121 of Blair and Robertson's edition and annotation of Miguel de Loarca's *Relacion de las Yslas Filipinas* from 1582.

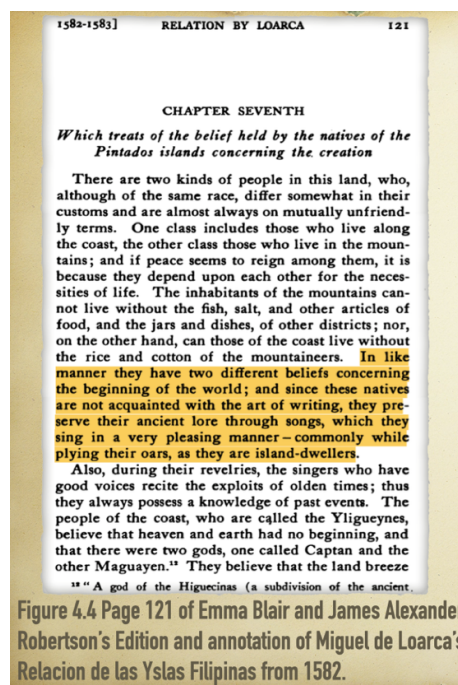


Figure 4.4 Page 121 of Emma Blair and James Alexander Robertson's Edition and annotation of Miguel de Loarca's *Relacion de las Yslas Filipinas* from 1582.

¹⁰⁹ E. Blair, E. Helen, J. A. Robertson, and E.G. Bourne, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1803: Explorations by Early Navigators, Descriptions of the Islands and Their Peoples, Their History and Records of the Catholic Missions, as Related in Contemporaneous Books and Manuscripts, Showing the Political, Economic, Commercial and Religious Conditions of Those Islands from Their Earliest Relations with European Nations to the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century* vol. 5 (Cleveland, OH: A.H. Clark, 1903): 121.

¹¹⁰ S. Wright, "Revealing the Boxer Codex," *BYU Humanities* (Brigham Young University, 2016) Accessed 20, November 2020, humanities.byu.edu/revealing-the-boxer-codex/.

break the skin and bark of the bamboo. And though they have letter, they have no books or histories, nor do they write anything of length; they only write letters and messages to each other and this is the only use they make of these characters, of which there are only seventeen. Each letter is a syllable and with certain points placed to one side or the other of a letter, or above or below it, they represent words and write and say with these whatever they wish. It is very easy to learn and anybody with a desire to apply himself can learn it in just over two months. They are not very fast writers indeed they write very slowly. And the same goes for reading, which is like when children sound out their letter in school."¹¹¹

Figure 4.5 Blair and Robertson. The Philippine Islands. Vol XII, pp. 242-43.

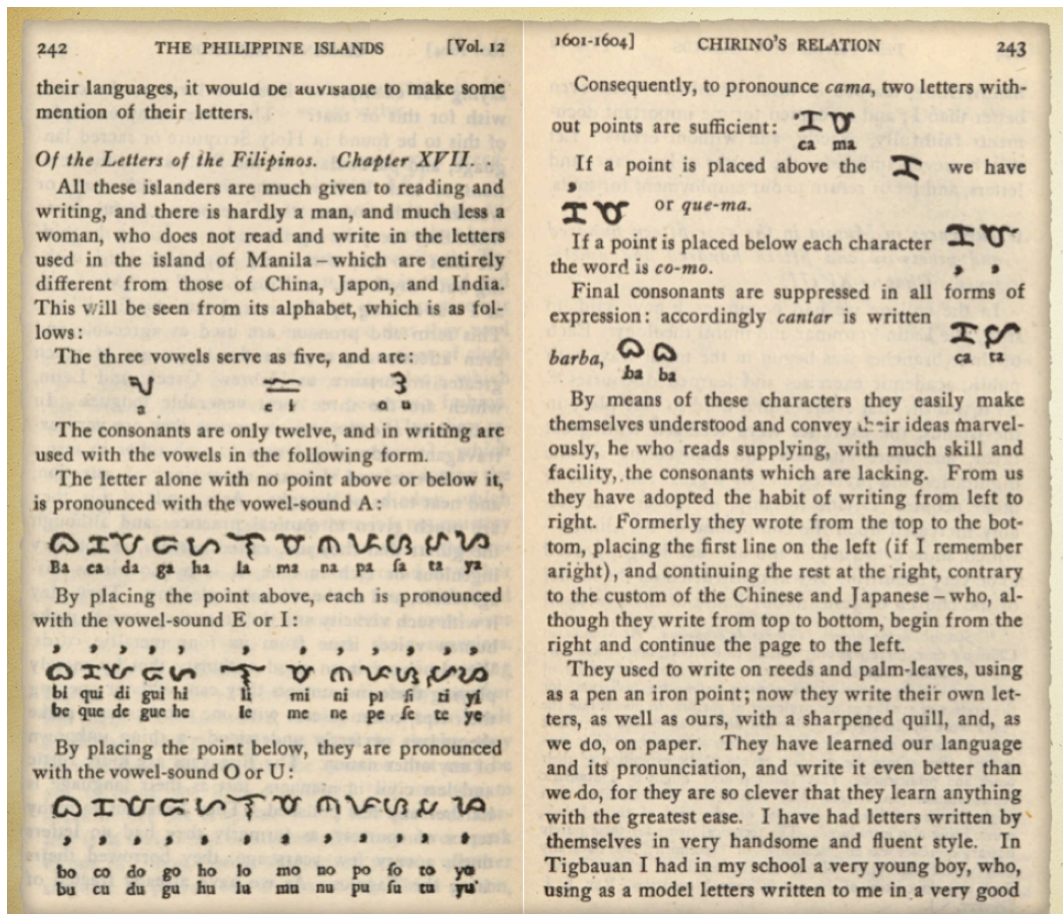


Figure 4.5 Blair and Robertson, The Philippine Islands, vol. XII, pp. 242-43

¹¹¹ G. R. Souza, and J. C. Turley, *The Boxer Codex* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

This account in the 1590 Boxer Codex from an unknown author, unlike the other preceding accounts, gives greater details on the different aspects of the Baybayin around the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors. Categorically, the author noted the following; 1) there is no discrimination on gender as both men and women write, 2) the materials used for writing were burins and bamboos, 2) the nonexistence of books and/or written histories of the natives, 3) the manner and purpose in which they read and write, and 4) the characteristics of the writing system which. All of which are very important details in understanding the Baybayin that we have today and also know how it has evolved or was modified since the arrival of the Spanish colonizers.

In agreement with the author of the Boxer Codex from 1590, Pedro Chirino, a Spanish missionary and historian, also noted in Chapter 10 of his book *Relación de las Islas Filipinas*, how both men and women are given to reading and writing, as he states;

"All these islanders are much given to reading and writing that there is hardly a man, and much less a woman, who does not read and write in the letter of the island of Manila—which are entirely different from those of China, Japon, and India."¹¹²

It is also important to note Chirino's statement on how accustomed the islanders are to reading and writing their letters, which could also show that this was not something fairly new to them during those times. Another important part of Chirino's statement is his mention of the island of Manila [Luzon], where the previous accounts note only the southern parts of the archipelago, which is the Visayas and Mindanao regions.

¹¹² E. H. Blair, Emma and J. A. Robertson. *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898: Explorations by Early Navigators, Descriptions of the Islands and Their Peoples, Their History and Records of the Catholic Missions, as Related in Contemporaneous Books and Manuscripts, Showing the Political, Economic, Commercial and Religious Conditions of Those Islands from Their Earliest Relations with European Nations to the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century* Vol. 12, (Cleveland, OH: A. H. Clark, 1903). Cited in Wade 1993.

Figure 4.6 J.S. Cummins' 1971 translation, edition, and notations of Dr. Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*.

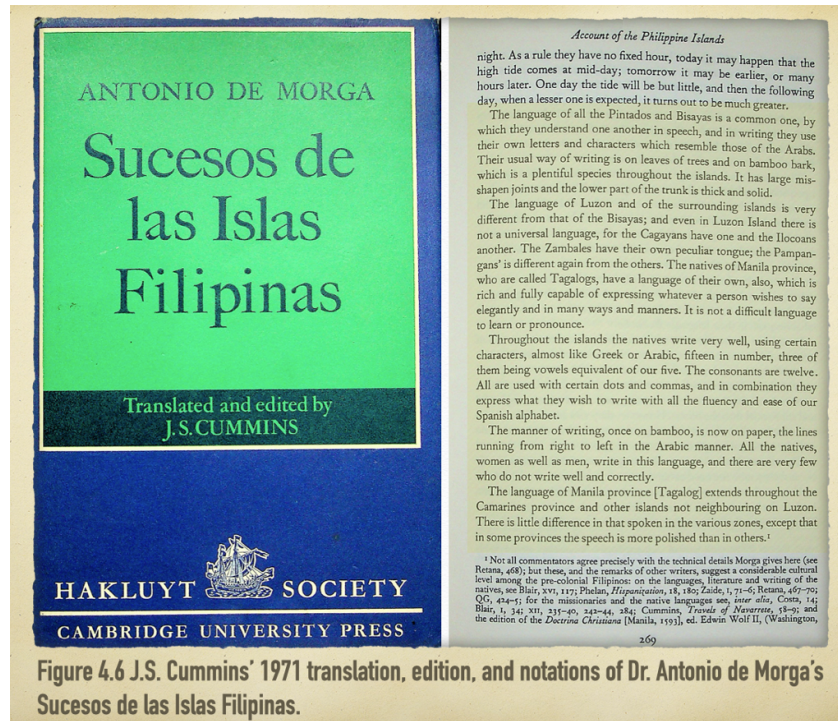


Figure 4.6 J.S. Cummins' 1971 translation, edition, and notations of Dr. Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*.

Even in greater details of the Baybayin are accounted for by Antonio de Morga—a lawyer, a high-ranking and long-lasting colonial official in the Philippines—in his book, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* in 1609.¹¹³ Similar to the previous statements, Morga's account also referred to the dwellers in the Bisayas [Visayas] region. Morga made mention of how their language—spoken and written—are common to them. He also noted the materials used to write on which was on leaves and on bamboo bark. But, unlike the previously noted accounts—in exception to Chirino—Morga also notes down the "language of Luzon and of the surrounding islands and how they are different from

¹¹³ Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*. Mexico, 1609, trans. and ed. J. S. Cummins. The Hakluyt Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971): 169.

that of the Bisayas." In fact, according to Morga, even Luzon have various languages—referring to the Cagayans [Cagayanos], Ilocoans [Ilocanos], Zambales [Sambals], Pampangans [Kapampangans]. Morga also noted how rich and capable the language of the Tagalogs are as far as its expression, elegance, ways, manners, and easiness to learn. Further, Morga noted; "Throughout the islands the natives write very well, using certain characters, also like Greek or Arabic..." Again, this 1609 observation of Morga seems to contradict the interpretations of historians, scholars, and alike regarding Pigafetta's 1521 manuscripts. Another important notation in this account is Morga's statement, saying,

"they express what they wish to write with all the fluency and ease of our Spanish alphabet." Indeed, such a statement may be true for the natives, but in the succeeding years under the Spanish colonization, missionaries seem to have had a great deal of frustration with the script, which led to its modification and seeming disappearance.

4.2 Baybayin and Christianization

Early during the arrival of the Spanish conquest in the Philippines, Spanish scholars took note of literacy among the native people in the islands.

Figure 4.7 Front cover of the *Doctrina Christiana* of 1593.



Figure 4.7 Front cover of the *Doctrina Christiana* of Juan de Placencia from 1593 which is currently under the care of the Library of Congress in the U.S.

With their intention to Christianize the inhabitants of the archipelago (Phelan 2011),¹¹⁴ they began learning the vernaculars and eventually modifying it to further introduce Christianity to the indigenous people (de Plasencia 1593; Lopez 1621).^{115 116 117}

When Juan de Plasencia wrote the *Doctrina Christiana, en Lengua Española y Tagala*, a book on the Catholic Catechism with Tagalog translation, printed in 1593—making it the earliest known printed book in the Philippines¹¹⁸—it is noticeable how Plasencia used the pre-colonial Baybayin script where words that end with a consonant were modified by simply not writing (or by dropping) the final consonant. Around 28 years later, when Francisco Lopez wrote the *Doctrina Cristiana em la Lengua Española e Yloca*, a book on the Catholic Catechism with Ilocano translation¹¹⁹, printed in 1621, a cross kudlit or

¹¹⁴ J. Phelan, "The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish aims and Filipino responses, 1565-1700" *New perspectives in Southeast Asian studies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011).

¹¹⁵ Blancas de San José, "Prologo," in *Arte y Reglas De La Lengua Tagala* (Bataan, 1610).

¹¹⁶ Juan de Plasencia, *Doctrina Christiana, en lengua española y tagala* (Manila, 1593). Accessed November 19, 2020 <https://www.loc.gov/item/scd-gdc.20020613001ro/>.

¹¹⁷ F. Lopez, *Doctrina Cristiana em la Lengua Española e Yloca* (Manila, 1621).

¹¹⁸ E. Wolf, *Doctrina Christiana the first book printed in the Philippines, Manila, 1593*, (Project Gutenberg, 2005). Accessed on November 20, 2020 from <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/16119/16119-h/16119-h.htm#d0e406>.

¹¹⁹ Francisco López, *Libro á naisuratán ámin ti bagas ti Doctrina Cristiana nga naisurat iti libro ti Cardenal á Agnagan Belarmino, Ket ináon ti P. Fr. Francisco Lopez padre á S. Agustin, iti Sinasan toy. Impreso en el convento de San Pablo de Manila por Antonio Damba i Miguel Seixo. Año de 621. Manila* (Manila: Convento de San Pablo, 1621). Cited in Smith and Stark 2009.

virama began to be implemented to modify words by placing a cross or "+" under the consonant to eliminate the inherent "a" vowel that is naturally included with every consonant. (see Figure 4.8)

4.3 The Missionaries' Frustration with the Baybayin.

From the chapter *The Politics of Translation* in the book *Contracting Colonialism* by Vicente Rafael (1988), he noted how the early missionaries "attempted to employ them [Tagalog script or writing system] in the translation of catechisms into the native idioms."¹²⁰ Indeed, the discourse from the above paragraphs has proven how the missionaries engaged themselves in understanding the ancient scripts and their purpose behind it. But, the frustrations of the missionaries eventually led to modifications of the Tagalog script and its eventual replacement with the roman alphabet. The succeeding quotes below are accounts—in chronological order—of the missionaries' frustrations throughout the three centuries of Spanish rule in the Philippines.

Figure 4.9 The *Arte y reglas de la lengua Tagala* by Francisco Blancas de San José

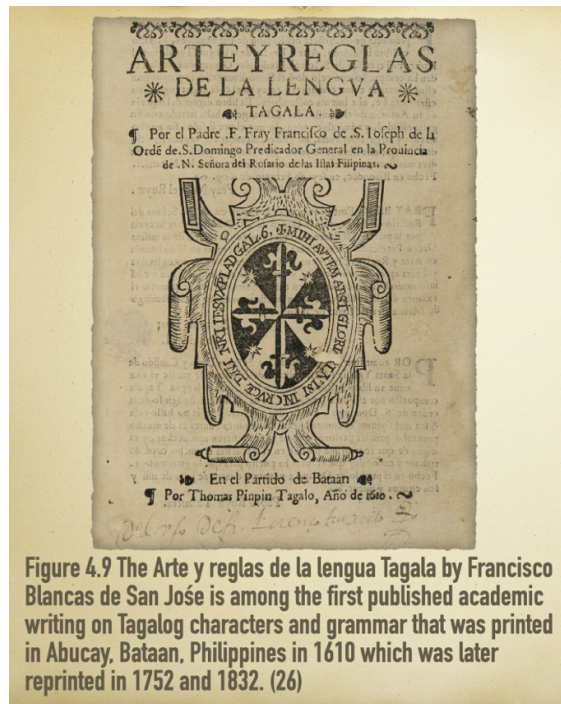


Figure 4.9 The *Arte y reglas de la lengua Tagala* by Francisco Blancas de San José is among the first published academic writing on Tagalog characters and grammar that was printed in Abucay, Bataan, Philippines in 1610 which was later reprinted in 1752 and 1832. (26)

¹²⁰ Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, 44

In Francisco Blancas de San José's *Arte y reglas de la Lengua Tagala*, among the first published academic writing on Tagalog characters and grammar in 1610¹²¹ ¹²², he said;

"For which reason those who wish to talk well should learn to read Tagalog characters since it is such an easy matter that they can be learned ordinarily in one hour, although reading the Tagalog language in its own characters without faltering as we read our own Spanish language no Spaniard will ever be able to do in all his life, though it might be as long as Adam's. The reason for this will be readily understood by anybody who takes just one lesson in it, and he will see it by experience even in the native speakers themselves, among whom even the most skillful grope through it, because after all, reading their characters is almost pure guessing. All this notwithstanding, I would ask the diligent student to learn such reading, and he will see how it will help him perfect his pronunciation."¹²³

Though we can see how Blancas de San José noted that the Tagalog characters "can be learned ordinarily in one hour," in a hyperbolic statement, he also noted that reading the Tagalog language in its own characters is something that "no Spaniard will ever be able to do in all his life, though it might be as long as Adam's." This seems to be the frustration among the Spanish missionaries in the succeeding years of their Philippine conquest. As already mentioned in the study of the *Doctrina Cristiana* versions above, Francisco Lopez, the missionary who created the Ilocano version of the catechism, went to the point of modifying the Tagalog script—possibly for the reason he stated;

"the Tagalog script... is so defective and so confusing (for not having up till now a way of writing suspended consonants, that is, consonants that do not sound off vowels) so that even the most astute ladino [bilingual native]

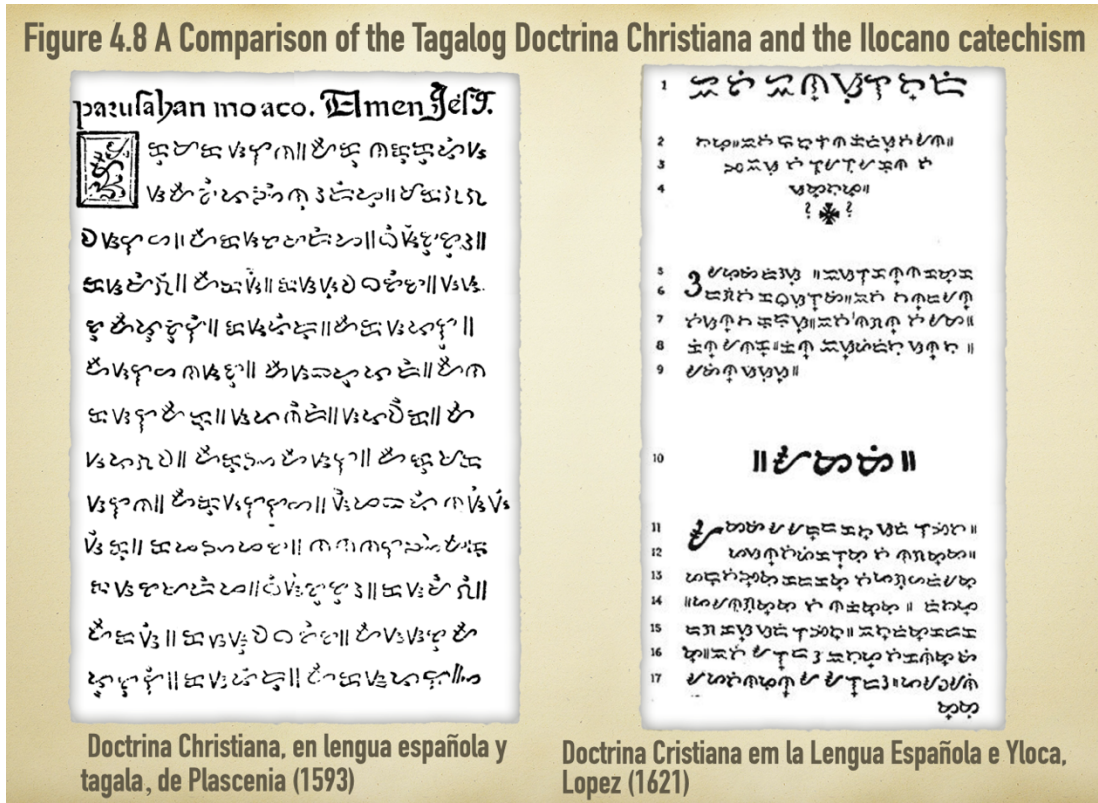
¹²¹ *Artes y reglas de la lengua tagala* in V. Almario ed., *Sagisag Kultura Vol.1* (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2015) Accessed on November 20, 2020 from <https://philippineculturaleducation.com.ph/artes-y-reglas-de-la-lengua-tagala>.

¹²² Wolf, *Doctrina Christiana the first book printed in the Philippines, Manila, 1593*.

¹²³ Blancas de San José, *Arte y Reglas De La Lengua Tagala*, 45.

is detained by it and is given to a great deal of thinking in many words in order to be able to pronounce what the writer had tried to write."¹²⁴

Figure 4.8 A comparison of the Tagalog Doctrina Christiana and the Ilocano catechism.



Despite the modification through the introduction of a form of a virama in the Tagalog script, Filipinos seem to have never adopted such reform, according to Scott.¹²⁵ Scott's statement may be true during his time, but many Baybayin enthusiasts, artists, and advocates nowadays actually prefer Lopez's modification possibly because many have been so accustomed to the Latin alphabet that contemporary Filipinos now share the same

¹²⁴ Padre Francisco López, *Belarmino* (1621), quoted in W. E. Retana, *Los antiguos alfabetos en Filipinas, La Política España en Filipinas* 21 (1895): 6. (Cited in Rafael 1988:46).

¹²⁵ Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth-century Philippine Culture and Society*, 215.

frustrations as the missionaries in regards to the traditional Tagalog script. Further pieces of evidence in regard to the missionary's frustrations with the ancient Tagalog script are the following:

"although they [the Tagalog characters] are easy to write, it is almost impossible to read them because the consonant that follows when pertaining to an antecedent word is not written so that one has to guess the circumstances in which they would appear."¹²⁶

"This script...is as easy to write as it is difficult to read because it is to guess [adivinar] it...it helps to know the Tagalog characters in distinguishing accents."¹²⁷

"This script...cannot be any less than illegible...it presents great difficulties not for him who writes it but for him who reads it...[We are thus] far from believing that this alphabet could provide the simplicity and clarity of Latin. Also, it is absurd to say that with a few points and commas, these characters can be made to signify everything that one might want to write as fully and as easily as our own Spanish alphabet."¹²⁸

Though in the eyes of the missionaries, the ancient Tagalog script is far from being perfect as it is, according to them, "so defective and so confusing" (Lopez 1621), "impossible to read" (Magdalena 1679), "difficult to read" (San Agustin 1787), and far from being simple and clear as the Latin or Spanish Alphabet (Marcilla 1895); the Tagalog script, according to Evergisto Bazaco in 1953, "might have been fairly perfected when used exclusively for the native dialects of those days."¹²⁹ What seems to be

¹²⁶ Padre Agustin de Magdalena, *Arte de la lengua tagala sacado de diversos artes*, (Manila, 1679). unpaginated.

¹²⁷ Gaspar de San Agustin, *Compenio del arte de la lengua tagala*, 2nd ed. (Sampaloc: Convento de Nuestra Senora de Loreto, 1787): 155.

¹²⁸ C. Marcilla, *Estudio de los antiguos alfabetos filipinos* (Malabon: Asilo de Huerfanos, 1895):19 (Cited in Rafael 1988:46).

¹²⁹ Bazaco, *History of Education in the Philippines*, 10.

obvious, though, is the immanent nature of the natives in using their own letters to represent their own language. As observed by Pedro Chirino in 1604 that all the islanders are much given to reading and writing¹³⁰ and this was also seconded by Antonio de Morga in 1609 that the natives are very fluent with their letters as they are with their Spanish counterparts.¹³¹ Even in the 1984 observation of William Henry Scott expressed how literate Filipinos are with their letters as they are able to read it at any direction, noting:

"The willingness of Filipinos to read their writing with the page held in any direction caused understandable confusion among European observers who lacked this ability..."¹³²

In understanding the frustrations of the missionaries, it is perhaps pertinent to note that the "imperfection" may not have been with the ancient Tagalog script. As quoted in Stephen Houston's 2004 paper in the *Annual Review of Anthropology*¹³³, "the very point of most notational systems is that not everyone can understand them."¹³⁴ Could it be that the writing system was designed specifically for the language of the natives? Could it be that the outside influences that might have caused the apparent "imperfection" of the Tagalog script? As Bazaco, a notable former faculty of the University of Santo Tomas—the oldest university charter in Asia—noted: "the introduction of a new religion and of

¹³⁰ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898...vol. 12*, 242.

¹³¹ Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, Mexico, 1609, trans. and ed. J. S. Cummins. *The Hakluyt Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971): 269.

¹³² Scott, *Prehispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History*, 59.

¹³³ S.D. Houston, "The Archaeology of Communication Technologies," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33, no. 1 (2004): 223-250.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 223.

the Western civilization, were to influence the vocabulary of the natives and even the way of pronunciation."¹³⁵ Certain terms such as *Dios, Virgen, Espiritu Santo, Cruz, Doctrina Cristiana*, and the like, that cannot be compromised as it needs to maintain its "purity" and for such reason they are left untranslated by the missionaries.¹³⁶ Thus, it is not then surprising that these influences or assertion on vocabulary and pronunciation necessitated the modification of the ancient Tagalog script.

4.4 The Gradual Disappearance of the Baybayin in the Vernacular

By around 1745, when Sebastian de Totanes published his first Tagalog grammar, *Arte de la lengua tagala y manual para la administracion de los Santos Sacramento*, he noted how seldom will one see an Indio or a native read and write with the Tagalog scripts, recording:

"...rare is the Indio who still knows how to read them, much less write them. All of them read and write our Castilian letter now."¹³⁷

The native vernacular was then gradually replaced with the Castilian or Latin letters as the missionaries saw the advantage of introducing or asserting their writing system to the islands, the natives saw the "simplicity" of the Latin alphabet. Filipinos soon learned the Spanish language and pronunciation as well, or even better, as the Spaniards.¹³⁸ Whether it was language or politics that was asserted first, definitely: the assertion of one is

¹³⁵ Bazaco, *History of Education in the Philippines*, 10.

¹³⁶ Rafael, *Contracting colonialism*, 29.

¹³⁷ S. Totanes, *Arte de la lengua tagala y manual para la administracion de los Santos Sacramento* (Manila: Convento de Nuestra Senora de Loreto, 1745): 1 (Cited in Rafael 1988).

¹³⁸ Bazaco, *History of Education in the Philippines*, 14.

accompanied by the spread of the other.¹³⁹ And, as Antonio Nebrija wrote in his Prologo of the *Gramatica de la lengua castellana* in 1492:

"...one thing I discovered and concluded with certainty is that language was always the companion of empire; therefore, it follows that together they begin, grow, and flourish, and together they fall."¹⁴⁰

Indeed, the impact of the colonizers on the natives was engrained to their culture and to their identity. Whatever happened to the writing system that the natives, both men and women, were so given to reading and writing?¹⁴¹ What ever happened to the writing system that grew and flourished in the islands as far back as ~900 A.D. as proven in the Laguna Copper-Plate?¹⁴² What happened to the political power of the "Filipinos" as the language of the colonizers began to grow and flourish in the archipelago? The answer lies similar to the current condition of the Tagalog writing system today.

4.5 Baybayin Today

In a 1922 book *El Problema Linguistico En Filipinas* by Dr. Paul Verzosa, he took note of the current condition of the ancient vernacular, saying; "the vernacular 'alibata' was destroyed as the gods of paganism perished, and our homeland literature

¹³⁹ B. Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); (Cited in Rafael 1988:23-24).

¹⁴⁰ J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain: 1469-1716* (New York: New American Library, 1963): 125. See also H. Kamen, *Spain, 469-1714: A Society in Conflict* (London: Longman, 1983): 57-58 (Cited in Rafael 1988:23).

¹⁴¹ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898...vol. 12*, 242-243 (Cited in Wade 1993).

¹⁴² A. Postma, "The Laguna Copper-Plate inscription (LCI): A Valuable Philippine Document," *National Museum Paper* (1991): 1-25.

disappeared for good. Now we have Roman calligraphy, a mixed language with little of everything and a mixed-race literature."

Figure 4.10 An excerpt from Dr. Paul Verzosa's *El problema lingüístico en Filipinas*.

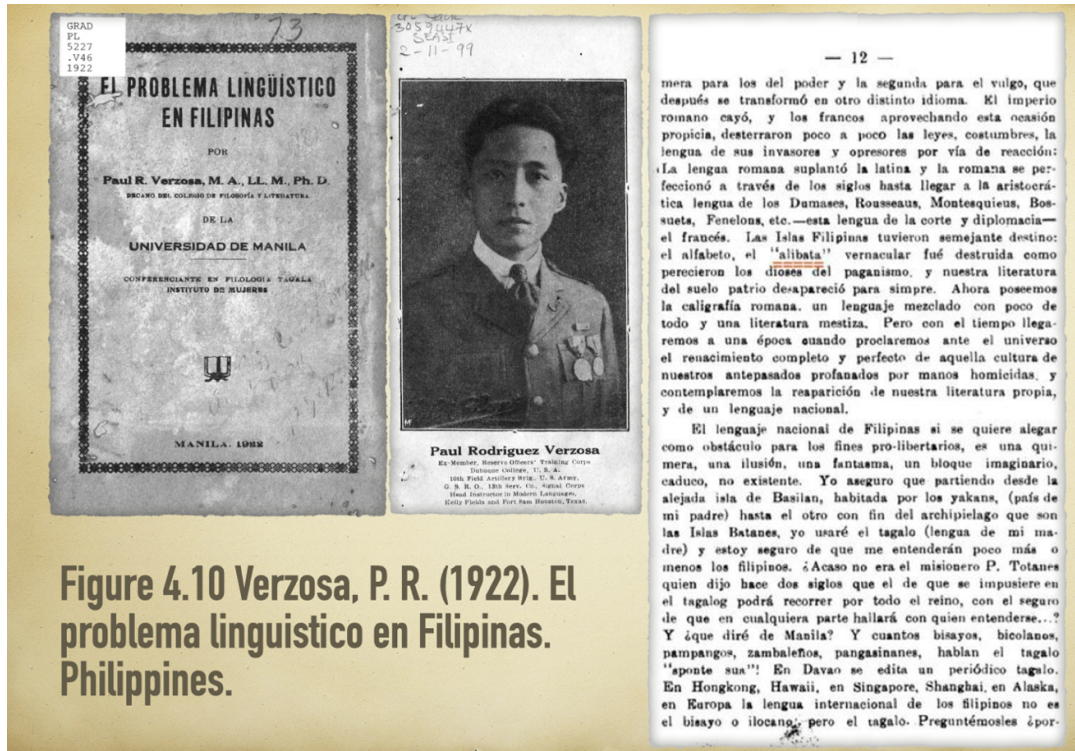


Figure 4.10 Verzosa, P. R. (1922). *El problema lingüístico en Filipinas*. Philippines.

From this statement, Verzosa noted the disappearance of the ancient vernacular—which he called "alibata" and which will later be a topic of debate—for good. Though the American historian William Henry Scott (1984) disagree with the disappearance of the ancient writing as according to him it continued to appear in testator's signatures and poetries and continued to be used by the people of Mindoro all during the 17th and 18th centuries,¹⁴³ we cannot deny the fact that it is no longer the vernacular language in the islands for the centuries that have passed and as Vicente Rafael (1988), a professor of

¹⁴³ Scott, *Prehispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History*, 56.

Southeast Asian history at the University of Washington, remarked; "the rapidity with which Baybayin was displaced by romanized phonetic writing among the Christianized natives."¹⁴⁴ Along with this displacement is the continuing and worsening dilemma on cultural identity among many Filipinos as expounded in the introduction of this thesis.

4.6 The Alibata Controversy

For many years, the Baybayin was popularly known as "Alibata". In 1939, in the book *Pangbansang titik nang Pilipinas* (Philippine National Writing), Dr. Verzosa explained how he has coined the term "alibata" in 1914 in the New York Public Library, Manuscript Research Division, where he based it on the Maguindanao (Moro) arrangement after the Arabic: alif, ba, ta (alibata). Though, he was aware that the native system is called Baybayin.¹⁴⁵ Basing the ancient Philippine writing on Arabic and relating it to the Moros, actually, is not something new or something that is out of ignorance. In his 1609 book, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, Antonio de Morga has likened the writings of the natives to the Arabic writings.¹⁴⁶ William Henry Scott, in his 1994 book, *Barangay : Sixteenth-century Philippine culture and society*, he noted how the writing systems were thought to be from the Moros or Muslims and referred to it as "Moro writing" during the time of Alcina.¹⁴⁷ The Filipino historian Evergisto Bazaco

¹⁴⁴ Rafael, *Contracting colonialism*, 45.

¹⁴⁵ P.R. Verzosa, *Pangbansang titik nang Pilipinas (Philippine National Writing)* (Philippines: Institute of National Language, 1939): 11.

¹⁴⁶ Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, 169.

¹⁴⁷ Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth-century Philippine Culture and Society*, 95.

even called the writing "Abacada".¹⁴⁸ So, could Dr. Verzosa have used "Alibata" to avoid using the term "Alfabeto" from the colonizers? His coining of the term "Alibata" is actually a scholarly work that deserves a better respect than it has garnered throughout the years as many seems to have condemned him for coming up with the term.

4.7 The Revitalization

The movement of revitalization was noted by Evergisto Bazaco around his time in the mid 1900s¹⁴⁹ and interest in the revitalization of the script continued around the early 2000s and a surge of interest

thereafter, according to a

Google Ngram. This surge of

interest may have been due to

the constant online

study/revelation/discourse

through personal webpages like

that of Paul Morrow¹⁵⁰ and

blogs like that of Kristian

Kabuay¹⁵¹ on the rightful name

Figure 4.11 Google Ngram showing the surge of interest in Baybayin.

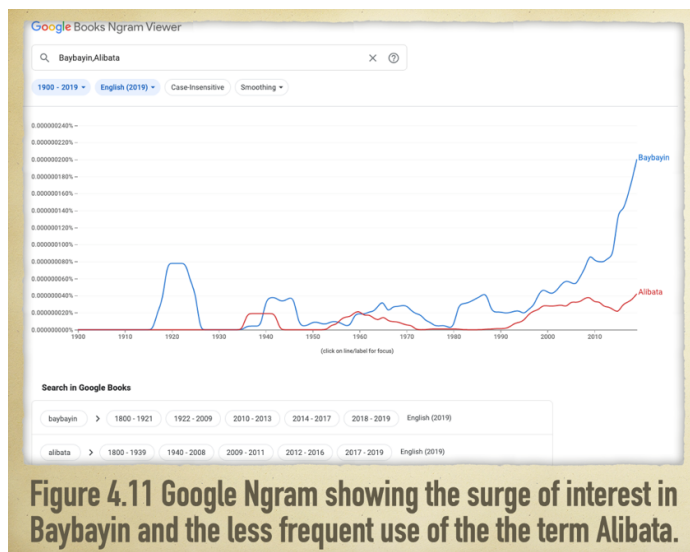


Figure 4.11 Google Ngram showing the surge of interest in Baybayin and the less frequent use of the term Alibata.

¹⁴⁸ Bazaco, *History of Education in the Philippines*, 10.

¹⁴⁹ Bazaco, *History of Education in the Philippines*, 15-16.

¹⁵⁰ Morrow, "Baybayin - The Ancient Script of the Philippines."

¹⁵¹ K. Kabuay, "Baybayin (incorrectly known as Alibata) for Cultural Identity, Promotion for Economic Gain and Preservation" Accessed November 19, 2020. <http://baybayin.com/>.

for the Baybayin where many were still using the term "Alibata" when referring to the "Baybayin" writing system.

Today, the Baybayin characters are still used artistically through different designs and as a symbol of the great Filipino heritage. Unlike its widespread use as the colonizing Spaniards have noted, the use of the Baybayin writing is now limited to the New Generation Currency series of the Philippine peso, Philippine passports, and other government logos, etc. This is generally because the Baybayin scripts are no longer understood in the Philippines.

Figure 4.12 The Baybayin used in graphics.



Through the advancement of technology and globalization, the growing numbers of enthusiasts and advocates—Filipinos and non-Filipinos alike—are becoming more involved with the revitalization of the ancient Filipino scripts. From motivated individuals to movements of different organizations, the Baybayin writing is promoted

through different forms of arts such as clothing, accessories, computer apps, graffiti arts, tattoos, movies, tv shows, movies, etc. In terms of computer technology, the Baybayin (Tagalog) writing currently have assigned Unicode characters from range 1700-171F (<https://unicode.org/charts/PDF/U1700.pdf>) and along with that, are keyboards that also include the ancient Filipino writing.

Many intrapreneurs also now include Baybayin artworks in their merchandise—from accessories, hats, and clothing—on shopping websites such as; baybayinwear.com, redbubble.com, and many other online shops that promote Filipino patriotism. The Baybayin had also been recently used on broadcast media through movies such as the Baybayin¹⁵² and the tv show Amaya¹⁵³.

Jayo Santiago incorporates Baybayin writing with his wall arts (see figure 4.13). One of his artworks includes a signature/showcase piece in 2015 that he did for the Philippine Independence Day in Las Pinas, Philippines. Several

Figure 4.13 FlipOne's signature piece in 2015 Philippine Independence Day.



Figure 4.13 FlipOne's signature piece in 2015 for the Philippine Independence Day

¹⁵² Solitoarts2012, *Baybayin Trailer* [Video file] (YouTube, 2012 October 26) Accessed on November 20, 2020 from <https://youtu.be/Qp4xwKqJnL0>.

¹⁵³ GMA Network, *Amaya: Full Episode 162*. [Video file] (YouTube, 2017 September 5). Accessed on November 20, 2020 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYMAv1ma_zM.

documentaries are featuring his work as he continues to advocate for Baybayin writing.¹⁵⁴

There is also a resurgence of patriotic Filipinos who are getting Baybayin tattoos—especially among the Filipinos abroad—seeking a window to their rich cultural heritage. An article written by Paolo Fresnoza for *canadianfilipino.net* explains this Filipino patriotism nicely, saying:

"Baybayin today is a novelty seen in artworks, tattoos, and other design aesthetics, its value revived as a contemporary craft. Pop culture has become an important engine for its revival, especially for those of Filipino heritage reconnecting with their roots."¹⁵⁵

One of the most recent advancements in the revitalization of the Baybayin is the use of it on signages in Manila (see figure 4.13).

Figure 4.14 Baybayin used on signages in Manila (2020).



Figure 4.14 Baybayin used on signages in Manila (2020).

¹⁵⁴ Heygem, *Wild Style graffiti in Rizal, Philippines (written in baybayin, a precolonial alphabet)* [Video file] (YouTube, 2016 July 03) Accessed on November 20, 2020 from <https://youtu.be/ZZe76vVGjtU>.

¹⁵⁵ P. Fresnoza, P. "Baybayin: Does this Ancient Filipino Script Have a Future?" *Canadian Filipino.Net* (July 16, 2017). Accessed on November 20, 2020 <https://www.canadianfilipino.net/sections/culture/394-baybayin-does-this-ancient-filipino-script-have-a-future>.

Chapter 5

Writing Systems and Efforts of Preservation and/or Revitalization

This chapter will look into the importance of language preservation and/or revitalization and understand the writing systems' role in these said efforts. In a study conducted by Biddle and Swee, 2012, they found a positive relationship between Indigenous people's sustainability¹⁵⁶ of their Indigenous land, the sustainability of their Indigenous language, and the sustainability of their Indigenous cultural production with theirs.¹⁵⁷ Chandler and Lalonde, 2008, and Hallett et al., 2007, found a strong correlation between knowledge of First Nations Languages and a lower incidence of Indigenous youth suicide.¹⁵⁸ ¹⁵⁹ Indeed, there are various reasons why a nation should preserve and/or revitalize their language/s due to cultural imperialism's threat to their culture and identity as borders between countries grow thinner due to globalization. We will be looking into communities and nations who have undergone or currently undergoing language preservation and/or revitalization. We focus on how their writing systems played a role in their efforts to preserve and/or revitalize their spoken language and culture their identity.

¹⁵⁶ Sustainability—‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (Brundtland 1987 cited from Biddle and Swee 2012).

¹⁵⁷ N. Biddle and S. Hannah, "The Relationship between Wellbeing and Indigenous Land, Language and Culture in Australia," *Australian Geographer* 43, no. 3 (2012): 215-232.

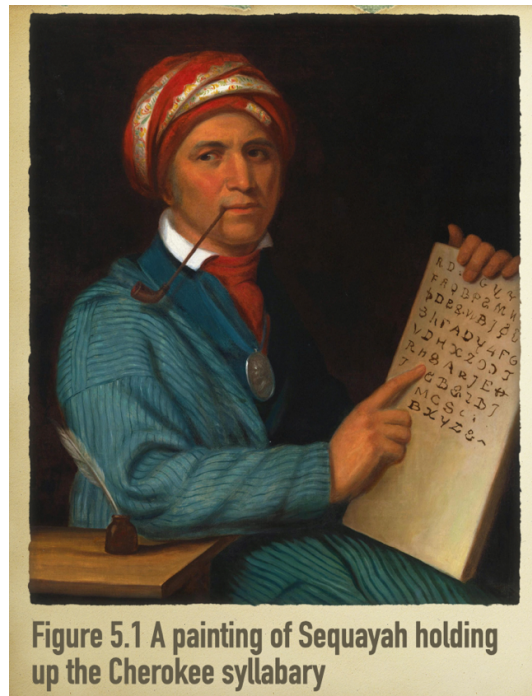
¹⁵⁸ M. J. Chandler and C. Lalonde, "Cultural continuity as a protective factor against suicide in First Nations youth. Horizons: A Special Issue on Aboriginal Youth, Hope or Heartbreak: Aboriginal Youth and Canada's Future" (2008): 68-72 (Cited in Hinton 2018:7).

¹⁵⁹ D. Hallett, M. J. Chandler and C. E. Lalonde, "Aboriginal Language Knowledge and Youth Suicide," *Cognitive Development* 22, no. 3 (2007): 392-99. (Cited in Hinton 2018:7).

5.1 The Creation and Preservation of the Cherokee Syllabary

The Cherokee Nation of North America was among the largest politically united tribes at the European colonizers' arrival. The name "Cherokee" is from a Creek—a Muskogean language spoken by Muscogee and Seminole people—a word which means "people of different speech."¹⁶⁰ With the Europeans' arrival who also possessed different speech, the Cherokees aimed to preserve their identity and self-governing political structure by presenting themselves as "civilized" before the mainstream society under the colonizing Europeans.¹⁶¹

Figure 5.1 A painting of Sequayah holding up the Cherokee syllabary.



While the other Native American tribes began writing their languages using the Roman alphabet that was brought by the Europeans, Sequoyah—a Native American from the Cherokee Nation—who was also first exposed to writing through the white settlers who could send messages with "talking leaves," began inventing a system of writing for the

¹⁶⁰ "Cherokee." In Britannica, n.d. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Cherokee-people>.

¹⁶¹ B. Montgomery-Anderson, "Revitalizing the Cherokee Syllabary," in *The Routledge Handbook of Language Revitalization* 1st ed. (Routledge, 2018): 169-178.

Cherokee language in 1809 to find equality with the writing system of the European colonizers.¹⁶² ¹⁶³ To demonstrate the efficiency of the writing system he invented to the local elders at the Arkansaw Territory, he was joined by his six-year-old daughter Ayoka whom he first taught the syllabary. Sequoyah then instructed Ayoka to leave the meeting as the elders dictated to him a message later read by Ayoka to the elders upon her return. The elders embraced Sequoyah's writing system enthusiastically despite the missionaries' promotion of the Roman alphabet.¹⁶⁴ By 1825, the Cherokee Nation accepted Sequoyah's writing system to be the official Cherokee syllabary—making kinds of literature, tribal and religious materials, and a newspaper available to the Cherokee tribe, at that time, increasingly becoming literate.¹⁶⁵ Sequoyah has since been revered for his innovation and intellectual identity, which brought about a significant cultural identity among the Cherokee people.¹⁶⁶

The role of the Cherokee syllabary become apparent to the Cherokee Nation. As a nation that faced discrimination from the United States government in their ancestral homelands, the Cherokee syllabary immediately became their source of pride and

¹⁶² J. B. Davis, "The life and work of Sequoyah," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 8(2), (1930):149–180. (cited in Unseth 2016;88).

¹⁶³ P. Unseth, "The International Impact of Sequoyah's Cherokee Syllabary," *Written Language and Literacy* 19, no. 1 (2016): 75-93.

¹⁶⁴ Montgomery-Anderson, "Revitalizing the Cherokee Syllabary," 169-178.

¹⁶⁵ J.F. Simek et al. "The Red Bird River Shelter (15CY52) Revisited: The Archaeology of the Cherokee Syllabary and of Sequoyah in Kentucky," *American Antiquity* 84 no.2 (2019): 302-316; Unseth, "The International Impact of Sequoyah's Cherokee Syllabary," 88.

¹⁶⁶ Simek et al. "The Red Bird River Shelter (15CY52) Revisited..." 303.

cohesiveness.¹⁶⁷ ¹⁶⁸ As the Cherokee syllabary spread quickly, and a wide variety of written and reading materials were readily made available, literacy among the Cherokee people became widespread.¹⁶⁹ Currently, according to anthropologist Margaret Bender and Montgomery-Anderson (2018), the Cherokee syllabary serves a role as; 1) an integral part of the tourist industry as it is useful in establishing Cherokee identity, 2) a promotional function for the efforts of revitalizing the Cherokee (spoken) language, 3) it establishes the identity of the Cherokee people and outlines the Cherokee-controlled spaces, 4) it continues to institute literacy and traditional value among the Cherokee people.¹⁷⁰

With the increasing globalization and migration, Cherokees are again becoming the minorities in their homeland. Though many are still speaking Cherokee in the 20th century, the use of the syllabary was becoming gradually rare¹⁷¹, possibly from the displacement caused by the more universal and economically beneficial Roman alphabet. As of the early 2000s, approximately 10% of the Cherokee population were language speakers/learners, 4% could read the Cherokee syllabary, and less than 1% were able to

¹⁶⁷ T. Perdue, *The Sequoyah Syllabary and Cultural Revitalization*. In *Perspectives on the Southeast: Linguistics, Archaeology, and Ethnohistory*, edited by Patricia B. Kwachka (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994): 116–125.

¹⁶⁸ M. Bender, *Signs of Cherokee Culture: Sequoyah's Syllabary in Eastern Cherokee Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

¹⁶⁹ Perdue, *The Sequoyah Syllabary and Cultural Revitalization*, 120; Unseth, "The International Impact of Sequoyah's Cherokee Syllabary," 88; Simek et al. "The Red Bird River Shelter (15CY52) Revisited..."

¹⁷⁰ Montgomery-Anderson, "Revitalizing the Cherokee Syllabary," 176.

¹⁷¹ Montgomery-Anderson, "Revitalizing the Cherokee Syllabary," 170-171.

write.¹⁷² Indeed, it will be a great challenge to create new generations of parents, students, and teachers who are Cherokee-language learners and preservers.

5.2 The Creation and Preservation of the Pahawh Hmong Writing System

The Hmong people are a stateless minority who has endured a lingering struggle from the French colonial period through the U.S. intervention between the Vietnam and Laos

war.^{173 174} In this part of the chapter, we will be

referring mostly to the work of William A. Smalley, a missionary and an anthropological linguist, who worked among the Hmong people—in particular, with Chia Kua Vang, Shong Lue Yang's chief disciple, along with Chia Koua Vang and his associates—who recorded the different stages of development of the Pahawh Hmong writing system or the Pahawh script. We will be looking into the Pahawh script's development, its characteristics, its challenges, and its role to the Hmong people.

Shong Lue Yang, the messenger of the Pahawh script, was born in a village in Vietnam. Born and raised as a poor farmer growing rice on unirrigated mountain

Figure 5.2 Front Cover of the book *Mother of Writing*.

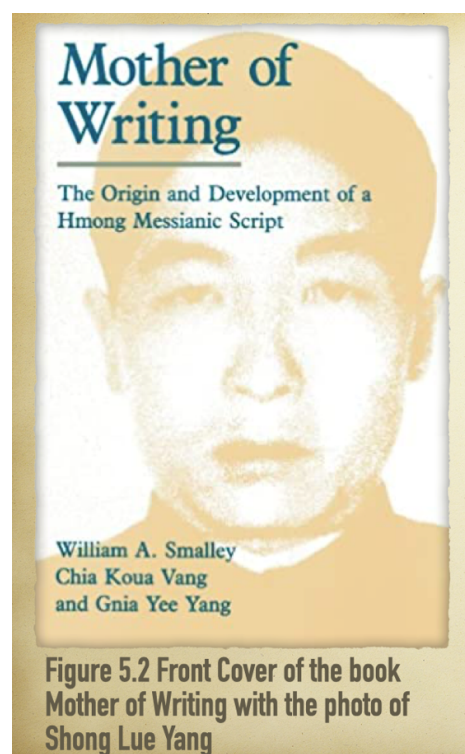


Figure 5.2 Front Cover of the book *Mother of Writing* with the photo of Shong Lue Yang

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ William A. Smalley, Chia Koua. Vang and Gnia Yee Yang, *Mother of Writing: The Origin and Development of a Hmong Messianic Script* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990): 2.

¹⁷⁴ Cornelia Ann Kammerer, review of "*Mother of Writing: The Origin and Development of a Hmong Messianic Script*," by William A. Smalley, Chia Koua. Vang and Gnia Yee Yang, *American Ethnologist* 20, no. 2 (1993): 420.

slopes, Yang, who did not get proper education on reading or writing any language, would eventually come up with a semi-syllabic writing system that is used to represent the

Hmong Daw and Hmong Leng, which are both Hmong languages.¹⁷⁵ In 1959, beginning the night of the 15th day of May, Yang was said to have been taught the Pahawh script for about five months through divine revelations by two male twins who appeared to him every night after smoking opium.¹⁷⁶

Yang continued to study the Pahawh script for several months until the 15th day of September, when his wife gave birth to the two male twins who appeared to him every night.¹⁷⁷

Cha Yang, the firstborn, died seven days from delivery and Xa Yang, the younger one, died seven days after Cha Yang—leaving a message to teach the Pahawh script to the Hmong and the Khmu people.¹⁷⁸ Yang taught the Pahawh script to his village,

Figure 5.3 A sample of the Pahawh Hmong script.

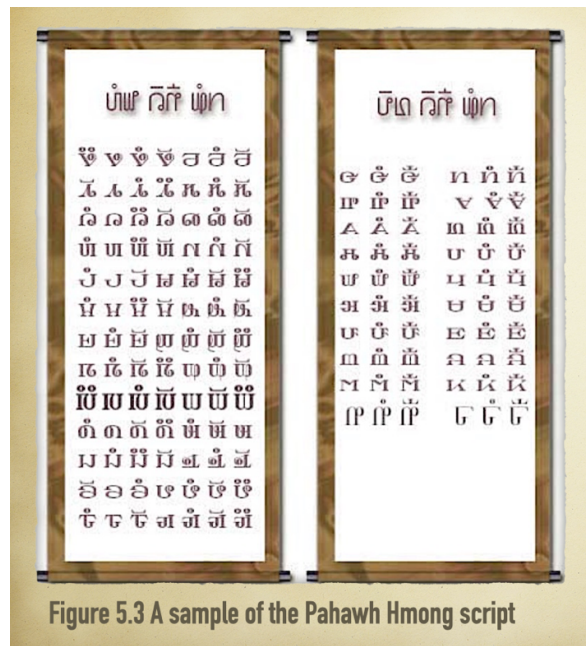


Figure 5.3 A sample of the Pahawh Hmong script

¹⁷⁵ Smalley, Vang, and Yang, *Mother of Writing*, 1-2.

¹⁷⁶ Smalley, Vang, and Yang, *Mother of Writing*, 21-22.

¹⁷⁷ Smalley, Vang, and Yang, *Mother of Writing*, 21-22.

¹⁷⁸ Smalley, Vang, and Yang, *Mother of Writing*, 23-24.

whether he was at home or in the fields where people were as he also responded to the interest of those who came to him to learn.¹⁷⁹

The continued development of the Pahawh script eventually resulted in the assassination of Shong Lue Yang.¹⁸⁰ The Pahawh script developed in four stages to symbolize pronunciation or sound contrasts—making it phonological—and in a notably different structure from other known writing systems, according to Smalley et al., 1990. The first stage of Pahawh is commonly known as the "source version" as thought by the two male twins who appeared to Yang in 1959. The second stage is the "reduced version," which was said to be the first practical script taught by Yang in 1965. The third stage introduced in 1970 is the one in general use.¹⁸¹ The fourth and final stage is the "core version," published in 1971—a month before Yang's death. Shong Lue Yang was assassinated for being a threat, along with his followers, to the CIA-supported Hmong military authorities who were in a faction with the Vietnamese communists. Both sides accused Yang of aiding the other.¹⁸² Further development of the Pahawh script includes

¹⁷⁹ Charles A. Ferguson, "review of *The Mother of Writing: The Origin and Development of a Hmong Messianic Script* by Smalley, William A., Chia Koua Vang, and Gnia Yee Yang; Mitt Moua, Project Translator," *Word* (Worcester) 46, no. 1 (1995): 75.

¹⁸⁰ Smalley, Vang, and Yang, *Mother of Writing*, 1.

¹⁸¹ William J. Poser, review of *Mother of Writing: The Origin and Development of a Hmong Messianic Script* "by William A. Smalley, Chia Koua Vang and Gnia Yee Yang," *Phonology* 11, no. 2 (1991): 365-369.

¹⁸² Smalley, Vang, and Yang, *Mother of Writing*, 1; Lois Malcolm, review of *Mother of Writing: The Origin and Development of a Hmong Messianic Script*, by William A. Smalley, Chia Koua Vang, and Gnia Yee Yang, *Journal of Religion* 72, no. 4 (1992): 629-630.

its advancement from handwriting to the modern word-processing technology within the twenty years of the emigration of Hmong speakers in the U.S.¹⁸³

Like the challenges with many other languages and writing systems, the Pahawh script is also suffering from language shift to another language or from displacement by another language. Smalley et al., 1990, admit that for many Hmong, the Pahawh script's promotion is counterproductive in a culture where education and literacy are increasingly widespread through the use of the Romanized Popular Alphabet (RPA).¹⁸⁴ RPA or Hmong RPA was created in Laos between 1951 and 1953 by a group of missionaries—William A. Smalley, among them—has been a writing system used for writing many of the Hmong languages in Southeast Asia, China, and more in widespread use throughout the Hmong people in the West.¹⁸⁵ Aside from the danger of being displaced by RPA, some educated Hmong also consider the Pahawh script to be an embarrassing remnant of the superstitious past.¹⁸⁶

Aside from the fact that the Pahawh script is still being used by the followers of Shong Lue Yang in the U.S. and Thailand, it still has significant roles in the life of many of the Hmong people. It has become a great source of pride for many Hmong speaking

¹⁸³ W. Bright, "review of *Mother of Writing: The Origin and Development of a Hmong Messianic Script* by William A. Smalley, Chia Koua Vang, and Gnia Yee Yang, and: Hmong, Njua: Syntaktische Analyse einer gesprochenen Sprache mithilfe datenverarbeitungstechnischer Mittel und sprachvergleichende Beschreibung des südostasiatischen Sprachraumes by Bettina Harriehausen" (review). *Language* (Baltimore: 1992): 165-171.

¹⁸⁴ D. Strecker, "review of *Mother of Writing: The Origin and Development of a Hmong Messianic Script*, by William A. Smalley, Chia Koua Vang, and Gnia Yee Yang, " *Journal of Asian Studies* 50, no. 2 (1991): 474-475.

¹⁸⁵ Smalley, Vang, and Yang, *Mother of Writing*, 151-154; Poser, " review of *Mother of Writing*," 365.

¹⁸⁶ Smalley, Vang, and Yang, *Mother of Writing*, 165.

people, even those who do not use it.¹⁸⁷ Rather than its function, what makes the Pahawh script currently and more relevant for the contemporary Hmong people is its symbolic representation of their identity and equality with their neighboring Southeast Asian brothers, whose prevailing point of view is that each varying language should have its corresponding writing system.¹⁸⁸

5.3 The Continuous Efforts of Revitalizing Sanskrit

Sanskrit, which has a long history that goes as far back as 4000 to 6000 years of existence and used in around 30 million ancient texts, is regarded as a holy and sacred

Figure 5.4 Sanskrit written in Devanagari on palm leaves.



Figure 5.4 Sanskrit written in Devanagari on palm leaves (1084 CE).

¹⁸⁷ Smalley, Vang, and Yang, *Mother of Writing*, 165.

¹⁸⁸ Smalley, Vang, and Yang, *Mother of Writing*, 95; Bright, review of *Mother of Writing*, 165-171.

language.¹⁸⁹ Aside from the vast number of ancient books that were written in Sanskrit and since almost every Indian language traces its origin to Sanskrit—making it a really interesting language for foreigners like the many Western scientists and scholars who already benefited from the knowledge of the Sanskrit kinds of literature¹⁹⁰—we can easily assume that it has excellent potential for revival as the vernacular language in India.¹⁹¹ ¹⁹² It seems to be a more complicated task than that as it continued to decline after the 13th century.¹⁹³ ¹⁹⁴ As noted by Sheldon Pollock, 2001, a scholar of Sanskrit, Dalpatram Dahyabhai, a Gujarati poet, spoke of Sanskrit's death since 1857.¹⁹⁵ The idea that "Sanskrit is dead" was supported by Pollock in his paper *The Death of Sanskrit* (2001).¹⁹⁶ Though other scholars like Jürgen Hanneder, 2002, reacted to Pollock's claim as it is, according to him, "often arbitrary."¹⁹⁷ Hanneder also noted that the fact it

¹⁸⁹ Myanmar (Burma), "OPINION: Revival of Sanskrit. Asia News Monitor" (Bangkok: 2020).

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ L. Vidyābhushana, *The Study of Sanskrit: A Plea for Its Revival* (Bombay: Times Press, 1913): Introduction.

¹⁹² Myanmar (Burma), "OPINION..."

¹⁹³ H.H. Hock, "Language-Death Phenomena in Sanskrit: Grammatical Evidence for Attrition in Contemporary Spoken Sanskrit," *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences* 13, no. 2 (1983): 21-35.

¹⁹⁴ S. Pollock, "The Sanskrit Cosmopolis, 300-1300: Transculturation, Vernacularization, and the Question of Ideology," in *Ideology and Status of Sanskrit: Contributions to the History of the Sanskrit Language*, Houben, Jan E. M. [Ed], (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1996): 197-247.

¹⁹⁵ Pollock, "The Sanskrit Cosmopolis, 300-1300," 394.

¹⁹⁶ S. Pollock, *The Death of Sanskrit. Comparative Studies in Society and History* (2001): 392-426.

¹⁹⁷ J. Hanneder, "On "The Death of Sanskrit,"" *Indo-Iranian Journal* 45 no. 4 (2002): 293–310 doi:10.1023/a:1021366131934.

is spoken, written, and read, it is not a dead language. The statement of Hannender is similar to that of Vidyabhushana in 1913, where he stated:

"though many would prefer to class Sanskrit with the dead languages once for all, the fact that it is being used by the Pandit class to communicate their thoughts to each other may entitle it to be called a language of the literary few, but not a dead language."¹⁹⁸

Sanskrit is among the most mysterious, almost magical, languages in the world as far as its structure and the immense fields of knowledge it covers. Sir William Jones, an Anglo-Welsh philologist, said, "of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek more copious than the Latin; and more exquisitely refined than either."¹⁹⁹ Many claims that Sanskrit covers, if not most, but every subject is known to man from the ancient to modern times.^{200 201 202 203} Though it was written using various scripts throughout the centuries and across countries, the most popular and most common script used to write Sanskrit was the Devanagari script.²⁰⁴ However, the antecedent Nagari script has a more

¹⁹⁸ Vidyābhushana, *The Study of Sanskrit*, 80.

¹⁹⁹ Vidyābhushana, *The Study of Sanskrit*, 88-89.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Indian Government, "World Sanskrit conference concludes with a call to revive the universality of the language" (M2 Presswire, 2001).

²⁰² Mishra, Sampadananda. "Is Sanskrit, an Ancient Indian Language, Still Relevant? | Dr Sampadananda Mishra | TEDxPanaji." YouTube, uploaded by TEDx Talks, (YouTube: 28 Aug. 2019) Accessed on November 20, 2020 at www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmUJLx47ZDg.

²⁰³ Myanmar (Burma), "OPINION..."

²⁰⁴ S.C. Banerji, "A Companion to Sanskrit Literature: Spanning a Period of over Three Thousand Years, Containing Brief Accounts of Authors, Works, Characters, Technical Terms, Geographical Names, Myths, Legends and Several Appendices" (Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1989).

significant historical relationship with Sanskrit according to various epigraphical evidence.²⁰⁵

Figure 5.5 Vidyābhushana's short letter to Prof. Lanman of Harvard.

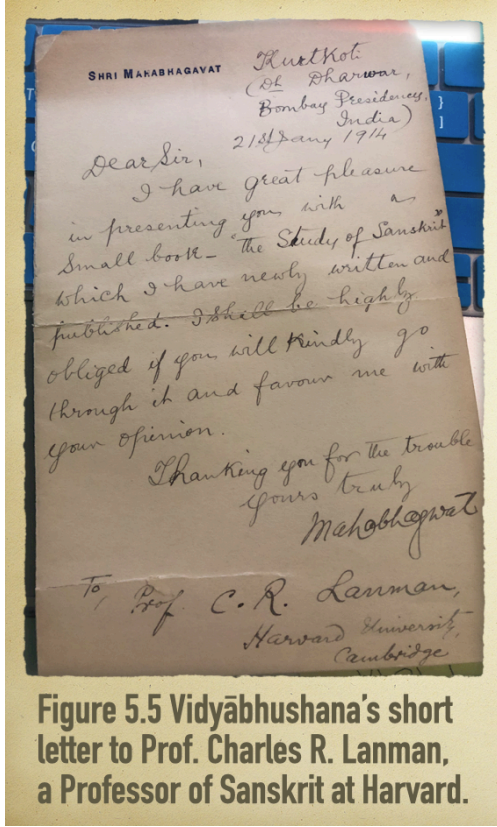


Figure 5.5 Vidyābhushana's short letter to Prof. Charles R. Lanman, a Professor of Sanskrit at Harvard.

In the book, *The Study of Sanskrit: A plea for its revival*,²⁰⁶ published by Pandit Ligesha Vidyabhushana Vedanta-Vachaspati alias Shree Mahabagavat of Kurtkoti, in 1913, he noted the features that marked the downfall of Sanskrit and addressed several efforts that must be undertaken to be successful in the hope to revive Sanskrit.²⁰⁷ Several features that the Pandit observed as the downfall of Sanskrit include; 1) the signs of the decay of the language that it has become "nearly"²⁰⁸ a dead language, 2) the deterioration of its style, and 3) the lack of

²⁰⁵ D. Jain, and G. Cardona, *The Indo-Aryan Languages* 1st ed. *Routledge Language Family Series* (Florence: Routledge, 2004).

²⁰⁶ Pandit is a Hindu scholar learned in Sanskrit and Hindu philosophy and religion, typically also a practicing priest. Definition was taken from Google's English dictionary as provided by Oxford Languages.

²⁰⁷ Vidyābhushana, *The Study of Sanskrit*, 90.

²⁰⁸ Vidyabhushana further explained why he used the term "nearly" since Sanskrit is actually not a dead language since it is still being used by the Pandit class to communicate their thoughts to each other.

educative training which Sanskrit was once expected to confer on its votaries.²⁰⁹

Vidyābhushana ended his book by addressing several efforts or "Methods of Revival" that must be taken, such as; 1) government patronage²¹⁰, 2) the assistance of math or religious establishments, and 3) the works of the people. Vidyabhushana addresses how the Government should create University titles and degrees for Sanskrit and impress upon the responsible Government officials the importance of fully understanding one's customs through history and literature. According to the Vidyabhushana, religious establishments should encourage the study of Sanskrit since the religious and philosophical thoughts are preserved in Sanskrit writing. Finally, people should work on; 1) adapting to the needs of the time accordingly with the Sanskrit influence, 2) learn English as it is the key that leads to civilization and modern world culture, and 3) preserve their native vernaculars as it is the link between Hindus who know Sanskrit and those who do not.

Through the Indian Government's leadership, there is a unanimous decision to simplify Sanskrit and make it effortlessly conversational.²¹¹ In 2010, Sanskrit became the

²⁰⁹ Vidyābhushana, *The Study of Sanskrit*, 80-82.

²¹⁰ The appeal to Government was criticized in the book's Introductory Remarks by Sir Dr. Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, an Indian scholar, orientalist, and social reformer, noting that Vidyābhushana appear to mix up his appeal to the Government with his appeal with one of the Universities. Bhandarkar also went on to point out that the University of Madras has already led the way by instituting special degree. But, in Vidyābhushana's defense, it was quite clear that the appeal was for the Government since they have the power to mandate Universities on what may be included in their curriculums. Also, Vidyābhushana did mention, in page 90, of the Madras University's attempt towards the creation of titles and degrees for Sanskrit learning.

²¹¹ Indian Government, "World Sanskrit conference concludes with a call to revive the universality of the language," 1.

second official language in Uttarakhand.²¹² Sanskrit was included among the 22 official languages of India in 2013.²¹³ And most recently, in 2019, Himachal Pradesh—a state in the northern part of India—also made Sanskrit their second official language.²¹⁴

With the revival of Sanskrit, aside from it renewing and reviving the people's cultural pride and heritage, it will also foster spiritualism and create the concept of a meaningful and self-governing society—setting forth order across the country as viewed in a published article in Myanmar.²¹⁵ What is important to note about the revitalization of the Sanskrit language in relation to our study is the significant role of the writing systems in preserving the pieces of literature that continue to serve as the breathing life of the Sanskrit language. These many roles of the writing systems are true to all of the other spoken languages on the brink of death.

5.4 The Successful Revitalization and Modernization of Hebrew in Israel

Hebrew, a Northwest Semitic language that is historically native of the Israelites, Judeans, and their ancestors, though still used as a language to be studied, prayed, and

²¹² The Hindu, "Sanskrit Second Official Language of Uttarakhand," (2010): Accessed on November 20, 2020 at www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-otherstates/Sanskrit-second-official-language-of-Uttarakhand/article15965492.ece.

²¹³ J.A. Shoba and F. Chimbutane, "Bilingual Education and Language Policy in the Global South" Vol. 4 *Routledge Critical Studies in Multilingualism* (London: Routledge, 2013).

²¹⁴ UNI News Service, "HP Assy Clears Three Bills, Sanskrit Becomes Second Official Language" *United News of India* (2019): Accessed on November 20, 2020 at www.uniindia.com/hp-assy-clears-three-bills-sanskrit-becomes-second-official-language/north/news/1501689.html.

²¹⁵ Myanmar (Burma), "OPINION."

read through various works of literature, is said to have ceased as a vernacular language more than two thousand years ago.²¹⁶

In the late 19th century, efforts to revive the dead language as a mother tongue was started by Eliezar Ben-Yehuda. The said "death" and "revival" of Hebrew, though, has been contested by Chaim Rabin, a German-Israeli professor of Hebrew and Semitic languages, to be an "erroneous idea"

since Hebrew was solely used as a written language—of at least part of the Jewish people—and was never used in everyday speech.²¹⁷ Despite the said controversy, if we want to think of successful language revitalization, the efforts to revive Hebrew could be the best model in revitalizing a dead language. Hebrew has been successfully revitalized²¹⁸, but it has also gone through what Joshua Fishman, an American linguist, calls

Figure 5.6 Eliezar Ben-Yehuda in his house at Talpiot neighborhood.



Figure 5.6 Eliezar Ben-Yehuda in his house in Talpiot neighbourhood

²¹⁶ M. Laoire, "The Historical Revitalization of Hebrew as a Model for the Revitalization of Irish?" in *Irish Questions and Jewish Questions; Crossovers in Culture*, Irish Questions and Jewish Questions; Crossovers in Culture, 1(2018): 179-192.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ L. Hinton, L. Huss, and G. Roche, "The Routledge Handbook of Language Revitalization. 1st ed. Routledge Handbooks in Applied Linguistics" (Milton: Routledge, 2018).

"revernacularisation"²¹⁹ from its traditional literary sacred use to a daily spoken language for the ordinary people in Israel.

While the Israelites were in captivity during the Babylonian exile around the 6th century BCE, many learned the Aramaic language, which eventually influences the Jewish elites to learn Aramaic.²²⁰ This learning of a new language, whether through influence or imposition, marked the beginning of the language shift from Hebrew to Aramaic, which also caused the start of the Hebrew language's displacement. Aramaic became the vernacular language, and Hebrew, though still used in reading and understanding the sacred works of literature, was no longer used in a day to day conversation. It was considered a "dead language"²²¹ for almost around two thousand years before efforts of its revitalization began in the 19th century through Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, who was considered the "reviver of the Hebrew language"²²² for his great effort of reviving Hebrew through publishing articles in the newspaper and instigating a project which became the Ben-Yehuda Dictionary.²²³

²¹⁹ J. Fishman, "Can threatened languages Be saved?: reversing language shift, Revisited : A 21st Century Perspective" Vol. 116 *Multilingual Matters* (2001).

²²⁰ N. Ostler, *Empires of the Word: A Language History of the World* (London: HarperCollins, 2005): 80.

²²¹ D. Fesperman, P. McCardell, J.P.A. Wilson, and B. Santamaria, "Once 'dead' Language Brings Israel to Life; Hebrew: After 1,700 Years, a Revived Language Becomes a Common Thread Knitting Together a Nation of Immigrants with Little in Common except Religion," *The Sun* (Baltimore, MD: 1998).

²²² A. Bar-Adon, "S.I. Agnon utchiyat halashon ha'ivrit" (Jerusalem: 1977).

²²³ B. Harshav, "Flowers Have No Names: The Revival of Hebrew as a Living Language after Two Thousand Years Was No Miracle," *Natural History* 118, no. 1 (2009): 24.

Among the struggles during the early efforts of Hebrew revitalization in the late 19th century was to face two well-established languages: the Yiddish and the German language. The Yiddish language was proclaimed as ‘a Jewish national language’ in Tshernovits,²²⁴ while the German language was recognized as a world language for

Figure 5.7 Children among the first wave of Jewish migration.



Figure 5.7 Among the First Aliyah or wave of Jewish migration are these kindergarten in Rishon Lezion, c. 1898.

culture and

education.²²⁵

With the inspiration

from the Jewish

Enlightenment—the

Haskalah

movement—in the

18th century, the

Hebrew script

began to be

modernized in

Europe. In addition to the *Haskalah* movement, Ben-Yehuda’s ardent efforts to revive the Hebrew language and the promotion of Zionism²²⁶ during the 19th century to create

²²⁴ J. A. Fishman, "Attracting a following to High-culture Functions for a Language of Everyday Life," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 24 (1980): 43-73.

²²⁵ R. Wahl, "German language policy in 19th century Palestine," MA thesis, *English Barllan University* (Ramat-Gan, 1996).

²²⁶ Zionism: a movement for (originally) the re-establishment and (now) the development and protection of a Jewish nation in what is now Israel. It was established as a political organization in 1897 under Theodor Herzl and was later led by Chaim Weizmann. (Definition from Google’s English dictionary as provided by Oxford Languages).

national revival movements, the revernacularizing of the Hebrew language gradually became an accepted movement. With the national revival movements, various literature on poetry, novels, and drama was created in the Hebrew language using the modern Hebrew script. It is also possible that the Hebrew language and the script began to be used for other purposes such as trading and other secular activities.²²⁷

Hebrew schools in the Jewish communities were established during the waves of Jewish settlements in Palestine under the Ottoman rule, and further efforts and developments to revitalize/revernacularize and modernize Hebrew occurred beyond Ben-Yehuda. Stages of revitalization and developments of the Hebrew language through establishments of various idealistic and nationalistic Jewish organizations was concurrent with; 1) the First Aliyah, 1882-1903, or the first major wave of Jewish immigration, from Eastern Europe and Yemen, who were responsible for the agricultural development in Palestine, 2) the Second Aliyah, 1904-1914, or the most influential wave of Jewish immigration, from Russia and some from Yemen, who were mostly credited with the Hebrew language revitalization and standardization for the Jews in Israel, and 3) the British Mandate, 1919-1948, where the Hebrew language—though were already likely revived during this period which also marked the demise of Ben-Yehuda in 1922, continued to be developed as the mother tongue of the Jewish population in Palestine. Along with these stages came the establishment of Hebrew high schools in 1905, Jewish legion in 1917, Hebrew University in 1918, the *Histadrut* in 1920, and the first Hebrew city in Tel Aviv.

²²⁷ Laoire, "The Historical Revitalization of Hebrew as a Model for the Revitalization of Irish?" 183.

Indeed, the revernacularisation and modernization of the Hebrew language and writing in Israel may be deemed a real success story of language revitalization as the vast majority of the Israeli population uses the modern Hebrew language and writing in their daily life.²²⁸ Looking at the remarkable and inspiring revitalization of the Hebrew language from the perspective of understanding the role of Hebrew writing, we can see how great of a role does writing play in the preservation and revitalization of the spoken language. Having written literature that survived through time and space played a big part in the preservation and, eventually, the revitalization of the Hebrew language.

5.5 Reflection

At this point in this study, it is clear that the various efforts and needs of studying writing systems seem to be underrated in academia. From a global point-of-view, we can see the scarcity of resource materials for written language or scripts and worst when we look at the number of materials for some countries such as Southeast Asia. With this dilemma, there is a great precarity in the future of many languages, whether it is spoken or written. What is also obvious in this chapter is that different situations have their unique way of dealing with language revitalizations. Like the case with the Hebrew language where the aim was to revernacularize Hebrew, the case with the Cherokee and the Pahawh writing systems is different in the way that they are not really revitalizing a language that had previous pieces of literature to work on but rather producing new works of literature to help preserve their written and spoken languages. The Cherokee people being under the Western rule and the Hmong people not having a nation of their own, unlike the Israeli

²²⁸ Laoire, "The Historical Revitalization of Hebrew as a Model for the Revitalization of Irish?" 180-182.

Hebrew, it might be a good idea for them to aim like the Hawaiian and Maori people where language revitalization is more on balancing bilingualism with the English vernacular.²²⁹

It is undeniable, though, in this chapter, that the role and influence of a written language in the cultural identity, pride, and preservation of language are extremely important. I could not agree more with the point of view that is prevalent in Southeast Asia—as pointed out by Smalley et al. (1990;95)—that each different language should have an identifiably different writing system. This was true in the Philippines as different writing systems seem to have begun to flourish until there was a language shift, and those writing systems were displaced with the Roman alphabet that was brought by the colonizers. And the problem with the efforts in revitalizing the Baybayin is the lack of written literature that was maintained like that of the Hebrews and the Egyptians, whose literature lasted through time and space. With that, it is quite obvious that there is this great challenge in trying to understand the role of a written language in the cultural identity and socio-psychological wellbeing of the people.

²²⁹ Hinton, Huss, and Roche, "The Routledge Handbook of Language Revitalization. 1st ed. Routledge Handbooks in Applied Linguistics".

Chapter 6

Baybayin Language Today and the Current Revitalization Efforts

As we have learned from the previous chapter, different approaches were made to revitalize or preserve languages depending on the situation. This chapter will focus on the various efforts to promote and/or revive the ancient Philippine script called Baybayin. Though there are various ways wherein the Baybayin writing system is promoted, we will focus on four efforts that are at the forefront of revitalization, which includes; 1) Advocacy through online and social media, 2) Advocacy through the government, 3) Advocacy through arts and other commercial media, and 4) Advocacy through the academy.

6.1 Advocacy Through Online & Social Media

In 1953, Evergisto Bazaco noted:

"A movement is noticed in our days to revive the old Baybayin which was used in the Islands. The restoration of it with its primitive symbols (or complemented with others based on the original one) aside from reminding our pupils of a chapter of past Philippine History, pays tribute and honor to our predecessors."²³⁰

During his time, the movement mentioned by Bazaco did not seem to have gone far until the Information Age. In the 21st century, though there are growing efforts and advocacy to revive the Baybayin writing system, there is no doubt that many of such measures were

²³⁰ E. Bazaco, *History of Education in the Philippines: Spanish Period, 1565-1898* 2nd ed. (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1953): 15.

initiated by what Filipinos call "*dayuhans*" (foreigners/non-Filipinos) and Filipino-Americans who lives abroad around the end of the 20th century. These *dayuhan* efforts are evident in the statements of Emil Yap, a Filipino researcher at the Center for Katipunan Studies, and Jay Enage, an advocate of the Baybayin writing system and the founder of Baybayin Buhayin. Their statements are as noted below:

Figure 6.1 Emil Yap in a Baybayin documentary.



"Nagkakaroon ng interest ang mga kabataan lalo na ang mga dayuhan at ang karamihan ng may interest dito ay 'yung mga Fil-Am nating mga kababayan na nasa abroad (The youth are becoming interested especially the foreigners at most of them who are interested are our Fil-Am countrymen who are abroad)."

~ Emil Yap²³¹

"Ang nakakagulat dahil mga banyaga, mga foreigner pa ang nag-aaral dito at itinuturo ito sa ating mga Pilipino (What is surprising is that it is the foreigners who are learning this and teaching it to the Filipinos)."

~ Jay Enage²³²

Figure 6.2 Jaime Enage in a Baybayin documentary.



²³¹ E. Yap, *Baybayin: pasundayag sa sinaunang baybayin*, YouTube [Video file] (2017): Retrieved on December 18, 2018 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=234&v=ehTab-wWXPg (Time Stamp 00:02:35 – 00:02:45).

²³² J. Enage, *Baybayin Documentary* YouTube [Video file] (2011) Retrieved on October 23, 2020 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Q5G4qcostg> (Time Stamp 00:07:00 – 00:07:10).

Among the earliest, if not the earliest, initiatives to promote the Baybayin writing system online is Hector Santos—a Filipino-American from California and an independent scholar²³³ on Philippine history—who published *A Philippine Leaf* on Philippine Studies online as early as 1995.²³⁴ Paul Morrow—a Canadian who learned Filipino in Canada mainly through books—published his research study *Ang Baybayin* (2002) online.²³⁵ Also, among the first independent research blog (Baybayin.com) created on the internet is the webpage of Kristian Kabuay, a Filipino-

Figure 6.3 Among the earliest online initiatives to promote the Baybayin.



Figure 6.3 Among the earliest online initiatives to promote the Baybayin

²³³ H. Santos, "Biodata," Accessed November 19, 2020. <http://www.bibingka.baybayin.com/dahon/hector/hector.htm>.

²³⁴ H. Santos, "A Philippine Leaf," Accessed November 19, 2020. <http://www.bibingka.baybayin.com/dahon/index.html>.

²³⁵ P. Morrow, "Baybayin - The Ancient Script of the Philippines," (2002). Accessed November 19, 2020. <http://paulmorrow.ca/bayeng1.htm>.

American artist and entrepreneur who is based in California²³⁶. It is also not surprising that many known commercial products that promote Baybayin are also from California.²³⁷ Such pattern of nationalism among Filipinos—mostly in California—in the 1990s and early 2000s is best illustrated in Susanah Mendoza's *Between the homeland and the diaspora: the politics of theorizing Filipino and Filipino American identities: a second look at the poststructuralism-indigenization debates* (2002).²³⁸ The book talks about the *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology) movement that was pioneered by Virgilio "Ver" Enriquez, a social psychologist and the Father of Filipino psychology "*Ama ng Sikolohiyang Pilipino*," which found its way into the Filipino American academic community in California when Enriquez went on a stint as a Visiting Professor at UC Berkeley to teach Filipino language classes. In her book, Mendoza noted;

"Taking a view of language as ultimately inscribed in larger cultural, political, and historical determination, especially in the case of postcolonial Philippines, Enriquez would adopt a critical approach to language teaching using the perspective of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* as a framework."²³⁹

Here, we can see how language played a big role in inspiring the Filipino American communities, in particular the second and subsequent generations in California, thus developing a profound interest in Philippine studies. As a result of this newfound interest, Mendoza stated how programs on

²³⁶ K. Kabuay, "Baybayin (incorrectly known as Alibata) for Cultural Identity, Promotion for Economic Gain and Preservation." Accessed November 19, 2020. <http://baybayin.com/>.

²³⁷ See Section 6.3.

²³⁸ S.L.L. Mendoza, "Between the Homeland and the Diaspora: The Politics of Theorizing Filipino and Filipino American Identities : A Second Look at the Poststructuralism-indigenization Debates" *Asian Americans*. (New York: Routledge, 2002): 123-131.

²³⁹ Ibid.

Philippines/Filipino/Filipino American/Ethnic Studies received a boost in enrolment in various universities. Further, she noticed;

"Noted in particular is the immense interest generated in learning (about) the pre-colonial indigenous system of writing called *alibata* [Baybayin] that many students would take up as a serious study... This 'quaint relic of the past' seems to have particularly captured the students' imagination. One reason noted is that it revealed to them the heretofore little-known fact in Philippine history that, long before the coming of the Europeans to the Philippine shores, there was this literate people with their own system of writing and alphabet subsequently made illiterate by (European brand of) 'civilization.'"²⁴⁰

So, even more profound than the language in general, as we have seen, is the role of the Baybayin in captivating the interest of the Filipino Americans as they try to understand their Filipino culture—possibly to find a clearer cultural/ethnic identity amid the great diversity that is in America. Today, there are various Facebook groups and pages promoting the Baybayin writing system through updates and open discussions. Among the notable Facebook groups in social media and pages that are actively promoting Baybayin includes Baybayin²⁴¹ and Baybayin Buhayin.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Baybayin is a Facebook page created since 2009 and has gathered more than 22k followers as of October 28, 2020. It has been the hub for many Baybayin advocates, scholars, enthusiast, and alike for many years where they talk about the updates on the Baybayin writing system, discuss their interest, get an advice on Baybayin, etc. Retrieved on October 28, 2020 at <https://www.facebook.com/baybayin> .

²⁴² Baybayin Buhayin is another Facebook page created since 2010 and has gathered more than 22k followers as of October 28, 2020. This group was founded by the main proponent of the Baybayin bill, Jay Enage, and has been among the center of information as far as the progress of the Baybayin bills in the government. The group promotes Baybayin by holding in-person seminars, conferences and summits. Since the 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic, they have been inviting various speakers from different fields to do presentations focusing on the Baybayin writings system, and others. Retrieved on October 28, 2020 at <https://www.facebook.com/baybayinbuhayin>.

6.2 Advocacy through the Government

There are several government acts promoting the Baybayin/indigenous writing systems in the Philippines.^{243 244}

The initial bill for the National Script Act was said to be introduced on March 16, 2011, during the 15th Congress by the then Representative of the 2nd District of

Pangasinan, Leopoldo N. Bataoil (Principal Author of the bill, see figure 6.4) in collaboration with the

proponent of the bill, Jaime Enage of the Taklobo Baybayin which is now the Baybayin Buhayin Incorporated. Though the said National Script Act of 2011 (House Bill no. 4395) from the 15th Congress is nowhere to be found in the archive of the official website of the Philippine House of Representatives, trustworthy news remnants from blogs,

Figure 6.4 Former Rep. Leopoldo Bataoil introducing the National Script Act during the 15th Congress.



²⁴³ "House Bills and Resolutions" *Republic of the Philippines*. Accessed November 20, 2020. <http://congress.gov.ph/legisdocs/?v=bills>.

²⁴⁴ "Bills/Resolutions" *Senate of the Philippines*. Accessed November 19, 2020. http://legacy.senate.gov.ph/lis/bill_res.aspx?congress=17%2CSBN-433.

articles, and web sites online show that it was, indeed, the first act to promote the Baybayin, Baybayin.²⁴⁵

Some notable progress made from the government acts include; 1) House Bill No. 4395, 2) House Bill No. 1022 or 8785, 3) Senate Bill No. 433, and 4) House Bill No. 5984. The initial bill, House Bill No. 4395, was filed in the 15th Congress during the First Regular Session with the full title as; "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF BAYBAYIN AND DECLARING BAYBAYIN AS THE NATIONAL SCRIPT OF THE PHILIPPINES." During the 17th Congress' 1st Committee Hearing on April 23, 2018, House Bill No. 1022 was approved, but during the 2nd Committee Hearing on October 8, 2018, the bill was amended by the former Representative of Taguig City's lone district, Pia Cayetano, recommending the full title be modified as; "AN ACT PROMOTING PHILIPPINE INDIGENOUS OR TRADITIONAL WRITING SYSTEMS AND PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION, PRESERVATION, AND CONSERVATION" to make the bill inclusive of the debated "other" writing systems from the various ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines. House Bill 1022 was then substituted by House Bill No. 8785, which was approved in the Third Reading on the 14th day of January 2019 with house votes of 208 Yeas and 0 Nays and 0 Abstain.²⁴⁶ The said bill was transmitted to the Senate on the 15th day of January

²⁴⁵ K. Kabuay, "Baybayin Bill – National Script Act of 2011" (2011). <https://blog.kabuay.com/2011/03/16/baybayin-bill-national-script-act-of-2011/>; Filipino Editor, "Muling Paggamit Ng Baybayin, Dapat Bang Pag-Ibayuhin?" *The Varsitarian*, (2017) Accessed on November 20, 2020 at <https://varsitarian.net/filipino/20170831/muling-paggamit-ng-baybayin-dapat-bang-pag-ibayuhin>; "National Script Act." Accessed November 19, 2020. <http://baybayinbuhayin.blogspot.com/p/national-script-act.html>.

²⁴⁶ Historical details and information were provided in the correspondence between the researcher with Jay Enage, the main proponent of the bill, through Facebook messenger.

2019 and was introduced by the then Senator Loren Legarda in the First Regular Session on the 16th of July 2019 as Senate Bill no. 433. Currently, during the 18th Congress, House Bill No. 5984 is introduced by the incumbent Representative of the 3rd District of Manila, John Marvin C. Nieto or better known by his stage name Yul Servo.

Generally, the abstract of the bill provides that the writing systems shall be promoted through the following:

- (a.) Mandates the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education to include the writing systems in relevant subjects of the basic and higher education curricula and create the elective or specialized course in higher education for the same;
- (b.) Creates and support activities that promote the awareness of the writing systems during the *Buwan ng Wika* and other similar occasions and events;
- (c.) Conducts seminars, conferences, conventions, symposia, and other relevant activities on the study of the writing systems; and
- (d.) Ensures the proper record-keeping of relevant documents and preservation of oral evidence on the writing systems.

There have been several controversies surrounding the bill, which possibly motivated the said amendment of House Bill no. 1022 that was passed on April 23, 2018, to be substituted by House Bill no. 8785. In an online article at CNN Philippines written by Michael Rosero on April 24, 2018 (the next day after the bill's approval)^{247 248}, *The*

²⁴⁷ M. Rosero, "The Baybayin bill and the never ending search for 'Filipino-ness'," *CNN Philippines* (2018). Accessed on December 1, 2018 from <http://cnnphilippines.com/life/culture/2018/04/26/baybayin-bill.html>.

²⁴⁸ The article written by Michael Rosero on April 24, 2018, published by CNN Philippines seems to have been taken down. Though remnants of it exists on Google search and Facebook as shown on the figure provided. Accessed on October 27, 2020 from <https://www.facebook.com/CNNPhilippines/posts/posts-on-twitter-say-that-the-script-is-tagalog-centric-and-the-imposition-of-ba/2187869834786237/>.

Baybayin bill and the never-ending search for 'Filipino-ness,' he noted some controversies where experts and educators argue for further clarification on the Baybayin writing's "ancientness" and "indigeneity" and many enthusiasts and advocates speaks-out of its seemingly dismissive characteristic of the other existing indigenous scripts—arguing that it is a Tagalog-centric bill. It was also noted in the same article that this controversy is reminiscent of the past and ongoing struggles of the ethnolinguistic communities for recognition. Further reactions among other online news outlets and netizens include; its linguistic limitations, the capacity of educators, and its purpose (Villa 2018).²⁴⁹

Figure 6.5 A remnant of the CNN Philippines article in Twitter.



Figure 6.5 A remnant of the CNN Philippines article in Twitter that was written by Michael Rosero.

²⁴⁹ N. Villa, 'Educate first': Filipinos react to Baybayin as national writing system. *Rappler*, (2018). Accessed on December 4, 2018 from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/201104-baybayin-national-writing-system-reactions>.

6.3 Advocacy through Arts and Other Commercial Products

There have been many efforts to revitalize the Baybayin writing system through arts and other commercial products as it can be seen adorning the skins of Filipino celebrities like Brando Vera (see figure 6.6) to the National Costume backdrop of Miss Universe 2018, Catriona Gray (see figure 6.7), and to various walls around the Philippines like that of the works of FlipOne. Among the most elaborate of such artworks are the intricate pieces of Taipan Lucero, a graphic designer, and artist advocating the Baybayin writing system and Filipino Cultural Heritage through his calligraphy art known as *CalligraFilipino*.

Inspired by Japanese calligraphy while working in Japan as a graphic designer, Taipan decided to come back home to hone his knowledge of the Baybayin and continue to cultivate his skills in graphic designs by using Baybayin in

Figure 6.7 The Baybayin script adorns the border behind the backdrop of 2018's Miss Universe winner, Catriona Gray.



Figure 6.7 The Baybayin script adorns the border behind the backdrop of Catriona Gray's National Costume in the 2018 Miss Universe pageant.

Figure 6.6 Baybayin tattoo of Filipino mix martial artist, Brandon Vera.

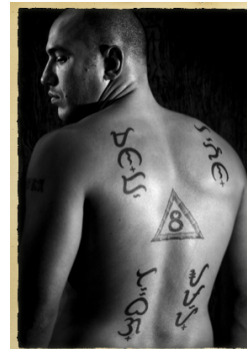


Figure 6.6 Baybayin Tattoo of Filipino mix martial artist, Brandon Vera.

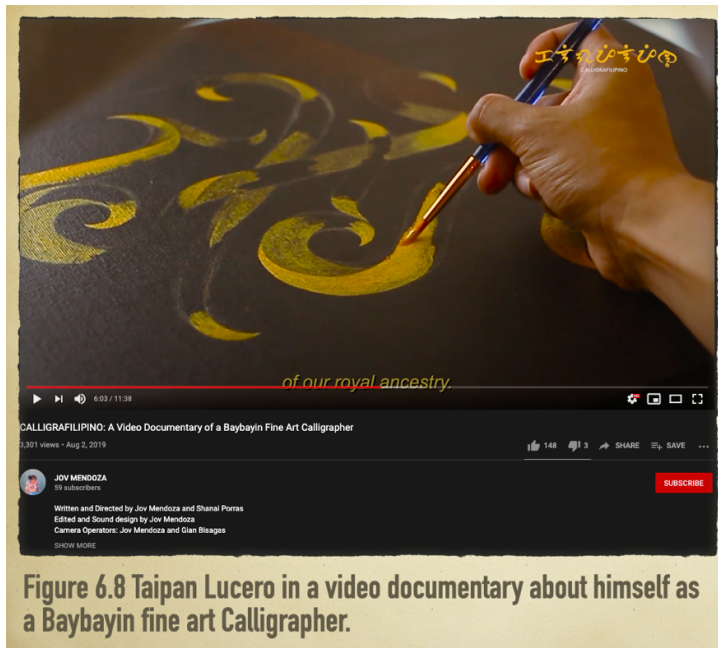
his calligraphy and promoting the awareness and advocacy of the Filipino heritage. His *CalligraFilipino* has such eye-catching designs that not only captivate the visual senses but even satisfy the thirst or taste of many Filipinos who longs for a

wonderful and intricate representation of their Filipino culture and great ancestral

heritage.

Figure 6.9 Taipan Lucero in a video documentary.

There are also a growing number of companies using Baybayin writing in their products. Many known commercial products that promote Baybayin as early as ~2010 are from the U.S., mostly from California, such as;



Bayani Art²⁵⁰, Baybayin Wear²⁵¹, Shop Kabuay²⁵², etc. Now, Baybayin writing seems to have become a fad for many Filipinos in the Philippines.

Similar to how the writing system-generated immense interest among many Filipino-Americans around a decade ago in California, as noted by Susanah Mendoza²⁵³, artistic works using the Baybayin writings system like that of FlipOne Santiago and Taipan Lucero also captures the imagination of many Filipinos as it also continues to build momentum in mainstream media in the Philippines.

²⁵⁰ "Bayani Art." Accessed on 23 October. 2020, <https://www.bayaniart.com/>.

²⁵¹ "Baybayin Wear." Accessed on 23 October. 2020, <https://baybayinwear.com/>.

²⁵² "Shop Kabuay." Accessed on 23 October. 2020, <https://www.shop.kabuay.com/collections/clothing>.

²⁵³ Mendoza, "Between the Homeland and the Diaspora," 126-127.

6.4 Advocacy through the Academy

Though there is an increasing number of printed and online publications regarding the Baybayin writing system, there seems to be a very limited number of scholarly works about it as far as researchers abroad are concerned. Books by Juan Francisco (1971), William Henry Scott (1984, 1994), Vicente Rafael (1988), Damon Woods (1992), and Pedro Andres de Castro (2014) are among the most prominent and openly available and easily accessible materials that discuss the Baybayin writing system intensively. A couple of research studies available like that of Antoon Postma and Rolando Borrinaga dwells mainly on the study of archaeological artifacts like the Laguna Copperplate and the Calatagan Pot. In this age of information technology, and mainly what we will be discussing in this section, we will look at other modern efforts to educate those in the academe of the ancient Baybayin, which includes; online presentations, interviews with scholars, and alike, and Baybayin courses. Among those who have been promoting the Baybayin writing system in the academe are the likes of the Baybayin Buhayin (see Chapter 6.1) and KULTURA²⁵⁴.

²⁵⁴ "KULTURA." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/kultura101>.

KULTURA, formerly known as Baybayin Primer, is a Facebook page created in 2011 and has gathered more than 17k followers as of October 28, 2020. The group promotes Baybayin by educating teachers through live online lectures, interviews with scholars, and offering an online Baybayin 101 course. Around the mid-year of 2020,

Figure 6.9 KULTURA's first Baybayin 101 course online.

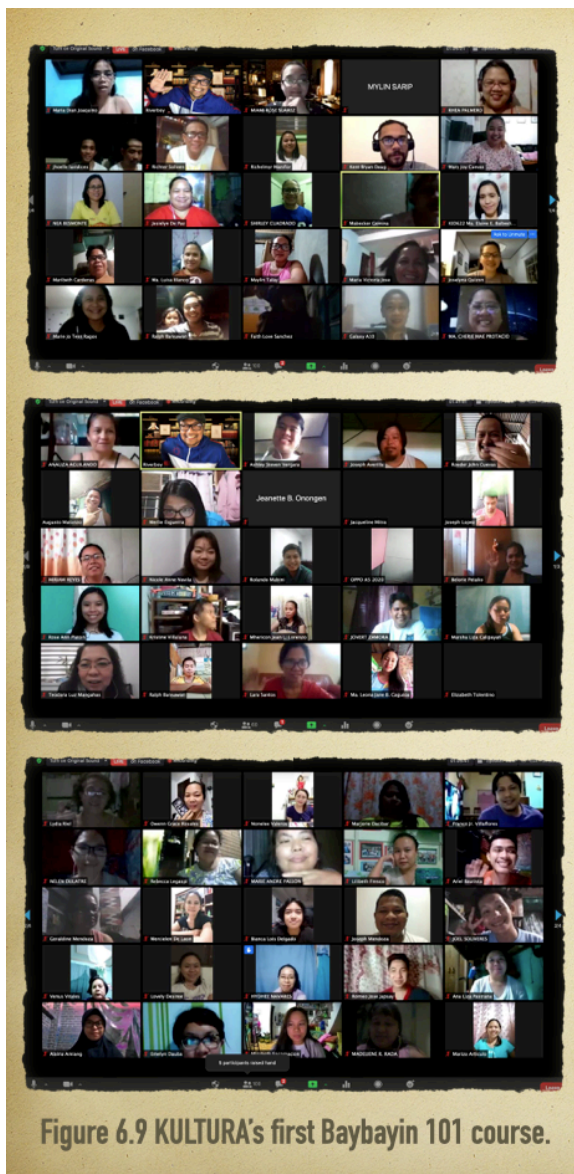


Figure 6.9 KULTURA's first Baybayin 101 course.

there was a surge of interest in online learning—mainly attributed to the lockdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic—prompting the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines to require educators to attend webinars and online lectures. Because of this, KULTURA created online lectures, seminars, and activities on culture and the Baybayin writing system, which eventually led the group to create a course that comprises lectures on the Baybayin writing system. There were roughly more than 1,700 teachers all over the Philippines that participated in the activities of KULTURA in a span of three months. Also, KULTURA

hosted live interviews with various scholars and advocates of the Baybayin writing system, such as; 1) Jay Enage, 2) Kristian Kabuay, 3) Taipan Lucero, 4) Leo Emmanuel Castro, 5) Christopher Miller, and 6) Dr. Rolando Borrinaga.

Chapter 7

Research Method

I have used qualitative research in this study based on a phenomenological research method. With the aim of this research to look into how the Baybayin script plays a role in the cultural identity and socio-psychological well-being of the groups of people who still use the writing system, it was imperative to carefully choose the appropriate population for this study. So, initially, I planned to have two focus groups: Group 1 will include the Mangyan tribes who still use the ancient Filipino writing system; Group 2 will consist of advocates, artists, and scholars who still use the ancient Filipino writing system in their work—one way or another. In exploring the cultural identity clarity—in turn promoting socio-psychological well-being—of the Mangyan tribes, I planned to conduct an ethnographic study—using a hermeneutic phenomenological framework—of the people in or from the said tribes by interpreting the participants' interests and lifestyles through direct observation). But due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I had to modify my research and settle with just having Group 2. In interpreting the efficacy of the revitalization of the Baybayin in giving cultural identity clarity—in turn promoting sociopsychological well-being—among the diaspora of scholars, advocates, and artists, I used a transcendental phenomenological framework²⁵⁵ through a series of interviews with the participants to understand their experiences in revitalizing Baybayin and the role of

²⁵⁵ K. Eddles-Hirsch, "Phenomenology and Educational Research," *International Journal of Advanced Research* 3 (2015): 251-260.

such in understanding the part of the Baybayin writing system in the sociopsychological well-being of Filipinos.

For group 2, I collected my data through a series of interviews with scholars, advocates, and artists who are helping promote the revitalization of the Baybayin language in their respective way. With the transcendental phenomenological framework, I used a process called "bracketing" or "*epoche*" where I withheld my own judgments, biases, or preconceived interpretations to give a greater focus on the participants' experience, and this was done by making sure I held by my reactions and gestures during the interview process. Recruitment of the participants depended on their in-depth lived experience in the promotion of the Baybayin language. I collected separate data for the recruitment of participants according to my knowledge of them and their work. I limited my interview questions to a few open-ended questions regarding their experience in the promotion of the Baybayin language. Example of my questions included: "Tell us what you know about the cultural identity of Filipinos." and followed-up with, "What are their experiences?", "What are they strong in?" "What do they struggle with?"—delving into their interconnectedness to the Baybayin language itself, by further asking, "How does the ancient writing play a role in the cultural identity of the Filipinos?" After gathering all my transcribed data from the interviews, it was analyzed and processed through horizontalization where certain statements were lifted out of the transcript and recorded on a separate piece of paper—where they are organized in tables (appendices). I have chosen significant statements to form textual and structural analysis. In the textual analysis, I have studied the data to describe *what* the participants experienced. In the

structural analysis, I've analyzed the data to explain *how* the participants expressed their experiences.

7.1 Research Limitations

The major limitation to my research was due to the Covid-19 pandemic—preventing me from doing my ethnological fieldwork with the Mangyan tribe in Mindoro, Philippines—limiting my attempt to make a multimethod approach to my research. Another limitation was the lack of prior research about the Baybayin writing system or the Baybayin. Not only is there a scant resource on the Baybayin writing system, but there is a lack of research materials on written language globally. Researching the topic was also tricky in as far as the terms used by researchers. As mentioned in an article written by Cook et al. (2009), there seem to be differing interpretations of the words "writing system," "script," and "orthography"—giving them different meanings on their work.²⁵⁶ For this reason, it becomes time-consuming to go through research materials only to find out that their study is referring to another topic other than the implementation of a language in written symbols.

Regarding the limitations on both phenomenology methods, it has also been troublesome to filter out my biases or preconceived interpretations of the researcher, as the researcher—my self—as the Founder and Executive Director of KULTURA (see Chapter 6.4), being among the advocates in the promotion of the Baybayin language. Recruiting participants also became a problem as it required the IRB to review my proposal before its initiation. Because the process took longer than I was hoping for and

²⁵⁶ V. Cook, J. Vaid, and B. Bassetti, "Writing Systems Research: A New Journal for a Developing Field," *Writing Systems Research* 1, no. 1 (2009): 1-3.

the lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic came almost the same time as the IRB approval, I ended up having to modify my research method. On top of that, it was also tricky getting access to the participants due to their condition as an indigenous and protected population.

Another limitation that I noticed towards the end of my research was how I was interpreting the materials as a Filipino-American researcher—born in the Philippines but raised most of my life abroad—therefore are looking at those materials through my own lenses and comparing them with a limited amount of resource materials on the topic. The language also became a problem as the majority of the available resources were written in Spanish and some Filipinos.

Chapter 8: Findings, Discussion, and Conclusion

8.1 About the Participants

In this part of the chapter, we will introduce the participants to you and their role in language revitalization. The participants include advocates, artists, and scholars who were selected due to their shared interest in promoting the ancient writing systems. Most of them founded their groups or organizations to promote ancient writing. At the same time, the rests are scholars and enthusiasts who played a vital role in promoting and revitalizing the ancient Filipino writing system. Nevertheless, all the participants share a common interest in promoting the writing system and play a vital role through their various efforts such as; online and social media, politics (government), arts & other commercial products, and the academe. The order of the introduction of the participants is in accordance with the date they were interviewed.

8.1.1 Tim Brookes²⁵⁷, originally from the UK and now currently living in Vermont, USA, is the Founder and Executive Director of the Endangered Alphabet Project whose mission is to preserve endangered cultures through artwork educational materials using their endangered alphabets. He has met and worked with various individuals and groups—advocating for multiple writing systems—through his active promotion of various endangered alphabets online²⁵⁸ and wood carvings²⁵⁹. In his

²⁵⁷ "Tim Brookes." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/tim.brookes.92>.

²⁵⁸ "Endangered Alphabets." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/Endangered-Alphabets-166589506713085>.

²⁵⁹ "Endangered Alphabets' Albums: Timeline Photos." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?vanity=166589506713085>.

interview, though he has stated that his part in language revitalization is nil or nothing, he mentioned that one part is making people in the privileged world aware that other people exist. He hopes that doing so--in a respectful way--arouses curiosity and interest.²⁶⁰

8.1.2 Jay Enage²⁶¹ is currently the most prominent Filipino advocate of the Baybayin writing system in the Philippines for more than ten years. He is the founder of the group Baybayin Buhayin Incorporated²⁶², formerly known as Taklobo Baybayin. His significant works include; sponsoring Baybayin festivals and seminars in the Philippines and abroad and being the proponent of the Baybayin Bill in the Philippine Congress and Senate.

8.1.3 Taipan Lucero²⁶³ is a Filipino calligraphy artist who is a graduate of Fine Arts at the University of the Philippines. He is the founder of *CalligraFilipino*²⁶⁴ art, which serves as his advocacy in celebrating the ancient Filipino writing system. Among his biggest contribution so far includes; an exhibit for the National Commission for Culture and Arts, a mural for ABS-CBN (former TV Station in the Philippines), a mural for SM North Edsa (among the major mall chains in the Philippines), and many more.

²⁶⁰ See Appendix A, Brookes Interview, Timestamp 1:19:22.

²⁶¹ "Jay Enage." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/jay.enage>.

²⁶² Baybayin Buhayin. Facebook Page. Accessed on November 11, 2020 at <https://www.facebook.com/baybayinbuhayin>.

²⁶³ "Taipan Lucero." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/ian.lucero.9>.

²⁶⁴ "Taipan Lucero: CalligraFilipino Baybayin Calligraphy: Manila, Philippines." [taipanlucero](http://taipanlucero.com). Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.taipanlucero.com/home>.

8.1.4 FlipOne Santiago²⁶⁵ is a Filipino graffiti artist who incorporates the Baybayin writing system in his art style. He runs a creative and design studio in the Philippines. It has taken him ten years to develop his graffiti style using the Baybayin writing system. He goes to various countries²⁶⁶ and uses his style on his graffiti pieces, promoting the ancient Filipino writing system.

8.1.5 Leo Emmanuel Castro is a Filipino writer, freelance researcher, teacher, and an advocate of culture who founded *Sanghabi*²⁶⁷ and is currently serving as its Executive Director. He has held lectures and workshops on Baybayin and various Filipino arts and cultures. His major work on the Baybayin includes *Baybayin, Ating Tuklasin*²⁶⁸—a guidebook and an activity book on the Baybayin writing system.

8.1.6 Christopher Ray Miller²⁶⁹ is a Canadian scholar who is currently the consultant for the Mangyan Heritage Center in the Philippines. He finished his BA and MA at the University of Ottawa in Canada. He has studied linguistics and has taught language and linguistics in several universities in North America and France. His major

²⁶⁵ "Jayo Flipone Santiago." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/flip1sba>.

²⁶⁶ "Jayo Flipone Santiago - Photo Album (Public)." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. https://www.facebook.com/flip1sba/photos_albums.

²⁶⁷ "Sanghabi." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/Sanghabi-342221059172855>.

²⁶⁸ "Baybayin, Ating Tuklasin." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/commerce/products/2559998224103456/?rt=9>.

²⁶⁹ "Christopher Ray Miller." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/christopherraymiller>.

work on Baybayin includes two published articles that include theories of the origin of the Baybayin writing system and was mentioned in this paper.^{270 271}

8.1.7 Kristian Kabuay²⁷² is a Filipino-American artist who founded Baybayin.com²⁷³—among the oldest website/blog on the Baybayin writing system—making him among the most active and prominent advocate of Baybayin online for more than a decade. He has also published books on Baybayin. Among his major contribution to Baybayin includes; being the first to demonstrate the Baybayin writing system at the Asian Art Museum in 2014 and having done a European tour in 2016—visiting Philippine embassies in Europe.

8.1.8 Dr. Rolando Borrinaga²⁷⁴ is a Filipino scholar and a Full Professor at the School of Health Sciences at the University of the Philippines Manila in Leyte. He has published several historical books and published numerous research papers. Among his major contribution to Baybayin is his book *Surat Binisaya* where he talked about his decipherment of the ancient Bisayan writing (a variation of Baybayin) in the Calatagan pot as mentioned in this paper.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁰ C. Miller, "A Gujarati Origin for Scripts of Sumatra, Sulawesi and the Philippines." *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society* 36, no. 1 (2010): 276.

²⁷¹ C. Miller, "Devanagari's Descendants in North and South India, Indonesia and the Philippines," *Writing Systems Research* 6, no. 1 (2014): 10-24.

²⁷² "Kristian Kabuay." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/kkabuay>.

²⁷³ "Kristian Kabuay." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/kkabuay>.

²⁷⁴ "Rolando Borrinaga." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/rolando.borrinaga>.

²⁷⁵ "Rolando Borrinaga." Google Scholar Profile. Accessed on November 12, 2020 at <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=rHLhY2QAAAAJ&hl=en>.

8.1.9 Norman De Los Santos²⁷⁶ is a Filipino-American graphic designer for *Bathala Project*. He has mentioned that he has written a couple of papers that he has personally presented at Tokyo University and Academia Sinica in Taiwan. Among his major contributions in Baybayin includes his creation of several Baybayin fonts since the early 2000s.

8.1.10 Dr. Bonifacio Comandante Jr.²⁷⁷ is a Filipino scholar and a retired Senior Lecturer at the University of the Philippines, Los Baños. He is an award-winning Marine Biologist and among the Directors of Baybayin Buhayin Incorporated. Among his major contributions to Baybayin is his published books on the Baybayin writing system and his theory on the origin of the Baybayin writing system.

8.2 Approach in Organizing, Analyzing, and Synthesizing the Data Transcriptions of the Interviews.

Though the complete data transcriptions of the interviews are attached at the last pages of this research paper, the complete transcription of this study was reduced in order to efficiently do the horizontalization of the collected data. The results of the phenomenological reduction process or horizontalization have been organized in the appendices of this paper to create proper citation materials on the participants' statements. Upon organizing the appendices, data were analyzed to form core themes for each of the participants' statements during the interview. The core themes were then clustered to create the table below.

²⁷⁶ "Norman De Los Santos." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/Nordenx>.

²⁷⁷ "Boni Comandante." Facebook. Accessed November 19, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/boni.comandante>.

Table 8.1 Core Themes from the Participants' Statements on the Role of a Written Language in the Cultural Identity, Social Well-Being, and Psychological Well-Being of Filipinos.

Legend: CI = Cultural Identity. SWB = Social Well-Being. PWB = Psychological Well-Being		
CULTURAL IDENTITY	SOCIAL WELL-BEING	PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING
<p>-----Cultural Identity----- ----- Brookes 34:30 CI SWB Connection with Culture -- It is deep and multifaceted. A substantial minority of the people in that culture feel deeply connected to their writing even if they can't read it (referring to the Amazigh Flag). Enage 48:27, 1:24:25 CI SWB PWB Promotion for Nationalism – By using the writing system, they will embrace they're being Filipino. When we use our script, it affects our nationalism, identity, and love for our country. Miller 48:48 CI SWB National Identity – It could give it a little more of a National Identity or national cohesion, perhaps. Miller 36:11 CI SWB PWB Visual Identity – that says "Filipino" and nothing else. Miller 36:11 CI Cultural Identity– That's why people find it like a <u>symbol of Filipino culture</u> that resonates. This has visual impact. 1:01:52 Writing system plays a role mostly at a cultural level. Comandante 9:52 CI Cultural Identity – Identify ourselves as Filipinos. 16:10 Created by our ancestors...in caves. They already have writing. Uniquely Filipino without any trace of relationship with other nations. Kabuay 14:44 CI Key Identifier & Cultural Asset – Writing system is definitely tied to our identity. It has a direct correlation to culture.</p>	<p>--Unity in the Identity and Healing- Enage 53:45 SWB Pride & Identity of Community – They will have a sense of pride or identity in the Filipino Community. Castro 1:52:50 SWB Unifying Factor – for a group/community. Miller 53:10 CI SWB PWB Unifying Factor – It might at some point help to give people more of a sense of united identity for people who don't. Enage 54:33, 57:25 SWB PWB Unifying Factor for the community and for the nation. Belongingness FlipOne 28:21 SWB Sense of Belongingness – It gives us the sense of belonging. Brookes 41:59 SWB PWB Belongingness – A demonstration of belongingness is in itself compelling. Commandante 24:38 SWB Creates Relationships – It will create a closer relationship among Filipinos... through teaching. Enage 1:16:12 SWB Community Validation – We bring back the writing, which is visible, then I believe the people, youth, next generation will appreciate it. "Oh! we have our own!" Brookes 34:30 CI SWB Connection with Culture -- It is deep and multifaceted. A substantial minority of the people in that culture feel deeply connected to their writing even if they can't read it (referring to the Amazigh Flag). Kabuay 21:50 SWB Social Connection – most of my close friends that I have now that I've gained for the past 10+ years is because of our shared interest of this writing. The social aspect is important, and it is easier to attain compared to the cultural and economic value of the ancient writing. We need to put more stress on the social values [of the writing system]. Taipan 48:44 SWB PWB Pride – As of now, it is an emerging topic for connection for the social well-being of Filipinos. It contributes to social well-being because it is something to be proud of and can be an anchor for our pride. Borrinaga 31:50 SWB A Proof of Commonality – almost everybody knew how to read and write.</p>	<p>-----Colonial Mentality, Culture of Envy, Visual Reinforcement, & Psychological Healing----- ----- FlipOne 45:18 SWB PWB Role to show Colonial Mentality – using a foreign writing system, is a colonial mentality in itself. Brookes 58:30, 1:07:50 CI SWB PWB Culture of Envy or Shame – Kids growing up in culture of envy (referring to Cherokees being influenced by mass media). Brookes 52:12, CI SWB PWB Cultural Health -- Writing as a factor of overall sense of robust cultural health—affecting education, physical health, mental health. 46:16 When people start losing their language and other traditional activities, bad things happen... 54:44 Writing used as a mental [psychological] health measure. Brookes 1:05:38, 1:07:50 CI SWB PWB Visual Reinforcement [of cultural identity, social and psychological pride]. Enage 1:16:12 CI SWB PWB Visual Reinforcement – We bring back the writing, which is visible, then I believe people, the youth, the next generation will appreciate it. "Oh! We have our own!" De los Santos 58:21 SWB PWB Social to Psychological Upliftment – Socially, it is one of my goal to make the writing technologically available so that we can communicate with it. It is beautiful and uplifting to</p>

<p>Castro 48:00 CI Language dictates identity.</p> <p>De los Santos 1:42:45 CI Visual Reinforcement – It’s a direct form of identifying a culture.</p> <p>Brookes 1:05:38, 1:07:50 CI SWB PWB Visual Reinforcement [of cultural identity, social and psychological pride].</p> <p>Enage 1:16:12 CI SWB PWB Visual Reinforcement – We bring back the writing, which is visible, then I believe people, the youth, the next generation will appreciate it. "Oh! We have our own!"</p> <p>-----Cultural Pride-----</p> <p>---</p> <p>Enage 48:27, 1:24:25 CI SWB PWB Promotion for Nationalism – By using the writing system, they will embrace they’re being Filipino. When we use our script, it affects our nationalism, identity, and love for our country.</p> <p>Castro 1:48:16 CI SWB PWB Shows Pride – we can be proud as Filipinos. Pride in the right place. Achievement of our ancestors.</p> <p>Miller 1:03:44 CI SWB PWB Cultural Pride – knowledge that your cultural roots are more sophisticated than you might’ve thought.</p> <p>De los Santos 58:21 CI SWB PWB Pride, Identity, & Economy – It becomes an image that instills pride and identity and economy.</p> <p>De los Santos 48:21 CI Cultural Pride – It makes me proud that we have our own culture and ancient knowledge and it is unique to us...like our writing.</p> <p>Miller 48:48 CI SWB National Identity – It could give it a little more of a National Identity or national cohesion, perhaps.</p> <p>Kabuay 19:49 CI SWB PWB [Misplaced Patriotism] – In the Philippines, the fondness of the script is more on the</p>	<p>Borrinaga 31:50 SWB PWB Proof of General Literacy – There was general literacy.</p> <p>Kabuay 20:36 SWB Sociological Healing – So, from a social aspect, I think there’s some healing. It’s a connection [to culture] for those who are not married to a Filipino [a sense of socio-cultural longing because of being immigrant.]</p> <p>De los Santos 58:21 SWB PWB Social Upliftment – Socially, it is one of my goal to make the writing technologically available so that we can communicate with it. It is beautiful and uplifting to communicate with our own writing system.</p> <p>Brookes 52:12, CI SWB PWB Cultural Health -- Writing as a factor of overall sense of robust cultural health—affecting education, physical health, mental health.</p> <p>46:16 When people start losing their language and other traditional activities, bad things happen... 54:44 Writing used as a mental [psychological] health measure.</p> <p>-----Validation as Civilization-----</p> <p>Enage 20:10 CI SWB Validation for an existing civilization – When the colonizers came, we already have our civilization. We already have our writing system. We already have our <i>barangays</i>. If a country has a writing system, it is a civilized country.</p> <p>Taipan 43:45 CI SWB Validation for an existing civilization – With our ancient writing, we can show that our ancestors were civilized, and we have a thriving culture even before the colonizers came.</p> <p>Brookes 1:05:38, 1:07:50 CI SWB PWB Visual Reinforcement [of cultural identity, social and psychological pride].</p> <p>Miller 1:01:52 CI SWB PWB Validation of an Ancient Civilization – "We weren’t just savages running around in loincloths cutting off each other’s heads. Your roots are something better than what people have thought they were at that time.</p> <p>Enage 1:16:12 CI SWB PWB Visual Reinforcement – We bring back the writing, which is visible, then I believe people, the youth, the next generation will appreciate it. "Oh! We have our own!"</p> <p>-----Pride-----Enage 48:27, 1:24:25 CI SWB PWB Promotion for Nationalism – By using the writing system, they will embrace they’re being Filipino. When we use our script, it affects our nationalism, identity, and love for our country.</p> <p>Taipan 48:44 SWB PWB Pride – As of now, it is an emerging topic for connection for the social well-being of Filipinos. It contributes to social well-being because it is something to be proud of and can be an anchor for our pride.</p>	<p>communicate with our own writing system.</p> <p>De los Santos 1:32:22 PWB Tool for Emotional Expression – If it is used in a context of beautiful artwork like calligraphy, you feel classy. If you put it in a masculine type of painting, it gives you a sense of toughness. If it is used on music video, it elevates your sense of awareness through arts. If it is form of Ambahan, it is very intellectual or romantic. It gives you the different emotions and connects with you in different ways. Arabic gives you the sense of religiousness and it is very spiritually uplifting.</p> <p>Enage 1:16:40 PWB Writing as a tool change the mindset of Filipinos [Psychological Healing] ...1:24:25 to end colonial mentality</p> <p>Taipan 1:00:26 PWB (Psychological healing) – a tool to fight colonial mentality.</p> <p>Kabuay 19:49 PWB Psychological Healing – I’ve had people cry because of the doors that just learning the script has opened.</p> <p>Borrinaga 40:37 PWB Psychological Healing-- If done in a larger scale, it can have a psychological impact. 41:29 It always leads back to our beginnings.</p> <p>-----Pride-----</p> <p>---</p> <p>Taipan 48:44 SWB PWB Pride – As of now, it is an emerging topic for connection for the social well-being of Filipinos. It contributes to social well-being because it is something to be proud of and can be an anchor for our pride.</p> <p>FlipOne 45:18 PWB Pride – Baybayin gives you the pride to appreciate our language</p> <p>Castro 1:48:16 CI SWB PWB Shows Pride – we can be proud as Filipinos. Pride in the right place. Achievement of our ancestors.</p>
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<p>cosmetic side but in the US [referring to the Fil-Ams] is deeper because there's a hole in their lives. -----Validation as Civilization-- --- Enage 20:10 CI SWB Validation for an existing civilization – When the colonizers came, we already have our civilization. We already have our writing system. We already have our <i>barangays</i>. If a country has a writing system, it is a civilized country. Taipan 43:45 CI SWB Validation for an existing civilization – With our ancient writing, we can show that our ancestors were civilized, and we have a thriving culture even before the colonizers came. Miller 1:01:52 CI SWB PWB Validation of an Ancient Civilization – "We weren't just savages running around in loincloths cutting off each other's heads. Your roots are something better than what people have thought they were at that time. -----Health, Art, & Religion--- ---- Brookes 52:12, CI SWB PWB Cultural Health -- Writing as a factor of overall sense of robust cultural health—affecting education, physical health, mental health. 46:16 When people start losing their language and other traditional activities, bad things happen... 54:44 Writing used as a mental [psychological] health measure. FlipOne 35:35 CI SWB Cultural promotion – for fellow Filipinos and others to know – through arts/creativity through graffiti. Kabauy 12:37 CI Value on the Discourse – The value is not in the tangible artwork but in the conversation. Borrinaga 24:10 CI for Religious Practices – Different</p>	<p>Enage 53:45 SWB Pride & Identity of Community – They will have a sense of pride or identity in the Filipino Community. Castro 1:48:16 CI SWB PWB Shows Pride – we can be proud as Filipinos. Pride in the right place. Achievement of our ancestors. Miller 1:03:44 CI SWB PWB Cultural Pride – knowledge that your cultural roots are more sophisticated than you might've thought. De los Santos 58:21 SWB PWB Pride – something unique to ourselves. Uplifts the Manyan spirit. De los Santos 58:21 CI SWB PWB Pride, Identity, & Economy – It becomes an image that instills pride and identity and economy. Kabauy 19:49 CI SWB PWB [Misplaced Patriotism] – In the Philippines, the fondness of the script is more on the cosmetic side but in the US [referring to the Fil-Ams] is deeper because there's a hole in their lives. -----Art & Cultural Tourism----- De los Santos 1:32:22 SWB PWB Tool for Social Influence – If it is used in a context of beautiful artwork like calligraphy, you feel classy. If you put it in a masculine type of painting, it gives you a sense of toughness. If it is used on music video, it elevates your sense of awareness through arts. If it is form of Ambahan, it is very intellectual or romantic. It gives you the different emotions and connects with you in different ways. Arabic gives you the sense of religiousness and it is very spiritually uplifting. De los Santos 1:32:22 PWB Tool for Emotional Expression – If it is used in a context of beautiful artwork like calligraphy, you feel classy. If you put it in a masculine type of painting, it gives you a sense of toughness. If it is used on music video, it elevates your sense of awareness through arts. If it is form of Ambahan, it is very intellectual or romantic. It gives you the different emotions and connects with you in different ways. Arabic gives you the sense of religiousness and it is very spiritually uplifting. Comandante 23:23 SWB Amazement from foreigners. 33:40 Foreigners were amazed with the Filipino wrote in Baybayin. FlipOne 35:35 CI SWB Cultural promotion – for fellow Filipinos and others to know – through arts/creativity through graffiti. Brookes 1:05:38 SWB Cultural Tourism -- In downtown Oklahoma, about 12 years ago, the mayor (whom I interviewed) and the city council put up street signs in English and Cherokee script. I asked, why did you do this? He talked to me about cultural tourism.</p>	<p>Miller 1:03:44 CI SWB PWB Self-Pride – knowledge that your cultural roots are more sophisticated than you might've thought. De los Santos 58:21 SWB PWB Pride –something unique to ourselves. Uplifts the Mangyan spirit. De los Santos 58:21 CI SWB PWB Pride, Identity, & Economy – It becomes an image that instills pride and identity and economy. -----Unity & Belongingness--- --- Miller 53:10 CI SWB PWB Unifying Factor – It might at some point help to give people more of a sense of united identity for people who doint. Enage 48:27, 1:24:25 CI SWB PWB Promotion for Nationalism – By using the writing system, they will embrace they're being Filipino. When we use our script, it affects our nationalism, identity, and love for our country. Brookes 41:59 SWB PWB Belongingness – A demonstration of belongingness is in itself compelling. -----Other----- --- De los Santos 1:08:16 SWB PWB Self-Redemption – It gave me a chance to give back [by giving them the fonts I created]. It is my way to redeem myself for being away for 10 years in the Philippines. Miller 1:01:52 CI SWB PWB Validation of an Ancient Civilization – "We weren't just savages running around in loincloths cutting off each other's heads. Your roots are something better than what people have thought they were at that time.</p>
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<p>pots have different scripts which, I suppose, the Babaylans uses as an outline for their rites and expands on.</p> <p>-----Representation----- ----- Enage 29:55 CI Writing as representation of language. FlipOne 28:21 CI (Representation) Simplifies our spoken language. -----Innovation & Influence-- -- Castro 1:01:30 CI Cultural Innovation -- Shows our own innovation on writing. Comandante 16:10 CI Cultural influence – We were the ones that influence our neighboring nations instead of them influencing us. -----Others----- - Kabuay 12:37 CI [Emerging] No Role, yet... -- It doesn't have a role and that's the problem Kabuay 12:37 CI Entry point to other cultural practices – it's about exploring identity using the script as an entry point—as a gateway—to other cultural practices. 14:30 Entry point to something much deeper.</p>	<p>De los Santos 58:21 SWB Cultural Tourism – It sells us an image for tourism. 1:15:15 Most I've seen was its commercial use.</p> <p>-----Recording----- Brookes 29:19, 45:40 SWB Document/Record/Legal Force -- Writing (Documents/Legal Records/Records) as a legal force like losing your land and various legal rights. 50:18 Abnaki became a refugee in their land... Enage 37:40 SWB Document/Record/Evidence – If a nation uses its writing, they have history, records, documents, and evidence. -----Emerging-----Miller 48:48 SWB [Emerging] No role, yet... Commandante 23:23 SWB [Emerging] No role, yet... - I think the tipping point is 10%. When we reach 10%, no one can stop it. Taipan 48:44 SWB [Emerging] Writing has no role, yet...--it is an emerging topic for connection for the social well-being of Filipinos. The clamor and love for it are just emerging. It's an emerging rally to show the world that we have our writing system and we are civilized before.</p> <p>-----Other things it shows----- FlipOne 45:18 SWB PWB Role to show Colonial Mentality – using a foreign writing system, is a colonial mentality in itself. Castro 1:35:55 SWB Shows Progressiveness – like the Japanese that wins Nobel prize in chemistry and physics despite the fact they use their own writing in learning. -----Others----- De los Santos 1:08:16 SWB PWB Self-Redemption – It gave me a chance to give back [by giving them the fonts I created]. It is my way to redeem myself for being away for 10 years in the Philippines. De los Santos 1:15:15 SWB Quick Communication – The Mangyans were using it for little slips of letters here and there. Kids passing notes to each other. Messages on bamboo seats. Brookes 58:30, 1:07:50 CI SWB PWB Culture of Envy or Shame – Kids growing up in culture of envy (referring to Cherokees being influenced by mass media).</p>	
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8.3 Research Findings

8.3.1 On Cultural Identity, Social Well-Being, and Psychological Well-Being.

Before going straight to the research question on how the Baybayin plays a role in the

cultural identity, social well-being, and psychological wellbeing of the groups of people who still use the writing system, participants were prompted with a statement regarding their understanding of cultural identity, social well-being, and psychological well-being of Filipinos. The purpose of this prompt was to stimulate a better understanding of a certain topic prior to asking the more relevant question regarding the role of the written language on the said topic. Below are the following generalized summaries of the participants' answers to the prompted statements.

8.3.1.1 Tell us what you know about the cultural identity of the Filipinos. A majority of the participants took note of the regionalistic characteristic of the Filipino culture.²⁷⁸ Varying statements from the participants noted that; 1) many of the ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines prefer their mother tongue,²⁷⁹ 2) regionalism was due to politics,²⁸⁰ 3) Filipinos tend to be proud of their region or their hometown,²⁸¹ this is among the biggest struggles of Filipinos,²⁸² and such regionalistic mind of the Filipinos will destroy the Filipinos.²⁸³ Participants also took note of the existing colonial mentality among many Filipinos.²⁸⁴ Other notable statements include the idea that

²⁷⁸ See Appendix B (54:33), Appendix D (25:43), Appendix E (1:06:20), Appendix I (37:49), Appendix J (10:58).

²⁷⁹ See Appendix J (10:58)

²⁸⁰ See Appendix E (1:06:20).

²⁸¹ See Appendix I (53:28)

²⁸² See Appendix D (25:43)

²⁸³ See Appendix B (54:33)

²⁸⁴ See Appendix D (39:51), Appendix G (25:05), Appendix H (36:20).

Filipinos have mixed culture,²⁸⁵ a culture of envy,²⁸⁶ cultural differences,²⁸⁷ or diversity²⁸⁸ among Filipinos themselves, especially those in the Philippines and those who live or grew up abroad.

8.3.1.2 Tell us what you know about the social life of the majority of Filipinos. Many of the participants noted the great influence of mass media on the social well-being of the Filipinos²⁸⁹ though such observation is also noted to be relevant to other nations²⁹⁰. Participants also noted that Filipinos tend to have this idea of supremacy where others are more superior²⁹¹ and that Filipinos easily assimilate themselves to other cultures²⁹² though there are also those who socially long to find their culture, especially for those who are living abroad²⁹³.

8.3.1.3 Tell us what you know about the psychological well-being of the majority of Filipinos. Almost all of the participants took note of the prevalence of inferiority complex among Filipinos.²⁹⁴ This finding supports the so-called inferiority complex that Alex Tizon was going through, as declared in his book and autobiography.

²⁸⁵ See Appendix F (29:24), Appendix G (17:50).

²⁸⁶ See Appendix B (59:45), Appendix E (1:25:23).

²⁸⁷ See Appendix b (1:06:43), Appendix I (43:23).

²⁸⁸ See Appendix D (22:40)

²⁸⁹ See Appendix C (53:02), Appendix F (34:30), Appendix J (27:27).

²⁹⁰ See Appendix A (58:30).

²⁹¹ See Appendix B (59:45), Appendix E (1:04:52), Appendix G (14:19).

²⁹² See Appendix C (45:23), Appendix D (31:21).

²⁹³ See Appendix B (54:33), Appendix G (19:18).

²⁹⁴ See Appendix B (59:45), Appendix C (53:02), Appendix D (39:51), Appendix C (1:25:23), Appendix F (58:02), Appendix G (25:05), Appendix H (36:20), Appendix I (1:22:27).

Various statements from the participants noted that; 1) Filipinos are still suffering from colonial mentality²⁹⁵, 2) Filipinos have this preference of fashion from London, Europe, Paris, and the US,²⁹⁶ 3) the lack of progress gives Filipinos the feeling that there's something wrong with the culture,²⁹⁷ 4) Filipinos have what seems to be a misplaced pride or patriotism,²⁹⁸ 5) and this idea that others are inherently more supreme than themselves.²⁹⁹

8.3.2 On the Role of Baybayin. This section of our paper answers our research question: How does the Baybayin (Baybayin) play a role in the cultural identity, social well-being, and psychological well-being of the Filipinos? Answers from the participants were transcribed and reduced through horizontalization and were organized into three categories, as seen in Table 1. The various core themes were extracted and categorized from the data gathered during the interview of the participants.

8.3.2.1 The role of a writing system in cultural identity. Research findings suggest that the Baybayin provides a national visual identity or symbol to the Filipino people.³⁰⁰ Findings also suggest that the writing system gives a sense of visual reinforcement that identifies the Filipino culture.³⁰¹ Further, the writing

²⁹⁵ See Appendix G (25:05), Appendix H (36:20).

²⁹⁶ See Appendix B (59:45).

²⁹⁷ See Appendix E (1:25:23).

²⁹⁸ See Appendix E (1:48:16), Appendix D (45:18), Appendix G (17:50), Appendix I (1:22:27).

²⁹⁹ See Appendix B (59:45), Appendix D (39:1), Appendix E (1:04:52).

³⁰⁰ See Appendix A (34:40), Appendix B (48:27, 1:24:25), Appendix E (48:00), Appendix F (48:48, 36:11), Appendix G (14:44), Appendix J (9:52).

³⁰¹ See Appendix A (1:05:38, 1:07:50), Appendix B (1:16:12), Appendix I (1:42:45).

system serves to promote or as an entry point to the Filipino culture not only among Filipinos who are not aware of it but also to others who are interested in learning more about the Filipino culture.³⁰² In turn, for Filipinos, the writing system also promotes a sense of cultural pride.³⁰³ Statements from the participants also reinforced that the writing system functions as a form of validation of an existing civilization prior to the arrival of the Spanish colonizers.³⁰⁴

8.3.2.2 The role of a written language in social well-being. Data gathered from all the participants overwhelmingly suggests that a written language has a unifying factor that provides a sense of pride, belongingness, and social connection among the various communities of Filipinos in the Philippines and abroad.³⁰⁵ Findings also suggest that the writing system serves as a social influence through the various forms of arts.³⁰⁶ In addition, statements from the participants suggest that the writing system is a great social tool for cultural promotion and cultural tourism.³⁰⁷

8.3.2.3 The role of a written language in psychological well-being. As previously stated in this paper through the book or autobiography of Alex Tizon

³⁰² See Appendix D (35:35), Appendix G (12:37).

³⁰³ See Appendix B (48:27, 1:24:25), Appendix E (1:48:16), Appendix F (1:03:44), Appendix I (58:21, 48:21).

³⁰⁴ See Appendix B (20:10), Appendix C (43:45), Appendix F (1:01:52).

³⁰⁵ See Appendix A (34:30, 41:59), Appendix B (53:45, 57:25, 1:16:12), Appendix C (48:44), Appendix D (28:21), Appendix E (1:52:50), Appendix F (53:10), Appendix G (21:50), Appendix H (31:50), Appendix I (58:21), Appendix J (24:38).

³⁰⁶ See Appendix I (1:32:22), Appendix J (23:23).

³⁰⁷ See Appendix A (1:05:38), Appendix D (35:35), Appendix I (58:21, 1:15:15). Appendix J (23:23).

and supported by the data collected from the participants, Filipinos, indeed, suffer from inferiority complex³⁰⁸ due to the lingering colonial mentality.³⁰⁹ It is then imperative to explore a greater understanding of the role of a writing system in the healing process. Data collected from this research suggest that the use of visual reinforcement provides a sort of emotional expression and psychological upliftment to people.³¹⁰ Participants also noted how the writing system provides psychological healing among Filipinos from the colonial mentality and/or cultural assimilation.³¹¹ This greatly supports one statement where it was noted that a writing system serves as a factor of an overall sense of robust cultural health— affecting education, physical health, and mental health.³¹² And, as the role of a written language in unifying the Filipinos under a communal pride suggests a promising outcome in the context of social well-being, it also seems to spread clearly to the *Pinoy psyche*—data suggests.³¹³

8.4 Discussion

8.4.1 Further Findings on the Role of Baybayin. In trying to understand the efficacy of language revitalization in the cultural identity and socio-

³⁰⁸ See Appendix B (59:45), Appendix C (53:02), Appendix D (39:51), Appendix C (1:25:23), Appendix F (58:02), Appendix G (25:05), Appendix H (36:20), Appendix I (1:22:27).

³⁰⁹ See Appendix G (25:05), Appendix H (36:20).

³¹⁰ See Appendix B (1:16:12), Appendix I (58:21, 1:32:22).

³¹¹ See Appendix B (1:16:40, 1:24:25), Appendix G (19:49), Appendix H (40:37).

³¹² See Appendix A (52:12).

³¹³ See Appendix C (48:44), Appendix D (45:18), Appendix E (1:48:16), Appendix F (1:03:44), Appendix J (58:21).

psychological well-being of those who still use the writing system—in this case, the group of advocates, artists, and scholars—we have found a significant role of the Baybayin in the aspect of; 1) understanding a clearer cultural identity, 2) societal unity through cultural identity, and 3) psychological healing for those with an inferiority complex. This means that efforts to revive an ancient script could play a vital role in the lives of Filipinos—especially among the diaspora of Filipinos abroad and to those who are experiencing inferiority complex. The findings in this research support the hypothesis that the revival of the Baybayin, as an aspect of Filipino cultural identity, is playing a positive role in giving a clearer cultural identity and better socio-psychological well-being to a group of advocates, artists, and scholars who still use it. Socially, the said group of participants noted a sense of belongingness to their cultural group, a greater social connection among the people in their cultural group, and greater recognition from others for having a written language of their own. Psychologically, the group noted a sense of a healing process from a possible inferiority complex as a result of colonial mentality; thus, giving them greater self-esteem and pride of their own culture—a better *Pinoy psyche*. Though the results of this research would seem obvious in supporting the hypothesis since the group of participants that were interviewed already have a profound interest in the Baybayin, further studies are still needed to fill in the missing ethnographic research with the Mangyan tribes due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

8.4.2 Further Insights. This study explored a completely new research question to get an insight into understanding the various roles of a writing system

in the healing process among those experiencing inferiorities due to colonial mentality. The relevance of this study is evident from the growing interest of Filipinos in the ancient writing system in the past two decades and the advocacy to promote the Baybayin Bills in the Philippine government. This research gives further clarification on why the Baybayin should be revitalized and its relevance to the lives of every Filipinos in the Philippines and abroad.

8.4.3 Discussion on the Limitations. Being out of the mainstream and a study regarding the language of a developing country, research materials were hard to find. Also, though the findings still provide a great insight into this study, having the ethnographic fieldwork could have provided a wider and greater scope of understanding for this research. But the fact that the original research method was not followed, the findings were only limited to the interviews done with the advocates, artists, and scholars. One aspect that was overlooked in this study is how the participants seem to confuse the idea of cultural identity, social well-being, and psychological well-being. This could possibly be due to the lack of clarity of the questions from the beginning of the interview, or it could simply be due to a language difference or difficulty in articulating their exact thoughts in English. Nevertheless, all interviewees have a great understanding of the cultural identity, social well-being, and psychological well-being of Filipinos or have a certain amount of experience in language promotion and preservation.

8.4.4 Unexpected Insights. Moreover, there have been unexpected insights found while doing the research. This research recognized that the regionalistic characteristic of Filipinos might possibly be causing the slow progress of

revitalization in the country, which could be a great topic for future research.³¹⁴ It seems that in their aim to preserve, protect, and promote their "variation" of the ancient Philippine writing, several factions are created—pulling themselves away from the collective efforts for nation-building. Also, the fact that the culture of Filipinos in the Philippines and those abroad are very different may also post a varying sense of pride among Filipinos, which participants call a "misplaced patriotism"—also a great topic for future research.³¹⁵ Still, further investigation of the Mangyan tribes in the Philippines is strongly suggested to get a better understanding of the various roles of the Baybayin in the everyday lives of every Filipinos.

8.4.5 Other Surprising Revelations from the Study. Further, when doing an unplanned ocular visit at the Mangyan tribes in Mindoro prior to the planned ethnographic study, I was somewhat surprised with the amount of outside influence they have had in as far as their writing systems. Many of those that I have met and even some of the schools I visited where the children were studying were no longer using their ancient writing system, nor is it even evident in the signages of their schools and elsewhere. With the exception of a few who still promote it through their crafts, it seemed as if the ancient writing had also already fallen out of their vernacular language. This was in contrast to what I originally thought in considering the Mangyan tribes to be part of this study. Or, it could

³¹⁴ See Appendix B (54:33), Appendix D (25:43), Appendix E (1:06:20), Appendix I (37:49), Appendix J (10:58).

³¹⁵ See Appendix E (1:48:16), Appendix G (17:50), Appendix I (1:22:27)

also be that I was not exposed to an ample amount of Mangyan population to really understand the current condition of the ancient writing there.

8.5 Conclusion

The research question originally aimed to answer how the Baybayin language plays a role in the cultural identity and socio-psychological well-being of the Mangyan tribes and the group of advocates, artists, and scholars who still uses the ancient writing system. But, due to the pandemic, the research was limited to answering how the Baybayin language plays a role in the cultural identity and socio-psychological well-being of the group of advocates, artists, and scholars. Based on the qualitative analysis of the phenomenological research method that was conducted, it can be concluded that the Baybayin writing system plays a great role in the cultural identity, social well-being, and psychological well-being of the group of advocates, artists, and scholars— supporting the hypothesis in this study and suggesting that it will also do the same for the rest of Filipinos. The Baybayin could play an important factor in understanding a clearer cultural identity as it provides a national visual identity or symbol for the Filipino people. Socially, the Baybayin may serve as a unifying factor that provides a sense of pride, belongingness, and social connection among the various Filipino communities in the Philippines and abroad. Indeed, we can find unity in the shared identity. Psychologically, the Baybayin could help in the psychological healing process of Filipinos who are experiencing inferiority complex due to colonial mentality and/or cultural assimilation to various cultures abroad. To better understand the implications of these results, further

studies could address the ethnographic study of the Mangyan tribes that were not fulfilled in this research due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

APPENDIX A: Brookes Interview

<p>Interviewee</p>  <p>Interviewee: Tim Brookes Date: March 24, 2020</p> <p>Founder & Executive Director of the Endangered Alphabet Project.</p>	<p>Understanding of Cultural Identity and the role of a writing system in Cultural Identity.</p> <p>17:34 The very notion of cultural identity became an excuse for bigotry, snobishness, xenophobia, chauvinism (British). 22:01 The culture that gets the upper hand, to a greater or lesser extent, wants to manage, persecute, or even obliterate the culture they have overthrown (Ex. King of Vietnam overthrew the Champa Kingdom), resulting in ethnic, cultural transformation.</p> <p>34:30 Role of Writing: It is deep and multifaceted. A substantial minority of the people in that culture feel deeply connected to their writing even if they cannot read it (referring to the Amazigh flag: Yaz letter from the Tifinagh Alphabet. Symbolizing the entire Amazigh people, living in harmony with their land, Tamazgha). 41:59 A demonstration of belongingness is in itself compelling. 52:12 It (writing) is one factor in this overall sense of robust cultural health, and when you no longer have this full cultural health, all kinds of downstream effects happen in terms of education, physical health, mental health. 29:19 By writing something, you give it a legal force (referring to the Abnaki people).</p>	<p>Understanding of Social Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Social Well-Being</p> <p>45:40 Role of Writing: If you do not have writing or have writing of a different kind, you lose your land (referring to the Abnaki and the indigenous people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh who lost their lands because they have no legal records). 46:16 When people start losing their language and other traditional activities, bad things begin to happen like the rise in alcoholism, divorce, increase in infant mortality, education levels go down, birthweight goes down (referring to those in Labrador and Native American reservations). 50:18 The Abnaki became a refugee in their land during the eugenics movement, as they were systematically persecuted and denied of their indigenous identity because there was no writing about them. 1:05:38 In downtown Oklahoma, about 12 years ago, the mayor (whom I interviewed) and the city council put up street signs in English and Cherokee script. I asked, why did you do this? He talked to me about cultural tourism. For the Cherokee people to come back to homelands and to see some of their writings on the street signs, on the post office, on the school water tower, economically, it is good for the town because it encourages cultural tourism, which is one of the few sources of income. Because they recognize the syllabary, it becomes a visual sign/reinforcement saying, "this is us!" It is impossible to gauge the value of visual support accurately.</p>	<p>Understanding of Psychological Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Psychological Well-Being</p> <p>54:44 Role of Writing: Karen people in Myanmar went under ethnic cleansing 1980s. Many of the Karen people are now in Thailand, and roughly 50% of them are clinically diagnosed with depression. They combat that by teaching the kids their language and their writing—as a mental health measure. 58:30 When did the Cherokee stop speaking Cherokee at home? Began through radio and television as they all listened to English speakers and brought home things that are shiny, glowing, and attractive... kids growing up in a culture of envy. 1:04:17 Lyle Campbell, American scholar and linguist and expert in American languages and language revitalization, said; different tribes make different decisions about what they want to achieve. 1:07:50 It is impossible to gauge the value of visual reinforcement accurately. In as much as there is this "culture of envy or shame," the same thing can also happen in reverse. If you get some kind of visual reinforcement, it has some sort of power... (it brings some kind of pride).</p>
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APPENDIX B: Enage Interview

<p>Interviewee</p>  <p>Interviewee: Jaime Enage Interview Date: May 25, 2020</p>	<p>Understanding of Cultural Identity and the role of a writing system in Cultural Identity.</p> <p>17:30 "We have a damaged culture." ~F. Sionil Jose, respected historian and literature guru on Philippine history. As Filipinos, we were colonized by three significant countries (referring to Spain, America, and Japan). 20:10 Role of Writing: Baybayin has a significant role in redeeming our culture. When the colonizers came, we [already] have our civilization, we [already] have our writing system, we [already] have our barangays. If a country has a writing system, it is a civilized country. 29:55 [Our written language should represent our spoken language.] 37:40 If a nation uses it [writing], they have history, have records, have documents, and have evidence.</p>	<p>Understanding of Social Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Social Well-Being</p> <p>39:00 Filipinos are a very damaged culture. Colonial mentality. What is new in other countries, America, Europe, Asia (KPop)... We are multi-culture, but the sad thing is we neglect the real history or culture of the Philippines. 40:16 DepEd needs to teach or include in the curriculum that loves for the country, that cultural identity, sense of history, and it will affect every Filipino's social life, especially the youth. 44:32 Role of Writing: By using it in signages [like the recent Maynilad]. What you do not use, you lose. 48:27 By using the writing system, they will embrace they are being Filipino. 49:12 It is used in different formats/platforms; in printed materials, in books, t-shirts, barong, and tattoos. 53:45 They will have a sense of pride or identity in the Filipino community. 54:33 Filipinos in other countries are in hunger/thirst for our culture. Though we have different Filipino communities, if we have the script, it will reunite the whole Philippines because we will share our own identity using our script. To have that sense of belongingness. But the sad part is we have a regionalistic mind in the Philippines, which will destroy [us]. 57:25 The power of the script is that it will unite us in one community, one country. 1:16:12 When we bring back the writing, which is visual, then I believe, people, the youth, the next generation will appreciate it. "Oh! we have our own!"</p>	<p>Understanding of Psychological Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Psychological Well-Being</p> <p>59:45 because of the colonial mentality. They like what's superior to people [others/majority]: We like fashion from London, Europe, Paris, US, whenever we have the opportunity. 1:01:20 The problem is when parents embrace the colonial mentality. 01:02:20 Technology affects the psychological well-being of the Filipinos [possibly due to influence]. If we use technology to show the love for country, love for [our] history, being a Filipino, then it will change. 01:04:50 We are embracing what is not ours. 1:06:43 There is a difference between Filipinos abroad and Filipinos in the Philippines. 1:11:30 Role of Writing: [Our products should be written in our script.] Technology is visual now, and we appreciate it. 1:16:12 [Visual Appreciation] We bring back the writing, which is visible, then I believe people, the youth, the next generation will appreciate it. "Oh! we have our own!" 1:16:40 Technology/Script will change the mindset of the Filipino. 1:24:25 [Referring to printed materials from Chinese, Japanese, etc.] When we use our script, it affects our nationalism, identity, and love for their country. If we arrive at the situation, we will end the colonial mentality.</p>
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APPENDIC C: Taipan Interview

<p>Interviewee</p>  <p>Interviewee: Taipan Lucero Interview Date: July 14, 2020</p>	<p>Understanding of Cultural Identity and the role of a writing system in Cultural Identity.</p> <p>39:18 Filipinos are too quick to adapt or assimilate other cultures, leading us to abandon our culture quickly. I do not know if that's part of being hospitable as we try to be inclusive and receptive to other cultures. On a positive note, we are proud of our own culture as we try to take part of success of other Filipinos abroad. We have a rich culture.</p> <p>43:45 Role of Writing: It plays a significant role. With our ancient writing, we can show that our ancestors were civilized, and we have a thriving culture even before the colonizers came. We have a good culture ever since.</p>	<p>Understanding of Social Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Social Well-Being</p> <p>45:23 Filipinos are among the friendliest towards everyone. Watching Travel Vloggers shows how friendly Filipinos are. Filipinos are genuinely friendly. Filipinos are easy to assimilate with and respectful of other cultures. We get along with other people /cultures around the world.</p> <p>48:44 Role of Writing: As of now, it is an emerging topic for connection for the social well-being of Filipinos. The clamor and love for it are just emerging. It is a [emerging] rally to show the world that we have our writing system, and we were civilized before. It contributes to social wellbeing because it is something to be proud of and can be an anchor for our pride.</p>	<p>Understanding of Psychological Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Psychological Well-Being</p> <p>53:02 The fact that many wants to lighten their skin, they are not proud of being brown. I do not know where this kind of thinking is coming from—probably from mass media. When foreign products (the US, K-pop from Korea, Japanese) reach us, and we see it, "I want to be like that!" [culture of envy]. It shows on "Reaction Videos" how, when foreigners react and appreciate Filipinos (singing, in particular), Filipinos are happy—like in the form of "validation" from westerners.</p> <p>1:00:26 Role of Writing: It can be a tool to fight colonial mentality. We have a thriving culture before the colonizers. Even before the Spaniards came, all men and much fewer women (Pedro Chirino), can read and write (educated and unlike in other cultures where women and children are suppressed). [giving us a sense of pride]</p>
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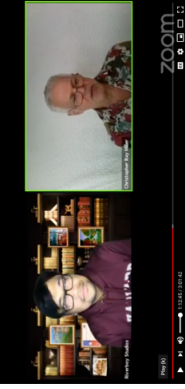
APPENDIX D: FlipOne Interview

<p>Interviewee</p>  <p>Interviewee: FlipOne Santiago Interview Date: July 29, 2020</p>	<p>Understanding of Cultural Identity and the role of a writing system in Cultural Identity.</p> <p>22:40 One thing I appreciate being a Filipino is diversity. Having several different languages from Batanes to Tawi-Tawi. We have a different faith, different ethnicity... it is a fusion of various cultures. 25:43 One of Filipino culture's biggest struggles is that Filipinos, in general, are not united due to regionalism.</p> <p>28:21 Role of Writing I look at Baybayin to describe the other scripts in the Philippines... It simplifies how we write and read our own [spoken] language. It gives us a sense of belonging.</p>	<p>Understanding of Social Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Social Well-Being</p> <p>31:21 You got two types of Pinoys; 1) Those who are open-minded and adapt to other cultures—associating themselves to foreigners well, 2) Those who only associate with other Filipinos and not associate themselves with other groups/cultures. Filipino culture is pretty much western.</p> <p>35:35 Role of Writing: Baybayin, for me, is to promote to other Filipinos who are unfamiliar with it and to foreigners to another side of Filipino culture. Different people from other cultures have a negative perception of Filipinos because they are mainly blue-collar. Baybayin is used to promote Filipino art/creativity through graffiti.</p>	<p>Understanding of Psychological Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Psychological Well-Being</p> <p>39:51 Colonial mentality has been a significant problem with the Filipino people. There is also such a thing as an inferiority complex. 40:21 Department of Tourism Secretary on the radio explaining Palawan's best site, saying, "Para kang nasa ibang bansa" or "It's like you're in a different country"—that's a big disservice. Filipinos bad-mouthing our country in a global stage.</p> <p>45:18 Role of Writing: We, using a foreign writing system, is a colonial mentality in itself. Filipinos tend to be less patriotic or "misplaced patriotism" than the other nation because everything else we use is foreign. With Baybayin, it gives you the pride to appreciate our language, our writing system... It's tough to appreciate our language if we are using a foreign writing system. With Baybayin, you appreciate who you are and that we have that system to write.</p>
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APPENDIX E: Castro Interview

<p>Interviewee</p>  <p>Interviewee: Leo Emmanuel Castro Interview Date: August 02, 2020</p>	<p>Understanding of Cultural Identity and the role of a writing system in Cultural Identity.</p> <p>28:45 "Poverty of experience in our culture." 46:03 Our cultural identity is seen not only in our genetics but also in our language. 48:00 Role of Writing: Language dictates your identity. Our being Filipino depends on how we think and how we dream. Some have this what they call the "American Dream" and not the "Filipino Dream." We should start with our language. 1:01:30 Our writing system is innovatively ours.</p>	<p>Understanding of Social Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Social Well-Being</p> <p>1:04:52 We have this feeling of being inferior and looking into others as being superior. 1:06:20 We are divided by regionalistic thinking and, in part, due to politics. 1:07:25 We need to foster respect within the different [regions]. There seems to be no conflict amongst the ethnolinguistic groups during pre-Hispanic times. Various cultures are unique in their way, and we need to respect that. 1:18:57 We had a good relationship with others in the archipelago and even those in the surrounding nations before the Spaniards' arrival. 1:33:50 If a Filipino is good in English, they prosper. But only those who are good in English are the ones that thrive and not the nation [because many Filipinos are not good in English]. In Japan, they translate their knowledge into their language—into their writing system. 1:35:55 Role of Writing: Japan wins Nobel prize in chemistry and physics. [Implying that Filipinos should also write our knowledge into our language and our writing system in order for us to prosper.] When you teach your own writing system, translate knowledge into the language, it is easier understood, learning becomes easier, and innovation becomes faster, also. 1:52:50 Language unifies the group. Writing also unifies us, especially if our writing system is unique. Not all race has writing system. You can write our languages [in the Philippines] with our writing system.</p>	<p>Understanding of Psychological Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Psychological Well-Being</p> <p>1:03:52 We have this feeling of inferior. Our understanding of our past pre-Hispanic period has part in how we carry ourselves, our consciousness, and our confidence. 1:25:23 Viewing other nations' technological advancements, we feel that there is something wrong with our culture. "Why can't we be as rich as these people in different country?" [Culture of Envy]. We view it as if there is something wrong with our culture. They say that the natives are lazy (remembering a book: <i>The Myth of the Lazy Native</i>, by Syed Alatas). The view that we are not prospering because we are lazy is a view from the colonizers. It has to do with the work cycle (8am-5pm). 1:27:19 The work of the farmers—waking up early around 4am or 5am—are not seen by the colonizers. 1:30:30 The attitude of the colonizers was actually transplanted to the "new colonizers" and the sad part about it is they are our fellow Filipinos who got the attitude of the colonizers before. 1:48:16 Role of Writing: For me, what's important is that we will have something [our writing] about our culture that we can be proud with as Filipinos. Pride that is in the right place. Baybayin is already an achievement of our ancestors. [other seem to attach to false pride]. We may lose [international] basketball game or boxing but we could still be proud.</p>
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APPENDIX F: Miller Interview

<p>Interviewee</p>  <p>Zoom Meeting Interviewee: Christopher Ray Miller Interview Date: September 29, 2020</p>	<p>Understanding of Cultural Identity and the role of a writing system in Cultural Identity.</p> <p>29:24 It's really a mix [referring to what he knows of the Filipino culture] based on the old Austronesian culture. Everywhere around the world, you have traditional culture that've been changed a lot by modern influences, and this happens everywhere. It started from Spanish influence from 500 years ago that continued for another 400 years. It really influenced the cultural ideas and ways of living of Filipinos.</p> <p>31:36 There's a lot of cultural attitudes [practices/traditions; like Timikling, Pandango, sa ilaw, Carinosa, etc.] inherited from the Spanish.</p> <p>31:01 The Spanish language influenced Tagalog and other Filipino languages a lot.</p> <p>32:42 For 100 years [during the American colonization] has influenced the Filipinos' language and politics, especially.</p> <p>34:30 Many TV personalities switch from Tagalog to English, having this feeling it's a better way to express something. There's this feeling you can't express something in Tagalog itself. While there are reactions from those in the academe (UP, for example) who are trying their (<i>Komite sa Wikang Pilipino</i>) best to purify the Tagalog language—and this happens to other languages as well—by finding ways to express everything in the language itself without having to switch into English. I see the sense of wanting to repossess your own identity and not just pulling everything that are American. That's what I see happening in the sense of cultural identity with a lot of Filipinos. It's interesting that Baybayin really exploded over the past decade.</p> <p>36:11 Role of Writing: It is what people used when the Spanish arrived. It's native Filipino. It is obviously something that was used there and that had come to take that shape in the Philippines. So, it is a very important "visual badge" / a piece of "visual identity" that says "Filipino" and nothing else. I think that part of the importance, the visual look, that completely indigenously. That's why people find it like a symbol of Filipino culture that resonates. This has a visual impact.</p>	<p>Understanding of Social Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Social Well-Being</p> <p>44:10 It varies depending on where your experience, where you live, what ethnic group do you belong to, what language do you belong to, your social/economic status.... So many Filipinos leave for the U.S. to Canada and keep their Filipino identity. 46:56 In the Philippines, there's a lot of reaction from non-Tagalog people to an imperial city that tries to make the rest of the Philippines the same as Manila.</p> <p>47:48 From the viewpoint of an outsider, there are tension in the country. Personally, there's a lot of openness to the people from the outside like me.</p> <p>48:48 Role of Writing: The one thing that something that people don't know much about: A lot of people in school would have that I 5min, one day, where they were taught about Alibata, then they went on to do other things. It would have to become something that is common and part of the sense of National identity to really have any role. I don't think it would be a very basic influence. I don't know if making Baybayin really common again would really change things at that level. But it could give it a little more of a National Identity or national cohesion, perhaps.</p> <p>53:10 It is more a sense of cultural identity than a social well-being, as such. Though, perhaps, it, I don't know, I can't predict what would happen. It might at some point help to give people more of a sense of united identity for people who don't.</p>	<p>Understanding of Psychological Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Psychological Well-Being</p> <p>55:21 For people I know, I've basically had a sense of equality. I haven't had the feeling, you know, from the people I know here in Canada, of people who feel inferior. In general, in most Canada—primarily urban Canada—we are so multicultural that people almost don't know the differences very much. The multiculturalism we have here in Canada accepts that people can have different lifestyles they bring with them. There's not a huge pressure to assimilate.</p> <p>58:02 When I was in the Philippines, I visited Mercury a lot and came across all these shelves of skin whitening. So, there is that sort of skin color preoccupation that I found there, especially amongst women.</p> <p>59:40 Another thing I noticed interacting with people in the sense of defensiveness from people who are from outside. Others with specific academic training understand what I am doing and that my viewpoint is not an outside viewpoint. Still, it's that question from a particular way of approaching problems.</p> <p>1:01:52 Role of Writing: Writing system plays a role mostly at a cultural level. At the cultural level, this is what people like to point out: "we weren't just savages running around in loincloths cutting off each other's heads. When the Spanish arrived, we had our civilization; we had our writing system." Your roots are something better than what people have thought they were at that time.</p> <p>1:03:44 As far as psychological well-being is concerned, it's a question of a sense of cultural pride that it gives people. This knowledge that your cultural roots are more sophisticated than you might've thought.</p>
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APPENDIX G: Kabuay Interview

<p>Interviewee</p>  <p>Interviewee: Kristian Kabuay Interview Date: October 03, 2020</p>	<p>Understanding of Cultural Identity and the role of a writing system in Cultural Identity.</p> <p>9:37 Filipinos are: humble, hardworking family oriented, [has that] <i>Bahala na</i> attitude, that Island vibe... Built upon a microcosm of what we think America is which could be positive, but it could also be negative as it neglects who we are as a people.</p> <p>12:37 Role of Writing: The role of the ancient writing in the cultural identity, at the service level, for most, is that it doesn't have a role [referring to the current situation of the Baybayin] and that's the problem. It's just not the written: it's also the other cultural practices, in general—whether it is weaving or [with the] other languages. That's what my work is about—it's about exploring identity using the script as an entry point—as a gateway—to other cultural practices. It goes much deeper than superficial. The value is not in the tangible artwork but in the conversation.</p> <p>14:30 I think that the role of the ancient writing in my context is that it is an entry point to something much deeper.</p> <p>14:44. The ancient writing system can play a role in the cultural identity of Filipinos as it is a key identifier and key cultural assets like that of the other cultures. Writing system is definitely tied to our identity. It has a direct correlation to culture.</p>	<p>Understanding of Social Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Social Well-Being</p> <p>16:00 In the Philippines, we are very social but also very humble at the same time. They want to be part of something, but they are very shy to go there because they could be culturally intimidated. 17:19 There's a strong sense of idolism [admiration]. We tend to put people in a higher level.</p> <p>17:50 In terms of the diaspora, we are kind of mix. We are more assertive as we speak our mind, but we still have that Filipino—more cosmetic [outward appearance] sense. There's a sense of identity but I think a lot of it is cosmetic. I don't know if there's a sense that it needs to go deeper. But, life instances like death in the family, marriage, birth, and ethnic studies can be a catalyst.</p> <p>20:36 Role of Writing: So, from a social aspect, I think there's some healing. It's a connection because probably don't speak the language or they are in this corporate life or maybe because they are not married to a Filipino [a sense of cultural longing because of being an immigrant].</p> <p>21:50 I think the social aspect is one of the values that's not talked about or appreciated. Most of the close friends that I have now that I've gained for the past 10+ years is because of our shared interest of this writing. The social aspect is important, and it is easier to attain compared to the cultural and economic value of the ancient writing. We need to put more stress on the social value [of the writing system].</p> <p>28:14 It's something familiar. Oddly enough, for the majority of us, our culture is foreign to the majority of us, we are confused about it. But for the past five years, it is being normalized. [Referring to a book "Triumphs"] If you look at cultures around the world that have succeeded, it's the ones that express their identity and most of them, that were identified in the book; the Indian, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Jewish, the English... all of them have their own writing system. Writing system is the first thing you see and the last things you see when you leave the earth. It is there.</p>	<p>Understanding of Psychological Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Psychological Well-Being</p> <p>25:05 Even I have it too [referring to the colonial mentality of many Filipinos]. It's an ongoing battle with ourselves and the community. It is multilayered. I see a lot of people— young people, especially—who want to do what you want to do. It's a very detrimental mindset. It like that "impostor syndrome." Kids nowadays don't want to fail.</p> <p>19:18 Culture Searching</p> <p>19:49 Role of Writing: I'll speak specifically about the people that I work with like the Fil-Ams in the diaspora. I've had people cry because of the doors that just learning the script has opened. In the Philippines, the fondness of the script is more on the cosmetic side but in the US [referring to the Fil-Ams] is deeper because there's a hole in their lives. There's something missing here in the diaspora. 20:36 So, from a social aspect, I think there's some healing.</p>
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APPENDIX H: Borrinaga Interview

<p>Interviewee</p>  <p>Interviewee: Dr. Rolando Borrinaga Interview Date: October 13, 2020</p>	<p>Understanding of Cultural Identity and the role of a writing system in Cultural Identity.</p> <p>17:22 In terms of cultural identity, I came from the Bisayas, I am basically partial to what Scott (William Henry Scott) had written about the Bisayan society and culture in his book, <i>Barangay</i>. I come from this language. I come from this culture. So, I have become very much familiar with that and it could link with our forms of ancient writings, so it was not difficult for me to link what has been written in the artifacts and linking this with our cultural practices. We still have a lot of cultural practices in the Bisayas. When the Jesuits came here, they eradicated the practice of the Babaylan. 21:56 In the Visayas we still have retained our old practices... We always fall back to the commune style of living during critical times.</p> <p>24:10 Role of Writing: When a priest says the mass, he has his own script. The Babaylans during their time, they had, in fact, their own script. Like the Calatagan Pot, they had their outline [writing] that they improvise during the ritual. There were different scripts [monologue they follow] for different things. Different pots have different scripts which, I suppose, the Babaylan expands on.</p>	<p>Understanding of Social Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Social Well-Being</p> <p>28:22 At least we can be very friendly... very joyful! We had these games we entertain ourselves. We had epics, at least in the Visayas, they recited for several nights, sometimes. They had certain musical tunes where they engage instant musical 4-liner compositions.</p> <p>31:50 Role of Writing: Almost everybody knew how to read and write [commonality]. There was general literacy. Babaylan women had higher status than men in society. When the Babaylans were suppressed, there were discriminations as their written materials were burned and the educational system was also suppressed. They could no longer transfer the knowledge of the Babaylan writing—especially in the wake of the strong effort of the Spaniards to teach Roman writing to the natives.</p>	<p>Understanding of Psychological Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Psychological Well-Being</p> <p>36:20 I think we still suffer from a lot of colonial mentality.</p> <p>37:57 If we have to be very serious with Babaylan, you have to write words according to how you pronounce them. We have to undo the way we spell words in our native language. We have to root ourselves in the way we write.</p> <p>40:37 Role of Writing: Learning Babaylan does not require a lot of adjustments. I am teaching my students the Babaylan writing in one session. It is not difficult. You can notice the transformation inside. If done in a larger scale, it can have a psychological impact. 41:29 It always leads back to our beginnings.</p>
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APPENDIX I: De Los Santos Interview

<p style="text-align: center;">Interviewee</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Interviewee: Norman de los Santos Interview Date: November 1, 2020</p>	<p>Understanding of Cultural Identity and the role of a writing system in Cultural Identity.</p> <p>37:49 I'm a Tagalog with influences of Ilocano, Bisaya, and Mangyan because I am from Mindoro. I am very regionalistic, I think. I don't like the monolithic Filipino identity because growing up from the province and going to study in Manila and meeting people who are very nationalistic. They make fun of the way I speak Tagalog. I kind of developed a resentment to the Manila centric style of speaking Filipino—the way they use Taglish to elevate themselves. That Filipino mentality of being "One Culture" really got to me.</p> <p>43:23 Filipino-American culture is totally different. Filipino-American culture has its own histories and stories. It is totally different from what they see now in the Philippines as Filipino culture. Nowadays, the young Filipinos who go to Sagada and claim as if it is their own but to them is still like going to a foreign land. But here in America, Fil-Ams here put all those cultures together and tries to lump it as one [Cultural Appropriation]. Like, this is Filipino culture and us, Fil-Ams, appreciate all the cultures in the Philippines. There's actually a new drama brewing in the internet right now where some groups who are "promoting" the Filipino heritage are being accused of cultural appropriation. Probably because we don't have anything else in America and we have all these privileges to claim without having any direct contact with the other regions.</p> <p>48:21 Role of Writing It makes me proud that we have our own culture and ancient knowledge and it is unique to us...like our writing.</p> <p>1:42:45 It's a direct form of identifying a something [culture]. Just like if I see a Japanese writing in the Valley... In the sea of Latin script, in the sea of ABCs, here comes writing from Punjab region; Ah! That's Indian food!</p>	<p>Understanding of Social Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Social Well-Being</p> <p>53:28 Filipinos tend to be proud of their region or their hometown. Even growing up in Mindoro I isolated myself. Because I am Tagalog. I have this sense of pride and superiority about being Tagalog. I even looked down on the Mangyan (Indigenous/Native people of Mindoro). Also, even then, I look down on the migrants that are coming in. We tend to fight among ourselves. There are a lot of things we can do without isolating ourselves. We can be together even if we don't claim each other's culture. We should appreciate each other's differences. 57:03 We have a lot of classism in the Philippines.</p> <p>58:21 Role of writing It instills a sense of pride. It's something unique to ourselves. Surat Mangyan instills a sense of pride and uplifts the Mangyan spirit. It sells us an image for tourism. We know how people love things that are different to them (i.e. Japan). If Surat Mangyan is everywhere and everybody notices how they are in Mindoro through the writing. It becomes an image that instills pride and identity and economy. Socially, it is one my goal to make it [ancient writing] technologically available. So that we can communicate with it. It is beautiful and uplifting to communicate with our own writing system.</p> <p>1:08:16 What if [Surat] did, is it gave me a chance to give back. For the longest time I've had this feeling of regret and feeling of being guilty of something. When I started learning Surat Mangyan, I want to ultimately give it back to them. The first thing I did, after being away for 10 years in the Philippines, is I went to the Mangyan Heritage center and gave them those fonts. It is my way to redeem myself.</p> <p>1:15:15 When I was young, they [the Mangyans] where using it [Surat] for little slips of letters here and there. Mangyan kids were passing notes in Surat to each other. Little messages written on bamboo seats. Most I've seen was its commercial use.</p>	<p>Understanding of Psychological Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Psychological Well-Being</p> <p>1:22:27 Filipinos in the Philippines and Filipino-Americans are totally different. As Filipino-Americans, we try to develop this thick skin. We have our own method of dealing with colonial mentality. We fight it tooth and nail. A lot of Filipinos in the Philippines still have this inferiority complex. Although that pride kind of overrides their inferiority complex. Sometimes its false pride that overrides the inferiority complex. Sometimes its anger that overrides their inferiority complex. Filipinos in the Philippines tend to be meek due to classism.</p> <p>1:32:22 Role of Writing If it is used in a context of beautiful artwork like calligraphy, you feel so classy. If you put it in a masculine type of painting, it gives you a sense of toughness. If it is used on music video, it elevates your sense of awareness through the arts. If it is in the form of <i>Ambahan</i>, it is very intellectual or romantic. It gives you different emotions and connects with you in different ways. Arabic gives you the sense of religiousness and it is very uplifting, spiritually. It [writing] instantly gives that connection.</p> <p>1:37:55 Just recently, Kristian Kabuay showed me photos of these electrical boxes in San Francisco where they put Baybayin arts using my font. That wows me. That's very Filipino and very Nationalistic. Not just a sense of pride, I am happy and elated. It is emotionally uplifting.</p> <p>1:41:35 When I first visited the southern part of Mindoro in Mansalay and I saw the Surat Mangyan in the market, I quickly took a photo.</p>
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APPENDIX J: Comandante Interview

<p>Interviewee</p>  <p>Interviewee: Dr. Bonifacio Comandante Jr. Interview Date: November 03, 2020</p>	<p>Understanding of Cultural Identity and the role of a writing system in Cultural Identity.</p> <p>9:07 When I was still in High School, when you say "Jeepney", that is uniquely Filipino. You can't see jeepney in any other place other than the Philippines. 10:58 First, in the manner of speaking, if you go to provinces, it's their mother tongue and then English. You can't make [expect] them to speak Tagalog. Same issue with those from Bohol. They prefer their mother language. 9:52 Role of Writing: Our writing system, our Baybayin, is the only remaining, as of now, that we can claim to identify ourselves as Filipinos. We should enrich the and promote this. We, Filipinos, should be the one patronizing and promoting this. Sadly, there are foreigners who are promoting this, gladly they are promoting, but are sometimes distorting or claiming it. It is better for it [promotion] to start from our fellow Filipinos. 16:10 We can count our artifacts with Sulat [Writing]. Sulat [writing] began with proto-Philippine script. In the Calatagan Pot, the shapes of our writing are different. There is difference in the writing but there are relationships with the writing that Filipinos used. It is uniquely Filipino that was created by our ancestors. With the Manunggol Jar, it is clear that though they [our ancestors] were still in caves, they already have a writing. That's why our writing is uniquely Filipino without any trace of relationship with other nations. It seems that we, were the ones that influence our neighboring nations instead of them influencing us.</p>	<p>Understanding of Social Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Social Well-Being</p> <p>20:05 The Spaniards has a great influence on us because we were colonized for a long period. What I see is that whatever the Castilla [Spaniards] does, it is also what others [Filipinos] under them does. 29:11 Whatever those who are rich are doing, they influence those who are below [in class] [classism] [Culture of Envy]. American influence our way of clothing. That's why anything made in the U.S. is bragged about. 32:10 Filipinos wants to copy the foreigners. That will not be gone until we raise our race as Malay with brown skin. 23:23 Role of Writing: There are only few Filipinos who are interested with learning the ancient writing. I think the tipping point is 10%. When we reach 10%, no one can stop it. 24:38 It will create a closer relationship among Filipinos. Teaching our fellow Filipinos, especially to the children, of the various writing systems in the Philippines will create a closer tie among Filipinos. Foreigners will be amazed with us more.</p>	<p>Understanding of Psychological Well-Being and the role of a writing system in the Psychological Well-Being</p> <p>27:27 It [Colonial Mentality] is slowly being erased because of media. With the television, English movies are being replaced by Filipino or Asian shows/movies. Just a couple more decades and that imprint of colonialism will be gone and that will only be realized if the media will promote our culture more. 29:56 The media should project that we are just the same as another race. Pure Filipino women are unique and beautiful. In beauty pageants, they should get pure Filipino women with both pure Filipino parents and not mixed. 33:40 Role of Writing: This happened in real life: When various Asians were together, the Teacher asked them to write and the foreigners [other Asians] thought we were English, but they were amazed when the Filipino wrote in Baybayin. 34:14 When a Filipino uses Baybayin, other people are amazed.</p>
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