

**Cebuano Poetics: Deciphering the Advice of Maria Kabigon's
Column in *Bisaya***

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Abstract

Maria Alcordo Kabigon's column "Ang Panid ni Manding Karya" in *Bisaya* from the late 1940s to the 1950s is considered as one of the momentous contributions of the Philippines' oldest Cebuano language magazine. Kabigon used the pen name Manding Karya to advise letter senders, and the letter and advice were published after the war in *Bisaya*. On average, she received 20 letters per day for her column, with most letter senders being men. This article aims to expand the scope of Kabigon's creative abilities by demonstrating her metaphorical language in her advice column, providing a variety of approaches to experience her poetic genius, and allowing her to connect more with her readers, particularly those from Visayas and Mindanao. By examining Kabigon's writing style, it can answer how she epitomizes the popularity of her column as she is recognized as a professional adviser as well as a writer in Cebuano literature. The article investigates Kabigon's *pasumbingay* or Cebuano poetics. Also, the advice of Kabigon was examined to convey its integration into Edith Tiempo's restoration context: preserving the individual's integrity, confirming ultimate values, defining significant purpose, and developing a reasonable worldview. This article used a qualitative research method that included descriptive research that conveyed a content analysis. The main source of the study, Kabigon's "Panid ni Manding Karya," can be found at the University of San Carlos, specifically at the Cebuano Studies Center. Kabigon makes use of nature to improve the poetic quality of her advice. When responding to a letter, she employs metaphors and symbolism to provide a brief but profound response. However, due to the limited space in her advice column, her responses are short. Despite the magazine's limited space, her use of figurative language and symbolism suggests her solution to continue providing effective advice. As a result, her writing style promotes critical thinking as well as imagination.

Keywords: Cebuano literature, Maria Alcordo Kabigon, *Ang Panid ni Manding Karya*, Edith Tiempo

Numerous authors in the Philippines have used the Cebuano language in their literary works to portray Filipino culture and identity. In 1988, the Cebuano-based National Artist for Literature, Resil Mojares explained the origin of *balak* or poetry in the Cebuano language in his essay entitled “Cebuano Poetry Until 1940: An Introduction,” the literary text serves also as a preface of the first volume of *Cebuano Poetry, Sugboanong Balak*. Mojares introduces Cebuano poetry:

Balak is the term that has survived to this day to refer to poetry in general although it is often reserved for the more elevated creations, with *garay* used for more informal, less accomplished ‘versifying’...Cebuano poetic forms include gnomic verses, like proverbs (*sanglitanan*, and perhaps the earlier *guyo*) and riddles (*tigmo*), expressed in a single metaphor or couplet; religious chants and invocations (like the *harito*); songs of various types (*awit*); and the popular forms of colloquy of wit (*duplo*) which may involve two persons (as in the *balitaw* or *oyayi*) or many (as in the *kulilisi*) and social rituals (p. 3).

The forging of the Cebuano verses, crucial to the everyday discourse and the imaginative language, takes on a variety of literary forms. In practice, traditional poetry served different functions depending on its intended audience. Also, some poems were performed not only by one person but by a group of people. The nature of the oral Cebuano literature implies the strength of poetry in the formation of a community, particularly during an important occasion.

As time progressed, more Cebuano writers emerged. On the other hand, works by women were slowly making an impact. Erlinda Alburo (2015), the former director of the Cebuano Studies Center and a pioneering member of Women in Literary Arts, Inc. (WILA), admits that in her study of Cebuano literature written by women, she “discovered that within 26 years duration of the most popular prewar Cebuano periodical *Bag-ong Kusog* from 1915-1941, only 41 out of 461 short stories were written by women (that 8.8%), and only 106 out of 2,081 poems (that’s .05%)” (p. 117). It took time for women writers to express their voices, especially in poetry. In the first volume of *Cebuano Poetry, Sugboanong Balak*, which was published in 1988, there is just one female poet among thirty-two male poets (p. 208). Gardeopatra Quijano’s “Kon” represents women writing in Cebuano until 1940. The place of poetry for women before was almost non-existent in an abode of men writers. In the continuous years of silence, slowly the voices of women were recognized. In the preface written by Erma Cuizon (2014) for the anthology *Femi.Nest: History and Poems of the Women in Literary Arts*, she states the transformation of Cebuano women writers in the current time through Maria Kabigon: “It wasn’t usual that a woman wrote the way Cebuano *Bisaya* advice columnist Maria Kabigon did in the early 1900s, having been also a journalist. She wrote literary pieces, including plays. In sum, her life was so different from the woman’s life in her era” (p. 1).

On the other hand, regional literature provides a huge impact on building Filipino identity. The Cebuano-Visayan language is widely spoken and used in Visayas and Mindanao. Moreover, *Bisaya* magazine continues to publish writers from these regions. In “Song and Substance: Women Writing Poetry in Cebuano,” Majorie Evasco (2002) articulates that, “the nation itself is still caught up in the process of formation, then its kinds of literature are part of these processes. What would matter then is that the regional members of the nation-state assert the place of imaginative writing from the region” (p. 60). Moreover, Mojares (2009) mentions the significance of art criticism and local writing in the foreword of *Pasumbingay: Antolohiya sa Sugboanong Balak (Anthology of Cebuano Poetry)*:

The future of Cebuano poetry lies with its poets. The imperative is for Cebuano poetry to make itself heard, first in the community that speaks the language and then the other communities into which it enters by force of reputation or virtue of translation. What this requires is not easy. Conditions of production, publishing, and promotion need to be improved. A culture of criticism must be encouraged (p. ix).

Writing using regional languages is linked with the culture of the rural areas and their traditional practices. These writings revolve around the authenticity of Filipino identity, providing the closest examples of folk wisdom, stories on nature, and even the emergence of women writers. This study explores to analyze the poetic language in the selected advice of Maria Alcordo Kabigon's "Ang Panid ni Manding Karya" in *Bisaya* magazine.

Consequently, Cebuano literature is historically associated with its pastoral writing. The human-nature relationship implies the need to reconnect with the environment as one of the ways to maintain the moral sensitivity of people towards the other creations of God. Moreover, Greg Gerrard (2004) believes that "classical pastoral was disposed of, then, to distort or mystify social and environmental history, whilst at the same time providing a locus, legitimated by tradition, for the feeling of loss and alienation from nature to be produced by the Industrial Revolution" (p. 39). Kabigon's advice is closely related to using metaphors from nature, particularly describing or using concepts from the local areas, her strategy is to allow its readers to read her advice like a traditional Cebuano poem while incorporating the environment.

Furthermore, Mojares (1988) also states another element of Cebuano poetry: "the overcultivation of certain kinds of diction and sentiment" (p. 6). An indication that a poem is meant to teach, but at the same time, it also targets one's emotion. Indeed, it is an eloquently way of a region's consciousness that is still companionable even until now. Moreover, according to Chua (2017), she explains that "the writer's understanding of the local environment or place, including our folk wisdom and beliefs, and the stories we have been told and have known all our lives about our islands" (p. xxxvii). All these qualities of sentimentality and local knowledge of one's environment are identified in Kabigon's advice column in *Bisaya*. Also, studying Cebuano poetry requires the skill to decipher the ambiguity and suggestiveness of the words. Mojares (1988) states the following observations the need to reclaim the power of Cebuano language and poetry:

Today, however, much of the richness of Cebuano language and poetry has been depleted through disuse (the language is not studied in the universities; it is, if at all, marginally used as medium of instruction; and outlets for Cebuano writing are sorely lacking) or because of the dominating influence of a foreign language that has created imperfectly literate Cebuano inhabiting the inarticulate spaces between the world of Cebuano and that of English. For many Cebuanos today, to read Cebuano poetry is to experience something both intimate and strange. In a sense, this is the experience of poetry itself (p. 6).

The influence of English on Cebuano has resulted in a subtle and hybrid language. Most importantly, given the diversity and complexity of the two languages, it continues to seek ways to achieve harmony. To study Kabigon's writing style is not just to signify women writers and their contribution to the national literature of the Philippines because Kabigon was one of few female Cebuano-Visayan authors who emerged in a period of male-dominant writers. Also, this study attempts to promote Filipino literature and nationalism through local languages

The Cebuano Poetics

Figurative language in Cebuano poetry is related to *pasumbingay*, it is defined as “a parable, allegory, fable or apologue, depending on the context. It can even be any literal or rhetoric device (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony) that consists in the use of words other than their literal sense.” (Beltran, Durado, and Kintanar, 2009, p. 1). According to Victor Sugbo (2016), writers radiate the ethnic mother tongues in the Visayas region, “*Pasumbingay* or *paaliday* – these terms aptly describe Visayan poetry in that in the poets’ attempt to explain clearly a point, their language becomes lush and figurative as they try, with a tinge of humor, to make a semantic approximation of their truth” (p. 205). Cebuano poetry concretizes a new kind of reality to ponder on, forming a language that dwells and enriches the writer’s voice. As Mojares states, “the Cebuano poet today does not come upon a language that is already there, ready to use; he has to recreate it not only out of the rawness of daily speech but summon out of language that which has already fallen away from common consciousness and use” (p. 6). The first responsibility of a Cebuano poet is to inhabit the Cebuano language as he speaks of his veracity, where he navigates the immense challenge to resolve the issues of language and identity in the country.

The problem of language and identity continues to be relevant to the Filipino writer in English and in particular, the Cebuano writer...suffers two levels of marginalization: the dominance of a colonial language, English, and the dominance of a Tagalog-influenced national language, Filipino (Camacho, 2012, p.6).

Simple text is given new meaning using figurative language or symbolism. Furthermore, symbolism is used in this study to analyze the poetic text. A symbol is defined as “when an incident, object, or person is used both literally (as itself) and figuratively (as something else), it becomes a symbol...to expand the meaning of the text and provide additional possibilities for meaning discovery” (Dobie, 2012, p. 43). Thus, human experiences and cultural practices play a role in symbol analysis. Another definition of symbolism is “the process by which a person, place, object, or event comes to stand for some abstract idea or condition.” Symbol, as it is commonly used in literary studies, suggests a link between ordinary sense of reality and moral or spiritual order” (Quinn, 2006, p. 408). To study symbols, you must start with a literal meaning and work your way up to a metaphorical or even spiritual meaning. Furthermore, Sussane Langer, an American philosopher, writer, and educator, asserts that when readers conceive of symbols, they can perceive their interpretations. On the other hand, signs allow us to react to our surroundings, whereas symbols allow us to create imagery and ideas that are not directly related to the real world. The only distinction between a sign and a symbol is that a sign causes us to think or act, whereas a symbol causes us to think about the things being symbolized.

Contemporary Philippine fiction authors and poets, on the other hand, address prevalent themes and issues in their writings. These are as follows: maintaining one’s integrity, confirming ultimate ideals, identifying important purpose, and establishing a rational worldview. These concepts that shape Filipino literature are based on Edith Tiempo’s “Philippine Literature as an Instrument” (Edith Lopez-Tiempo, 1919-2011, poet, fiction writer, teacher and literary critic). Valuing morality is a prodigious element that humanity needs to reclaim. “Foremost among the concerns of the Philippine writers today is the theme of individual’s integrity, his human rights, the sanctity of his beliefs and his personal experience” (Tiempo, 2008, p. 4). As a citizen of a country with a long history of colonialism, numerous literary works have encompassed human integrity which resonates with the country’s national literature as well as

its contemporary themes that geographically connect the Filipinos. This reality manifests the integration of identity. The importance of freedom and preserving the individual's integrity is one of the themes in the works of contemporary Filipino writers. Also, Tiempo (2008) emphasizes that “the theme of individual integrity, his human rights, the sanctity of his beliefs, and his personal experience is foremost among the concerns of Philippine writers today” (p. 4).

Literature serves as one of the moral compasses. The soul of the nation can be found in confirming its values and morality. Within a nation where corruption abounds, and values are loosely defined. There is a kind of neglect to prioritize morality in a troubled time. Tiempo discusses the next issue or problem that is commonly found in contemporary Philippine literature, which is restoring one's principles and values (p. 5). Furthermore, Tiempo discusses defining significant purpose, which is another theme that is often used by Filipino authors: “In much of the poetry and fictional works we see the attempt to expose a view of significant human purpose into the midst of complexity and the external confusion ever going into our world” (p. 6).

Finally, Tiempo discusses responsibilities as a global citizen by developing a reasonable worldview that goes beyond narrow nationalistic consciousness. Literature and culture are intertwined. Unlike journalism, literary works attempt to broaden an artistic discussion by presenting an unbiased viewpoint: “Creative writers, unlike journalists, have their way of addressing the problem of creating a just and workable world-view for the individual and the nations” (p. 9).

Literature broadens one's perspectives. Also, it allows more writers to master the craft of living. As a result, it allows people to unlearn things and properly filter the information around them. The formation of these ideas is motivated by the desire to broaden human interactions with the rest of the world.

Deciphering the Poetic Contributions of Kabigon in Cebuano Literature

In her column, Maria Kabigon reflected on local life while revealing her literary consciousness. She does this by choosing the words that are easily applicable to the various situations of her readers. Also, she has included poetic presence that assists the readers in navigating the meaning of her advice. Kabigon, born in Carcar in 1878, had little formal education, as did all women of her time. An aunt taught her reading, writing, and basic Spanish. Her first story, “Ang Gugma sa Inahan,” was written under a pseudonym when she was 16 years old. Her initials “MAK” accompanied a body of works carried by numerous Cebuano publications, including plays, poems, stories, and essays, when she began using her real name in 1912. Kabigon helped pave the way for subsequent generations of women writers at a time when men writers dominated the literary and journalistic scene (“Top 100 Cebuano Personalities: Maria Kabigon Everybody's Manding Karya,” 2019).

The sea is the soul of the earth. The sea has served as a storyteller of the past, influencing and even shaping future narrations. Cebuanos have a strong relationship with the sea. The sea is, without a doubt, an essential component of Cebuano writers' imagination, memory, and literary consciousness. Here is an example of the sea as a metaphor by Dodong Mercado for the first section:

*Aniay akong hinigugma nga gipangasawa ko na. Apan napakyas,
kay dili ako mautlon sa iyang ginikanan. Ang tagayan sa among*

pagbati, sibo gayud. Maayo ba nga manlakaw lang kami? (Kabigon, 1952, p. 40)

I have a beloved that I already married. But our love failed because her parents dislike me. The cup of our passion fits perfectly. Do you think we shall leave her parents' house?

According to Dodong Mercado, his sentiments are about his new wife's parents. Manding Karya's response:

Hulata nga molantong na ang dagat, basin inig hunas, hikinhasan mo ang mga isda nga ginganlag palad. Ayaw dalia ang paglakaw, kay matunok unya kamo (Kabigon, 1952, p. 40)

Wait for the tide to come in, perhaps during low tide, you can see the fish which is like fate. Do not rush to leave/Your feet may be injured.

Kabigon compares Dodong's current situation to the sea. Shells, sea urchins, stones, and other sea creatures can be found more easily at low tide. A person can easily take note of one's path in this manner for safety. Kabigon mentions waiting for the seawater to come ashore. In this scenario, Kabigon articulates the importance of allowing his in-laws and himself enough time to get to know each other. This may be a viable option for resolving the conflict. The fish suggests a path to his fate. It implies a decision, a choice, or perhaps his destiny concerning whatever happens in his new family. Kabigon concludes her advice by emphasizing the significance of patience and perfect timing. The tide, too, has its parables and depths as this life comes and goes. Kabigon wants Dodong to take it easy and wait because if he goes, he will be saddled with the enormous responsibility of raising a family, especially in the early stages of marriage.

Another example is from Antonio Casas from Cebu City who is confused about his situation:

Ako usa ka ulitawo nga may igo nang panuigon sa pagminyoy. Dunay pila ka babaye nga daw may gusto kanako, apan wala ko sila hinigugma. Aniy akong gihigugma wala mosugot kanako. Unsaon na niini, Manding? (Kabigon, 1953, p. 42)

I'm a bachelor of marriageable age. Several women like me, but I don't love any of them. I have someone I love, but she doesn't like me. How are you going to solve this, Manding?

And here is Kabigon's reply to Mr. Casas:

Mao gayud kining kinabuhi. Usahay makalagot, apan inigkaalinggat ta nga ang panahon maoy naghari kanato, ang atong kalagut, pulihan sa kadasig. Hulata nga molantong ang dagat basin dunay laing nitabo nga kubiton na ang imong pasol (Kabigon, 1953, p. 42).

This is life. Sometimes, it is irritating, though time truly possesses us, our anxiety is transformed to optimism. Wait for the sea to come down, perhaps there is someone who crosses to take your fishing pole.

Kabigon mentions the meaning of time and the significance of waiting patiently. Perseverance to wait on for the low tide connotes a better chance of finding love. In this case, Kabigon recommends Mr. Casas for the right moment and hopefully, the right person will arrive. With this, the fishing pole implies the “big catch” that can be associated with a new lover.

The second part involves defining values by utilizing nature’s cycle and reality. Another letter requesting advice reads as follows from Mandaue City’s Marcelino Dabon:

26 na ang akong panuigon. May giulitawhan ako, apan naminyo sa usa ka higala ko ra usab. Tungod sa kawala nila magsinabtanay, nagkabunlag nga wala dangtig usa ka tuig ang ilang panag-apon. Nakahunahuna ako nga akong siyang balikan pagpangulitawo, kay naluoy ako kaniya. Maayo ba kaha Manding, nga akong isubli kaniya pagsugilon ang gugma nga kaniadto iyang gisalikway? (Kabigon, 1948, p. 42)

I’m 26. I had courted a woman, but she got married to my friend. And because they did not understand each other, after a year, they broke up. I’m thinking if I can court her again because I feel pity for her. Do you think Manding I should offer the love that she once rejected?

And she responds to him about true love and the proper timing for love:

Ayaw pagtanduga ang samad aron dili mosidlit ang dugo. Siya samdan karon og kasingkasing tungod sa ilang panagbulag. Labing maayo hinoon nga magpalayo ka kaniya aron dili ka katahap sa iyang bana (Kabigon, 1948, p. 42).

Do not touch the wound, so it does not transpire blood. She has a grieved heart because of the separation. It is better if you distant yourself to her so her husband will not be angry at you.

The ability to heal oneself physically or psychologically is the most enduring stage of a person’s life, but the entire process takes time. The advice expresses a broken heart, Kabigon acknowledges the existence of time. A wound will heal on its own over time. She also mentions distance as an important factor in the healing process. For a person to heal, there must be enough solitude and time to forget. This process aids in the act of letting go of the past’s pain. As a result, the act of grieving will be completed and satisfied. For example, consider the following entry from *Bisaya* on January 14, 1948, from Eling of Subang Daku in Mandaue City:

Aniay akong gihigugma nga dii masabut. Kay kon akong amoralon, motubag lang nga unya na siya motangdo inigka 40

ang iyang panuigon. Karon 20 pa siya. Kadugay 'sab nakong hulat! (Kabigon, p. 34)

I have a beloved that I don't understand. It is because if I express my love with flowery words, she just replies that she will marry me when she reaches 40. Now, she is 20. I will wait too much!

Here is the reply of Kabigon that uses both *pasumbingay* and *bugal-bugal*:

Pasagdi siya nga malagas. Ang bunga sa kahoy kon imo lang pasagdan, mobulag man gayud sa iyang pungango busa nganong lugson man nimo pagpupo. Inigkagulang niana tingalig magpanawagna kanim. (Kabigon, 1948, p. 34)

Let her wither. If you don't bother the fruit of the tree, it will just fall off from the branch so why will you force it to harvest. When it will ripe perhaps it will allure you.

The presence of the fruit reflects the imagery of a woman's body. Simply because it is a seed-bearing of a flowering plant, it is often connected with the ability of a woman to conceive. And like the nature of the fruits, when it ripens over time, it will just eventually fall. This is what Kabigon wants to express, she uses nature to manifest the notion of waiting for the beloved (the woman) as she also includes the cycle of a woman's body. When fruit is very ripe, nobody will notice it. Eventually, it becomes useless.

Moreover, Kabigon's advice highlights *bugal-bugal*, it is an ironic and sarcastic speech intended to insult or demean its subject or the addressee (Alunan, 2004). The presence of *bugal-bugal* tradition has been part of the Cebuano verses to capture humor. Nevertheless, Kabigon has the talent to camouflage this through applying metaphors, she has attempted to offend vaguely to let the readers realize how nature can teach people how to live, most especially in understanding oneself and others. Conceding *bugal-bugal* can be a way to have a hint of awareness of reality.

The last characteristic is using animals and plants in confirming an individual's rights, personal experience, and beliefs. To widen the social presence of values, Kabigon uses nature to recognize them. Here is an example, a sentiment from Neno Pelayre of Tagbilaran Bohol:

Kining akong trato, kaipon nakog balangay. Upat na ka alibangbang ang na trato niya. Wala ba kaha katak-takig gihayang iyang pagkabalak sa mga kamut niadtong mga alibangbang? Unsay ikasulti mo niini Manding? (Kabigon, 1948, p. 33)

My beloved, who is with me in my home. There were already four butterflies that she had with. Were her pollens had been taken away from her flower through the hands of these butterflies? What do you think about this Manding?

Kabigon replies with straight conviction about this situation:

Dili kahukman ang bulak kon naunsa na ang iyang gihay tungod lamang kay daghan nang alibangbang nga misangkop. May hiilhan akong dalaga nga kapito na makatrato. Apan wala ka taktakig gihay ang iyang pagka bulak kay molikay man sa masipad nga alibangbang (Kabigon, 1948, p. 33).

You can't judge a flower's petal simply because of the butterflies that have conquered her. I know a maiden who had seven boyfriends. Yet none of them had taken the pollens of her flower because she isolates herself to the wicked butterfly.

In this instance, the flower or a petal represents the female's chastity. And the butterflies represent men or even boyfriends. In this case, Kabigon follows the symbols provided by the letter writer (Neno). She responds in the same way, but instead of referring to the entire flower, she utilizes the presence of the petal to demonstrate the woman's chastity. Perhaps the entire flower represents the woman for Kabigon, and that the petal is only a part of it which denotes her purity. Kabigon emphasizes that a woman's identity is not based solely on the image of one petal; rather, the flower's oneness is the entire depiction of a woman. This scenario implies that to appreciate womanhood, one must look at the flower as a whole rather than at its parts.

Another example that confirms morals using animals and plants is from Mersy Ganar of Kibaghot Alubid in Misamis Oriental:

Dalaga ako, batanon pa. Daghan nagtrato apan walay usa kanila nga nakaangkon sa tinuod kong gugma. Aniyay duroha, ang una gradwado sa high school, ang lain dili. Maorag tinuoray na ako ning nahiuna, apan may kaluoy ako ning ulahi, kay kugihan. Hay, kinsay maayo kanila? (Kabigon, 1952, p. 32)

I'm still a maiden. Many men like to have me as their beloved yet none of them have conquered the genuineness of my love. Two men are courting me, the first is a graduate student in high school, and the other is not. I'm true to the first one, however, I feel pity for the second, because he is hardworking. *Hay*, who is better between them?

And this is the answer of Kabigon to this young lady:

Nganong paghigut kag daghan langgam? Maayo gani kay wala ka hituhiki sa ilang mga sungo. Ay kanimo babaye! Pagpili sa lain, bulagi kanang duroha aron walay masilo kanila (Kabigon, 1952, p. 32).

Why do you tie so many birds? Thankfully none of them have pierced you with their bill. Ay you woman! Choose among others, let go of those two men so they will not be broken.

Kabigon's advice articulates the significance of the "collect and select" attitude in dating. The woman collects suitors and then dates them all. And when one stands out the most, the woman can finally make her choice. The birds that she gathers symbolize the men. Kabigon even reacts

in a form of a *bugal-bugal* about Miss Ganar's mindset by saying that she is grateful that none of them have decided to revenge on her. Moreover, Kabigon's reaction: "*Ay kanimo babaye!*" (Ay you woman!) echoes her dominant presence as a mother giving guidance to her child. The command of Kabigon's advice is strongly illustrated particularly in the last part.

Kabigon incorporated nature to expand the literariness of her column. It was also found that Kabigon used the sea as a direct comparison in preserving the integrity and encompassed nature's cycle and reality in defining values. Kabigon illustrated nature through animals and plants in confirming individuals' rights, personal experience, and beliefs. Also, Kabigon's advice tends to sound pastoral and romantic. Lastly, she articulates two significant matters: using nature as *pasumbingay* and describing nature. This observation suggests that the advice of Kabigon is intertwined with the pastoral tradition, continuing the practice of Cebuano poetry.

Conclusion

Through her distinct literariness and the use of pastoral characteristics, Kabigon has a definite way of responding to her readers. Kabigon's poetic style presents itself as aesthetically and critically different. Aside from her other literary works, her imaginative presence in her column in *Bisaya* elevates her contributions to Cebuano literature. Her advice resonates with the following characteristics: preserving the individual's integrity, confirming ultimate values, defining significant purpose, and developing a reasonable worldview. Also, reading Kabigon's advice is like analyzing a poem. Rather than simply reading her advice, Kabigon appears to present her readers with the task of deciphering the unspoken and subtext. With this, her style allows for opportunities to develop critical thinking and poetic appreciation.

Kabigon has become well-known for her column, which offers practical solutions to life's challenges and complexities. She demonstrated a woman's great voice among men writing during her time, solidifying the hallmark of her advocacy, which is to use her literary gifts to make more people aware of the truth of life and learn a different worldview by providing another perspective. When responding to a letter, she employs metaphors and symbolism to provide a brief but profound response. However, due to the limited space in her advice column, her responses are short. The use of figurative language and symbolism suggests her solution to still provide effective advice despite the magazine's limited space. As a result, her writing style encourages both critical thinking and creative appreciation of the Cebuano language. With this, the readers can have various ways of deciphering Kabigon's advice. Furthermore, most of the letter-senders were young adults seeking advice, particularly on love and life, implying that the advice column signifies how the senders can empower themselves through Kabigon's wisdom. Also, the use of local color demonstrates the richness of Cebuano poetry or Cebuano literature in general, both of which continue to contribute to the Philippines' current national literature.

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