

# *Tradition and rupture: the representation of women in Mafalda comics from a materialist discourse analysis perspective*

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## **Abstract:**

This paper aims to analyze the functioning of feminist discourse in the Mafalda comic strips by the cartoonist Quino. The analysis seeks to understand how the different positions assumed by the characters Mafalda, Raquel (her mother), and Susanita (her friend) are produced. To do so, we will analyze two comic strips to describe and understand the meaning effects they produce. This work is based on the materialist Discourse Analysis, popularized in Brazil through the works of Orlandi (1999). After the analyses, we conclude that Mafalda's stance differs from the discourses of her friend Susanita and her mother Raquel. Mafalda's speeches produce effects of resistance against patriarchal practices, being influenced by the feminist movement that circulated in the 1960s in America. In Susanita's case, her positions result in an effect of resignation towards the discursive practices of patriarchy, reflecting how she behaves in relation to feminism. Meanwhile, Raquel's speeches are characterized by a discovery effect, as she becomes aware of the conflict between the social role she occupies and the positions she could have assumed socially.

**Keywords:** Discourse analysis; Mafalda comics; women.

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## INTRODUCTION

The character Mafalda, created by the cartoonist Quino, is well-known for her progressive stances, questioning and reflecting on various social issues involved in heated debates. Among these issues, Mafalda stands against the conservatism associated with the female figure in the 1960s and 1970s. Noticing that her mother, Raquel, is influenced by so-called traditional practices associated with women, Mafalda confronts her mother's behavior. Raquel had abandoned her studies to dedicate herself to housework, thus losing her sense of self to fit into that reality.

Another aspect we propose to analyze is the dialogues between Mafalda and her friend Susanita. Susanita expresses a desire to get married and have children while believing she must be entirely submissive to her husband. She defends the notion that women should serve men and be financially dependent on them, opposing any social movement that threatens to disrupt such ideology. Bringing this to the present day, when reflecting on the conservatism and sexism imposed on women throughout history, we still see these behaviors in discussions about the social roles women should/can assume in society.

Although the production conditions of the discourses in the strips reflect the social stances of the 1960s and 1970s in Argentina, the subject still deserves discussion, as it remains a current issue. The fight for women's rights continues to produce meaning effects aligned with the context in which they are read. For example, in the strips where Raquel, Mafalda's mother, is influenced by conservative behaviors and discourses, she also reflects on her position as a woman and the direction her life has taken—central elements that will be explored in the analysis.

Even today, job positions often offer different salaries for men and women, even when they perform the same tasks. Additionally, physical violence is still a form of repression of female freedom, where men act against women, given that society still exhibits strong characteristics based on dominant secular ideologies motivated by macho/patriarchal ideals that emphasize gender inequality. Given the information presented, we propose the following guiding question: how and what meaning effects are produced in Mafalda's comic strips when discursive practices symbolizing different meanings of "being" a woman are mobilized?

To address this issue, we selected two comic strips produced by Quino, considering a dual focus: (i) the socio-historical conditions around the disputes of meanings produced by discourses representing different social places associated with women; and (ii) the discursive regularity symbolized by two distinct discursive positions regarding the role of women in society. This allows us to form the discursive corpus with only two strips, given that their representativeness as the materialization of two ideologies is at stake. We aim to describe how the discourses of the female characters in the strips are formulated and constituted concerning the position of women in society.

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by: Saymon Santana de Sousa Lima.

The theoretical framework mobilized pertains to Materialist Discourse Analysis (hereinafter AD), which has developed significantly in Brazil since the 1980s. We will use the contributions of Pêcheux (1975) and Orlandi (1999) as theoretical support, considering elements such as ideology, interdiscourse, and production conditions as fundamental for understanding the discursive functioning under analysis.

## TRADITION AND RUPTURE IN MAFALDA COMIC STRIPS

The creation period of the Mafalda comic strips occurred in the 1960s and 1970s in Argentina, a time marked by various social movements, which contextualizes and clarifies their production conditions (Silva, 2012). Cosse (2014) discusses that family relationships were influenced by ideological, religious, and even political ideas, which always placed the male figure at the center of the family, emphasizing the idea of patriarchal power, which consequently established gender inequality.

Bourdieu (2002) elucidates that, influenced by anthropological and even cosmological determinations, the social construction of bodies significantly contributed to the inequalities attributed to the sexes. Men were always positioned at the top of both categories due to their physical characteristics, associated with a system of homologous oppositions.

The sociologist argues that:

The division between the sexes seems to be "in the order of things," as is sometimes said to describe what is normal, natural, to the point of being inevitable: it is present simultaneously in the objectified state of things (in the home, for example, where everything is "sexed"), in the entire social world, and in the incorporated state, in bodies and the habitus of agents, functioning as systems of schemes of perception, thought, and action (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 4).

These details further highlight the centrality of the male sex, a characteristic passed down from generation to generation. According to Bourdieu (2002), the defended idea was that the man "is the one who transcends the family's interest for the sake of society and opens a future by cooperating in the construction of the collective future [...]. The woman is oriented towards the perpetuation of the species and the maintenance of the home, that is, towards immanence" (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 169), characteristics that confine the female figure to a single reality, as she is underestimated, shaping social discourses according to what was ideologically deemed correct under patriarchy. Moreover, the philosopher states that "women can only be seen there as objects, or rather, as symbols whose meaning is constituted outside of them and whose function is to contribute to the perpetuation or increase of the symbolic capital held by men" (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 27), thus, female figures were even used as bargaining tools to form alliances between families.

It is no coincidence that Rousseau (1999, p. 370) asserts that it was the woman's role to educate men, or, directly: "to please them, to be useful to them [...], to educate them when they are young, to care for them when they are adults, [...], to console them, to make their lives useful and pleasant - these are the duties of women at all times and what should be taught to them from childhood". These ideas reinforce what would be, in this view, the realization of the "natural rights" assigned to women, undermining their strength and numerous qualities by trying to limit them to roles revolving around men.

The functioning of conservative discourses is observed, as we will see later, in the positions of the character Raquel, Mafalda's mother, who accepts everything imposed on her, a conception based on the patriarchy that strongly influenced the ideology of the time, shaping not only the way of thinking but also the sayings and behaviors to be followed by women. This is seen in Susanita's speeches, who, in several strips, expresses her desire to grow up to marry and take care of her husband, home, and children, making various criticisms of women who fight for gender equality,

who "threaten," in a way, to break with the ideological traditionalism associated with women, an ideology possibly passed down in her family environment. In this case, both characters, Raquel and Susanita, are influenced by patriarchal discourse, although producing different effects, as we will see in the analysis.

These practices are primarily motivated by the Family, Church, and School, which are the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) presented by Althusser (2003). According to the philosopher, these function as censorship mechanisms based on ideology. This resource (ideology) is defined as the "representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their conditions of existence" (Althusser, 2003, p. 77), an element that mobilizes subjects and social groups to act according to certain rules, based on what is characterized as the most "correct" to follow, according to the dominant class.

In this sense, ISAs possess "a certain number of realities that present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions" (Althusser, 2003, p. 43), that is, they are under private control and continue to influence social positions through institutions. Another form of repression presented by Althusser (2003) is the Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs), which operate through violence, that is, through the police, the army, and other public institutions, thus acting as instruments supporting the symbolic practices of violence perpetrated by the ISAs.

In this context, the woman appears as a being without autonomy, as she is silenced by the patriarchal system/ideology. Since this figure does not show interest in other future perspectives or functions beyond domestic chores, especially after marriage, she ends up subjecting herself to a monotonous life, full of marital restrictions, focusing excessive attention on her husband. Consequently, the woman is seen as a person without sufficient skills to participate actively in social matters, as, according to the male conception still prevailing in the 1960s and 1970s, her feminine nature prevents her from going beyond these practices.

More recently, Lerner (2019, p. 272) reinforces that "it was the male hegemony over the symbolic system that most decisively disadvantaged women", a process that unfortunately harmed (and still harms) them for a long time throughout history. This helped build the image and identity of women under the influence of the patriarchal system, where women were educated to satisfy men in various contexts, while the male figure was educated to always dominate. Bringing this to the present day, despite different times, many men still consider themselves superior to women.

Thus, we understand that women have been repressed, silenced, underestimated, and violated for a long time. These actions stemmed from conservative, macho ideologies based on patriarchy, many of which are still perceptible today. Therefore, this dominant system (patriarchal) left a negative legacy for women and continues to victimize them. This functioning is historicized in the comic strips, formulated amid the discourses.

## **DISCOURSE AND EFFECTS OF MEANING**

Amid Pêcheux's studies (1990), the philosopher conceptualizes discourse as an ideological manifestation. According to the French researcher, the subject is permeated by ideologies, meaning that their ideas and manifestations are strongly influenced by the predominant ideologies in society without them being aware of such functioning. Thus, language, in this case, is understood as a process that permeates all areas of society, acting as a vehicle for ideological dissemination, shaping the way people think and communicate (Pêcheux, 1990).

Orlandi (1999) also supports this discussion by suggesting that discourse does not involve a simple mobilization of words but rather a production of meanings that occurs within a specific context. This context is influenced by social and historical factors, as well as the conditions under which the discourse is produced. In other words, the meanings produced by a discourse are determined by the circumstances in which it is produced, that is, the social and historical

environment in which it is embedded, characteristics referred to as production conditions (Pêcheux, 1975). Regarding this, Orlandi (1999, p. 17) argues that:

Starting from the idea that the specific materiality of ideology is discourse and the specific materiality of discourse is language, this work explores the relationship between language, discourse, and ideology. This relationship is complemented by the fact that, as Pêcheux (1975) states, there is no discourse without a subject and no subject without ideology: the individual is interpellated into a subject by ideology, and this is how language makes sense.

We understand from the information presented that discourse is a complex system that does not operate in isolation, being intertwined with language and the ideologies that permeate a subject. Thus, discursive memory, the already-said, assumes a significant role as it aids in meaning-making during interactive processes, retrieving information from the collective unconscious, a process designated by Michel Pêcheux (1975) as Interdiscourse. This term was first used by the linguist in his book entitled "Semantics and Discourse" (Pêcheux, 1975), as translated in Brazil, which refers to ideas already said at some point and that are revisited and utilized for the formation of other discourses in relatively distinct ways, that is, (re)signifying them. Orlandi (1999) also supports this viewpoint by stating that:

The saying is not a private property. Words are not only ours. They signify through history and language. What is said elsewhere also signifies in 'our' words. The subject speaks, thinks they know what they are saying, but has no control over the way meanings are constituted in them (Orlandi, 1999, p. 30).

Such a thesis understands that we are not the owners of our sayings, as humans are permeated by the discourses of others. Thus, each statement does not present inherent meanings within the words themselves but is constructed through historical interweaving (for this reason, it is understood as a subject), determined by interdiscourse.

Pêcheux (1975) adds that intradiscourse, which "articulates with co-reference" (Pêcheux, 1975, p. 167) to interdiscourse, is organized as a horizontal axis of discursive formulation, according to given conditions. Therefore, in intradiscourse, the sayings are constructed in such a way that:

The constitution determines the formulation, as we can only say (formulate) if we place ourselves in the perspective of the sayable (interdiscourse, memory). Every saying, in reality, is found at the confluence of the two axes: that of memory (constitution) and that of reality (formulation). It is from this interplay that meanings are derived" (Orlandi, 1999, p. 31).

The intradiscourse operates by virtue of the interdiscourse, allowing us to observe not only how "statements" function but also the role of memory throughout this process. In this context, interdiscourse, according to Orlandi (1999), is an element "[...] of the order of discursive knowledge, memory affected by forgetting throughout the act of saying" (Orlandi, 1999, p. 32). This forgetting is relevant to understanding the production of discursive meanings. In this regard:

When we are born, discourses are already in process, and we are the ones who enter into this process. They do not originate from us. This does not mean that there is no uniqueness in the way language and history affect us. However, we are not their starting point. They materialize within us. This is the necessary condition for the existence of meanings and subjects (Orlandi, 1999, p. 33-34).

Orlandi (1999) further discusses the relationship between language, thought, and the world, emphasizing the particularities that shape the production of meanings in Pêcheux's studies. For her, it is not a closed process but a subjective one, as language is understood as an event where meaning



and form are directly related and inseparable, encompassing the subjects and the positions they occupy in the act of enunciation.

Based on this, the researcher argues that discourse is better explored by initially giving visibility to the conditions of production that determine and enable discursive functioning, a concept understood by Orlandi (1999) as elements that link the subject to their environment, considering the circumstances present at the moment of producing a discourse. These characteristics help to understand the discursive functioning and the materialization of ideology. Thus, concepts such as conditions of production and interdiscourse will be fundamental theoretical elements for understanding how the representation of the feminine is constructed in the corpus we propose to analyze here, as we will see in the next section.

## ANALYSIS

As stated in the first part of this article, our analysis starts with the following guiding question: how and what meaning effects are produced in Mafalda comic strips when discursive practices that symbolize different meaning effects about "being" a woman are mobilized? This issue involves the composition of the corpus itself, as to address this question, we opted to select two comic strips focusing on the representation of women in the 1960s and 1970s, which exhibit a discursive regularity symbolized by two distinct discursive positions regarding the role of women.

To this end, we will analyze our corpus by theoretically considering the comic strips as *discursive sequences* (hereafter DS), defined by Courtine (2009) as symbolic sequences that recur within discourses, considering both verbal and non-verbal aspects. Souza's (2023) definition, which understands DS as "the materialization of interdiscourse processed on the axis of formulation, the intradiscourse" (Souza, 2023, p. 9), reinforces the theoretical interpretation of the corpus we propose here, as it comes to be considered in terms of how it is constituted within its conditions of production of the time already discussed at the beginning of the article.

### Susanita and Mafalda

The first comic strip to be analyzed, DS1, corresponds to a conversation between the character Mafalda and her friend, Susanita, apparently in a public setting, as shown below:

#### DS1- The woman according to Susanita<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> S: I get crazy with guys who think women are inferior.

M: It must be because they mainly see them in domestic tasks.

S: Well, that's what we're made for! After all, a woman who doesn't cook, doesn't iron, doesn't wash, doesn't clean, is less of a woman! Come on!

M: So for you, a woman who has a cook, a washer, a cleaner, and everything is less of a woman?

S: Hold on! ... One thing is being feminine, another is status.

Susanita comments on how women are viewed by men as an "inferior" being, a word that appears in italics, drawing the reader's attention. In response, Mafalda tries to explain, in the first panel, that this social perception of women occurs because men generally associate them only with domestic work, which has never been valued or seen as relevant for someone to stand out in society.

Mafalda's speech is marked by a discourse of resistance (Marques; Oliveira, 2012), as it symbolizes an attempt to make her friend aware of the perception of women's inferiority compared to men, aiming to break this issue and stimulate Susanita's dissatisfaction with that reality. However, from the first to the second panel, there is a break in expectation (Carriere, 2004), or an expected idea that is not met, regarding Susanita's positions. Despite her expression of discontent in the first panel with the idea of female inferiority, Mafalda's friend surprises by changing her speech and confronting the protagonist with her response.

At this moment, in the second panel, Susanita states that women were actually created to perform tasks ideologically assigned to them by the patriarchal system, such as taking care of the house and children, among others, and that women who do not perform these tasks are characterized as "less of a woman." The word "less" is highlighted in larger letters compared to the others used in the conversation. This aspect draws the reader's attention to Susanita's position, as the girl's speech produces an effect of resignation regarding the topic discussed: her speech paraphrases patriarchal ideologies. In other words, Susanita's speech symbolizes ideas established by the patriarchy that still resonate in society, as she propagates the norms and practices of this system. These specificities problematize the conversation between Susanita and the protagonist, as Mafalda's position is interpellated by feminist ideologies that oppose her friend's statements.

The dialogue continues, and in the third panel, the protagonist questions Susanita by saying: "So, a woman who has a cook, a laundress, a maid, and everything is less of a woman?" This question reinforces Mafalda's disapproval of her friend. In response, in the fourth panel, Susanita states that "One thing is womanhood, another is status," with the word "status" presented in italics, standing out in the sentence. Thus, Susanita's speech fuels the humor, as it is a female discourse with sexist aspects. Susanita starts with revolutionary ideals by questioning the definition of inferiority attributed to women.

However, she later mobilizes contradictory discourses based on the patriarchy by defending, through a play on words between "status" and "womanhood," that there are distinctions among those labeled as women, even if they do not assume the social roles established by society. These women are considered "less of a woman" or "a woman by status." On the other hand, Susanita associates the idea of a "real woman" with the term "womanhood," suggesting that it refers to the female figure who acts according to the demands originating from the dominant (patriarchal) discourse.

In this context, "womanhood" appears with the same meaning as the word "femininity" discussed by Pereira (2019), as both terms echo the belief that women are destined to fulfill a predetermined role from childhood, which ideologically includes virtues such as modesty, docility, and a passive disposition to meet the desires and needs of men, followed by children, with the only acceptable space being the family environment. The idea of femininity presupposes that women must conform to the roles assigned to them, thereby reinforcing a mentality sustained by conservative discourse.

The term "womanhood," if analyzed through paraphrases (Orlandi, 1998), understood by the author as the "matrix of meaning," reproduces the sexist ideal of the discourses that constitute Susanita's speech. The character's utterance could be paraphrased in different ways, such as:

- (I) “Uma coisa é uma mulher que faz de tudo por seu marido, outra coisa é àquela que deseja ser chamada de mulher e não cumpre com suas ‘obrigações’”.<sup>3</sup>
- (II) “Uma coisa é agradar seu marido fazendo suas vontades, outra coisa é rejeitar os papéis sociais dados à esposa, fazendo-a menos mulher”.<sup>4</sup>

Given this stabilization of meanings, we consider that Mafalda's response results in an explicit/founder silence (Orlandi, 1992), characterized by the absence of verbal language, which, along with the unsaid (Orlandi, 1992, 1999), produces the effect of dissatisfaction (or disbelief) in the protagonist regarding what she heard from her friend.

In the analysis of DS2, we will observe that, unlike Raquel, Mafalda's mother, who was taught to conform to the social impositions established by patriarchy, thus nullifying herself, Susanita seems to consider the conservatism/machismo associated with women as something positive, actively endorsing practices consistent with the dominant discourse. Here occurs the truth effect, which, according to Orlandi (1998, 1999), is the product of ideology, causing meanings to be accepted as natural. However, it is important to note that while the characters' positions are shaped by the same belief system (patriarchal discourse), they act differently, considering not only the social roles experienced by Raquel and Susanita but also the positions they take in relation to this system, as we will see next.

### Raquel and the discovery

The DS2 below presents only Raquel, Mafalda's mother, performing yet another of her routine household tasks.

#### DS2 - The music scores<sup>5</sup>



Source: Quino (2010, p. 348).

In the first panel, the maternal figure is amidst cleaning the dusty bookshelf, noticeable from the books out of place, accompanied by a cloth for cleaning, while wearing an apron, seated on the floor next to the shelf, with a dirty face and disheveled hair, though still held by a band.

Raquel continues cleaning the books in the second panel, placing them on the floor, when she encounters a surprise symbolized by a smile on her face, followed by the exclamation: "My music scores!" Raquel finds her childhood music study materials, becoming visibly nostalgic and

<sup>3</sup> (I) "One thing is a woman who does everything for her husband, another thing is one who desires to be called a woman and doesn't fulfill her 'duties'."

<sup>4</sup> (II) "One thing is pleasing your husband by fulfilling his wishes, another thing is rejecting the social roles assigned to wives, making her less of a woman."

<sup>5</sup> My thirteen years! ... Miss Giambartoli, the teacher. Poor thing! ... She thought I could become a great pianist. R: Poor her?



emotional, evident from her facial expression, particularly the distant gaze portrayed in the following frames of the comic strip.

In the third panel, Raquel remains still with the music scores resting on her lap, reflecting on her childhood and her musical experiences, visibly emotional as she reminisces, saying, "My thirteen years...! Miss Giambartoli. Poor thing!... She thought I could be a great pianist." This passage lacks syntactic elements, marked by the use of ellipses, leaving room for interpretation, demanding a reading gesture that requires drawing upon interdiscourse (Pêcheux, 1975), where readers associate this with societal sentiments towards nostalgic childhood memories to make sense of what is read and seen up to this panel.

In the fourth panel, Raquel continues her cleaning process (of the bookshelf and books), with a profound silence (Orlandi, 1992, 1999) permeating the scene, indicated by the unsaid or absence of words, yet still significant within the context. This process triggers reflection, as the character ponders her words and her current situation compared to the expectations set by her former music teacher.

Finally, the maternal figure interrupts her activities in the last panel, adopting an expression of sadness and disappointment, questioning herself, "Poor thing, her?" At this moment, an unexpected realization occurs: Raquel transitions from a nostalgic figure content with her reality to a "reality check," realizing her own position as a woman, identifying the societal role she occupies as a wife, mother, and homemaker. It appears she has reflected on the opportunities she may have missed to conform to social conventions.

In contrast, regarding the music teacher, Giambartoli, a different effect is produced: beyond being a woman and working as a music teacher, she stood out by believing in Raquel's potential in music, despite Raquel not having considered this in her life choices. There is a symbolic record of resistance in the teacher's action, encouraging her student to pursue a career in music.

Raquel's discourse, triggered by the discovery of her music scores, is characterized by conflict in the face of her role as a mother and homemaker, who rarely confronts or expresses dissatisfaction with her assigned roles. In other words, Raquel's questioning and reaction highlight her complex understanding of societal expectations placed on women, revealing a moment of self-discovery and confrontation with established norms, producing a discovery effect.

In this DS2, Raquel becomes aware of the choices she made upon finding her music materials, which could have altered the course of her life and made her a woman with greater social participation, rather than a submissive figure confined to home care for her husband and children. This is symbolized by the word "her," highlighted with larger bold letters, prompting readers to reflect on who indeed might assume the role of "poor thing": the teacher had a profession, so "poor thing" might refer to Raquel, the student who did not heed her teacher's advice. This visual and verbal emphasis directs the reader's attention to the attribution of the role of "poor thing" in DS2, challenging conventional expectations.

Raquel finds herself traversed by patriarchal discourse amidst conservative discursive practices (echoed in our society through paraphrases such as "a woman's place is in the kitchen, taking care of the family and the house"), taught to conform to practices consistent with this system within her family environment, relying on patriarchal statements that assume a dominant role. Raquel confronts the image of a complacent woman, one that Mafalda occasionally criticizes harshly in attempts to break such behaviors, aiming to "save" her or remove her from the position of passive victim within this system, perhaps to have a figure to look up to.

## CONCLUSION

In this work, we aim to identify the effects of meaning produced in the Mafalda comic strips, dissecting discursive processes that reflect positions and social roles concerning what it means to be a woman. We seek to understand how the social imaginary about women is formulated in the comic

strips amidst dominant discourses of a conservative society rooted in the patriarchal system, historically entrenched for centuries. However, in Mafalda's case, the protagonist represents a paradigm shift influenced by feminism, a movement gaining momentum during the period in which the comic strips were created, between the 1960s and 1970s.

The central character in the comic strips attempts to break away from the ideological conservatism/machismo associated with the female figure, demonstrating resistance against the dominant system (machismo/conservatism). As we analyze, this is a discursive practice influenced by patriarchy, where Mafalda repeatedly takes positions of resistance.

Regarding Susanita, however, we understand that despite her mentions in dialogue (see DS1) of the weight of tasks assigned to women by the patriarchal system within social conventions, she still favors it. This behavior leads her to reject feminism or any idea that could contribute to societal change. This stance underscores a resignation effect, as we observe her adherence to conservative and macho discourses, demonstrating a denial of social transformations that challenge her deeply held beliefs.

In the case of Raquel, we observe that the character's discourse is frequently influenced by patriarchal and conservative discourses. Often in the comic strips, this happens in response to social issues raised by her daughter, who attempts to raise awareness and provoke changes in her reality. However, in our analysis (see DS2), the maternal figure finds herself alone, revisiting a memory and producing a conflicted stance with the social role she occupies (housewife), prompting reflection on what she wanted or could have done differently in her life, producing what we call a discovery effect.

Examining these three discursive functions that permeate the analyzed corpus, we understand that readers often interpret Raquel as a victim of patriarchal culture, submitting to dominant social and familial standards, relinquishing her own voice and autonomy in favor of what is deemed traditional and acceptable. Susanita, on the other hand, adheres to the patriarchal system by opposing any role for women that deviates from what she considers legitimate and traditional, a stance that Mafalda views as submissive, perpetuating the marginalization of women compared to men/husbands.

Thus, we conclude that the positions taken by the characters produce three distinct effects of meaning regarding the imaginary of women: (i) the effect of resistance in Mafalda's mobilized discourses, intersected by feminist ideology, prompting the protagonist to seek ways to break away from the patriarchal system; (ii) the effect of resignation in Susanita's positions, rooted in the maintenance of conservative/macho ideologies that shape the character's discourse, leading her to reject feminism for acting against the patriarchy she defends; and (iii) the effect of discovery that cuts across Raquel's positions, as she realizes the social position she occupies and what she could have occupied. These effects are recurrent in other comic strips created by Quino, establishing a discursive regularity that materializes social practices, producing unity under the effect of evidence (as in Susanita's case), but also prompting unrest and rupture, engendering confrontation and reflection (as seen in Mafalda's and Raquel's cases).

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