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FROM COMIC TO FILM: NARRATIVE AND VISUAL ADAPTATION OF GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

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ABSTRACT

The study is a comparative analysis between the comics and film adaptations of Guardians of the Galaxy. The objective is to examine the continuity and rupture between both languages. Through a qualitative descriptive methodology, the transformations that arise when moving from the comic strip to the film frame are identified; the narrative, visual, and symbolic elements are analyzed. The results show that some narrative elements and characters remain the same, while other aspects are reconfigured. This study contributes to understanding adaptation strategies between sequential images, highlighting the importance of narrative and visual aesthetics in creating new experiences.

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1. Introduction

Comics are one of the visual languages with a long history, focusing on the visual and artistic resources used to tell a story.

> Comic books have been an indispensable element of mass societies. First published in the US press and later in magazines, they have been a means of dissemination and expression [...]. Their production has therefore conveyed different "coded" messages with ideological, cultural, or aesthetic content. (Merino, 2003, p. 138)

They are widely accepted in popular culture, but these stories, which were initially captured on paper, have also made their way onto television and movie screens. The consolidation of the audiovisual industry was an opportunity for comics to become powerful products of contemporary cinema.

Within this context, one of the major comic book and superhero franchises is Marvel, which, through its universe, has had an impact on the cultural and economic spheres of the industry. This publisher is notable for Guardians of the Galaxy, the subject of this research. It is considered a case study because Marvel Comics and the Marvel Universe are one of the most striking stories, widely accepted and consolidated among superhero fans. This story is characterized by humor, science fiction, and characters with very different personalities, which pose great narrative and visual challenges for its adaptation to film.

Moving from comic book to film is not a simple matter of copying the original work; the process is complex. Although both media use sequential images, there are significant differences that require reinterpretation. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the similarities and differences in the adaptation between the Guardians of the Galaxy comic books and films. For this analysis, narrative and visual elements are considered, such as narrative continuity, settings, characters, iconography, and visual identity.

Although there has been previous research on comic book adaptations for film, there is still a need for further study that integrates narrative and visual aspects, especially in products with a significant impact on popular culture. Related examples include the study by De Prada (2020), which analyzes the relationship between the world of comics and the audiovisual medium. Another study is that of Revert (2016), which analyzes how cinema, through technological advances, seeks to reproduce comics in a very close way, that is, how films increasingly try to look like comic strips.

Thus, this study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the processes of adaptation from comics to film through an analysis of contemporary visual narrative.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Visual and audiovisual language

Film and comics are two sequential languages, but with a clear difference: comics are presented through still images, and film through moving images. "Their sequential nature makes both media conducive to storytelling" (Villafañe and Mínguez, 2002, p. 295). Both languages are forms of visual expression, but they differ in how they articulate stories (Revert, 2016).

The language of comics is based on illustrations and words; McCloud (1993) defines comics as "pictorial and other images juxtaposed in a deliberate sequence, with the intention of conveying information and/or producing an aesthetic response in the viewer" (p.9). Images, symbols, and words are arranged in panels that act as stages, where the reader's point of view is determined.

> The filmic text is based on the interweaving of iconic and indexical sign systems with symbolic systems, whether verbal, written, oral, or visual, developing specific codes to endow moving images with a high narrative capacity and intense fictional potential. (Paz, 2001, p. 378)

In other words, cinematic language tells stories by combining images, sounds, and language, creating codes and symbols that give moving images a powerful narrative capacity.

The main differences between the two languages are the management and organization of time and space: comics through static panels and written verbal language, and cinema through the continuous articulation of shots and sound. That is, through editing.

In comics, editing is first responsible for organizing each panel internally and second for the layout of the different panels on the page (Villafañe and Mínguez, 2013). In comics, "it does not tend to resolve a series of immobile frames into a continuous flow, as in film, but rather to achieve a kind of ideal continuity through real discontinuity" Eco (1984, p. 172).

In cinema, editing "regulates the organization of visual and audio film elements, or the combination of such elements, by juxtaposing them, linking them, and/or regulating their duration" (Aumont, et al. 205, p.62). Editing selects, shapes, and arranges shots, scenes, and sequences, mixing and integrating sound with images (Konigsberg, 2004). This is why editing in cinema requires a more detailed and extensive process.

Another distinguishing element is rhythm; in comics, rhythm manipulates the elements of time to communicate a specific message or emotion, and for this, the decisive elements are the panels (Eisner, 1985).

In cinema, rhythm is made possible by the editing and articulation of spatial and temporal segments. Velo (2013) points out that, during the screening of a film, the viewer experiences three types of rhythmic phenomena: "Visual rhythms, produced on the screen by form and movement. Auditory rhythms, produced by the loudspeaker, the sound reproducer. And rhythms of time, produced by the cutting and editing of image and sound" (p. 228).

Rhythm in cinema is a more complex process than in comics, as different factors come into play:

> Mainly the accent, the beat, and the tempo. And the cinematic rhythm as a whole derives not only from editing, but also from other cinematographic techniques. The filmmaker also uses the movement of the mise-en-scène, the position and movements of the camera, the rhythm of the sound, and the overall context to determine the rhythm of the editing. However, the structuring of the duration of the shots contributes greatly to what we intuitively recognize as the rhythm of a film. (Bordwell & Thompson, 1995, p.256)

2.2. Comic book-to-film adaptation

Adaptation between formats involves a complex process related to the processes and diversity of languages used (Pérez Bowie, 2004). McFarlane (1996) refers to adaptation between film and literature and quotes Dudley Andrew, who states that "every representative film adapts a previous conception... [but that] adaptation delimits representation by insisting on the cultural status of the model... in a strict sense, adaptation is the appropriation of meaning from a previous text" (p. 21).

In the case of comics and cinema, we are dealing with graphic literature and audiovisual narrative, influenced by the expressive, technical, and cultural characteristics of each format. It is not a simple transfer of content, nor should it be considered a mere copy of the original product; it involves a reinterpretation of the original work, considering the resources and possibilities of sequential moving images, as well as audience expectations.

Eco (1984) points out that mass culture "is configured as a continuous dialectic between innovative proposals and standardizing adaptations, the former continually betrayed by the latter" (p.92). In other words, the author refers to the fact that, for example, in the case of comics and cinema, the latter takes the original product, which may have more complex stories, and turns it into a film, in which characters, plots, conflicts, etc. are eliminated, and this new product reaches an audience that believes it is accessing an original story, but in reality is accessing a neutralized, softer version.

Adaptation requires a process of transcoding, which is the transfer of a message from one digital language to another, that is, from one code to another code (Carrasco, 2024). This term, adapted to semiotics, refers to the transposition of one language to another.

Hutcheon (2006) recalls the term *palimpsestic*, where works feel "sometimes haunted by their adapted texts [...]. When we call a work an adaptation, we openly announce its manifest relationship to another work or works" (p.6). The Latin term *palimpsestus* means "preserving traces of previous writing" (RAE, 2026), referring to the technique of scraping old manuscripts to reuse the parchment.

This term, adapted to the two languages that interest us, would mean that the product resulting from the original is not dependent, but rather a branch with its own identity and aesthetic; thus, the adaptation of a work would stray from the fidelity of the original text; "fidelity would be impossible since cinema has a different structure, which affects both form and content" (Montoussé, 2016, p.17).

Adaptation is "subject to impositions and rules, on the basis of which an appropriation is made whose meaning must be measured" (Serceau, 1999, as cited in Pérez Bowie, 2004, p. 286). In other words, film adaptation requires fundamental changes in narrative structure, rhythm, and visual construction; it is a process of mutation that helps the original work to survive in new environments, considering the characteristics of the medium, absorbing and altering genres (Stam, 2009).

Comics, considered a sequential art form (Eisner, 1985), use drawings and words, that is, visual and verbal language. Adapting them to film, which is also a sequential art form, and in this case an audiovisual and verbal language, requires complex processes.

Comics are constructed from the sequentiality of panels, the fragmentation of space, and the reader's intervention in the construction of narrative time. Cinema, on the other hand, is based on the sequentiality of the moving image, editing, and the articulation of image and sound. This process involves reorganizing the narrative, characters, settings, conflicts, etc., to respond to the specific transformations of the new medium.

From the perspective of transmedia storytelling, adaptation is not about moving from one language to another, "but rather a strategy that goes much further and develops a narrative world that encompasses different media and languages. [...]. Adaptations or expansions end up functioning as gateways to the narrative universe" (Scolari, 2013, p. 18-49).

Adaptation theory, although it has different positions, allows us to analyze the similarities and differences between two languages; it allows us to understand narrative and visual transformations as part of a creative process conditioned by the characteristics of each medium.

3. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a comparative analysis that seeks to identify narrative and visual similarities and differences between the Guardians of the Galaxy comics and films. The qualitative approach is characterized by being "directly influenced by particular cultures and social relationships, which make subjective reality dependent on the understanding and analysis of the cognitive subject's ways of perceiving, thinking, feeling, and acting" (Corona, 2018, p. 73).

Regarding comparative analysis: "comparison also allows us to achieve other goals, through analogy, similarity, or contrast, based on what is known, to understand what was previously unknown" (Grosser, 1973, as cited in Nohlen, 2020, p. 43).

This approach is appropriate for this study, as it requires an interpretive analysis of the narrative and visual elements. The corpus of analysis is determined by a representative sample of the Guardians of the Galaxy comics and their corresponding film adaptation (Table 1). The selection criteria are based on narrative relevance, highlighting those products that allow for a clearer observation of the adaptation processes between both languages. They are not the same, but strategically, they are comparable from a narrative point of view.

Table 1. Study corpus

Comics	Marvel Super-Heroes #18 (1969)	Guardians of the Galaxy 2008 (modern version)	
Films	Guardians of the Galaxy (2014)	Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2 (2017)	Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3 (2023)

Source: Own elaboration

The main categories of analysis are narrative, settings, iconography, characters; for each category, similarities and differences between the two media are established. In the narrative, the main events are identified. In the settings, the places where the story takes place and their visual characteristics. In the iconography, the main symbols or recurring elements. In the characters, their role, personality, and visual identity are analyzed.

In the narrative category, the main events within the structure of the story in each medium are analyzed. The narrative structure, in simple terms, consists of an introduction, a climax, and a denouement. The narrative is:

> A chain of events with cause-and-effect relationships that unfolds over time and space. […]. A narrative begins with a situation, a series of changes occur according to a pattern of cause and effect, and finally a new situation is created that brings the narrative to an end. (Bordwell & Thompson, 1995, p. 65)

This analysis allows us to observe variations in the rhythm, temporal organization, and construction of the conflict. About the settings, which are not merely passive containers for the action, but can become the main characters in the story and can be part of the narrative action in a dynamic way (Bordwell & Thompson, 1995). The analysis focuses on determining scenarios as narrative spaces and their visual representation, considering how they contribute to the setting and development of the story.

In terms of iconography, recurring symbols, objects, and visual elements that contribute to the narrative universe are identified. Character categories and costumes are studied together, with costumes understood as a narrative sign that contributes to the characterization and visual and symbolic identity of the characters.

It should be noted that the study is largely a visual analysis; however, due to Marvel's copyright restrictions and to comply with intellectual property regulations, this manuscript does not include vignettes or screenshots of the products analyzed.

3.1. Use of artificial intelligence

ChatGPT was used as a support tool to organize ideas and improve the writing of the text, especially in terms of style, coherence, and organization. Its use was limited to adjusting and reformulating content that had already been developed, without generating any analysis, ideas, or results of its own. All methodological decisions, analysis, interpretation of results, and conclusions are the responsibility of the authors.

4. Results

The main findings obtained after a comparative analysis between the Guardians of the Galaxy comics and films are presented. The results are organized as follows: the first comic (1969) represents the origin of the Guardians of the Galaxy, and a comparison is made with the first film (2014), which also depicts the formation of the group. The second comic book (2008) is a modern version and is the fundamental basis for its adaptation to the audiovisual medium, therefore, it is compared with the second and third films (2017, 2023).

Next, a comparison between characters is presented, which only corresponds to those who have been found to be homonymous, that is, they appear in both the comic and the movies, share the same name, role, etc. This allows for an adequate analysis of the adaptation processes.

4.1. Similarities and differences between the Marvel Super-Heroes #18 comic book and the Guardians of the Galaxy movie

The story in the comic and the movie is structured around the formation of a team that joins forces against a common threat. In the comic, Charlie-27 faces the Badoon army alone and, finding himself overwhelmed, accepts the help of Martinex T'naga. Later, Vance Astro and Yondu Udonta are captured by the Badoons, leading to the meeting of these four characters, who work together to defeat them. In the movie Guardians of the Galaxy (2014), Peter Quill teams up with Gamora, Rocket, Groot, and Drax, forming a group of misfits who unite to stop Ronan the Accuser and prevent the destruction of Xandar and the galaxy. In both cases, the narrative is the same and revolves around individuals coming together to face a common enemy.

Another relevant similarity in both formats is the presence of internal conflicts between the characters. At the beginning of the story, relationships are marked by mistrust and confrontation, but as the story progresses, these conflicts transform into cooperation and teamwork.

The differences relate to character development and motivations. The comic delves deeper into the background and reasons that drive the protagonists to form a resistance against the Badoons. In the film, the narrative focuses mainly on Peter Quill's personal arc, while the background of the other characters receives less attention. There is also a difference in the complexity of the subplots. The film develops more pronounced emotional conflicts, such as the relationship between Gamora and Peter Quill, or Drax's resentment towards Gamora for her connection to Thanos and Ronan. In the comic, these conflicts are reduced, as in the rivalry between Yondu and Vance.

In terms of settings, both formats place the action on planets and space stations, with Earth as a recurring location. Places such as Knowhere and the Nova Corps base appear in both versions. However, the film presents a greater variety of settings, including Morag, the Dark Aster ship, the Kyln prison, Xandar, the Nova Corps headquarters, and the Sanctuary, each with its own visual and chromatic characteristics that emphasize the diversity of races and species in the galaxy. Furthermore, this difference is deepened by the level of visual detail; cinema allows for a more extensive development of set design, facilitating the viewer's immersion through open and dynamic compositions. In the comic, the limitations of the format restrict spatial representation, concentrating visual information in tightly framed panels.

In terms of iconography, the comic book features a minimal presence of identifiable symbols. In the film, the opposite is true; visual elements stand out, such as the Devastators' emblem, visible on the clothing of its members and later that of the Guardians, and the symbol of the Nova Corps, represented by a star and present on facilities, ships, and uniforms, reinforcing the visual identity of each faction.

4.2. Similarities and differences between the comic book Guardians of the Galaxy (2008) and the films Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2 and Vol. 3

A first similarity between comics and movies is the continuity of the narrative conflict. In both formats, the Guardians of the Galaxy face new threats, which maintains a recurring storyline. In the comic book, the antagonism centers on the Universal Church of Truth, while in the film the conflict revolves around Ego and the Sovereign people, marking a clear difference in the nature of the enemies.

Another similarity can be seen in the evolution of interpersonal relationships. In both formats, the characters overcome previous conflicts and consolidate a more cohesive alliance based on mutual trust and teamwork.

The differences are evident, first, in the development of the story. In the comic, the narrative focuses on the ideological and expansive threat of the Universal Church of Truth, which travels the galaxy recruiting followers to feed its faith generators. In the film, however, the group is already consolidated and must face both the Sovereign army and Ego, Peter Quill's biological father, which shifts the conflict to a more personal level.

This difference is reinforced on a psychological level. The film delves deeper into the characters' internal conflicts, especially Peter Quill's relationship with Gamora and his father. In the comic, this introspective development is minimal, as the narrative prioritizes action and external conflict. This intensification of personal drama in the film responds to the need to generate a greater emotional connection with the viewer.

In terms of settings, the differences are striking. In Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2, the action takes place on five planets (Missouri Earth, The Sovereign, Berhert, Contraxia, and Ego's Planet), each characterized by contrasting color palettes and visually dynamic environments. In the comic, there are five main settings (the Tancred Temple Ship of the Universal Church of Truth, the Faith Generators, Hala and The Supremor Hotel, the Sacrosanct World of the Church, and Knowhere), the latter being a recurring setting in the narrative.

On an iconographic level, symbols that function as markers of collective identity can be identified. The emblem of the Ravagers stands out in the film, while the symbol of the Guardians of the Galaxy appears in the comic. Both serve a similar identifying function, although they differ in design. The Ravagers' symbol is simpler, while that of the Guardians incorporates elements of the Nova Corps emblem.

This visual fusion reflects the narrative evolution of the team, which goes from marginal characters to heroes with a collective cause. However, the iconography has greater presence and clarity in the film. In the film, the symbols are consistently integrated into the costumes and set design, generating immediate recognition. In the comic, their use is more discreet and less legible.

On the other hand, the film Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3 maintains the narrative continuity of the previous installments. The group faces a new threat and delves deeper into emotional conflicts, with a particular emphasis on Rocket's past. The narrative evolution is evident throughout the trilogy. The first film shows the formation of the team, the second consolidates their unity despite internal tensions, and the third pits them against a definitive threat as they attempt to save Rocket from the High Evolutionary.

A recurring setting that connects comics and cinema is Knowhere, featured in Guardians of the Galaxy (2008), Guardians of the Galaxy (2014), and Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3 (2023), where it serves as the team's headquarters. The third film features four main settings, which are more visually striking than in the comics, where these spaces lose impact and legibility due to the limitations of the format.

In this latest installment, the Guardians of the Galaxy symbol takes on greater visual relevance, presenting itself as a fusion of the Devastators and Nova Corps emblems, graphically consolidating the group's visual identity and its narrative transformation.

4.3. Similarities and differences between the characters

Characters, by definition, are fictional entities (Koval, 2022). They play a central role in constructing the narrative thread and shaping the fictional environment. Within the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), different types of characters can be identified, such as protagonists and antagonists.

However, for the purposes of this analysis, only those characters who appear in at least one of the selected comics and in the films are considered, as this is a necessary condition for establishing a coherent comparison between the two media. Analyzing all the characters would be methodologically unfeasible, given that their presence and relevance vary between formats, with some characters appearing exclusively in the comics and others exclusively in the films. Table 2 shows the characters identified in both formats analyzed. However, those marked with an asterisk (*) are not included in the analysis.

Table 2. Characters identified in the formats analyzed

Character type	Comic Marvel Super-Heroes #18	Comic Guardians of the Galaxy 2008 (modern version)	Guardians of the Galaxy movies 1, 2, and 3
Protagonist	Charlie-27	Peter Quill	Peter Quill

Protagonist	Vance Astro*		
Protagonist		Rocket Racoon	Rocket
Protagonist		Gamora	Gamora
Antagonist/Protagonist	Yondu Udonta		Yondu Udonta
Protagonist		Groot	Groot
Protagonist	Martinex T'naga*		
Protagonist		Drax	Drax
Antagonist	Eastern Zone Council (Badoon)*		
Antagonist			Ronan*
Antagonist		La Matriarca*	
Antagonist			Ego*

Source: Own elaboration

4.3.1 Similarities and differences between Charlie-27 (comic) and Peter Quill (comic, film)

A comparison between the three characters reveals structural similarities in their narrative trajectories and their roles as central figures within the Guardians of the Galaxy. Their stories share a starting point marked by loss and tragedy. In comic #18, Charlie-27 returns from a mission to discover that his environment has been devastated by the Badoon, and that his loved ones have been killed or enslaved. For his part, the Peter Quill of the modern comic book presents a biography close to that of his film version, built on trauma and parental absence.

The main differences lie in the psychological development and background of each character. Charlie-27 has been genetically modified to survive on the planet Jupiter, a condition that, together with his military training, defines his physical strength and his role as leader of the group. In the comic, Peter Quill has a difficult childhood without his father, then witnesses the murder of his mother by a group of aliens (Badoon), an event that would lead him to seek revenge. In the film version, his mother's death from cancer indirectly caused by his biological father Ego, and his subsequent kidnapping by Yondu, form a narrative centered on loss and the formation of a surrogate family.

Physical differences reinforce these narrative variations. Charlie-27 is portrayed as an extremely corpulent character with fair skin and orange hair, features that emphasize his modified nature. Peter Quill, both in the comic book and in the movies, retains a more conventional human appearance, i.e., athletic build, fair skin, and blond or brown hair.

In terms of personality, Charlie-27 is serious, rigid, and combat-oriented, consistent with his training and physical abilities. Peter Quill, in contrast, adopts a relaxed and humorous character in both the comic book and the movies, a trait linked to his affinity for popular culture and rock music from the 1970s and 1980s.

From a symbolic point of view, Charlie-27 lacks identifiable iconography. In contrast, Peter Quill, both in the comic and in the films, bears the emblem of the Guardians of the Galaxy, although in its graphic version this design maintains a greater visual similarity to the symbol of the Ravagers.

The costumes and colors reinforce these distinctions. Peter Quill wears the Guardians' uniform in both media, with color variations: blue with red details in the comic book and burgundy tones in the movies, always accompanied by the group's emblem. Charlie-27, on the other hand, wears a yellow astronaut suit with metallic elements, which highlights his origin and function.

Finally, each character's abilities reinforce their narrative role. Charlie-27 possesses superhuman strength and speed derived from his genetic modification, making him a highly lethal hand-to-hand combatant. Peter Quill, in the comic book, combines physical abilities with the use of the Element Gun, a weapon that manipulates fire, water, air, and earth. In the movies, he uses Quad Blasters and a mask that allows him to survive in space; although he retains combat skills, these are less specialized than in his graphic versions, reinforcing his profile as a charismatic leader rather than an absolute warrior.

4.3.2 Similarities and differences between Rocket Raccoon (comic book) and Rocket (film)

Rocket is a central character. In both versions (comics and movies), his origin is unfortunate; he is a raccoon subjected to genetic and cybernetic experiments that transform him into an intelligent and autonomous life form. In the comics, he is introduced at an early stage, allowing us to observe the experimentation process and its impact on the construction of his identity. In the film version, the character is introduced as an adult, with a past that is only explicitly revealed in the third film. Despite these differences, both versions share an arc of redemption in which Rocket transitions from loneliness and mistrust to integration into a group and the consolidation of his role as a hero.

In terms of physical characteristics, both versions share the same bodily transformation resulting from genetic and technological manipulation, which marks a turning point in their narrative development. Rocket retains features typical of a raccoon, such as size, fur, and coloration, combined with humanoid characteristics. This hybridization reinforces his identity conflict, placing him between animal and human.

In terms of personality, Rocket displays an impulsive, ironic, and defensive character in both formats. In the graphic novel version, he tends to resolve conflicts through violence or the use of explosives, while in the films, his distrust and emotional hypervigilance are emphasized. In this context, his relationship with his friend Groot serves as his main emotional bond and safe space; furthermore, his acid humor acts as a protective mechanism against trauma.

About your skills, Rocket possesses superior capabilities to those of an ordinary being in both media, with an enhanced exoskeleton, increased intelligence, great agility, and a remarkable ability to create weapons and technological devices. The difference lies in the narrative emphasis, as the movies reinforce his physical abilities, while the comics highlight his creativity and strategic thinking. In both cases, these abilities are essential to his role within the team.

Rocket's visual identity is built on consistency between color and costume. The brown and white tones refer to his origins as a raccoon and establish visual continuity between comic books and cinema. The costume reinforces this identity, with blue suits and contrasting details that make the character stand out, as well as the Guardians of the Galaxy insignia as a constant element that consolidates his sense of belonging.

4.3.3 Similarities and differences between Gamora (comic book and film)

Gamora is a main character in both formats. She serves as a key warrior for the team and, on numerous occasions, proves necessary for the survival of her companions.

In both versions, her story begins in a similar way. She is rescued by Thanos, who raises her as his daughter and turns her into a living weapon known as the deadliest woman in the galaxy. Although the origin is shared, the narrative development varies. In the comics, Gamora becomes involved with the Universal Church of Truth, responsible for the destruction of her family and her home planet. In the films, the narrative focuses on her relationship with Thanos and the search for the Infinity Stones. After betraying him, she joins the Guardians of the Galaxy and participates in the defense of the universe, until she is sacrificed by her father in exchange for the Soul Stone.

Physically, Gamora is depicted in both media as an alien being with green skin and orange eye contours. The differences are limited to minor details, such as hair color, which is brown with green highlights in the comic book and black with red highlights in the film. In terms of personality, both versions agree on a strong, aggressive, and distrustful character. The film version gradually softens this attitude, showing greater emotional openness towards her companions, without losing her status as a lethal fighter.

Gamora possesses great strength, agility, and mastery of hand-to-hand combat in both the comics and the movies. In both cases, her primary weapon is the sword, and she stands out as an expert fighter. In the movies, she also has enhancements that increase her endurance, as well as a retractable sword that expands her offensive capabilities.

Gamora's visual identity is constructed coherently through the integration of color, costume, and iconography. The colors green, black, and red define her image and make her instantly recognizable. This palette is embodied in functional costumes designed for combat. In the comics, her costumes evolve from practical garments to more structured outfits, such as gloves and boots; in the movies, she wears black full-body suits with green or red details. The iconography also varies depending on the medium; in the comics, the belt with a skull reinforces her reputation as the deadliest woman in the galaxy, while in the movies this symbol is replaced by emblems associated with the Devastators, underlining her narrative alliances.

4.3.4 Similarities and differences between Groot (comic book and film)

Groot is a character whose role is relevant within the plot, as his abilities prove decisive in confrontations and in the dynamics of the team. In both formats, he has a similar origin story: he leaves his home planet, travels the universe, is captured, and establishes a key relationship with Rocket before joining the group. The comics delve deeper into his family life and early development, while the movies simplify this background, maintaining the idea of a personal journey.

Visually, Groot is a plant-like being with a tree-like appearance, whose organic body can expand and modify its limbs depending on the situation, which sets him apart from the rest of the team. His personality is calm, empathetic, and protective, although he becomes combative when his companions are in danger.

It can manipulate its plant body, creating weapons or shields and partially regenerating itself, skills that are essential in combat. Its chromatic identity remains constant, with a predominance of brown and green tones associated with its plant nature. It does not use conventional clothing; its own body functions as an organic structure that reinforces its visual uniqueness. Nor does it feature any external iconography; its identity is constructed solely from its form, materiality, and color.

4.3.5 Similarities and differences between Yondu Udonta (comic book and film)

In the comic book, Yondu Udonta is a warrior and mystical hunter from the planet Centauri IV. After being captured by the Badoon alongside Vance Astro, he rebels and joins Charlie-27 and Martinex to form the Guardians of the Galaxy. His identity is linked to his tribal origins and his role as a hunter. In the movies, he is the leader of the Ravagers, an interstellar group of thieves and smugglers. Although he initially appears as Peter Quill's kidnapper, it is later revealed that he cared for him and protected him from his biological father, assuming a father figure role.

In both versions, he has blue skin and a red crest. In the comics, golden tattoos representing his Centaurian heritage are added. In the movies, his design takes on a rougher space pirate aesthetic, with metal teeth and less tribal influence. Yondu's personality is characterized by loyalty to his own codes. In the comics, he is disciplined and confident; in the movies, he is tough and cynical, but with a strong sense of honor and a marked emotional vulnerability towards his crew and Peter Quill.

His abilities remain consistent. In the comics, he stands out as an agile hunter and combat expert, using a bow with Yaka arrows controlled by whistles. In the movies, this ability is concentrated in the intelligent Yaka arrow, guided by whistles and a cybernetic crest, with high precision and lethal power, as well as superior physical resistance.

His color identity is based on the blue of his skin and the red of his crest. In the comics, his iconography is associated with the bow, in the movies, with the Devastators' emblem. The costume reinforces these differences; in the comic, he wears minimal clothing linked to his tribal origins. In the film, he wears the Ravagers' uniform, a red trench coat and the group's insignia, which underlines his role as leader and space pirate.

4.3.6 Similarities and differences between Drax (comic book and film)

In the comics, Drax is a body created to house the soul of Arthur Douglas to destroy Thanos, a mission that defines his existence. In the movies, he is presented as a prisoner in Kyln prison, where he meets the future Guardians of the Galaxy and joins the group. In both formats, Drax is a hairless character with greenish skin and a strong body. In the comics, he has red tattoos, while in the movies, they are orange on grayish-green or bluish skin.

His personality is similar in both media, that is, serious, unsociable, and focused on combat. In the movies, these traits are accentuated in his limited relationship with the Guardians. Drax possesses superhuman strength, great endurance, and mastery of combat. In the comics, he is agile and skilled with knives; in the movies, he retains these abilities, possesses accelerated healing, and fights with dual daggers.

The color identity is based on the contrast between skin and body markings: green and red in the comics, grayish green and orange in the movies. Drax does not have his own iconography in the comics. In the movies, he only wears the Guardians insignia in the third film. In the comics, he wears black pants, gloves, and boots. In the movies, his wardrobe is minimal, although in the third installment he wears the team's uniform jacket.

5. Discussions

A comparative analysis of the two sequential image formats of Guardians of the Galaxy shows continuity in the narrative structure, but also identifies significant adjustments specific to the medium to which the story is adapted.

In both comics and movies, the narrative is structured around the union of different characters who initially have conflicts with each other but then evolve toward a group identity. However, the psychological evolution of the characters differs in depth between the two media. In cinema, it is much more dynamic and complex, which is necessary to maintain the viewer's attention.

Furthermore, in the graphic medium, the narrative prioritizes the social context and motivations of the antagonists, for example, the objectives of the Universal Church of Truth; this causes the conflict to intensify. In contrast, the films highlight the characters' inner psychological struggles, their family conflicts, and the emotional bonds between them. This is mainly due to the expressive capabilities of audiovisual language and the fact that cinema requires an emotional and multisensory connection with the viewer.

In terms of scenarios, the differences between media stand out. In graphic language, it is limited, with visual details minimized; this is determined by the physical layout of the panels. Meanwhile, in film, there is extensive visual detail, color, and highly legible images. However, they coincide in certain settings, such as the Guardians of the Galaxy's base of operations called Knowhere; this contributes to the transmediality of the narrative universe.

Iconography reinforces the evolution of the narrative; in the comic, it is somewhat limited, with no major symbolic resources identified, unlike in the films, where the main symbol identifying the guardians evolves and becomes an emblem of strength, unity, and even family.

Furthermore, a comparative analysis of characters at a visual level show that, in the film adaptation, their identity is strengthened through costumes, colors, and iconography; in the comic, these elements are more limited.

Therefore, the comparative analysis allows us to establish that the differences between the two media do not constitute an absolute break, but rather a reconfiguration that responds to the expressive, narrative, and symbolic dynamics of the audiovisual medium.

6. Conclusions

The study of the Guardians of the Galaxy comics and their adaptation to film allowed us to identify differences and similarities in narrative, characters, settings, iconography, etc. We conclude that the similarities relate to narrative structure, while the differences are based on character development, visual details of the settings, and the presence of iconographic elements.

The film adaptation strengthens the characters' internal conflicts and the relationships between them, while the comic highlights the social context and the conflict between factions within the galaxy.

It can also be concluded that in the comic, visual identity through iconographic elements is limited compared to the film medium, where visual identity through symbols and colors is key to conveying unity, belonging and teamwork.

Furthermore, it is concluded that certain characters, stories, and settings that are similar in both media allow for narrative coherence, which reinforces the transmedia strategy and recognition of the fictional universe. Differences are necessary and confirm that cinema does not literally copy the story, but rather transforms it and adds new elements that allow it to connect with old and new audiences.

For future studies, the analysis could be extended to other characters; in addition, a comparison could be made between different formats, for example, between comics and animated series that share graphic elements. Furthermore, a mixed methodology could be proposed, that is, an in-depth semiotic analysis and reception studies that would provide insight into the viewer's perception.

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