

Constructing Parallel Narratives in Cartographic Storytelling

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Visual stories have become a predominant method for consuming information. Cartographic storytelling, which enhances the map with additional text and media elements, is no exception [2].

For this reason, research in field of cartography has begun to focus on how storytelling techniques and structures can be applied in cartographic storytelling. No research thus far has examined parallel narratives in cartographic storytelling.

Parallel narratives present multiple storylines in one story. They have become more popular in recent years in both literature and film because they present a complex and more realistic depiction of the world around us by examining multiple sides of a story [1].

DEFINITION

Cartographic parallel narrative stories can be defined as a map or combination of maps that with additional text and media present two or more narratives interwoven by a common theme.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective was to examine how parallel narratives are applied in cartographic storytelling and develop a typology that describes the presentation of parallel narratives in cartographic storytelling. In order to accomplish the objective four sub-objectives were outlined:

1. Examine the design elements and techniques used to enhance and structure a story in both visual and cartographic storytelling.
2. Examine parallel narrative structures present in literature and film.
3. Develop a typology categorizing the types of parallel narratives in cartographic stories.
4. Test methods of presenting parallel narratives in cartographic storytelling discovered by objective three.

QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

A qualitative content analysis of existing examples of parallel narratives in cartographic stories was conducted based on design elements presented in visual narratives, cartographic stories, and parallel narratives.

The qualitative content analysis consisted of coding and card sorting. 53 examples of cartographic stories that presented parallel narratives were collected for analysis. The 53 cartographic stories were coded by 51 variables.

RESULTS

Results of the qualitative content analysis presented 7 categories of cartographic parallel narrative stories. Categorization was based on several concepts including: what linked the two narratives, how the two narratives interacted in the visualization, and what visual elements guided the viewer between the narratives.

The categories of cartographic parallel narrative stories are: (1) Two Narratives – One Map, (2) Two Narratives – Multiple Maps, (3) Many Narratives – One Map, (4) Many Narratives – Multiple Maps – Spatial Connection, (5) Many Narratives – Multiple Maps – No Spatial Connection, (6) Same Space – Temporal Progression, and (7) Same Space – Different Points of View (Figure 1).

CASE STUDY

With data from the research group Bio-Invasions – global change – Macroecology [3] a case study was conducted which examined the role specific elements played in a Same Space – Different Point of View cartographic parallel narrative.

CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

This thesis presents the first step into research on the presentation of parallel narratives in cartographic storytelling. In examining how techniques from visual and cartographic storytelling and parallel narratives play a role in the presentation of parallel narratives in cartographic stories, 7 categories of cartographic parallel narrative stories were developed.

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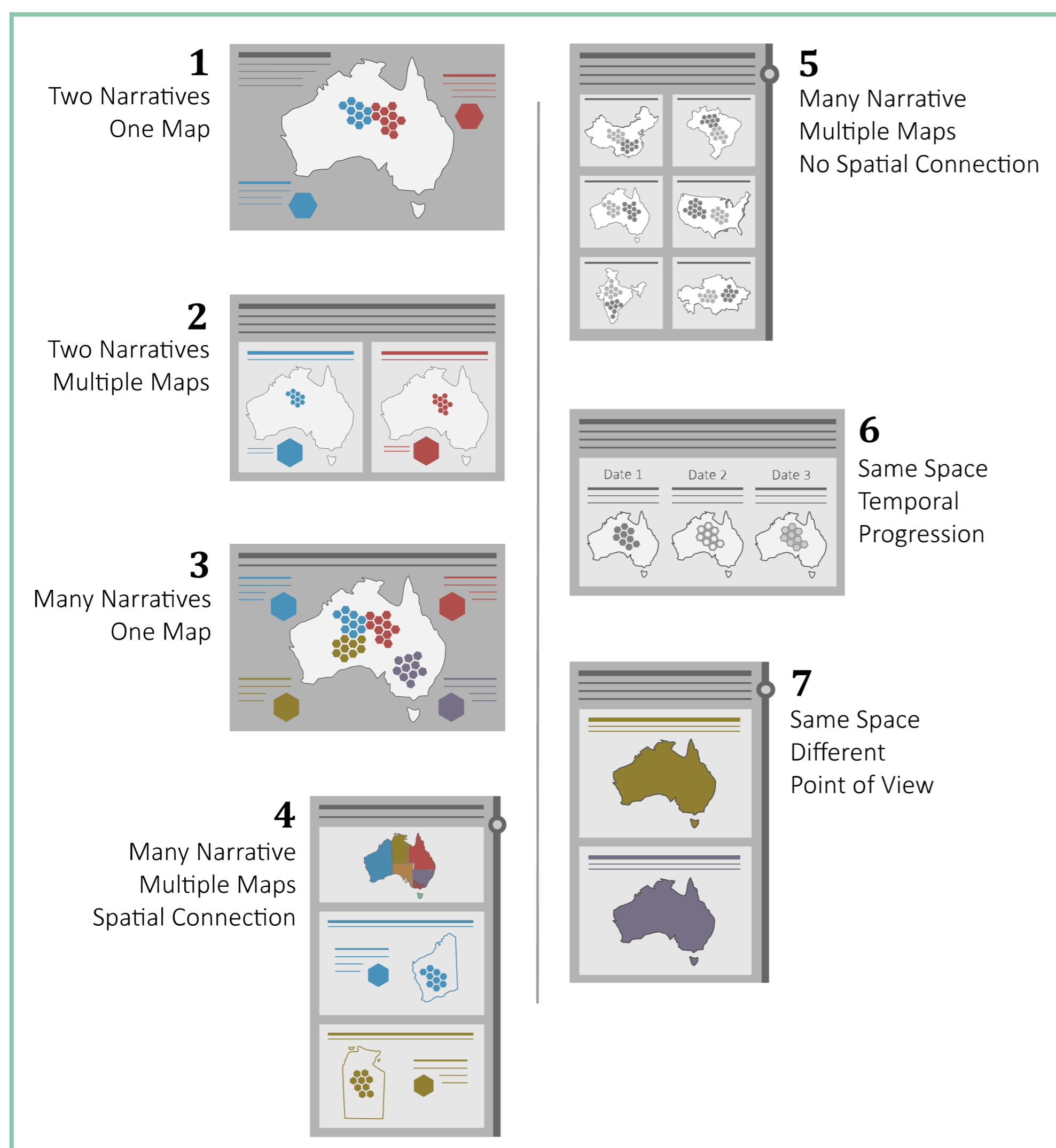


Figure 1. Visual example of each cartographic parallel narrative story category.

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