

Network Approach to Narrative Analysis

Vanja Govednik

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

e-mail: `vanja.ida@s5.net`

Researchers have been studying narratives for several years trying to find some generalization of structure or existence of uniform rules in them. Vladimir Propp, when studying Russian fairy tales in 1928, discovered that there is a limited number of roles characters undergo and actions they perform. Benjamin Colby (1973) came to similar conclusions when dealing with Eskimo folktales. Several other researches in proceeding years dealt with narratives by help of different methods and from different scientific perspectives. The approach we were particularly interested in is the one parsing text of narratives into so called semantic triplets composed of subject, verb and object. We can read this kind of triplet as who did what to whom. This kind of parsing of text can be easily transformed into a network. Subjects and objects can be represented as vertices, and relations between them as arcs or edges. Because a narrative includes also time component, it determines a multi-relational temporal network. This kind of network can be further analyzed with the goal of finding some basic rules or patterns in it.