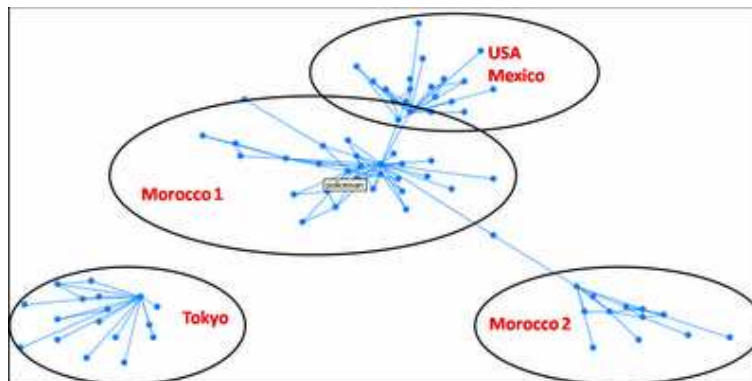


# **“Network Criticism” – A New, Crossdisciplinary Paradigm for the Criticism of Dramas, Movie Scripts and Literature**

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Although humanities and cultural studies have a long tradition in formalistic interpretations of works of art and literature (e. g. Erlich, 1973; Wellek and Warren, 1956), only few writers have understood these works as networks of characters that (inter)act (with each other). This paper expands this stream of thought by formalizing, visualizing and analyzing the evolution of the characters’ interaction networks in some popular movies (including “The Avengers” “Babel”, “Batman and Robin”, “Burn after Reading”, “Godfellas”, “The Godfather”, “The Graduate”, “Pretty Woman”, “The Reader”, “Schindler’s List”, “The Shawshank Redemption”, and “Thelma and Louise”). In the formalization, each character represents a vertex of a network. An aligned edge between two characters is drawn when they interact with each other in the movie (see Figure 1 and <http://tinyurl.com/bpkkoX>). For the creation of movie networks, the authors wrote a parser that can automatically extract social networks from movie scripts or dramas that are available free of charge on a variety of websites (e.g. awesomefilm.com, imdb.com, simplyscripts.com, gutenberg.org). In the paper, the authors discuss several decisions that have to be taken during the formalization process (e.g. how to treat characters who speak in the off etc.). Afterwards, they analyze the dynamic visualizations and statistic properties of these networks, and illustrate the potential of this approach in an interdisciplinary research context. Scholars in the humanities can benefit from this just as well as researchers in management science who aim at investigating success factors of movies on the basis of quantitative methods (e.g. Hennig-Thurau et al. 2007). For example, there are not yet many satisfactory quantitative measures reflecting movie script quality that can support managers during the greenlighting process.



*Figure 1. Social Network of Characters Interacting in Babel*