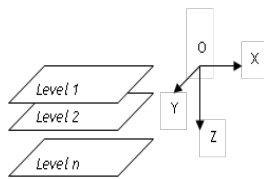


## Models and Tools for Digital Scholarly Editions: Textual Zoom

The project consists in the construction of a textual zoom model (*z-text*) and interface (*zoom-editor*) allowing the text to be structured on levels of details and to be explored by *zoom-in* and *zoom-out*. With application in creative writing, literary criticism or pedagogy, the model may be used in potential scenarios pertaining to the field of the scholarly editions, such as:

- **gradual** disclosure of **details** as an analytic, stylistic or storytelling strategy;
- variable **proximity/distance** to a textual object, simulating a camera-like approach;
- topic unfolding as a **scalable** map, from simple to complex, intuitive to abstract, particular to general or general to particular, “bird’s eye view” to tiny detail;
- **kaleidoscopic** view by change of the *visualization tool* (considering the same episode with different *magnifying glasses*).

### Models and Tools



The **z-text** model relies on a layout of levels of details along Z-axis. Every level is composed by units called **z-lexias**<sup>1</sup> which can include one, more or less than a paragraph (text and related images). A **parent z-lexia** may be expanded by adding details and have **descendants** on the subsequent, deeper levels.

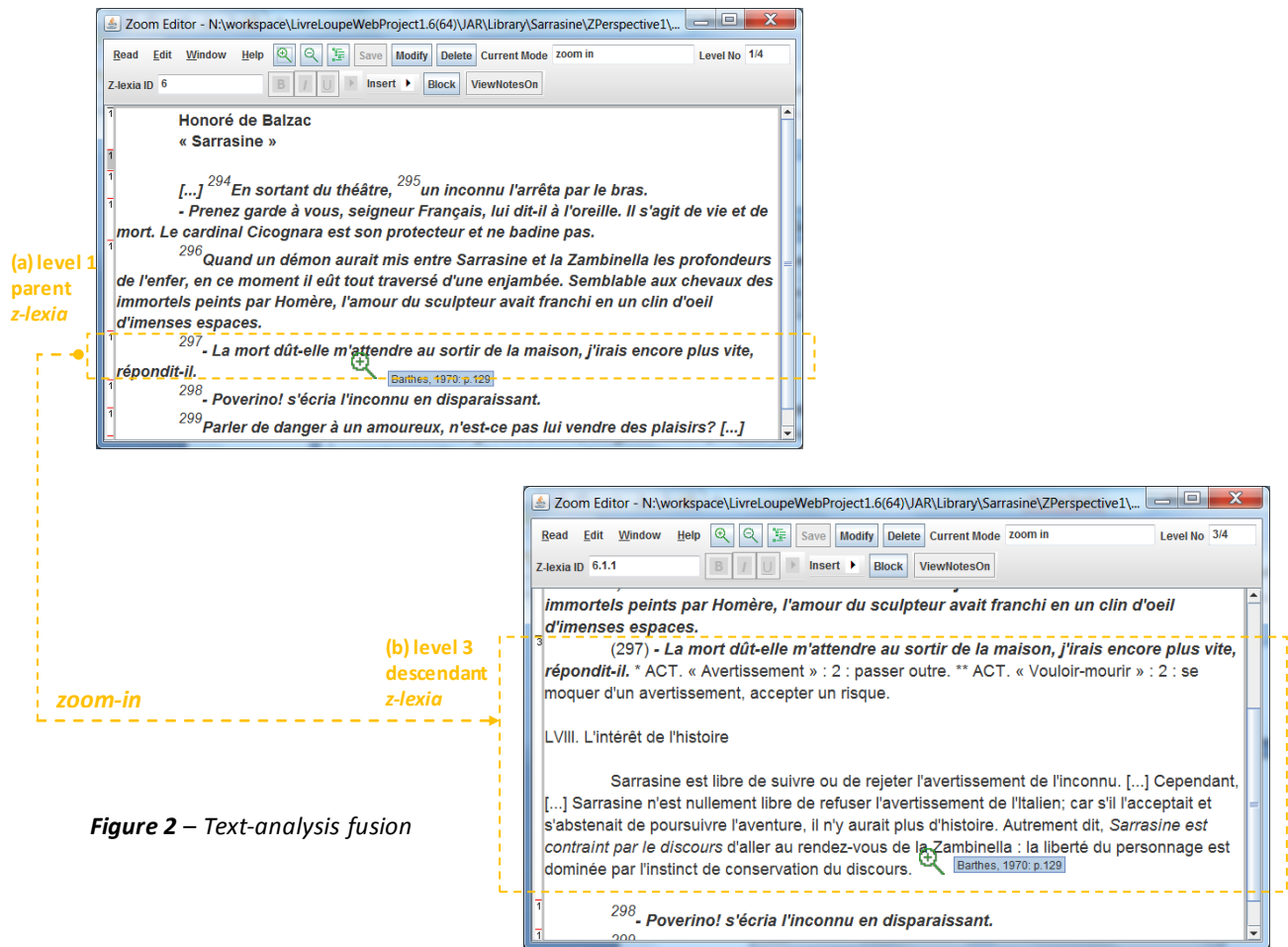
**Figure 1** – Z-text layout A *z-textual* layout is based on a set of XML files, to each level corresponds a file. The relations *parents–descendants* are expressed by means of a system of identifiers (*Z-lexiaID*). The **zoom-editor** interface, launched as a Java applet via a browser, manages the XML-based system in a way transparent to the user.

### Applications

The first examples of possible applications for scholarly editions are related to the field of literary criticism and deal with a fusion of the literary text to be analysed with a gradually unfolded analysis on the deeper levels of the representation. **Figure 2** shows a fragment of Balzac’s *Sarrasine* (a) and an excerpt from the corresponding interpretation by Barthes<sup>2</sup> obtained after successively zooming-in the 297 (z-)lexia (b). Further zooming may reveal the analytic details, moving progressively from the interpretative codes (*hermeneutic, symbolic, semantic, etc.*) to a more nuanced reflection on the discursive logic and the characters’ actions in the fictional world.

<sup>1</sup> Inspired by the term *lexia*, a unit of reading, proposed by Barthes (1970).

<sup>2</sup> Barthes, Roland, *S/Z*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1970.



Similarly, we can imagine a *z-textual* layout merging, in a multilayered structure, Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* with Greenblatt's<sup>3</sup> new-historicist reconstruction of the socio-cultural context having inspired it or Homer's *Odyssey* with Auerbach's<sup>4</sup> analysis leading gradually from a close reading of Ulysses' scar episode to a general view on the representation of reality in the Western literature<sup>5</sup>. Another kind of *z-text*, related to a genetic criticism perspective, could imply a fusion of a published text and its "avant-texte"<sup>6</sup> variants. For instance, by joining fragments of Flaubert's *Hérodias* and a layered structure of folios from the genetic edition of *Corpus Flaubertianum*<sup>7</sup>, placed in an anti-chronological order<sup>8</sup>. The punctual *zooming-in* and *out* through the levelled structure of manuscripts may convey a sense of the genesis of the text, back from the final, polished form, through its intermediate phases, to the first drafts of the writing process.

<sup>3</sup> Greenblatt, Stephen, *Will in the World. How Shakespeare became Shakespeare*, New York-London, W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Auerbach, Eric, *Mimésis. La représentation de la réalité dans la littérature occidentale*, Paris, Gallimard, 1968.

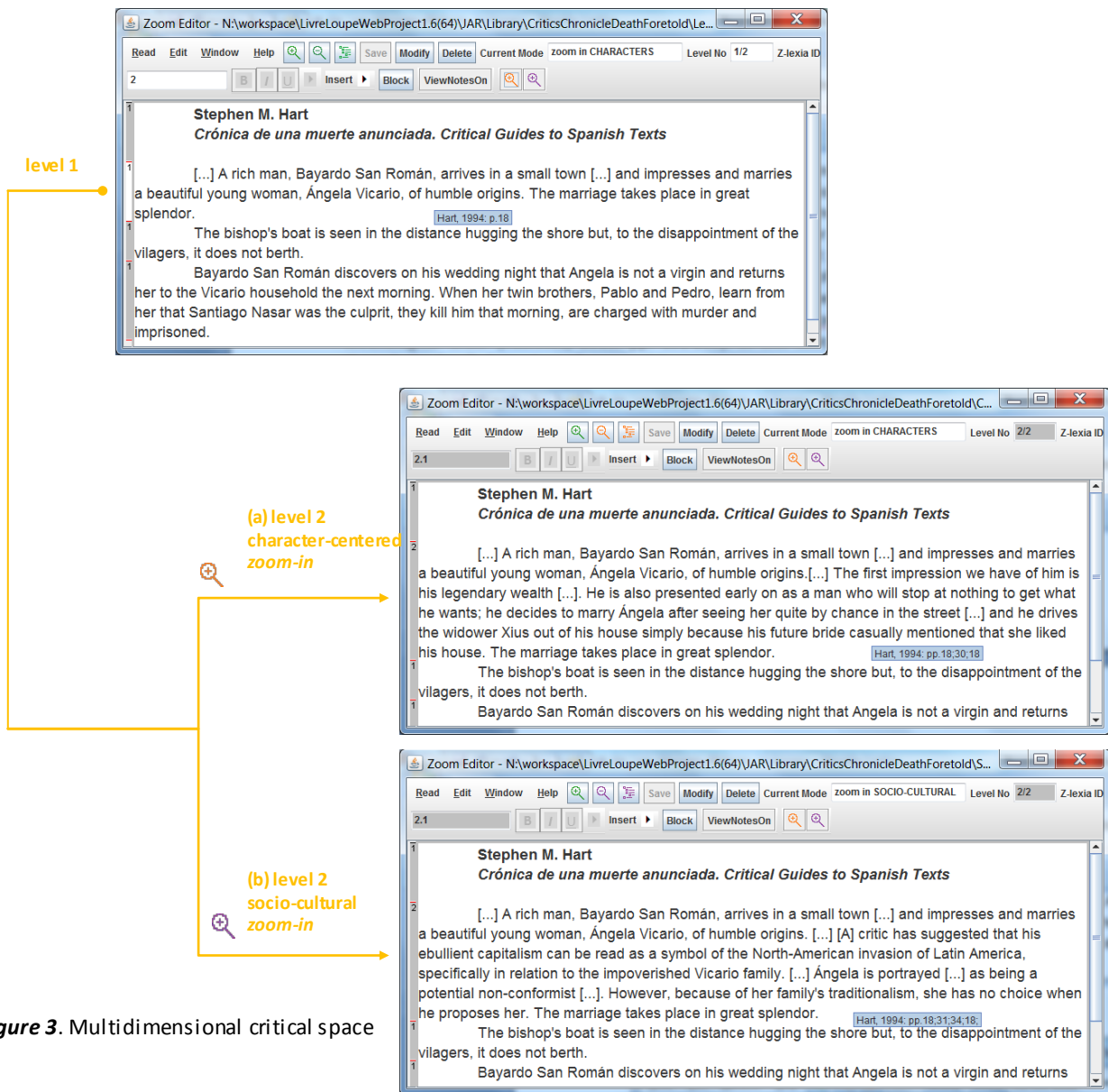
<sup>5</sup> Vasilescu Florentina, Ph.D. Thesis, « Le livre sous la loupe : Nouvelles formes d'écriture électronique », Papyrus, University of Montreal Institutional Repository, 2010, <https://papyrus.bib.umontreal.ca/jspui/handle/1866/3964>, pp. 173-191.

<sup>6</sup> Term proposed by Bellemin-Noël, Jean, *Le texte et l'avant-texte ; les brouillons d'un poème de Milosz*, Larousse, Paris, 1972.

<sup>7</sup> Bonaccorso, Giovanni et collaborateurs, *Corpus Flaubertianum II. Hérodias*, Edition diplomatique et génétique des manuscrits, Tome II, Messina, Sicania, 1995.

<sup>8</sup> Vasilescu, 2010: pp. 191-200.

As McGann<sup>9</sup> observes, literary works organize themselves along “multiple dimensions”. **Figure 3** presents a z-text based on adapted excerpts from Hart’s<sup>10</sup> critical notes on Márquez’ *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*. The expansion of the z-lexia describing the marriage of Angela and Bayardo represents a branching point of the analysis: one direction follows a character-centered view focusing on Bayardo’s wealth and his ability to get what he wants (a), the other, a socio-cultural interpretation hinting to the intrusion of the North-American capitalism in a traditionalist Latin America (b). The use of different types of “magnifying glasses” as visualization tools is intended therefore to create a multidimensional critical space.

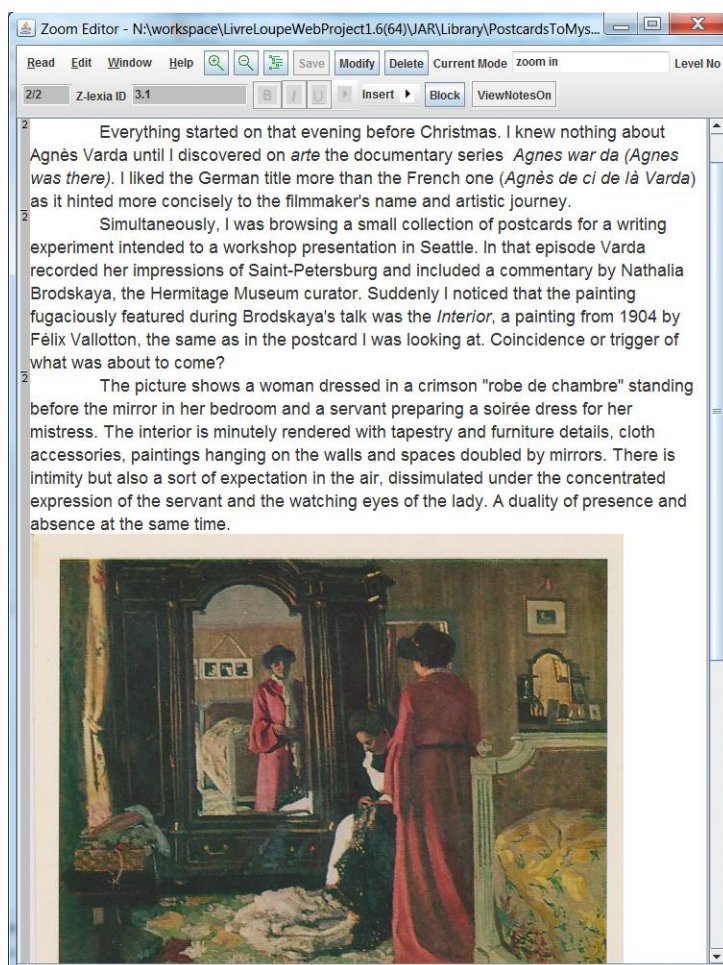


**Figure 3.** Multidimensional critical space

<sup>9</sup> McGann, Jerome, “Marking Texts of Many Dimensions”, In *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, edited by Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, John Unsworth, Blackwell Publishing, Padstow, Cornwall, 2004, pp. 198-217.

<sup>10</sup> Hart, Stephen M., *Critical Guides to Spanish Texts. Gabriel García Márquez. Crónica de una muerte anunciada*, Grant & Cutler Ltd., Valencia, Spain, 1994.

The last example deals with the idea of gradual disclosure of details as a strategy of storytelling (**Figure 4**). The story (*Postcards to myself*)<sup>11</sup>, starts with a paragraph and expands gradually on the deeper levels. The text unfolding is activated by trigger-elements, like the theme of Vallotton's painting. At the same time, one can consider the *z-textual* layout as keeping trace of the process of writing itself, i.e. the triggers and the different phases of development of the text, a perspective that may be further explored in a scholarly edition context.



**Figure 4.** Details disclosure as a strategy of storytelling

<sup>11</sup> Armaselu (Vasilescu), Florentina, *Postcards to myself* (work in progress).

## **Developments**

A demo version of *zoom-editor* is available on the project Website ([www.zoomimagine.com](http://www.zoomimagine.com)).

A downloadable variant, including *z-texts* samples, can be accessed via:

<https://papyrus.bib.umontreal.ca/jspui/handle/1866/3964>.

A new beta version will be available soon on the project Website.

## **Contact Information**

Florentina Armaselu (Vasilescu)

*ZoomImagine*, [www.zoomimagine.com](http://www.zoomimagine.com)

Address: Türnergasse 4, 69124 Heidelberg, Germany

Phone: +49 (0)6221 7781936

E-mail: [florentinaa@zoomimagine.com](mailto:florentinaa@zoomimagine.com)