

DIGITAL PICAESQUE STUDIES AND THE ACADEMIA PICAESCA

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation contributes to the Digital Humanities in general and to the study of the picaresque novel in particular. Its immediate goal is to coordinate and enhance the dialogue of scholars and readers of the picaresque, a field currently characterized by strong disagreement and a lack of communication. In order to accomplish this objective, I created an extensive digital bibliography and textual archive whose search capacity and structure were designed to host and foster dialogue among critics and lay readers alike.

The bibliography and archive are presented in the form of a Zotero Group Library. Zotero is a free, downloadable software application that allows for the crowd-sourcing and collaborative annotation of primary and secondary references and texts by scholarly communities. The group library I have developed and begun to annotate (and which contains over 1900 works to date) represents a living medium of exchange and will always maintain its essential status as a collective “work in progress.” The dissertation’s objective is to cultivate order within the aforementioned disarray characterizing the field, such that all who use the library will have a progressively better reading and research experience and thus feel empowered to make their own

contributions to the ongoing dialogue. The technological infrastructure provided by this project will ideally build a greater sense of community in our shared endeavor as students and readers of the picaresque.

The dissertation's Introduction discusses digital technology within a specialized scholarly community and attempts to demonstrate how digital tools can be successfully employed in traditional literary research and criticism. It is followed by two appendices: the first, a "user's manual" for the library (its "Readme" file); the second, an automatically generated bibliography of the library's current contents.