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ENGL 3204
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Evaluating *Arthurian Literature and Art*

For this evaluation project I am choosing to evaluate *Arthurian Literature and Art*, a website edited by Dr. Kathleen L. Nichols and which is based on cataloging an enormous number of websites pertaining to literature and artistic movements that occurred during the Arthurian period in medieval Europe. The site is located at <http://members.cox.net/academia/labelle.html>. I decided to base my evaluation on three main areas: content, clarity, and authority.

At a first glance, the website is incredibly extensive. Upon closer examination I found that it is solely based on links to other sites with little personal involvement from the editor; however, next to each link are at least a few sentences written by the editor herself that describe that particular link and how insightful it might be. Most of the links do function (only a few times did I happen to come across one that could not be located on the Internet), but I noticed almost all of them are not current and some are as much as seven years old. All the external websites do appear to be quite legitimate and consistent in the content of information they offer. One interesting thing about Nichols' website is the variety of information given, ranging from "scholarly" articles such as "Arthurlandia: A Tradition of Anachronism" to "The Evolution of the Chivalric Code" which was written by a college student. Ultimately, *Arthurian Literature and Art* does make up for its apparent lack of internal substance with the enormity of the knowledge and facts that it does offer any interested student or hobbyist, but even this cannot deter from the fact that at times the website seems to be a hodgepodge of any available site dealing with the

Middle Ages and the Arthurian era.

In terms of clarity, *Arthurian Literature and Art* is for the most part easy to navigate and understand. The information is organized into two main areas: Celtic, Medieval, and Renaissance Arthurian literature and Victorian/Modern Arthurian Literature. From there, there are a number of different indexes (for example, “Gender and Sexuality Issues”) that have the links pertaining to that subject listed under them. With this system, it is easy to locate the subject you want more information on and visit several links in a relatively short time period. However, a particular aspect about the site that I feel both enhances it while at the same time makes it more distracting is the array of images and text used to make each page distinct.

Finally, the site is fairly professional despite the large number of external links – a link at the bottom of the page takes us to Dr. Nichols’ homepage where we learn the editor received her Ph.D. in English from the University of Nebraska and is currently an English professor at Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas. The bottom of each page of the site has a date signifying when it was last updated (a negative aspect is that the most current date is 3-20-03) and a link to contact Dr. Nichols with questions and comments regarding the site. Nichols unarguably has good credentials, but the lack of an .edu domain specifies that it is NOT associated with Pittsburg State and therefore is one solely based on her own personal interest in medieval literature and may have errors in the knowledge it offers.