

2018 Leader prize citations

2017 article — winning the 2018 award is Kristina Hildebrand (in absentia)

The article in question is Kristina Hildebrand's "Sitting on the Sidelines: Disability in Malory," *Arthuriana* 27.3 (2017). Hildebrand insightfully examines the function of disabled characters in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*. As Hildebrand argues, "the invisibility and confusion surrounding disability in Malory's text is due to its being non-normative, and thus marginalized to the point of invisibility in the text, and that this, in its turn, is due to its being a site of anxiety for the intended audience." Deftly drawing on Malory's sources, contemporary materials on war and chivalry, and recent work in Disability Studies, Hildebrand's prize-winning essay forcefully interrogates how the reader's focus is consistently drawn away from disabled characters and re-oriented toward those characters providing healing or restoration. Enacting what disability theorist Ato Quayson calls "aesthetic nervousness," Hildebrand charts a profound and recurring dis-ease in Malory that may ultimately reflect the discomfort the nondisabled often feel in the shadow of their inevitable disabling. This essay is a testament to Hildebrand's careful close readings and theoretical facility, and stands as a most worthy winner of the 2018 James Randall Leader Prize for best Arthurian article published in 2017.