

CHRISTIAN K. MESSENGER

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Education

Ph.D. Northwestern University, 1974
M.A. Northwestern University, 1970
B.A. Trinity College (Hartford, CN), 1965

Areas of Research Interest

American Fiction
Modern and Contemporary Fiction
Cultural Studies
Sport and Play Theory

Teaching Experience

University of Illinois at Chicago
Professor of English, 1990-
Associate Professor of English, 1982-90
Assistant Professor of English, 1976-82
Wittenberg University, Springfield, Ohio
Assistant Professor of English, 1973-76

Awards and Grants

University of Illinois at Chicago Excellence in Teaching Award, 1997
University of Illinois at Chicago Teaching Recognition Award, 1994
University of Illinois at Chicago Humanities Institute Fellow, 1984-85
Principal Investigator, National Endowment for the Humanities
"Reading Literature" project, Division of Education Grant, 1985-87
"Negotiating American Culture: Unity and Diversity": USIA
Teaching Grant (training of foreign secondary and university teachers in American culture)
group award, 1990, 1993-2006
Carl Sandburg Award for Best Non-Fiction published by a Chicago Author, 1981
Presented by the Friends of the Chicago Public Library

Publications

Books:

Sport and the Spirit of Play in American Fiction: Hawthorne to Faulkner
(New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 359 pp.
Sport and the Spirit of Play in Contemporary American Fiction
(New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 473 pp.
Long Time Coming: A Black Athlete's Coming of Age in America (with Chet Walker)
(New York: Grove-Atlantic Monthly Press, 1995), 258 pp.
The Godfather and American Culture: How the Corleones Became "Our Gang" (Albany:
State University of New York Press, 2002), 297pp.

Articles:

"Tom Buchanan and the Demise of the Ivy League Athletic Hero in The Great Gatsby,"
Journal of Popular Culture, 8, 2 (Fall 1974), 402-410.
"Ernest Hemingway and the School Athletic Hero," Lost Generation Journal,
3,2 (Spring-Summer 1975), 21-23
'Jack London and Boxing in The Game," Jack London Newsletter,
3,2 (May-August 1976), 67-72.
"Southwestern Humorists and Ring Lardner," Illinois Quarterly, 39, 1 (Fall 1976), 5-21

- "Sport in the Dime Novel," Journal of American Culture, 1, 3 (Fall 1978), 495-506
- "Frank Norris and the College Sportsman," American Literary Realism, 12, 2 (Fall 1979), 288-94
- "The American Depression and its Creative Expression," Mark Gordon, Jack Nachbar, eds., Currents of Warm Life: Popular Culture in American Higher Education (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Press, 1980), pp. 115-18.
- "The Dynamics of Ritual and Play: Kesey's One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest," Arete 1, 1 (Fall 1983), 99-107.
- "Introduction to Sport and the Spirit of Play in American Fiction: Hawthorne to Faulkner," Wiley Lee Umphlett, ed., American Sport Culture: The Humanistic Dimensions (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press), 1985, pp. 197-211.
- "The Place of Literary Theory in the Freshman Literature Class," (with Jonathan Arac and Gerald Sorensen) ADE Bulletin 82 (Winter 1985), 22-26.
- "Upward and Downward Space: Sport and the Spirit of Play in John Updike's Rabbit Trilogy," Nanda Fischer, ed., Sport und Literature (Munich: Deutschen Vereinigung fur Sportwissenschaft, 1986), pp. 85-99.
- "A Structural Semantics for Sport and Play Fiction," Susan Bandy, ed., Coroebus Triumphs: The Alliance of Sport and the Arts, (San Diego: San Diego State University Press, 1988), pp. 68-82.
- "Normal Mailer: Boxing and the Art of his Narrative," Modern Fiction Studies 33, 1 (Summer 1987), 95-110.
- "The Inscription of Women in American Sports Fictional Narrative," Nanda Fischer, ed., Heldenmythen und Korperqualen Munich, 1988, pp. 70-89.
- "Expansion Draft: Baseball Fiction of the 1980's," Wiley Lee Umphlett, ed., The Achievement of American Sport Literature: A Critical Appraisal (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2 1991), pp. 62-79.
- "Baseball and the Meaning of America," Humanities 15 (4), (1994), 13-18.
- "Football as Narrative," American Literary History, 7 (3), (Fall 1995), 726-39.

Book Reviews:

- From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports, by Allen Guttman; reviewed in Winterthur Portfolio, 16 (Summer-Autumn 1981), 246-49.
- Laurel and Thorn: The Athlete in American Literature, by Robert J. Higgs; reviewed in Review 5 (1983), 119-24.
- "Semiotics and Alchemy: Biography under Attack," review essay of The Invented Self: An Anti-Biography from Documents of Thomas A. Edison by David E. Nye; reviewed in American Quarterly 37, 1 (Spring 1985), 150-55.
- Best American Sports Writing 1991, ed. David Halberstam; reviewed in Aethlon 9:1 (Fall 1992), 216-217.
- Sporting with the Gods: The Rhetoric of Play and Games in American Literature and Culture, by Michael Oriard; reviewed in The American Historical Review (April 1993), 581-82.
- The Leisure Ethic: Work and Play in American Literature, 1840-1940, by William A. Gleason; reviewed in American Quarterly (Fall 2000), 394-96.
- Passing Off, by Tom LeClair reviewed in Electronic Book Review (EBR), 2000.
- Lucchesi and the Whale, by Frank Lentricchia; reviewed in VIA 13 (2002), 155-58.

Papers presented at Professional Meetings

- "Sports in the Dime Novel," March 21, 1975, St. Louis, MO., Proceedings of the Fifth National Popular Culture Association Meeting.
- "The Hero and His Witnesses: A Destructive Relationship in Contemporary Fiction," March 22, 1976, Chicago, IL. Proceedings of the Sixth National Popular Culture Association Meeting.

"Stephen Crane and Football in The Red Badge of Courage," April 29, 1977, Baltimore, MD. Proceedings of the Seventh National Popular Culture Association Meeting.

"Notes on Doing a Decade in Popular Culture: The American 1930's," October 7, 1977, Illinois State University. Midwest Popular Culture Association Meeting.

"Finley Peter Dunne and Baseball Narrative before Ring Lardner," May 20, 1978, Michigan State University. Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature.

"Towards a Poetic of American Sports Fiction: Some Definitions," December 29, 1978, New York City. Modern Language Association National Convention.

"Faulkner's Football Tale in The Hamlet," February 23, 1979, Louisville, KY. Seventh Annual Conference on Twentieth Century Literature.

"The Incarnation of the College Football Hero in American Fiction," April 14, 1979. Public lecture before the Departments of English and American Studies, Purdue University.

"In the Wake of Ring Lardner: Heywood Broun, Damon Runyon, and the Canon of Sports Fiction," March 29, 1981, Cincinnati, OH. Proceedings of the Eleventh National Popular Culture Association Meeting.

"The Problem of Popular Art and High Art Relations," October 31, 1981, Memphis, TN. Panel, Biennial American Studies Association Meeting.

"Popular Culture Study and Contemporary Critical Discourse," December 30, 1981, New York City. Chair, Special Session, Modern Language Association National Convention.

"Fictions of Football," March 31, 1983, Clemson University. Conference on Sport and Society.

"Ring Lardner's White Sox and the Evolution of Sports Fiction," October 28, 1983, Chicago, IL. Conference on "Chicago as a Literary Place."

"A Structural Semantics for Sports Fiction," Keynote Address of July 27, 1984, University of California at San Diego. First Annual Conference of the Society of Sports Literature.

"The Authority of the Signifier: Barthes and Puzo's The Godfather," December 27, 1984, Washington, D.C. Popular Culture Division, Modern Language Association Convention.

"Lardner's Baseball Fiction," "Lardner's Achievement," March 6-7, 1985, Albion College. Panel Moderator and Respondent, Ring Lardner Centennial Symposium.

"Upward and Downward Space: Sport and the Spirit of Play in John Updike's Rabbit Trilogy," December 1, 1985, Munich, West Germany. Symposium des Lehrstuhls für Sportpädagogik, der Deutschen Vereinigung für Sportwissenschaft.

"Introducing Theory in Freshman Literature: Politics and Practice," presented December 28, 1986, New York City. Division of the Teaching of Literature, Modern Language Association Convention.

"The Inscription of Women in Recent Sports Fiction," presented October 1, 1987, Ft. Worth, TX. Fourth Annual Conference of the Society of Sports Literature.

"Play Theory and Women in American Sports Narrative," presented January 27, 1988, Munich, West Germany. Symposium des Lehrstuhls für Sportpädagogik, der Deutschen Vereinigung für Sportwissenschaft.

"Basketball Fiction and the Black Experience," presented May 30, 1989, Clemson University. Sixth Annual Conference of the Society of Sports Literature.

"Aesthetics of Play and Freedom in Kesey's Sometimes a Great Notion," presented June 4, 1990, Oregon State University. Seventh Annual Conference of the Society of Sports Literature.

"Reports from the Front: Peter Gent's War with Football and Texas," presented March 31, 1991, San Antonio, TX. National Popular Culture Association Meeting.

"A Critically-Based Introductory Literature Sequence," presented April 17, 1991, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Allerton Articulation Conference.

"Baseball and the Meaning of America," invited lecture in the NEH series, "Baseball and Changing Cultural Heroes," presented September 22, 1994, Galveston College.

"English Professor Writes Cross-Over Book: Confessions of the 'As Told To' Guy," presented January 25, 1996, Sports History Group, Illinois Faculty Consortium, Northeastern Illinois University.

"An American Literature Curriculum for Secondary Education," week-long series of lectures presented in Parnu, Estonia, Aug. 14-21 1998, United States Information Agency-sponsored curriculum planning seminar.

"Ernest Hemingway and Scott Fitzgerald," panel at the Hemingway Society Birthday Colloquium, Oak Park, Illinois, July 21, 2001.

"Stephen Crane's 'The Blue Hotel,'" invited lecture for the Chicago Humanities Festival, Columbia College, Chicago, Illinois. October 20, 2001.

"The Godfather and American Culture: How The Corleones Became 'Our Gang,'" presented October 22, 2001, Florida Atlantic University. Italian Literature Conference.

"'Vicious Sentimentality': 'Fitzgerald's Ambivalent Relation to Sentiment in Tender is the Night," presented September 21, 2002, International F. Scott Fitzgerald Conference, St. Paul, Minnesota.

"The Godfather's Sentiments," presented October 31, 2002, Callandra Institute of the City University of New York, New York, N.Y.

"The Criticism of Popular Narrative: What Are The Stakes," November 10, 2003, Chicago, IL., Newberry Library Teacher's Consortium.

"New Approaches to F. Scott Fitzgerald," November 7, 2004, Chicago, IL., Newberry Library Teacher's Consortium.

"Beginnings and Endings in Hemingway's In Our Time," presented January 27, 2005, Oak Park, IL., Ernest Hemingway Society.

"'Out Upon the Mongolian Plain': Fitzgerald's Ethnic and Racial Cross-Identifying in Tender is the Night," presented April 9, 2005, University of Illinois Chicago, MELUS Conference.

"Replacing the Dead Sisters: Fitzgerald's Narrative Incorporations of Sympathy in Tender is the Night," presented April 14, 2005, Hofstra University, International F. Scott Fitzgerald Conference.