

# Chapter 1

## An Authopreter Narrative: An Essay on Reading the Book *Saussure Suspects* With Author– Interpreter Interaction

**Arthur Asa Berger**

*San Francisco State University, USA*

**Nurdan Oncel Taskiran**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8978-2229>

*Istanbul Medipol University, Turkey*

### ABSTRACT

*Few people can show mathematics, physics, chemistry, geometry, or foreign language among the lessons they love in the educational process. It is no doubt that these lessons, which are difficult to understand and challenging to solve, still maintain their vitality in memories. Apart from these well-known essential areas, it is undeniable that among the new branches of science that developed in the 20th century, one is least as scary as the others. Semiotics (or semiology) is one of the problematic fields with its sophisticated theories in the 19th century until Arthur Asa Berger applied the edutainment (learning by fun) method to semiotics by his work “Saussure Suspects.”*

### INTRODUCTION

Few people would say that mathematics, physics, chemistry, geometry, or foreign languages were among the courses they loved most while getting an education. It is no doubt that these topics, which are often difficult to understand and challenging to deal with, still maintain their vitality in our memories, and still exist in our universities. Apart from these well-known essential subjects, it is undeniable that among the new branches of science that developed in the 20th century, there were some particularly scary and difficult ones. Semiotics (or semiology), which evolved in the 19th century, was a prime candidate to be one of these problematic fields until Arthur Asa Berger applied the edutainment (learning by fun)

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method to semiotics in his academic mystery novel, *Saussure Suggests*, to be renamed in a future revision, *Saussure Suspects*.

Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguistics professor, developed semiology, the study of signs, as a science in the 19th century and semiology (now generally known as semiotics) which plays a role in almost every moment of our daily life, and which many scientists from various disciplines have associated with their fields, is one of the new and vital areas of science that are difficult for the ordinary person to master. Semiology has a structuralist (linguistic) base. Other approaches to semiology come from various disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, logic, ethics and their perspectives often make semiology even more difficult to understand. The reputation of semiology is that it is a subject or theory that is abstruse, contains complicated terms and concepts, and requires intense concentration to master.

Semiology is essential to everyone engaged in the production of textual material, involving communications, media, literature, advertising, journalism, photography, journalism, screenwriting, directing, and cartooning. Semiotics is a discipline that doctors, lawyers, and judges need to understand and learn and that also applies to politicians who wish to influence the course of human behaviour and direct it in a desired manner. The fact that semiology/semiotics is used and applied in so many fields, involving written, visual, and audio elements, reveals the importance of semiotics and suggests the need for it to be made more understandable. Over the years, semiotics has become increasingly enriched and, as a result, even more difficult to understand, with new terms and concepts added from fields in different countries and different languages.

Arthur Asa Berger, who is the subject of our study, is an academic who is aware of the difficulties people have in understanding semiotic theory. He developed a method of teaching in a way that enables his students to learn while they are having fun playing learning games. His writings attempt to make semiotics entertaining and to contribute to the spread of the field using storytelling—that is, teaching semiotics by writing an entertaining mystery about semioticians. This narrative approach, which is also known as “Edutainment,” is a “fun and learn” method that is frequently used at lower levels of education in many countries.

His academic murder mystery, *Saussure Suggests*, was designed to both entertain readers and, at the same time, teach them about semiotic theory. In the second part of this article, Berger will discuss his notions about teaching using narratives and how he wrote *Saussure Suggests*. Readers wanting more information about his work, and his other murder mysteries (on Marxism and Psychoanalytic Theory) can find his books all on Amazon.com’s book pages and the book pages of other internet companies. His book is the first murder mystery about the science of semiotics of which I am aware. A self-published version of the book is available on Amazon.com books.

## **ARTHUR ASA BERGER AS AN ACADEMICIAN AND HIS PROJECTS AS A NARRATOR**

Arthur Asa Berger has a B.A. in literature and philosophy. He studied these subjects assuming that “a good education would fit me for any job. He applied to graduate school in journalism, thinking that he liked to write and might find journalism an exciting career. The University of California in Berkeley accepted him to its journalism school. While there he was offered a fellowship from the University of Iowa and went there. He focused on magazine journalism and took philosophy courses with Gustav

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