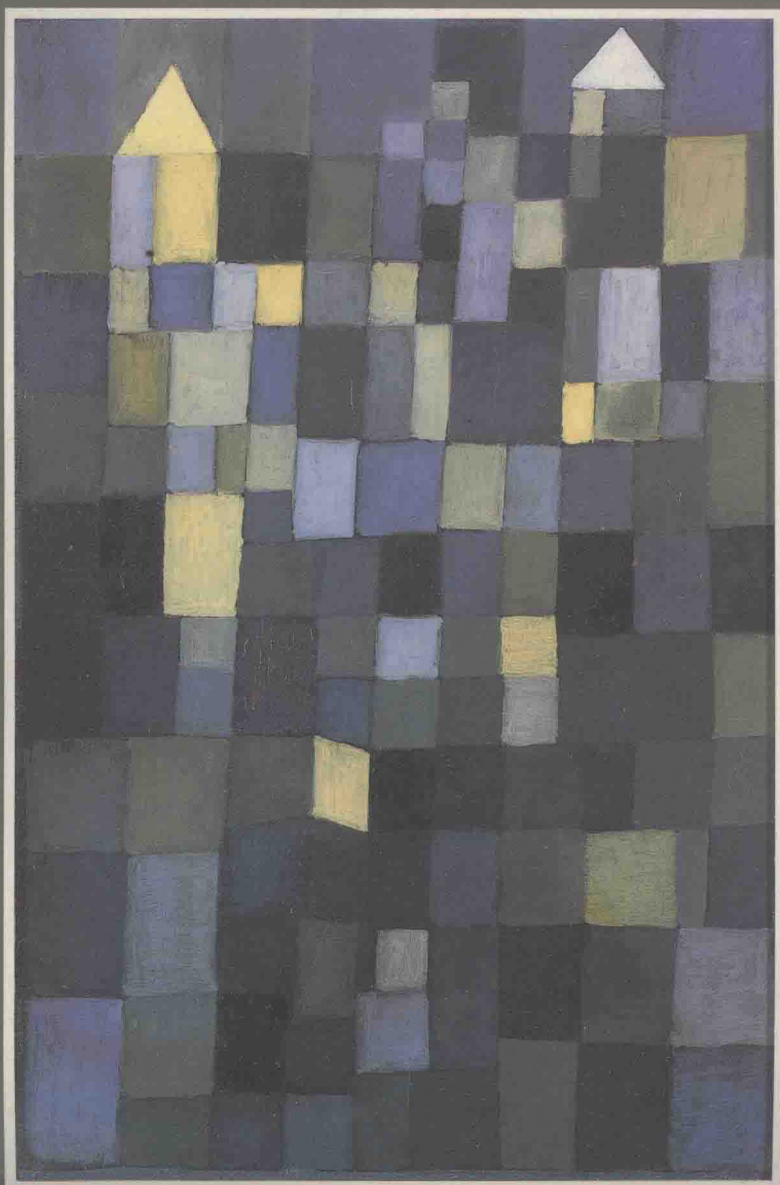


Liliane Haegeman

INTRODUCTION TO
**GOVERNMENT &
BINDING THEORY**



Introduction to Government and Binding Theory

Liliane Haegeman

Basil Blackwell

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Preface

The purpose of this book is to provide an introduction to the mainline version of Government and Binding Theory, or GB-theory, using as a basis Noam Chomsky's more recent writings. Starting from the ideas developed in the *Lectures on Government and Binding* (1981), the book will include the most important notions and concepts of *Some Concepts and Consequences of the Theory of Government and Binding* (1982), *Knowledge of Language* (1986a) and *Barriers* (1986b). Some of the concepts that were used earlier in the development of generative grammar but have become less relevant will occasionally be referred to and reference will also be made to some of the more recent developments of the theory. The aim of the book is not to make the reader familiar with all the literature published within the GB framework, but rather to enable him to read this literature himself, to understand it and to evaluate it independently.

The book is aimed at intermediate students in linguistics. A general introduction to generative syntax is presupposed. Roughly, the reader would be expected to be familiar with notions such as competence, performance, informants and linguistic intuition, grammaticality, acceptability, autonomy of syntax, etc. and to be able to parse sentences using the tree diagram representation and the labelled bracketing format. The book presupposes some understanding of terms such as constituent, phrase, grammatical function, lexical category, etc., but this does not mean that such concepts and terms will be taken for granted entirely. On the contrary, part of the aim of the book will be to give the concepts and terms with which the reader is familiar more precise content by offering a coherent theoretical background.

The book should be usable both in the classroom and for private study. It consists of twelve chapters each dealing with a particular component of the theory. Each chapter will contain a number of exercises which allow the reader to test the knowledge acquired in the chapter.

As a basis for the organization of the book I have chosen to start from the projection principle: i.e. the idea that all syntactic structure is projected from the lexicon. This idea is introduced in the first chapter. Starting from this initial premise the book then discusses the distribution of overt material (chapters 2

to 4) and of non-overt material (chapters 5 to 9). Chapter 10 offers an introduction to Chomsky's book *Barriers* (1986b); chapters 11 and 12 illustrate the application of the theory developed in the book to some problems in the syntax of Germanic and Romance languages respectively.

Clearly, a book like this one cannot be written in a vacuum, and in this preface I can only mention a fraction of the people who have influenced the development of the book directly or indirectly.

I wish to thank my publishers for giving me the opportunity to write an introductory course book.

The manuscript of the book has developed on the basis of my own teaching at the English Department of the University of Geneva. Earlier versions of the book were used in manuscript form for students of English linguistics in the second and third year syntax programme at the University of Geneva (1988–90), as well as at the University of Bern (1988–89). The comments of my students have been of invaluable help for the rewriting of my book and I wish to use this opportunity to thank them for their enthusiastic help and patience with a manuscript that often was far from perfect.

As a teacher I owe thanks to my students, but I also owe tremendous thanks to my own teachers, especially to Neil Smith who helped me find a direction for my own research and teaching in linguistics, to Michael Brody who introduced me specifically to generative grammar, and to Henk van Riemsdijk who introduced me to the linguistic community in Europe and in the United States.

I also wish to thank the many colleagues in Geneva and elsewhere who have helped me not only by commenting on and making suggestions for parts of the book but also by being just good friends: Genoveva Puskas, Ian Roberts, Manuela Schoenenberger, Bonnie Schwartz, Andy Spencer, Sten Vikner, Richard Watts and Mariette Wauters.

Thanks are also due to Neil Smith, Noel Burton-Roberts and an anonymous reader who went painstakingly through an earlier manuscript and pointed out to me its many flaws and shortcomings. I hope that the current version of the book will not disappoint them too much.

Two friends merit special mention. Sylvie Ferioli was always willing to help me out on the practical side of typing and printing, and supported me patiently and good-humouredly at the moments when I became overwhelmed by various anxieties and worries. Corinne Grange has helped me and encouraged me throughout the whole period of my teaching in Geneva. She was one of the most enthusiastic and loyal students I have had, and she has become a colleague with whom I have been able to discuss any major or minor problems in the book. Her cheerful mood helped me across bad spots where I felt like abandoning the project entirely. I owe her special thanks for the substantial time that she invested in the rereading of the pre-final version of the text.

Thanks are also due to Ruth Kimber for the editorial work on the book and to Philip Carpenter, who followed the development of the book and gave me valuable comments throughout.

Obviously none of the people mentioned above can be held responsible for the final version of the book, for which I assume full responsibility.

Thanks are finally due to Hedwig De Pauw for reminding me that there is more to life than generative syntax.

Liliane Haegeman
Geneva

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