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Front Matter

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Carpenter et al.: Front Matter

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS OCCASIONAL PAPERS 26

PAPERS IN OPTIMALITY THEORY II

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Preface

The first *Papers in Optimality Theory* was published in 1995, in Optimality Theory's early years. The past seven years have seen Optimality Theory become firmly established, and in fact, becoming the dominant theory in phonology. Many other fields have also benefited from OT approaches, notably in syntax and language acquisition.

The papers in this volume illustrate the diversity of OT's application and relevance. While the majority of papers are primarily phonological, there are papers on OT syntax (Grimshaw, Svendsen, Woolford), the interaction of syntax and phonology (de Lacy, Selkirk), and language acquisition (Velleman and Vihman).

The papers also illustrate the 'geographical' breadth of OT's use: the authors are from Amherst College, MIT, Rutgers University, the University of Cambridge, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and the University of North Carolina.

Most significantly, the papers attest to the vitality of work in OT. The papers deal with a wide variety of empirical phenomena and a great diversity of theoretical issues: the proposals cut to the heart of theories of constraints and their effects, the evaluation mechanism, and even methodology.

Just as the 1995 *Papers in Optimality Theory* contributed to OT's evolution, we are sure that this *Papers in Optimality Theory II* will do its part in developing and delving into the insights of Prince & Smolensky's theory.

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