

On Ghost Vowels

A Strict CV Approach

This dissertation proposes an original analysis of 'ghost' vowels, i.e. vowels which alternate with zero. It is couched within the Strict CV framework of Government Phonology, supplemented by some insights from Optimality Theory. Ghost vowels are represented lexically as empty nuclei. Which ghost vowels materialize phonetically is determined by Proper Government (PG) relations in which they are involved. These relations hold between audible and inaudible nuclei. They are similar to metrical relations between stressed and unstressed vowels (i.e. stress feet) and subject to analogous well-formedness constraints. Cross-linguistic variation in the appearance of ghost vowels is due to language-specific rankings of the constraints. This approach is applied to the analysis of Turkish, Yawelmanu, Cairene Arabic and Mohawk in Part I of the dissertation.

In Part II it is shown that the system of PG relations can also be sensitive to lexical 'unaccentability' specifications on some morphemes, analogously to stress in lexical accent systems. This is the case in Polish, where the appearance of ghost vowels is avoided in 'unaccentable' morphemes.

This book is of interest to general linguistic readership, in particular phonologists, researchers studying American Indian languages, Slavic languages, Turkish and Arabic, those working on prosodic structure, and all those interested in the interaction between phonology and morphology.

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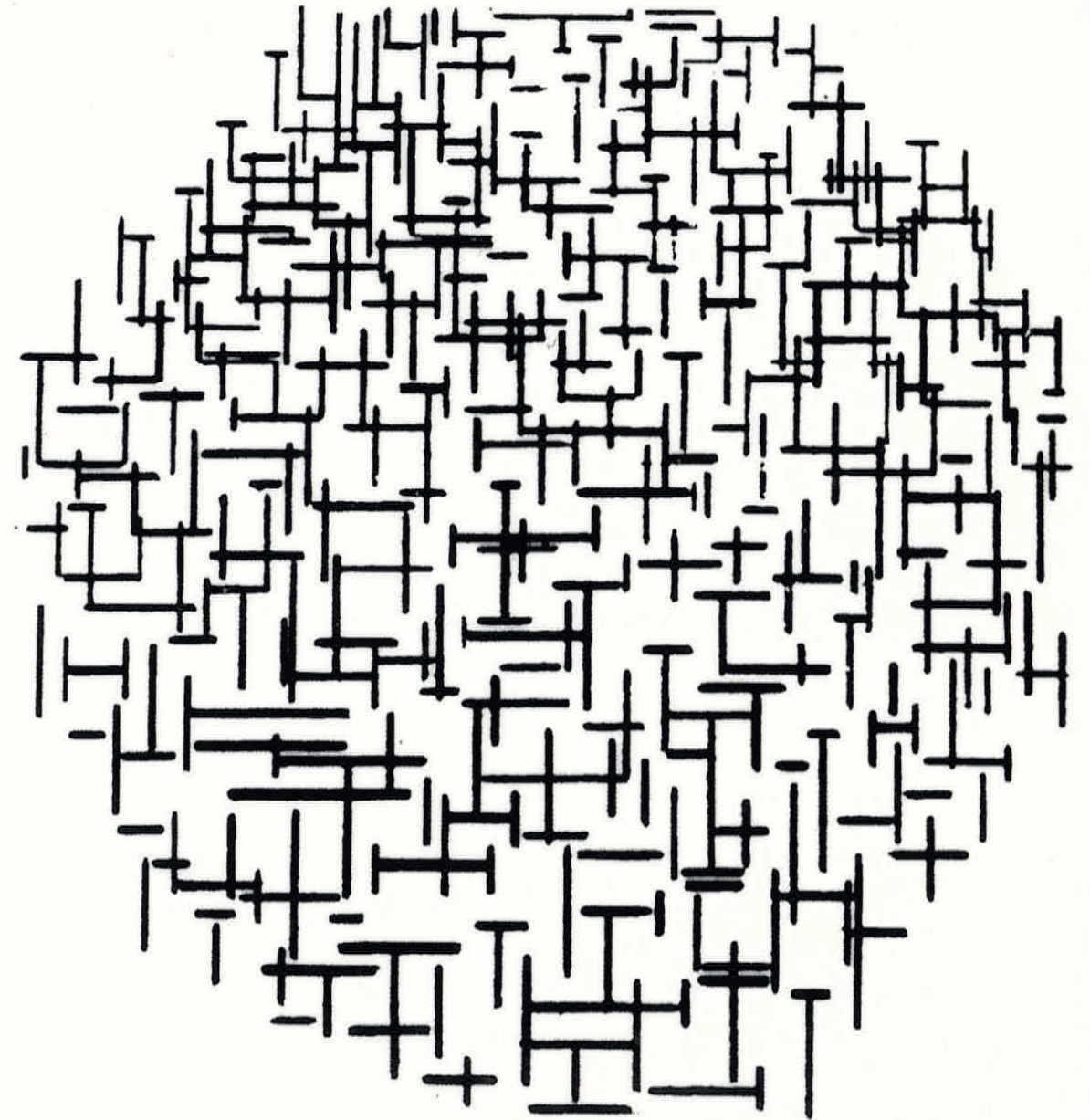


Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics
Landelijke Onderzoekschool Taalwetenschap

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Grażyna Rowicka

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