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This is the first extended study written within the framework of Government Phonology. Following the presentation of the main aspects of this theory, the process of vowel–zero alternations is addressed and analysed together with the idea that phonological processes are determined by principles of Universal Grammar along with parameters that distinguish languages. By using predominantly the alternation between schwa and zero in French, Monik Charette demonstrates that vowel–zero alternations are cases neither of insertion nor of deletion. Rather, they involve the interpretation of ‘empty nuclei’, i.e. nuclei with no segmental content, which must be licensed by proper government. It is when proper government fails to apply that a vowel is realized. Dr Charette also gives consideration to the constraints to which proper government is subject. She argues that these constraints result from phonological principles in conflict. This book represents a major development in the analysis of phonological processes. The extension of grammatical principles and parameters to phonological phenomena is well argued, and will interest theoretical phonologists and specialists of French alike.

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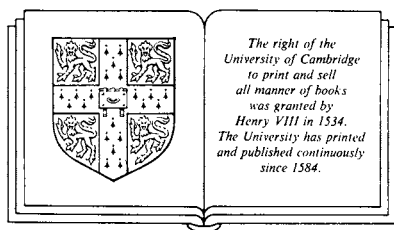
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# CONDITIONS ON PHONOLOGICAL GOVERNMENT

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**A mon père**

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## *Preface*

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This book represents an expanded and modified version of my Ph.D. dissertation (Charette 1988). The sections of my thesis which have been published will not be found here. The modifications involve certain refinements dealing with the level at which proper government operates. The notion of licensing is now more clearly defined, especially with respect to licensing as a condition for government. My treatment of compounds now directly follows from my analysis of word-internal empty nuclei. Some problematic data concerning the alternation of schwa with [ɛ] are now accounted for in terms of the effect of a floating consonant on a word-final empty nucleus.

This book is addressed to any linguist interested in phonological theories in general and Government Phonology, the framework in which it is written, in particular. Those who are unfamiliar with Government Phonology will find a fairly detailed presentation of certain aspects of this theory in chapter 1. The reader already familiar with this framework will be interested by new proposals and the sharpening of certain notions. This book may also be of interest for its new analyses of certain phenomena in French.

Since this book represents an expanded version of my dissertation, I wish to thank those who helped me with both the original work and the preparation of this book. In particular I am grateful to Jean Lowenstamm and Glyne Piggott for their help, support, comments and suggestions. I also want to thank the members of the African Project in Montreal and my colleagues and postgraduate students at the University of London. Thanks go to Jacques Durand and an anonymous reader of the manuscript of this book for their comments and suggestions. Finally, and above all, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Jonathan Kaye. Without his help, support, comments and suggestions neither my thesis nor my book would ever have been what they became.