Serial Harmonic Grammar

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This talk introduces Serial Harmonic Grammar, a version of Optimality Theory (Prince and Smolensky 1993/2004) that reverses two of Prince and Smolensky’s basic architectural decisions. One is their choice of constraint ranking over the numerically weighted constraints of its predecessor, Harmonic Grammar (Legendre, Miyata and Smolensky 1990). The other is their choice of parallel evaluation over a version of the theory in which the representation is changed and evaluated iteratively (Harmonic Serialism; Prince and Smolensky 1994/2004: ch. 2, McCarthy 2000 *et seq.*). I introduce the theory with an analysis of syllabification in Imdlawn Tashlhiyt Berber (Dell and Elmedlaoui 1985), the case that Prince and Smolensky use to introduce OT. This analysis illustrates advantages of both serialism and weighted constraints. I then go on to discuss general differences between serial and parallel evaluation, and ranked and weighted constraints, and argue that serialism allows for a typologically plausible version of Harmonic Grammar.