

Hypernegation, hyponegation: Gluts, gaps, and *parole* violations

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Hypernegation

Duplex Negatio Affirmat:

‘Two negatives in English destroy one another, or are equivalent to an affirmative.’ (Lowth 1762: 126; see Horn 1991, 2001a for extensive discussion)

Duplex Negatio Negat:

➤NEGATIVE CONCORD (1a,b) vs. LOGICAL DOUBLE NEGATION (2)-(6)

- (1) a. It **ain’t** **no** cat **can’t** get into **no** coop. (Labov 1972: 773)
(= standard ‘No cat can get into any coop’)
- b. I’ve got this thing and it’s [bleep]in’ golden and uh, uh, I’m just **not** giving it up for [bleep]in’ **nothing**. (R. Blagojevich 2008, p.c.)
- c. I **can’t** get **no** satisfaction. (Jagger & Richards 1965)
“The title line is an example of a double negative resolving to a negative, a common usage in colloquial English.” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Can't_Get_No_Satisfaction]

Duplex Negatio Affirmat...what?

- (2) a. not uncommon ≠ common
b. not infrequent ≠ frequent

Language has a logic of its own, and in this case its logic has something to recommend it. Whenever two negatives really refer to the same idea or word the result is invariably positive; this is true of all languages...**The two negatives, however, do not exactly cancel one another** so that the result is identical with the simple *common, frequent*; the longer expression is always weaker: “this is not unknown to me” or “I am not ignorant of this” means ‘I am to some extent aware of it’, etc. The psychological reason for this is that **the *détour* through the two mutually destructive negatives** weakens the mental energy of the listener and **implies...a hesitation** which is absent from the blunt, outspoken *common* or *known*. (Jespersen 1924: 332, emphasis added)

Bare double-*not* sequences and virtual contrariety

- (4) Bart: Dad, are you licking toads?
Homer: I’m **not** ^V**NOT** **licking toads**. [^V marks fall-rise or L*+H L H%]
(Exchange from 2000 episode of “The Simpsons”, re putatively hallucinogenic red toads of Micronasia [sic])

Lucy: Are you friends with Mary?

Robbie: I'm **not** ^v**NOT friends with her.** [^v marks fall-rise contour]
(Dialogue from ABC TV family comedy, "Seventh Heaven", 2001)

"So what do you think, is Tori connected to that other girl?"

Milo's lie was smooth. "I can't say that, Mr. Giacomo."

"But **you're not not saying it.**" (Jonathan Kellerman (2006), *Gone*, p. 145)

"Bandini croaks, Patty's got a DB to deal with, she drags him out to the street, waits awhile, calls it in...guess it fits."

Milo said, "**It sure doesn't not fit.**"

She smiled faintly. "You and your grammar, Mr. English Major."
(Jonathan Kellerman (2007), *Obsession*, p. 277)

I have a dog. I got him because I am allergic to cats and I wanted my children to be happy...I love my children. I love my husband. They love the dog. **I don't not-love him, exactly.**

(Judith Warner, "Dogged By Guilt", NYT 28 August 2008)

(7) *Triplex Negatio Negat*

We sincerely hope and insist that peaceful means should be used to solve the Taiwan issue...China has **never** committed to **not** taking **nonpeaceful** means to solve the Taiwan issue simply because such a commitment would make peaceful reunification impossible.

(Chen Defu, Chinese Embassy Press Counselor, letter to editor of NYT, 7/18/89)

(8) *Triplex Negatio Confundit* (Horn 1991, 2001a)

There was **no** character created by him into which life and reality were **not** thrown with such vividness, that the thing written did **not** seem to his readers the thing actually done.

(J. Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens* (1873), cited in Hodgson (1885: 219))

"There's **nothing I don't** ever wish I **didn't** say," Reggie Miller said. "If it comes out of my mouth, it was meant to be said." (Quoted in NYT, 9 May 1995)

➤ **especially likely when at least one of the negatives is incorporated**
(cf. Jespersen 1917 and Haynes 1933 on FUSION, TELESCOPING, or BLENDS)

No detail was **too** small to **overlook**.

New Yorker 12/14/81, Words of One Syllable Department

People knew **too** little about him **not** to vote **against** him.

Bill Moyers on why voters in 1984 primaries voted for Gary Hart

Nothing is **too** small or too mean to be **disregarded** by our scientific economy. (R. H. Patterson, *Economy of Capital* (1865), cited in Hodgson 1885: 219)

No one is **too poor not** to own an automobile.

Review by Vincent Canby (N. Y. Times 1/22/84) of "El Norte", characterizing naive belief of two young illegal Guatemalan immigrants about riches of America

I **can't** remember when you weren't there,
When I **didn't** care/For **anyone but** you...

Opening lines of 1981 Kenny Rogers pop song "Through the Years"

I **can't** say I **don't blame** him.

Radio show host; meaning in context = 'I don't blame him'

It's a deed that should **not go unforgotten**.

Lewiston (Idaho) Morning Tribune, cited in
The New Yorker's "No Sooner Said Than Done" Dept.

It is **not impossible** that some aspect of sound-making efficiency might **not** have played into the mechanism of natural selection during the history of the species.
(Eric Lenneberg, *Biological Foundations of Language*, 1967)

There is **no doubt** that the commissioner will **not** give Pete an impartial hearing.
(Pete Rose's lawyer Reuven Katz in radio interview, 8/24/89, expressing his (premature) confidence in Commissioner Bart Giamatti's fairness)

Citing an **unwillingness to not go quietly** into retirement as the crowned princesses of the East, No. 1-seeded Connecticut battered No. 5 Notre Dame, 73-53.
("Uconn's Big Message: Rout Is Just First Step", New York Times 3/3/98)

I would **not be surprised** if his doctoral dissertation committee is **not** composed of members from several departments within a university.
(Letter of recommendation for applicant to graduate school)

Don't be surprised if the Suns **don't** come back and push the series to five games...
(NYT story on NBA playoffs by Robert Thomas Jr., 5/2/91)

"Piled up negatives prove easy stumbling-blocks" (Hodgson 1885: 218)
"Blunders with negatives are extremely frequent" (Fowler 1926: 375)

(9) *Quadruplex negatio farblondiat*:

I have but one comfort in thinking of the poor, and that is, that we get somehow adjusted to the condition in which we grow up, and we do **not miss the absence** of what we have **never** enjoyed.
(Froude, *Nemesis of Faith*, cited in Hodgson 1885: 218)

No one denies that a baby with a neural tube defect **isn't** a **catastrophe**, but...
Dr. Philip LaMastra, quoted in the New Haven Advocate, 8/19/81

I have **never** known another reciter of a speech who could **avoid weakening** the sentences in his mouth by **not** thinking of the one that was to come.

H. Cockburn, *Memorials* (1874), cited in Hodgson (1885: 219)

“Bernie produced what Bernie is supposed to produce”, Smith said, “but I **don’t** think, either, that you can single out Bernie as **not** a guy who is **not** part of the **disappointment**.”

New York Rangers’ general manager Neil Smith, declining (one guesses) to absolve star forward Bernie Nicholls for his play, N. Y. Times, 4/15/91, C3

Paratactic negation, in which

a negative is placed in a clause dependent on a verb of negative import like ‘deny, forbid, hinder, doubt.’ The clause is treated as an independent sentence, and the negative is expressed as if there had been no main sentence of that particular type. (Jespersen 1917: 75)

a.k.a. redundant, pleonastic, expletive, or SYMPATHETIC negation

(Smyth 1920, describing Ancient Greek and biblical German)

Frequent in Old English (OE verbs *tweo-* ‘doubt’, *forebead-*, *forber-*, *geswic-* ‘stop’, *wiðcweð-* ‘refuse’ all govern paratactic embedded negation), persists into Middle English and Early Modern English:

Nature defendeth and forbedeth that no man make himself riche. [Chaucer]

First he denied you had in him no [= any] right. [Shakespeare, *Com. Errors*]

You may deny that you were not [= you were] the mean of my

Lord Hastings late imprisonment. [Shakespeare, *Richard III*]

Pleonastic negation in embedded clauses cross-linguistically, e.g. in French:

- (10) a. Je crains qu’il **ne** vienne. ‘I’m afraid he’s coming’
b. avant/à moins qu’il **ne** vienne ‘before/unless he comes’
c. plus que je **ne** pensais ‘more than I thought’
(cf. Damourette & Pichon 1928 for the psychology of pleonastic negation)

- (11) Prendre garde de tomber.
Prendre garde de **ne** tomber. ‘Take care {of falling/not to fall}’
Prendre garde de **ne pas** tomber.

In concessive (un)conditionals in Yiddish [*gratia* Ellen Prince]...

- (12) Es iz mir gut vu ikh zol nit zayn. 'I'm fine wherever I am.'
it is to.me good where I SBJV NEG be

...and Russian [*gratia* Martin Haspelmath]

Mne xorosho gde by ja ni byl. 'I'm fine wherever I am.'
to.me good where SBJV I NEG be.PAST

In Paduan exclamatives (Portner & Zanuttini 2000)

- (13) a. **No** vien-lo! 'He's coming'
NEG comes-S.CL
b. **No** ga-lo magnà tuto! 'He ate everything!'
NEG has-S.CL eaten everything
c. Cosse **no** ghe dise-lo! 'What things he's telling him!
What NEG him say-S.CL

In high-register English exclamatives and embedded modal contexts:

- (14) a. How often have I **not** watched him! (Jespersen)
b. The Church of England...was so fragmented that there was **no knowing** what some sects might **not** have come to believe, but he doubted whether the christening of animals was encouraged.
(P. D. James (1992), *The Children of Men*, on christening of kittens)

Fowler (1926: 383-84) disparages a negative "evoked in a subordinate clause as a mere unmeaning echo of an actual or virtual negative in the main sentence" as "wrong and often destructive of the sense".
Alas, "We all know people who habitually say *I shouldn't wonder if it didn't turn to snow when they mean if it turned.*"

- (15) I **won't** be **shocked** if every single game is **not** a sellout.
(WFAN sports talk co-host Craig Carton, predicting that fans **will** fill Yankee Stadium during its last year of operation in 2008)
(16) I'm going to try to **avoid not** getting bogged down. (J. S. Horn, 1/5/09)
(17) I don't know if I can **hold** myself **back** from **not** watching it.
(Boomer Esiason on whether he could avoid the torture of watching another anticipated Mets debacle, 9/17/08)

Let's look at a number of familiar English words and phrases that turn out to mean the opposite or something very different from what we think they mean: **I really miss not seeing you**. Whenever people say this to me, I feel like responding, "All right, I'll leave!" Here speakers throw in a gratuitous negative, *not*, even though *I really miss seeing you* is what they want to say.

—Lederer (2008), "Our crazy English expressions"

- (18) a. I **miss not** seeing you.
Fusion or blend: < 'I miss seeing you' + 'I regret not seeing you'
b. I miss *(not) seeing you anymore. [** for standard anymore dialect*]

Resumptive negation (Jespersen 1917: 72-73; 1924: 334):

[A]fter a negative sentence has been completed, something is added in a negative form with the obvious result that the negative effect is heightened...[T]he supplementary negative is added outside the frame of the first sentence, generally as an afterthought, as in “I shall never do it, not under any circumstances, no on any condition, neither at home nor abroad”, etc.

- (19) a. He **cannot** sleep, **not** even after taking an opiate. (Jespersen)
b. **Not** with my wife, you **don't**. (cf. Lawler 1974)
c. **Not** a creature was stirring, **not** even a mouse.

Dowty 2006 on resumptive negation:

Resumptive Negation is an elliptical form of assertion revision: that is, it indicates a new assertion which is intended to replace the assertion made in the core clause; it may be either a strengthening or a weakening of the original assertion...Neither negation is in the scope of the other, nor is one of the negations merely pleonastic.

Why “PLEONASTIC negation”? The O.E.D. on *PLEONASM*:

The use of more words in a sentence or clause than are necessary to express the meaning; redundancy of expression either as a fault of style, or **as a rhetorical figure used for emphasis or clarity**.

Pleonastic negation with non-adversatives: Yoon 2008 on Japanese/Korean:

- (20) [J] John-wa Mary-ga ko-**nai-ka-to** **sinpaisi/kitaisi**-masu.

J.-TOP *M.*-NOM *come*-NEG-Q-COMP *fear/expect*-DECL
‘John fears/expects that Mary might come’

- [K] John-un Mary-ka oci(-na)-**an-ul-kka** **kekcengi/kitayhan**-ta.

J.-TOP *M.*-NOM *come(-if)*-NEG-FUT-Q *fear/expect*-DECL
‘John fears/expects that Mary might come’

Jap. -*nai*/Kor. -*an* is optional, but its use “lowers the level of certainty about the embedded proposition”, thus conveying epistemic modality

Zeijlstra (2008):

While standard Dutch (unlike West Flemish; cf. Haegeman 2008) is a DN (double negation) rather than NC language, it contains certain constructions (e.g. *niemand niet* ‘nobody not’, *nooit geen* ‘nothing no’) that are understood as simple but emphatic negations, rather than canceling out. He analyzes these as lexical items, not as true instances of NC.

Jespersen (1924: 333-34) on the “illogical” nature of pleonastic negation:

If we are now to pass judgment on this widespread cumulative negation from a logical point of view, I should not call it illogical...No one objects from a logical point of view to combinations like [(18a)]; it is true that here pauses, which in writing are marked by commas, separate the negatives, as if they belonged to so many different sentences, while in “he never said nothing”...the negatives belong to one and the same sentence. But it is perfectly impossible to draw a line between what constitutes one, and what constitutes two sentences; **does a sentence like “I cannot go no further” (Shakespeare) become more logical by the mere addition of a comma: “I cannot go, no further”?**

(21) Now you see it, now you don't:

Variation and code-switching in hypernegation

a. CELIA. I pray you, bear with me. **I cannot go no further.**

[*As You Like It*, from opening of II.iv in the Forest of Arden]

ADAM. Dear master, **I can go no further.**

[*As You Like It*, from opening of II.vi, in “another part of the forest”]

b. When you ain't got nothin' you got nothin' to lose.

(Bob Dylan, “Like a Rolling Stone”, 1965)

In his legal opinions, Chief Justice Roberts has altered quotations to conform to his notions of grammaticality, as when he excised the “ain't” from Bob Dylan's line “**When you ain't got nothing, you got nothing to lose.**”

—Steven Pinker, “Oaf of Office”, NYT Op-Ed 1/22/09

But in the version of “Like a Rolling Stone” appearing in *The Definitive Dylan Songbook* (2001), the relevant verse appears as

You used to be so amused
At Napoleon in rags and the language that he used
Go to him now, he calls you, you can't refuse
When you got nothing, you got nothing to lose

(22) Negative parentheticals in resumptive contexts

a. The economy **isn't**, I (**don't**) think, going to recover quickly.

b. The economy, I (***don't**) think, is(n't) going to recover.

(23) Negative parentheticals in ANTI-resumptive contexts

You an' Dad are great hunters, **I don't think.** (Zane Grey 1918, *Tonto Basin*)

Women will pay a lot of heed, **I don't think.** (Joyce 1922, *Ulysses*)

OED s.v. **think**, 9b: ***I don't think** (slang): used after an ironical statement, to indicate that the reverse is intended.*

1837 DICKENS Pickw. xxxviii, 'You're a amiably-disposed young man, sir, **I don't think**', resumed Mr. Weller, in a tone of moral reproof.

1857 HUGHES Tom Brown II. ii, Hark how he swears, Tom. Nicely brought-up young man, ain't he, **I don't think**.

1911 KEBLE HOWARD Cheerful Knave xvi, Yer a credit to yer calling, **I don't think**.

(24) **retro-NOT** (typically after an insincere tribute)

(ADS Word of the Year 1992; cf. Horn 1992 and esp. Sheidlower & Lighter 1993)

"He's a fine neighbor—**not**", declared Larry.
(Webster 1910, *Comrades of the Saddle*)

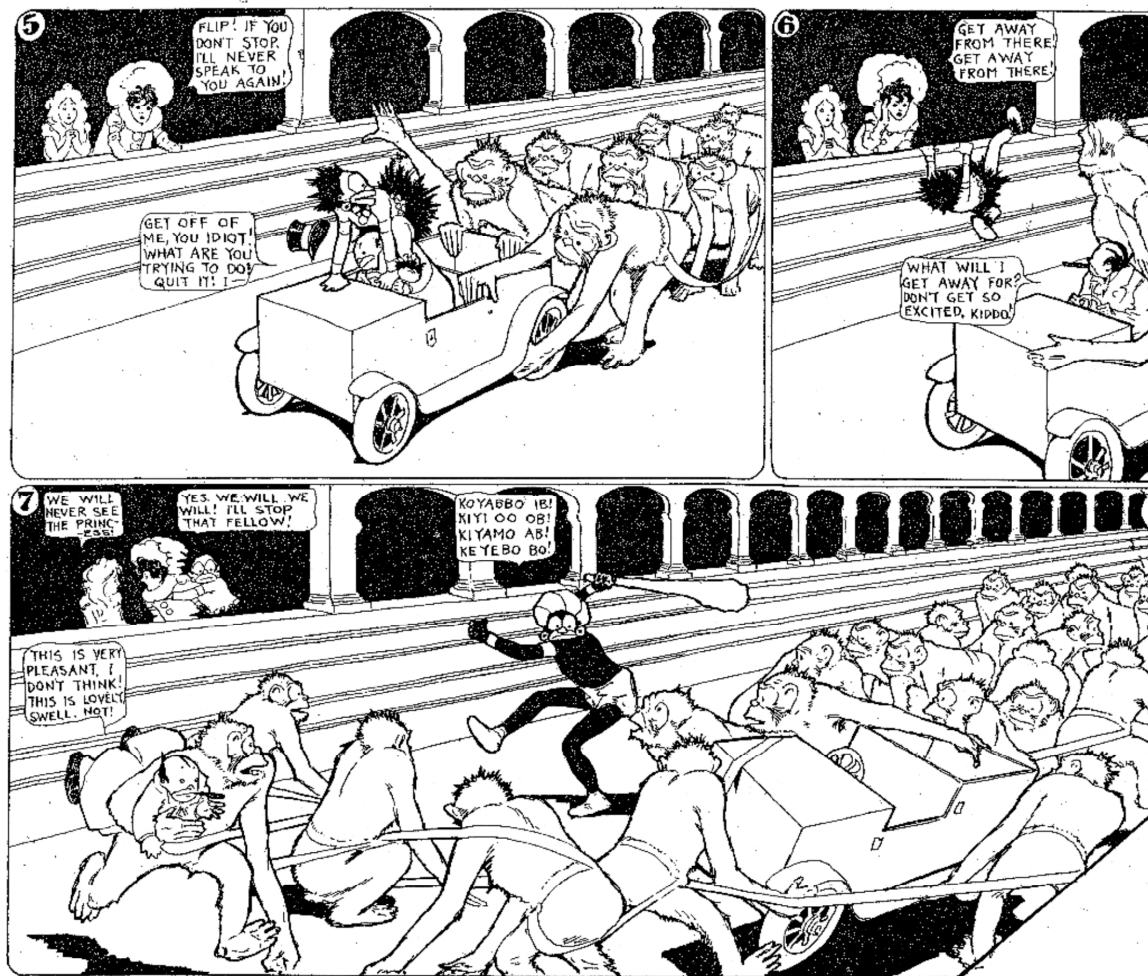
OED s.v. **not**, C, colloq.

Used humorously following a statement to indicate that it should not be taken seriously (usually because the idea expressed is untrue or unlikely to happen), or sarcastically to negate a statement made immediately before.

1893 *Princeton Tiger* 30 Mar. 103 An Historical Parallel—Not.

1900 G. ADE *More Fables* 80 Probably they preferred to go back to the Front Room and hear some more about Woman's Destiny not.

Or both ...*not* and *I don't think* combined (McCoy [1909])



(25) *So don't I*—or more generally *So AUXn't NP* (cf. Labov 1972: 815)

Irony, sarcasm, or just a “negative positive”?

Dictionary of American Regional English draft entry, *gratia* Joan H. Hall:

so ▷^Padv[◁] ▷^Bchiefly NEng[◁]

In neg constr following positive constr: used to express agreement with the positive constr—often in phr ▷^v*so don't I* ◁ so do I.

1962 *NYT Book Rev.* 28 Jan 16/1, This expression [=“Don't be surprised if he doesn't visit you one of these days”] is akin to the old jocular negative in the following piece of dialogue: “I wish I had an orange.” “So don't I.” Here again, the speaker means a strong “So do I.” 1980 *Daily Hampshire Gaz.* (Northampton MA) 9 Sept 16/2, And just as the mood of the once-solemn convocation has changed over the past few years, so hasn't the opening address by President Jill Ker Conway. 1980 *DARE File MA*, *So* (+ neg = agreement)—Heard in New England at least since 1959, esp. among younger people. E.g. “I really like blueberries!” — “So don't I!” . . . “We're going to the movies tonight.” — “So aren't we! Let's go together.” *Ibid cnMA* (as of c1915), “So don't I,” really meant “So do I.” 1982 Chaika *Speaking RI* [8], *So don't I* = I shaw do (also used in past tense, e.g. *so didn't I*). 1998 *NADS Letters nwPA* (as of c1980), The standard response indicating agreement was “so don't I” (as in A: “I like ice cream.” B: “Mmmm. So don't I!” Also “so didn't I,” “so doesn't she,” etc.) . . . While it had more currency among the harder-core locals, it seemed to be pretty much standard fare for everyone, barring those who moved in from outside. 1999 *DARE File*—Internet [Boston Online *The Wicked Good Guide to Boston English*], *So don't I*—An example of the Massachusetts negative positive. Used like this: “I just love the food at Kelly's.” “Oh, so don't I!” 2000 *NADS Letters VT*, In Vermont we often hear “natives” use the term “so don't I” which actually means “so *do* I” to me. For instance, if I said, “I like the DARE website” someone might answer (in agreement) “So don't I.” 2000 *DARE File nwMA* (as of 1960s), “I have a new bike.” “Well, so don't I.” *Ibid nwMA*, “So don't I” . . . is so ingrained a speech pattern that I've always taken it for granted. Grandma . . . said . . . “I was born in '09 and my folks were using it before I was born.” *Ibid RI*, When I was growing up in Providence, Rhode Island in the 1950s, it was common for people to say, “so don't I” or “so don't we.” “So don't I” was intended to mean the same as “so do I” and similarly with the plural. 2001 in 2002 *DARE File*—Internet *ceMA*, While he/she may have some quirks, so don't we all. 2002 *Ibid Boston MA* [Local Lingo], How about the expression “And so didn't Joe” which really means so did Joe. Example: “Mary went shopping and so didn't John.” Which, of course, means *Mary and John went shopping*.

THE COLTS WANT THIS ONE? SO DON'T THE PATS!

[Boston Globe headline, fall 1971]

Freeman (2004) and Pappas (2004): *So do not I*, etc. are found in Shakespeare (*Twelfth Night*, III.iv; *Richard III*, I.iv, II.ii) and Beaumont and Fletcher with pleonastic (non-)force sometimes intended. In fact, however, even in the most plausible candidate of these, the *Twelfth Night* couplet—

VIOLA: Methinks his words do from such passion fly,
That he believes himself: **so do not I**.

—the negation has its ordinary force, pace Freeman and Pappas.

The sense is: '*I, unlike Antonio, do not do so*' [viz., believe him]

Wood (2008): *so don't I* cancels exhaustiveness implicature of affirmative

(26) *don't care to*: Negative Positive #2? Montgomery (2004) entry:

care verb To be willing or agreeable to (usu. in phr. *I don't care to*, a response to a suggestion or invitation). The verb may range in sense from the understatement "not to mind if one does" or "to be pleased if one does."

1929 Chapman *Mt Man* 510 "I don't care for work" means "I like to work--I don't mind working." And "I'd not care to drive a car" means "I am not afraid to--I'd like to drive a car." Yet outlanders who have lived years in the mountains are still taking these comments in the modern sense, and advertising that the mountain man is lazy and that he is shy of modern invention.

1939 Hall *Recording Speech* 7 Examples of *not to care to* for *not to mind*, as in a sentence spoken by an Emerts Cove man, "She don't care to talk," meaning "She doesn't mind talking," are found in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

1998 Brewer *Words of Past* Another East Tennesseism is the practice, when asking somebody to do something, of adding "if you don't care to" when the meaning is exactly opposite of the plain English. An example would be, "Would you carry me to work, if you don't care to?"

[DARE: chiefly Midland]

OED s.v. **care**, 4b: Not to mind (something proposed); to have no disinclination or objection. Now only with *if*, *though*.

1526 *Pilgr. Perf.* (W. de W. 1531) 18 Some for a few tythes, with Cayn, **careth not** to lese the eternall rychesse of heuen.

1597 SHAKES. *2 Hen. IV*, I. ii. 142, I **care not** if I be your Physitian.

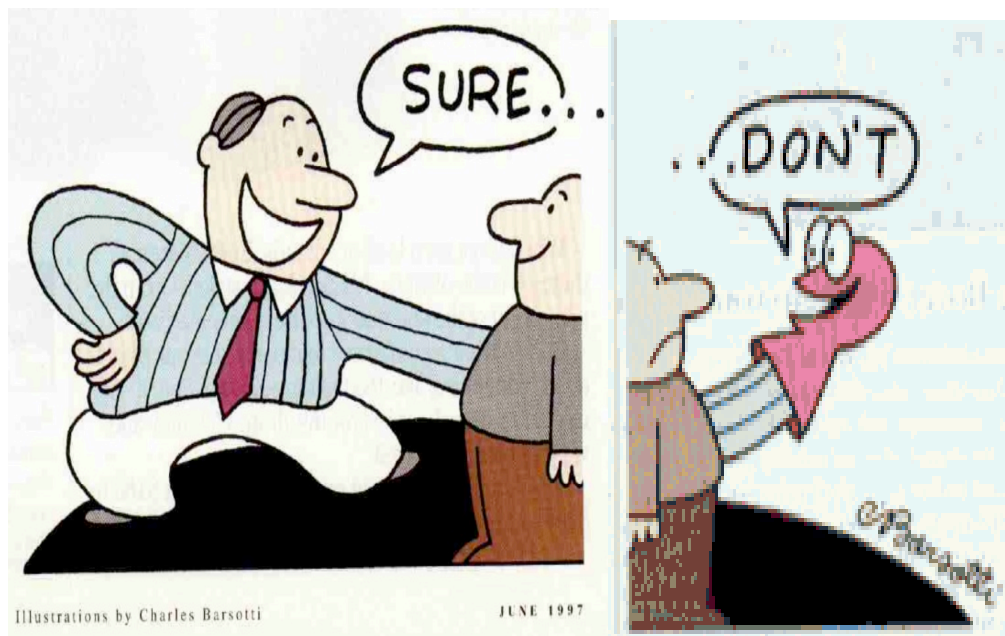
1611 FLORIO, *Scrócca il fuso*...a light-heeled trull that **cares not** to horne hir husband.

1748 RICHARDSON Clarissa (1811) V. 265 Will you eat, or drink, friend?.. I **dont care** if I do.

➤ (not quite) equal time for the "positive negative":

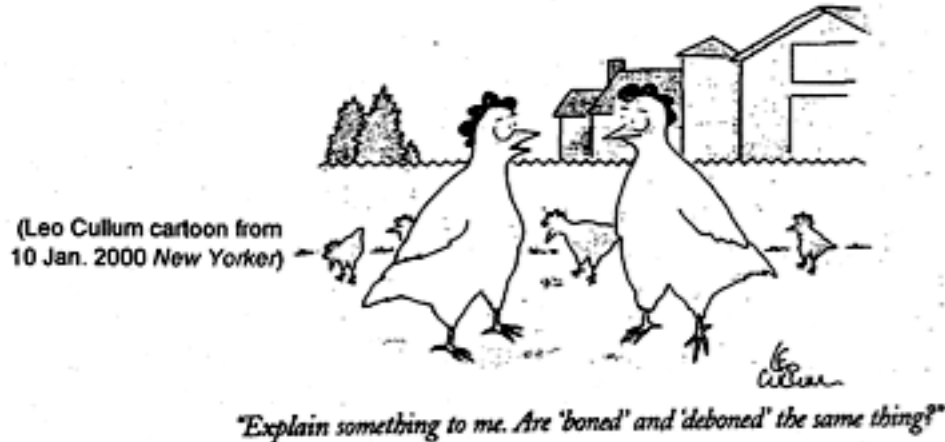
(27) Memo from "Sure Don't" America (Frazier 1997)

Normally the negative is expressed by the word "no". But for some people, and in some places, "no" is not part of the vocabulary. Instead speakers use an upbeat substitute that nevertheless conveys the same meaning—hence, **the "Positive Negative"**. For example, if you go into a convenience store...and you ask the salesperson if they have any cat food, he or she will reply, cheerful as can be, "We sure don't!" The last word is spoken with rising inflection, as if the expression were a positive one ending with the word "do". Sometimes the word "sure" is accented with a regretful but still good-humored shake of the head...The Positive Negative can be adapted to any situation in which the answer is no: "Will you be back later?" "I sure won't!" "Can you give me a jump start?" "I sure can't".



Lexical hypernegation:

- (28) a. double negative affixes with single negative meaning: modern **irregardless** or earlier (17th c.) formations *undoubtless*, *unguiltless*, *unhelpless*, *unmerciless* with simple privative force (cf. **unzweifellos**)
- b. *un-/de-/dis-* prefixed reversative or privative verbs reinforcing “entropic” or source-oriented meaning of positive stem
unthaw (= *thaw*, *unfreeze*), **unloose(n)** (= *loose(n)*, *untighten*), **unravel**
unpeel, **unshell**, **unpit**; **dissever**, **disannul**; **deprive**, **deworm**, **debone**
(See Horn 1988, 2002a for elaboration of when & why these occur)



The asymmetric nature of *un*-verbs: Helping **entropy** along
∴ **un-** on entropic bases is interpreted pleonastically...

The redundant *un*-verb: **unthawing** vs. **unfreezing**

unthaw in OED citations from 1598 on, always = 'thaw'

*The ponds were almost **unthawed**.*

*The men [in Holland] are cold to such a degree that neither Love nor wine can **unthaw** them.*

unfreeze always = 'thaw', opposite of 'freeze'

freezing *X* → puts *X* into a marked state of constricted energy;

both **(un)thaw** and **unfreeze** restore the state of nature

unloose(n)

unravel

unempty

unfree

untap (one's ability)

unpick (a lock)

undrain (oneself of adrenaline)

Swedish (*gratia* Johan Brandtler):

Reversative *upp*

knyta ‘tie’ vs. **knyta upp** ‘untie’

låsa ‘lock’ vs. **låsa upp** ‘unlock’

vika ‘fold’ vs. **vika upp** ‘unfold’

packa ‘pack’ vs. **packa upp** ‘unpack’

Pleonastic *upp*

tina ‘thaw’ = **tina upp** ‘unthaw’

lösa ‘dissolve’ = **lösa upp** lit. ‘undissolve’

lossa ‘loosen’ = **lossa upp** ‘unloosen’

But consider the role of technology, especially computers,
in generating new reversative senses for some *un*-verbs,
yielding homonymy with older redundant form

unerase

undeleete

unshuffle (*producing entropy, or reversing it?*)

unsort

➤ *once (predictably) pleonastic =*

‘sort (out)’, i.e. restore a natural order to

NFL playoff picture clearer with two weeks left

It shouldn't be too difficult to **unsort** the playoff possibilities
with two weeks left in the regular season.

As with all ethnography, it is difficult to **unsort** the meanings of
the actors interviewed from the predispositions and perspectives
of the observers (Manning, 1995)

Police Work and Culture in a Nonurban Setting: An Ethnographic Analysis
Wendy Christensen, Boise State University

While it is difficult to **unsort** the many overlapping factors
contributing to homelessness,...

=====

*But the vast majority of the current 883,000 google hits for
unsort assume a process which does indeed reverse/undo
a sorting, typically via a randomizing program.*

e.g. “Unsort is the inverse of 'sort': it randomizes the order of the lines
in a file.”

Hyponegation (when Nulla negatio negat)

Lexical hyponegation: haplo(lo)gy in **unpacked** ‘un-unpacked’ et al.

(Horn 1988: fn. 17)

- (27) a. My suitcase is **still unpacked** and my plane leaves in two hours!
b. My cartons are **still unpacked** and I’ve been living here for two months!
c. [Because of Plaxico Burress’s injuries] “The big-play threat the Giants hoped he would provide Eli Manning **remains unveiled**” (NYT 5/05)

Expletive and missing negations in Chinese, Spanish, and English approximatIVES: when hyper meets hypo

(see Horn 2002, Schwenter 2002, Ziegeler 2006, Amaral 2007 for elaboration)

[Mandarin Chinese; cf. Li 1976]

- (28) Wo chadianr mei chi. (i) ‘I almost didn’t eat’, ‘I barely ate’
I miss-a-little not eat (ii) ‘I almost ate’ [= Wo chadianr chi le]

[Spanish; cf. Schwenter 2002, Pons Bordería & Schwenter 2005]

- (29) a. Por poco sale. ‘She almost left’
b. Por poco no sale. ‘She almost didn’t leave’ (= She barely left)
(30) a. Por poco se mata. ‘She was almost killed’
b. Por poco no se mata. ≠ (i) ‘She almost wasn’t killed’
= (ii) ‘She was almost killed’

[Valencia Spanish; cf. Schwenter 2002]

- (31) a. ¡Casi salgo!” ‘I almost didn’t get out’, ‘I barely/finally got out’
[lit. ‘I almost get out’]
b. ¡Casi llegas! ‘You just barely made it!’ [lit., ‘You almost arrive!’]

Swiss Ger. **fasch** ‘almost’ [= Ger. **fast**] or ‘almost not’ (‘barely’)

- (32) **near miss**: usu. = *nearly a non-miss*, e.g. a near collision in the air.

William Safire (“On Language” column, 1/2/05) on “overuse of *near*”:

It became controversial with **near miss**, a nonsensical version of *near thing*; some of us patiently but uselessly pointed out that the writer meant “near hit.” Near miss has since entrenched itself as an idiom. (Idioms is idioms, and I could care less.)

“Greg Norman, best known for his massive collapse in ’96 and his other **near misses**”
(Bill Pidto on ESPN SportsCenter, 8/24/01)

[Headline:] Martin’s **near miss**

Great Britain curling skip Rhona Martin almost missed the

[Salt Lake City] Winter Olympics because of a stomach problem...

(<http://news.bbc.co.uk/winterolympics2002/hi/english/curling>)

(33) I **could care less** = ‘couldn’t care less’

- irony/sarcasm? frozen irony? what is the role of intonation?
- is there an understood (or formerly understood) “As if/Like...”?

(34) **Squatitives** (Horn 2001b, Postal 2004)

a. **Licensed *squat*** (*doodly-squat, diddly-shit, jack shit, zilch, beans,...*)

He then looked into a career as a newspaper reporter but discovered writing didn’t pay **squat**.

The designated hitter or DH: A player who is designated to bat for the pitcher, who, with rare exceptions, can’t hit for **squat**.

We’re all professionals, we understand the season’s over. We happened to be 15-3, that doesn’t mean **squat** now.

You’re being a pain in the ass... I’ve given you what I can, which may not be **squat**, but you’re lucky you’re not thrown out on your ear.

b. **Unlicensed *squat*** (and variants)

All the talk of a resurrected Yeomen football program the past two seasons will mean **squat** if the team fumbles its opportunity to make the playoffs.

And it’s not the kids who let us down—it’s the veterans...There have been a couple of veterans who have done **squat** since they’ve been here, to be honest.

When the more sophisticated students complain that they are learning **squat**, I would direct the professor to remind them that tutoring builds the self-esteem of both tutor and tutee.

The state is doing virtually nothing to prevent gambling addiction or help those caught in its trap. “Arizona has done **diddly squat**”, says Henry Lesieur, a sociologist and national expert on compulsive gambling.

My dad got ’em [football tickets] for free. He works at the university. They pay him **squat** so they give him perks.

Like Fr. *rien*, *squatitives* can appear freely to express 'nothing' in verb-less contexts:



'So, what is seventy-eight percent of doodly-squat?'

(Clay Bennett, Chattanooga Times Free Press)

c. Unlicensed *squat*-equivalents across the pond

(all examples from Peter Lovesey (1997), *Upon a Dark Night*)

"What did they do about it? **Bugger all?**"

"No. They showed some responsibility."

"And for those of you thinking I know **sod-all** about traumatic disorders, I did consult a couple of textbooks."

"What is comes down to is the result that whatever the result it's **bugger-all** use without a hair from the suspect to match."

"Two innocent people died for **bugger all?**"

"I'm afraid that's true."

Productivity

Chris, my best friend at the time, sat at the head of the table and seemed more disinterested in the conversation than Sandy and I, so I figured that he **gave two shits** about what was going on under the table. [Usenet post; **gave two shits** = 'didn't care']

Speculation:

could care less is essentially a squattive, appearing either as an NPI in the scope of negation or (increasingly) unlicensed and bearing its own negative force:

- (35) I **couldn't** care less : I **could** care less ::
It **doesn't** mean squat : It **means** squat

Related processes eventuating in hyponegation

Fr. *pas* ('not' < 'step'), *rien* ('nothing' < 'thing'), *jamais* ('never' < 'yet more'), *personne* ('no one' < 'person') originally reinforcers of negation that acquired negative force via reanalysis (Jespersen's Cycle)
Span. *en absoluto* 'not at all', 'absolutely not'

Sarcastic hyponegation

- (36) {**That will/That'll**} **teach you to...** = 'that will teach you not to'

Lawler (1974: 372, fn. 1): *That'll teach you to* fails to license even weak NPIs (*any, ever*), as in (29) (judgment is Lawler's):

- (36') That'll teach you *(not) to say anything.

But in fact NPI licensing IS possible, as googling reveals:

- (37) a. "That'll teach you to ever..." [1270 hits], e.g.
That'll teach you to **ever** fuck with me again," I said with a smirk.
That'll teach you to **ever** talk about sex.
Aw, sorry to hear Expatria, but that'll teach you to **ever** leave Boston.
b. That'll teach you to do **anything** without a spreadsheet
c. That'll teach you to **ever** come up with **anything** that doesn't fit within the status quo of as defined by the internet community!
That'll teach him to **ever** say **anything** degrading about girls in your presence.

➤Not surprising, since NPIs are regularly triggered in ironic contexts (a species of "Flaubert licensing", Horn 2001b)

- (38) Fat chance I'd **ever** open **any** attachment that didn't come from one of my clients.

A fat lot of good THAT **ever** did **anyone**.

Like you'd **ever** lift a **finger** to help **anyone** around the house.

Like/As if I give a {**damn/shit/flying fuck**} about any of that.

NPIs are also licensed by invisible negation in non-ironic contexts:

(39) Exactly four people in the whole world have **ever** read that dissertation:

Bill, Mary, Tom, and Ed.

[Linebarger 1987: 373]

Small thanks you get for THAT, **either**.

I'm anything but happy with THAT analysis, **either**. [J. McCawley, lecture]

The tone [of Germaine Greer's attack on manufacturers of vaginal deodorants]

wasn't light-hearted, which might have justified touching the subject

at all.

[C. McCabe, *San Francisco Chronicle*]

I mean, talk about /noise/, after about two years on the Linguist list, I'm

going to unsub because it is a complete waste of my time -- maybe 1 on

[sic]. 1000 messages on it has **/any/** conceivable interest.

[Posting to OUTiL e-mail list, 9 Sept. 1995]

> Why "Flaubert licensing"?

L'artiste doit être dans son oeuvre comme Dieu dans la création,
invisible et tout-puissant; qu'on le sent partout, mais qu'on ne le
voit pas.

—Gustave Flaubert, letter to Mlle Leroyer de Chantepie, 18 Mar. 1857

'The artist should be in his work like God in Creation, invisible and
all-powerful; let him be sensed everywhere, but let him not be seen.'

Like the deist God and the Flaubertian novelist, so too with
the immanence of negativity in contexts of hyponegation:
everywhere present yet nowhere visible.

> But not all hyponegative "only"-implying contexts license NPIs:

(40) a. Of all our presidents, it's only [_FBush] who has (ever) proposed tax
cuts in wartime.

b. Of all our presidents, it's [_FBush] who has (*ever) proposed any
tax cuts in wartime.

c. [_FBUSH] has (*ever) proposed any tax cuts in wartime.

☞ Clefts and other focus constructions fail to license
NPIs in the absence of a dedicated exhaustivity
marker. NPIs are permitted if maximality (and not
just identity) is asserted.

The preacher-man construction [*gratia* Dusty Springfield]

- (41) a. The only one who could ever reach me was the son of a preacher man.
b. *The one who could ever reach me was the son of a preacher man.
c. The one man who could ever reach me was the son of a preacher man.
- (42) a. You're the {only woman/one woman} I ever loved.
b. *You're the {one/woman} I ever loved.
- (43) a. The {only time/one time} she ever slept with a man she got pregnant.
b. *The time she ever slept with a man she got pregnant.

GAPS and GLUTS in truth-value assignment (Parsons 1990, Horn 2006)

➤propositions that can be neither true nor false

The King of France is bald.

There will be a sea battle tomorrow.

(cf. Aristotle (?), Strawson, Lukasiewicz, Bochvar,...)

➤propositions that can be both true and false

This sentence is not true.

Nirvana exists.

(cf. Nāgārjuna, Hegel, Routley, Priest,...)

HYPONEGATION and HYPERNEGATION:

gaps and gluts in the mapping of \neg in *langue* and *parole*

Thanks!

And thanks too to Patricia Amaral, Johan Brandtler, Joan Houston Hall, Jack Hoeksema, Beverly Flanigan, John Lawler, Mark Liberman, Michael Montgomery, Geoff Nunberg, Scott Schwenter, Jim Wood, Ton van der Wouden, Hedde Zeijlstra, Ben Zimmer, and Arnold Zwicky for their examples, judgments, suggestions, and inspiration. The usual disclaimers apply.