

(2005)

15.1 Introduction

Moravcsik and Wirth 1980 comprises the proceedings of the Great Milwaukee Syntax Bake-Off of 1979, an event pitting various grammatical theories against one another in a kind of intersyntactic precursor of the CBS *Survivor* show. The table of contents to that volume includes—among standard entries like Robin Cooper's "Montague's Syntax," Susumu Kuno's "Functional Syntax," and David Perlmutter's "Relational Grammar"—an entry for "An Un-syntax" submitted by (who else?) Jim McCawley.¹ As it happens, I was the designated discussant for this presentation; my contribution was later published as "Giving *Un* to Others" (Horn 1980). In this memorial volume, I propose to honor the immortal unsyntactician with a somewhat more comprehensive *un-* paper.

More specifically, I shall seek to account for the increasingly productive word formation process resulting in a brood of *un-*nouns, the semilegitimate offspring of Humpty Dumpty's *unbirthday present* (1872) and 7-Up's commercial incarnation as *the Uncola* (1968). Drawing on a large corpus of novel *un-*nouns I have been assembling jointly with Beth Levin (see the appendices in Horn 2002a), I will seek to motivate a set of constraints on the formation of these lexical items by invoking Rosch's prototype semantics and Aristotle's theory of opposition, in which *privation* is defined in terms of a marked exception to a general class property; to explain why 7-Up is a better candidate for an uncola than tea or chocolate milk, and more generally why a given *un-*noun refers either to an element just outside a given category

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with whose members it shares a salient function (e.g., *uncold*) or to a peripheral member of a given category (an *unhotel* is a hotel but not a good exemplar of the category—not a “HOTEL hotel”). I conclude with some remarks in defense of the conceptual necessity for a lexical pragmatics, a field whose ancestry traces back to McCawley 1978.

15.2 Varieties of Opposition

The genus of opposition, as developed in Aristotle's *Categories* (11b17), is divided into four apparently disjoint species:

- (1) a. *Contrariety* (between two *contraries*): for example, *good* versus *bad*
- b. *Contradiction* (*affirmative* to *negative*): for example, *He sits* versus *He does not sit*
- c. *Correlation* (between two *relatives*): for example, *double* versus *half*
- d. *Privation* (*privative* to *positive*): for example, *blind* versus *sighted*

Aristotle proceeds to offer detailed diagnostics for distinguishing “the various senses in which the term ‘opposite’ is used” (11b16–14a25).

Contradictory opposites are mutually exhaustive as well as mutually exclusive, while contrary opposites do not mutually exhaust their domain (for details, see Horn 1989, chap. 1). This distinction is originally drawn for statement types, as depicted in the system later schematized by Apuleius and Boethius in the square of opposition in figure 15.1.

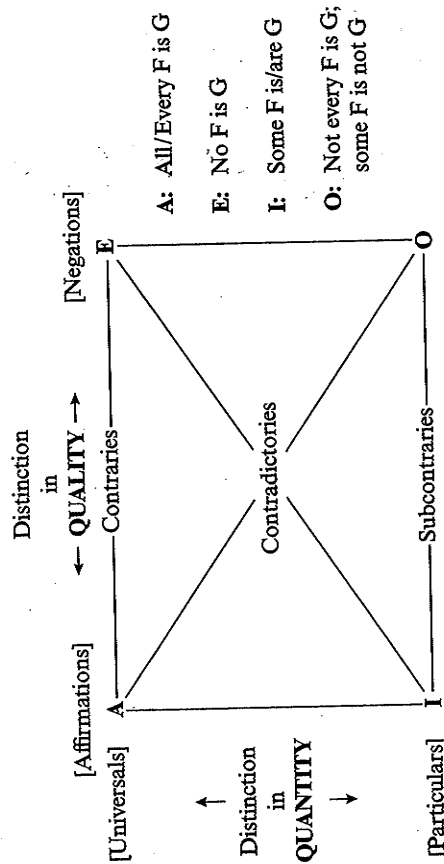


Figure 15.1
Traditional square of opposition

Corresponding A and E statements are contraries in that they cannot be simultaneously true (though they may be simultaneously false). Corresponding A and O (and I and E) statements are contradictories; members of each pair cannot be true or false simultaneously. In Aristotle's terms, contradictories “divide the true and the false between them.” Contradictory terms (*black/nonblack*, *oddeven*, *male/female*) exclude any middle term, an entity satisfying the range of the two opposed terms but falling under neither of them: a shirt that is neither black nor not-black, an integer that is neither odd nor even. Contraries, by definition, admit a middle: my shirt may be neither black nor white, my friend neither happy nor sad.

Correlation is essentially converseness: A is the double of B if and only if B is the half of A. Other pairs include *parent* versus *child*, *above* versus *below*, *own* versus *belong to*, and *eat* versus *be eaten by*; I shall have nothing further to say here about correlates. But privation, the fourth mode of opposition, will be our capstone.

For Aristotle, privatives and positives always apply to the same subject and are defined in terms of the presence or absence of a default property for that subject:

We say that that which is capable of some particular faculty or possession has suffered privation when the faculty or possession in question is in no way present in that in which, and at the time in which, it should be naturally present. We do not call that toothless which has not teeth, or that blind which has not sight, but rather that which has not teeth or sight at the time when by nature it should. (*Categories*, 12a28–33)

On this understanding, a newborn kitten is no more blind than is a chair, and a baby is not toothless.

Privation as the absence of what would be expected by nature to be present is revisited in the *Metaphysics* (1022b23–1023a8), where Aristotle—noting that privation can range over predictable absence, accidental removal, or deliberate “taking away by force” of the relevant property—distinguishes privation “with respect to genus,” as in the blindness of moles, from privation “with respect to self,” as in the blindness or toothlessness of an old man. In the end, Aristotle concedes, there may be as many senses of privation as there are *a*-prefixed terms in Greek (1022b33).² Indeed, privation may be reanalyzed as a marked contrary bearing an *a*-prefix: “the primary contrariety is that of possession and privation” (1055a34).

15.3 Contrariety, E-negativity, and the *Un-*adjective

The prefix *un-* attaches to English adjectives, verbs, and nouns, in each case yielding a lexical item of the same category as the original base. The standard characterization of the semantics associated with this prefix (or family of prefixes) is in terms of either *negation* or *antonymy*, but it is not clear what sense of negation is involved or whether there is a single sense (however generally defined), even within a single

category. What is clear is that few *un*-words of any category correspond to the contradictory opposition of the sentential negative.

It has long been recognized (see, e.g., Sigwart 1895, 138, for citation of *unhappy*; *unwise*, *unfeeling*, and *speechless*, and more recently Krusinga 1931, sec. 1620; Zimmer 1964; Funk 1971; Horn 1989, sec. 5.1) that negative affixation, especially when it involves the English prefixes *un-* and *iN-* and their crosslinguistic analogues, tends to develop a contrary rather than merely contradictory interpretation when such a strengthened reading is possible. Here is Jespersen's take on the semantics of *un*-prefixed adjectives:

The modification in sense brought about by the addition of the prefix is generally that of a simple negation: *unworthy* = 'not worthy', etc.... The two terms [*X*, *unX*] are thus contradictory terms. But very often the prefix produces a "contrary" term or at any rate what approaches one: *unjust* generally implies the opposite of *just*; *unwise* means more than *not wise* and approaches *foolish*, *unhappy* is not far from *miserable*, etc. (Jespersen 1917, 144; cf. 1942, 466-67)

As Jespersen observes, this strengthened, contrary reading correlates with the often observed fact that the same prefixes tend to yield derived forms that are associated with a pejorative or evaluatively negative content: "The same general rule obtains in English as in other languages, that most adjectives with *un-* or *iN-* have a depreciatory sense: we have *unworthy*, *undue*, *imperfect*, etc., but it is not possible to form similar adjectives from *wicked*, *foolish*, or *terrible*" (1917, 144).

Jespersen (1917) and Zimmer (1964, 10ff.) review a number of early discussions of negative affixation that demonstrate what Wundt (1886) labels the *Unlustaffekte* of negatively affixed forms in particular and negation in general. In German, Swedish, French, and English, as these lexical studies demonstrate, disproportionately many negatively affixed adjectives are depreciatory, derogatory, or evaluatively negative in denotation or connotation. Following Cruse (1980), I adopt *e-pos* and *e-neg* as shorthand for evaluatively/emotively positive and negative, respectively. The formula expressing the relevant generalization can be given as in (2).

- (2) negative affix + e-pos base → e-neg derived output
 [un] [happy] [unhappy]

Thus, in English we have *unhappy* but not *unsad*, *unwise* but not *unfoolish*, and the parallel examples in (3).

- (3) uncivilized *unboorish, *unbarbarian
 unclean *undirty
 unclear *unfuzzy, ?unconfused
 unfriendly *unhostile, *unantagonistic
 unhealthy, unwell *unsick, *unill

unintelligent *unstupid
 uninteresting *unboring, *undull
 unjust, unfair *unwrongful
 unkind, uncivil *unrude
 unsympathetic *unantipathetic
 untrue *unfalse
 infertile *unbarren

In these examples, only an e-pos or neutral stem can serve as a natural base for a negatively affixed adjective, and only e-neg derived adjectives are therefore possible.

Elsewhere, as in (4), we find an (e-neg) *un-* or *iN-*prefixed adjective based on an e-pos stem where there is no corresponding e-neg stem to serve as a source for an e-pos derived form.

- (4) impossible inconsequential unfit
 improper inconsistent unfortunate/unlucky
 inappropriate irrelevant unfree
 incoherent unapt/inept unsuitable

There are also a number of "orphaned" *un*-adjectives with no extant positive counterpart whatsoever: *unabashed*, *unassuming*, *unbending*, *uncouth*, *unflagging*, *unheard-of*, *unkept*, *unparalleled*, *unprecedented*, *unruly*, *unscathed*, *untouched*, *untoned*, and so on.³ Significantly, most such orphans (many of which are evaluatively positive) represent the productive *un*+V+participle pattern; those that fail to reflect this pattern do seem to share the e-neg quality of the adjectives in (3) and (4).

As Cruse (1980) notes, e-pos adjectives are semantically heterogeneous. A given pair of e-pos/e-neg adjectives will constitute *antonyms* (gradable contraries) if there is a midinterval between the unmarked and marked qualities. In such cases, the unmarked term (*happy*, *wise*, *interesting*) denotes a positive attribute or property that can be present in varying degrees, and there are no literal endpoints of the relevant scales (*#absolutely {happy/sad/wise/foolish/interesting/dull}*). With *gradable complementaries* (contradictories), there is by definition no midinterval, and the unmarked term denotes the absence of some negative or undesirable property (*clean* vs. *dirty*, *safe* vs. *dangerous*) and allows a scalar endpoint (*absolutely {clean/#dirty, safe/#dangerous}*). With antonyms, the e-pos term is also *q-pos* (quantitatively positive, denoting a salient property such as wisdom or interest), and it is this term that forms the basis for *un*-adjectives (*unhappy*, *unwise*, *uninteresting*); with gradable complementaries, it is the e-neg term that is *q-pos*: "All gradable complementaries denote degrees of some undesirable property, like dirtiness, or danger; antonyms always indicate degrees of either a neutral property, like length, or weight, or a desirable one, like beauty, merit, or intelligence" (Cruse 1980, 21). But, as shown by pairs like

unclean/**undirty*, *unsafe*/**undangerous*, and by the existence of unpaired neg-prefixed adjectives from q-neg but e-pos bases (e.g., *unfaithful*, *dishonest*, *imperfect*, *impure*), it is e-polarity rather than q-polarity that determines the availability of an adjective for negative prefixation. (For further discussion of antonymy, markedness, and gradable adjectives, see Sapir 1944; Givón 1970; Lehrer 1974, 1985; Ljung 1974; Lyons 1977; Lehrer and Lehrer 1982; Horn 1989.)

The asymmetry illustrated in (3)—and indirectly in (4)—does not extend to all negatively prefixed adjectives. The key correlation is formulated by Zimmer (1964): the less productive the affixation process, the more likely its output is to be interpreted as a contrary (rather than contradictory) of its base, and the stronger the restriction to e-pos bases (and, correspondingly, to e-neg resultant meanings for the derived negative adjective). This correlation emerges especially clearly when we turn to more productive subrules for *un-*. At least since the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), it has been noticed that *un-* attaches freely to stems with three deverbal suffixes, *-able* and participial *-ed* and *-ing*. Indeed, *un-* prefixation is virtually unrestricted in these cases, constrained only by the existence of lexicalized *iN-* forms occupying the same slot.⁴ But in just these contexts, the affixation rule produces derived forms that are strictly contradictory and emotively either neutral, as in (5a), or positive, as in (5b).

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| (5) a. imperceptible | b. unbeaten | untarnished |
| irreducible | unbigoted | unblamable |
| undecidable | unblemished | unconquerable |
| uneaten | undaunted | incorruptible |
| unexpired | undefeated | indomitable |
| unprefix{able/ed} | undeterréd | unimpeachable |
| unxerox{able/ed} | unharméd | unobjectionable |
| un-cross-examined | unscathed | irreproachable |
| un-mouse-eaten | unsullied | invulnerable |

Thus, “the negative content of simplex words differs from the negative content of forms derived according to some synchronically productive and frequently encountered pattern” (Zimmer 1964, 38). It is for this reason that Jespersen, in discussing the tendency for *un-* negatives to be read as contraries, explicitly exempts “words in *-able* and participles”; his examples (1917, 144) include *unabsorbable*, *unadaptable*, *unabbreviated*, *unadapted*, *unavailing*, and *unbefitting*.

Additional confirmation of the semantic asymmetry of *un-* formations is provided by the history of English. A number of potentially occurring *unX* adjectives are ruled out, presumably blocked or preempted by a previously existing and more lexicalized simple contrary with the same meaning; but this was not always the case. Here again is the *OED* (*un-*¹, 7):

There is ... considerable restriction in the use of *un-* with short simple adjectives of native origin, the negative of these being naturally supplied by another simple word of an opposite signification. There is thus little or no tendency now to employ such forms as *unbroad*, *undeep*, *unwide*, *unbold*, *unglad*, *ungood*, *unstrong*, *unwhole*, [etc.] which freely occur in the older language.

These cited examples, like those of (3) and (4), are e-neg forms with e-pos bases; no *unshallow*, *unnarrow*, *unsad*, *unbad*, or *unweak* seems to have occurred even “in the older language” (cf. Zimmer 1964, 41).

The Avoid Synonymy principle (“The output of a lexical rule may not be synonymous with an existing lexical item”: Kiparsky 1983) or its generalization as the Division of Pragmatic Labor (see Horn 1984) predicts that the meaning of derived adjectives such as *unhappy* and *unintelligent* must be different from (characteristically, weaker than) those of the corresponding underived *sad* and *stupid* (see Zimmer 1964; Lehrer 1985). But despite this difference in strength between derived and simple e-neg adjectives, *unhappy* and *unintelligent* still constitute contrary rather than contradictory opposites of their bases *happy* and *intelligent*: someone who is neither happy nor sad may be, but need not be, unhappy.

As noted by Jespersen and Marchand, *un-* and *iN-* derivatives tend to negate the emotive senses of the stems to which they attach, while *non-* negates objective or descriptive content. Among the minimal pairs that have been cited to illustrate this contrast are those in (6).

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (6) immoral : nonmoral | unprofessional : nonprofessional |
| irrational : nonrational | unprofitable : nonprofit |
| un-American : non-American | unremunerative : nonremunerative |
| un-Christian : non-Christian | unrhythmic : nonrhythmic |
| unnatural : nonnatural | unscientific : nonscientific |

In each case, the *iN-* or *un-* form is understood pejoratively and is in contrary opposition with the corresponding positive stem, while the *non-* derivative is a simple, evaluatively neutral contradictory.⁵ As Algeo (1971, 90–91) describes the contrast:

A Moslem is a *non-Christian*, but only a Christian can be *un-Christian* in behavior. A *nonrealistic* novel is one whose goal is other than a realistic view of the world, but an *unrealistic* novel is likely to be one that aims at, and fails to achieve, realism.

In each case, the emergence of the contrary reading also implies that the adjectival stem can be regarded as a *gradable* or *scalar* value (see Sapir 1944; Horn 1989, chap. 4). Applying the standard tests for gradability, we get the correct prediction that *iN-* and (usually) *un-* adjectives but not the *non-* forms can be inserted into the appropriate scalar frames.

- (7) downright {un/#non}-American very {un/#non}-Christian
 extremely {un/#non}natural awfully {immoral/#nonmoral}
 somewhat {irrational/#nonrational} rather {un/#non}scientific

Hence also the impossibility of *un-* prefixation for binary ungradables (**unmale*, **unfemale*, **unodd*) and the semantic restriction of other derived forms to scalar senses or contexts: the surface of my table can be *uneven*, but the number 7 cannot be; your decision may be *unfair*, but not your complexion. *Uneven* (for integers) is, of course, blocked by *odd*, and the same blocking effect explains why *uncool* could mean 'not hip' but not 'warm', while *unyoung* (attested but not yet lexicalized) will imply '... but not yet old', as when the *New York Times* uses it in an article entitled "Where Age 40 Doesn't Mean the End of Everything" to describe a film about the comeback of an aging ballerina.

The evaluative versus descriptive parameter yields some striking lexical gaps. Alongside *unmaternal*, *nonmaternal*, and *unmotherly*, we have no adjective **nonmotherly*: while the stem *maternal* may be construed as either a descriptive or an evaluative adjective, *motherly* can only be evaluative (Zimmer 1964, 33). Similarly, we have *nonmale* but *unmanly*, while their counterparts **unmale* and **nonmanly* do not occur. The same consideration rules out **nondecent* and **nonrespectable*.

The other side of the coin, as pointed out by Funk (1971), is that adjectives formed with *in-* and *un-*, even when they originate as evaluatively neutral and semantically contradictory senses, tend to develop a contrary, affective, and typically depreciatory meaning or connotation. Funk's examples of this process include *inadequate*, *inappropriate*, *inconvenient*, *incorrigible*, *infertile*, *irrelevant*, *uninteresting*, and *unsatisfactory*. Thus, color terms do not ordinarily sponsor *un-* contraries (**unred*, **unyellow*), but we do get *ungreen* with the specific meaning 'environmentally incorrect', as in *ungreen politicians* or *ungreen power sources*. And, as with Algeo's observations on "unrealistic" novels, only a failed comedy may be *unfunny*, not a successful tragedy. The *New Haven Advocate* "Film Clips" section in 1993 that excoriated *Sister Act 2* as "Wretched, unfunny, soporific; quite likely the year's worst movie" while hailing *Schindler's List* just above it in the alphabetic listings as "Stunning, superb, far and away the year's best movie, and a deeply emotional experience," could not have used the descriptor *unfunny* for the latter film, although whatever might be said about *Schindler's List*, funny it surely wasn't.

Apparently nonscalar categories can be coerced into scalarity via *un-* attachment. The scientific adjective *nuclear* ('of, relating to, or forming a nucleus') is binary—either a particle or reaction is nuclear or it's not; there are no two ways (more strictly, no third way) about it. But its metaphorically extended sense, in which we speak of nuclear families, is more admitting of scalar gradations, and thus while we have no unnuclear bomb, physics, power, and the like, and while this adjective is not

listed in conventional dictionaries, we are not too surprised to find a grouping that consists of the protagonist of a novel (*Mapping the Edge*, by Sarah Dunant) along with her 6-year-old daughter, her confidante, and her best friend and his boyfriend, described as "a strange unnuclear family" (*New York Times Book Review*, 18 February 2001, 34).

Similarly, one of the conventional examples of contradictory adjectives is *alive/dead*; nothing can be both and nothing capable of being either can be "in between." But is this really true? In fact, *undead* has been around since Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) as both an adjective and a zero-derived occupational noun to describe zombies, vampires, and other creatures that are, as the *OED* puts it, 'not quite dead but not fully alive, dead-and-alive'. Note that the someone or something that is undead, such as a vampire, fails to conform to one's expectation that it *should* be dead. But if something appears to be alive but does not quite fulfill that expectation, it must be not *undead* but *unalive*: "I wait for them [artificial flowers] to droop as in a natural cycle. But they are stubbornly unalive and therefore unwiting" (Baxter 2000, 106). Both the undead (but not quite alive) vampire and the unalive (but not dead) artificial flowers conform to Aristotle's notion of a privative opposite, in lacking a property associated by default rules with the respective subject.⁶

The poet E. E. Cummings (1972), notorious for his willingness to cajole and twist the English language to create new morphological, syntactic, and orthographic fault lines, found the *un-*adjective, not to mention the *un-*verb and *un-*noun, an unending source of inspiration. Cureton (1996) points out that Cummings's innovative *un-*verbs include reversatives like *unteach* and *ungrow* that undo what are not normally taken to be undoable actions along with statives like *unbe*, *unexist*, and *unsit*. Cummings's novel *un-*adjectives—*unalive*, *unbig*, *unslender*—strive, by overriding the normal blocking constraints, to induce a finer partition of the physical world.

More generally, the poet envisions an entire *unworld* inhabited by *unthings*, a domain of *unmen* going through the motions, not quite living but "unexisting" in an *unlife* filled with *unlove* ("unlove's the heavenless hell and homeless home/of knowledgeable shadows"). Noting that "Cummings uses *un-* with nominal bases as a major thematic device," Cureton observes that "the advertising industry has resorted to this use of *un-* as well," notably in 7-Up's self-promotion as the Uncola. "Has industry resorted to poetry?" wonders Cureton.

15.4 Privation, Prototype, and the *Un-*noun

Before either poets or advertising copywriters resorted to them, *un-*nouns were amply attested in English word formation. Most of the earlier examples, however, can be rationalized as deadjectival formations: *untruth* as a nominalization of *untrue* (rather than a negation of *truth*), *unhappiness* from *unhappy*, and so on. A number of cases

- d. **undeath**
The sum of the first and second sign Shall be undeath of the moon.
(1933 L. Riding Poet v. 125)
There is, every now and then, a film that escapes this sort of un-death.
(1974 *Globe & Mail* (Toronto) 24 July 13/4)

e. **unlight**

A cloak of darkness she wove about them ... an Unlight, in which things seemed to be no more, and which eyes could not pierce, for it was void.
(1973 J. R. R. Tolkien *Silmarillion* (1977) viii. 74)

f. **unphilosophy**

Every single fall or rise of nature's work ... led her into various veins of inductive unphilosophy.
(1877 Blackmore *Cripps* II. ii. 23)

—and the most historically significant member of the class:

g. **unperson** [introduced by George Orwell]

A person who, usu. for political misdemeanour, is deemed not to have existed and whose name is removed from all public records. In extended use, a person whose existence or achievement is officially denied or disregarded; a person of no political or social importance.
Syme was not only dead, he was abolished, an unperson.
(1949 G. Orwell *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 159)
Beria is already an "unperson," the record of his career "unfacts."
(1954 *Economist* 18 Sept. 883/2)

In each case, we are dealing with a simplex base where there is no plausible source for the nominal in an *un-*adjective or *un-*verb and the meaning involves antonymy or, more specifically, *privation* in Aristotle's sense: the absence of something that might have been expected to inhere in the referent.

Some attested *un-*nouns seem to have been facilitated by a priming effect.

(10) a. **unpublicity**

The publicity or unpublicity of the process.
(1802–12 Bentham *Ration. Judic. Evid.* (1827) II. 140)

b. **unshapes**

The English noses in their shapes and unshapes.
(C. 1843 Carlyle *Hist. Sk. Jas. I & Chas.* I (1898) 269)

Other cited forms allude to a tacit version of the priming effect, where the reader is invited to recall "the land of promise" or "promised land" in the former case and the hackneyed rhetorical query "What kind of society ...?" in the latter.

appear to involve a blend of an irregular nominalization and an *un-*adjective (as in the *OED* citations *Unintelligensia* (G. B. Shaw 1930) or *unmotherhood* (Bushnell 1947)) or the more recent *unprivacy*. Nouns like *unrest*, *undismay*, and *unconcern* can be seen as back-formed from the corresponding adjective or participle (see Horn 1989, sec. 5.1, for complications). In still other cases, the nominalization works off an implicit reversative *un-*verb, even when that verb (*uncircumcise*, *uncopy*, *unver-ify*) is not otherwise attested.⁷

(8) a. **uncircumcision**

Many men who have been circumcised as infants feel mutilated and robbed of their birthright, hence the growing "uncircumcision" movement.
("Ask Isadora" sex advice column, *New Haven Advocate*, 5 June 1997, 55)

b. **uncopier**

Headline: Un-copier Technology Draws a Blank on Used Paper
Heard of the Un-Cola? Now there's the Un-Copier, a kind of reverse photocopier that produces blank pieces of paper from documents published on a photocopier or a laser printer.
(Article by David Akin, *Ottawa Citizen*, 27 June 1998, Business, H3; the machine, manufactured by ImageX Technologies, is officially the "Decopier," although the write-up refers to it as an Un-copier for expository purposes.)

c. **unverification**

I was recently involved in an appeals case in which the question arose as to whether voice recognition had ever been used to show (prove?) that two different recorded voices were made by two different individuals. One might call this voice unverification.
(R. Rodman, posting to Language & Law e-mail list, 11 April 2001)

Suffless cases of *un-*noun formation are not so easy to explain away, including these cited by the *OED*:

(9) a. **unbook**

Another un-book.
(1965 *Probl. Communism* July/Aug. 56 (heading))

b. **uncountry**

In this un-country there was blue sky and light, consent and so sin.
(1964 W. Golding *Spire* ix. 178)

c. **uncrime**

All that the State can aim at is un-crime, whereas the work of the Church is to inculcate virtue.
(1882 *Ch. Times* XX. 938)

(11) a. **unpromise**

Gaze down into the future upon the hateful Land of Unpromise.
(1866 Pall Mall G. 12 May 12)

b. **unsociety**

What kind of unsociety we suffer when we have about us only persons very unequal.

(1872 H. Bushnell Serm. Living Subj. 335)

It will be noticed that the *OED* *un-*nouns sampled here and especially the members of the Cummings collection have a palpable e-neg flavor to them. Given this, it may seem surprising that the 7-Up team should have sponsored an ad campaign identifying its product as the *un-*anything. Unlight, unpromise . . . and Uncola? Crucially, though, it is the privative function of the *un-*noun that the advertisement exploited: if the “expected” beverage has undesirable qualities—caffeine, heaviness, or just plain old-hatitude—then the privation of this e-neg “positive” term can only be (e-)positive.

Kicking off in 1968, the Uncola campaign appealed to the nonconformist urges (or pretenses) of the intended audience in those heady days of the counterculture, and even decades later was still spreading to other businesses. In 1991, the *New York Daily News* introduced what its editor called a new supplement, of which its editor claimed, “It’s not quite like anything else we do. It’s an un-magazine, like an un-Cola” (quoted in Crain’s *New York Business*, 2 September 1991). John Hull, developing his SanFax Systems in Angels Camp, California, also alluded to 7-Up’s ad campaign and proclaimed, “We’re the ‘Un-dot-com’” (*Modesto Bee*, 10 October 2000). The cola companies can even dispense uncolas of their own: “Coke is diversifying, with plans to introduce a line of fashion and sports clothing and a rollout this summer of the ultimate un-cola—a bottled water called Dasani” (*Boston Globe*, 28 March 1999).

15.5 Class A and Class B *Un-*nouns

To gain a perspective on the sudden increase in productivity of these forms, which have exploded into the lexicon since the inauguration of the Uncola campaign, consider these forms:⁸

(12) Class A *un-*nounsa. **unhit**

Un-hit of the week: Cardinals pitcher Garrett Stephenson came into last Saturday’s game with Atlanta 1 for 36 at the plate. Then he lined what looked like a single to right. But Brian Jordan charged, fielded it and threw him out at first.

(Baseball “Week in Review” column by Jayson Stark at espn.com, 11 August 2000)

b. **unkids**

Getting a Life, Episode One: The Un-Kids

(Title of NYC column by Clyde Haberman, *NYT*, 14 May 1999, comparing young girls screaming for Latin teen idol Ricky Martin with the 20- and 30-somethings who ought to know better lining up for days at the Ziegfeld, dueling with plastic light sabers while waiting to buy tickets for *The Phantom Menace*. One woman, explaining “We’re kids,” admits to being 28.)

c. **unmartini**

Photo caption: UNMARTINI—A Ginger Citrus Snap, with pomegranate seeds, at Tabla.

(*NYT*, 20 January 1999, F1, “The Aperitif Moment: Sip or Finch”)

d. **unpotato**

Photo caption: THE UNPOTATO: Jerusalem artichokes are roasted with thyme at Craft.

(*NYT*, 14 March 2001, F3)

e. **unpublications**

The main unpublications of H. P. Grice

(Heading for column in bibliographic addendum to *PGRICE* (Grandy and Warner 1986, 495), facing page listing “The Publications of H. P. Grice”) **unturkey** (and **unbird**)

The Great UnTurkey. Let One of Now & Zen’s featherless friends be the centerpiece of Your Holiday table! This impressive creation is completely vegan and offers 5 solid pounds of boneless eating (enough for 8 hungry adults)! Made of delicately flavored tender seitan, dressed in a delectable ‘skin’ made from yuba (beancurd skin), . . . this innovative creation will delight vegetarians and non-vegetarians alike. This frozen “unbird” comes fully cooked, and needs only reheating to be enjoyed.

(Ad for Now & Zen, San Francisco, November 1999)

The *un-*noun coinages of (12) represent one of two closely related contexts distinguished in figure 15.2. As exemplified by the *Uncola* of the 7-Up ad and the *unmartini* consisting of a citrus ginger snap, sans gin or vermouth, served in a martini glass, the class A *unX* is not structurally a member of the category X, but it shares a significant functional status with Xs. The innovation of *unX* invites the hearer to construct a category that contains the sets denoted by both X and *unX* as subsets. Such class A *un-*nouns include *unhit* (a batted ball that bounces into the outfield but is thrown to first before the batter arrives is not a hit, although it starts out resembling one),

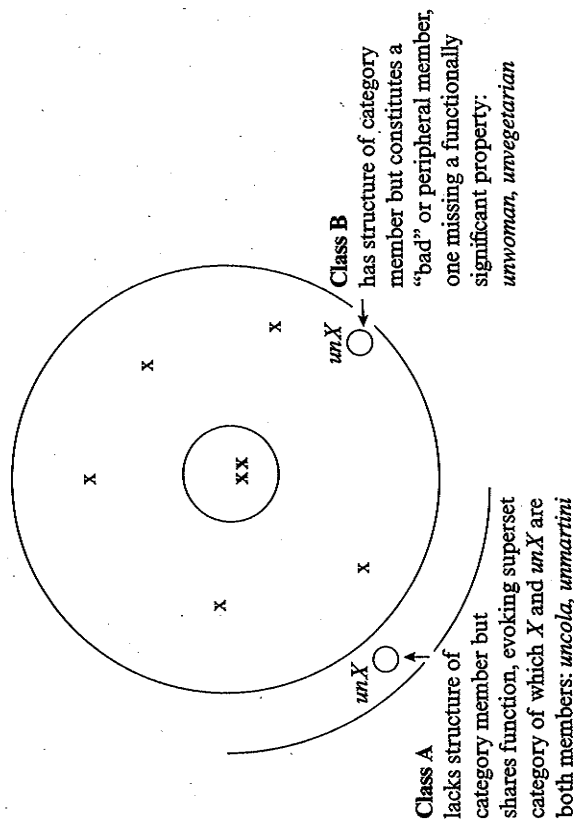


Figure 15.2
Classes of *un*-nouns

unkids (a 20- or 30-year-old doesn't become a kid by acting like one), and *unpotato* (however roasted and served, a Jerusalem artichoke doesn't turn into a potato). An *unturkey* (one of Now & Zen's featherless vegan "creations") isn't a turkey even if it looks like one and gets eaten at Thanksgiving.⁹ Nor, as one's tenure committee is quick to remind one, do *unpublications*, however impressive and copious, truly count.

Note the crucial role of Aristotelian privation in establishing the common ground against which the class A *un*-noun is coined.¹⁰ Just as it is its shared properties with Coke or Pepsi that make 7-Up a better candidate for an uncola than tea or chocolate milk would be, so too it's only when it's docked near Coney Island or another amusement park that a blighted garbage barge would qualify as an *unamusement*.

(13) **unamusement**

Sometimes she talked about the garbage barge, which was now docked off Coney Island, an unamusement.
(Lorrie Moore, "Places to Look for Your Mind," in *Like Life*, 1990, 115)

The ancestral role of the Uncola here is recognized by those who have developed the device for their own commercial purposes. Here is Washington consultant Jay Jaffe explaining his strategy for repositioning an Atlanta law firm:

The point, says Jaffe, was that Atlanta had two main players: King & Spalding and Alston & Bird. The next four or five firms down the line blended together, and Kilpatrick was looking for a way to distinguish itself. . . . The marketing costs of making Kilpatrick another King & Spalding—if that was what the firm wanted—would have been too high, he says. "We can't make you the Coca-Cola of Atlanta, but we can make you the Un-Cola of Atlanta," he says. (*American Lawyer Media*, Fulton County Daily Report, 12 July 1999)

The key is to exploit the target's tacit knowledge:

A television commercial for the United Jersey Banks shows a loan officer from "Lethargic National Bank" on the telephone assuring a customer in an unhurried manner than approval for his loan should be in "any day now—any day." After a narrator explains how large organizations often are "slow moving" when it comes to processing transactions such as loans, the commercial shows how United Jersey, "the fast moving bank," processes loans for its customers swiftly.

The ad clearly illustrates how one bank holding company has used positioning to gain market share, said Al Ries, who is the coauthor of *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind* and the chairman of Trout & Ries Advertising Inc., a New York ad agency. . . . "The battle doesn't take place in the banking retail establishment," he said. "The battle takes place in the minds of consumers." . . .

In planning marketing strategies, Mr. Ries suggested, bankers should "cherchez le creneau" (look for the opening) in consumers' heads. The best way, he added, is by "relating what you say to what's already in their mind. The mind accepts whatever information it already agrees with," he said. "Even 7-Up ["the Uncola"] got into people's minds by relating to colas," he said. (*The American Banker*, 29 April 1986, 14)

But while relating to colas, the Uncola is not one. Most instances of novel *un*-nouns fall into class B of figure 15.2, in which an *unY* is a bona fide—but (in the sense of Rosch 1978) not prototypic or stereotypic—member of category *Y*; the *unY* is a "bad example" of the category, lacking a functionally significant property. For instance:

(14) **Class B un-nouns**

a. **unbank**

Banking on the Unbanks: Tellerless Wonders Are Reinventing Small-Business Lending
(Headline, *NYT*, 4 February 1999)

b. **uncollege**

Even though many Mids [= Midshipmen, students at the U.S. Naval Academy] refer to their school with bemused affection as "the uncollege," it remains one of the great bastions of "old college spirit" in its pristine form. (*Washington Post*, 22 November 1977, D1, "Navy Revives College Spirit for the Game; Mids Rally 'Round for the Game'")

c. **unelection**

Numerous Google hits after the irregular Gore-Bush election of November 2000. For example: Twelve days after the unelection, no one knows how to keep a rendezvous with destiny—not the politicians, not the lobbyists, not the chatters in the press, not the hangers-on, not the sycophants, not even the White House interns.

(*NYT*, 19 November 2000, Week in Review, 1)

Our unelection is superior to our election in every way. The campaign was never about anything. Lockbox, prescription drugs, blah, blah. Now we are fighting over bedrock principles of freedom. The sanctity of the vote, the idea that every vote counts.

(Maureen Dowd column, *NYT*, 10 December 2000, 15)

d. **unplace**

[Referring to E. B. White's essay "Here Is New York"]

And what he made just as clear was that any place else was just, well, any place else. Or perhaps an un-place. The closest of these is New Jersey. (Charles Strum, "Garden State? The Image Is Closer to Crab Grass," *NYT*, 27 October 1996, Arts, 33)

e. **unplan**

Of course, a plan is a plan, even if it calls itself an "unplan."

(Herbert Muschamp, "42nd Street Plan: Be Bold or Begone!" *NYT*, 19 September 1993, Arts, 33)

f. **unpolitician**

Reference to Victor Morales, schoolteacher and surprise Democratic nominee for U.S. Senate seat opposite Phil Gramm

(*NYT*, 30 April 1996; many other examples since)

g. **unsheets**

Now that the big names in bedding—Cannon, Fieldcrest and J. P. Stevens—are bringing out their own versions of unsheets, suggestive types can go see natural [unbleached, untreated cotton sheets] displayed . . . in department stores around town.

(Liz Logan, "New Bed Linen," *NYT*, 10 October 1991, Home, 1)

h. **unsuperstar**

Meet Tom Cruise, the unsuperstar of superstardom.

(TV ad for *Access Hollywood*, 8 January 2000)

i. **unvegetarian**

The Unvegetarian

(Headline of article in the *Los Angeles Times*, 5 July 1990, by Charles Perry profiling Deborah Madison, whose restaurant and gourmet cookbooks "have made meatless cooking chic" but who "hates being called a vegetarian")

The chic unvegetarians targeted by Deborah Madison are still vegetarians, although "bad" members of the tribe. Similarly, the Naval Academy is a college (as well as an uncollege), Bush prevailed over Gore in an election (even if it was also an un-election), the archetypal unplace New Jersey is nevertheless a place, Tom Cruise is undeniably a superstar (if also an unsuperstar), and, as their description implies, unbleached natural cotton sheets are not only unsheets but also sheets.

The "badness" of the category member may be made explicit, as in the Ungame® marketed at <http://www.educationalmedia.com/bookfiles/ungame.html>:

The world's most popular self-expression game is a cooperative adventure in communication. Two to six players, ages 5 through adult, progress along the playing board as they answer questions such as "What do you think life will be like in 100 years?" This noncompetitive game can be a great icebreaker or a serious exchange of thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

Customer reviews posted on amazon.com highlight the noncompetitive, and thus exceptional, nature of the Ungame:

- "There is no winner and no loser—so everybody feels good!"
- "It's therapeutic"
- "There's a gameboard, but it's non-competitive"

Of course, it is the problem of defining *game* that provided Wittgenstein (1958, secs. 66–67) with the motivation for rejecting the traditional necessary-and-jointly-sufficient criterion for category membership and for introducing the notion of family resemblance, as well as his theory of language games.

In some cases, the assignment of an *un-*noun to class A or class B depends on the definition of the relevant (non-natural-kind) categories.

(15) *Class A or B?*

a. **unbreakfast**

Among the "un-breakfasts" that the experts suggest, besides a bean burrito, are a ham or turkey sandwich (try it on a toasted English muffin) and a bowl of soup.

(Sheryl Julian, "Which of the Above Is a Nutritious Breakfast? A. All of Them. When It Comes to Kids, the Rules on Eating Right Are Changing," *Boston Globe*, 11 October 2000, E1)

b. **The Un-Chocolate**

(Title of piece on white chocolate, *Better Homes and Gardens*, December 1995, 182)

c. **unhotel**

I don't always wear a suit. And I don't always stay in a hotel. Business is not my whole life. But it can seem that way when I'm on an extended out of town assignment. That's why I choose Oakwood Corporate Apartments. The Un-Hotel.

(Magazine advertisement)

The Ventana at Big Sur, California, is variously called the Ventana Hotel, the Ventana Inn and the Ventana Retreat. Lacking the quasi-mystic aura of the nearby Tassajara Zen guest facility, lacking the countercultural improvementism of nearby Esalen, the Ventana seems to be merely a tasteful, luxurious, expensive, hot-tubbed, advanced-Sybaritic, getaway, redwood and cedar lodge on its magnificent site up a slope of the Santa Lucia mountains just above the bravely foaming Pacific Ocean.... At one point, in the way of such matters, bankruptcy loomed. Professionals took over—but professionals who seemed to understand the nature of an unhotel—and now the place, like its cedar grayed by salt winds, has worn comfortably, perhaps even profitably, into the special world of Big Sur. (Herbert Gold, *NYT*, 29 January 1984, *Travel*, 16)

d. **unprizes**

Presenting the IgNobels, UnPrizes Satirizing Weak Science (Headline of story on awards ceremony of the *Annals of Improbable Research*, *NYT*, 5 October 2000, 8)

e. **unseason**

It was a typical California unseason, but it *felt* like fall. (Sue Grafton, *D Is for Deadbeat*, 1987, 1)

f. **unwomen**

(Label for women in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) who, because they are not fertile, are shipped to the colonies as slave labor)

Is a ham sandwich eaten in the morning a breakfast (as well as an unbreakfast)? Is an unhotel—whether corporate apartments for un-suit-wearing business types or the redwood-and-cedar lodge at Big Sur for well-off eco-boomers—a hotel? The unwomen of Margaret Atwood's dystopian future are technically women, albeit peripheral members of the category (i.e., class B unwomen)—but that is by our definition: within the world of *The Handmaid's Tale*, to be infertile is arguably to be not quite a woman at all. And what of Jim McCawley's unsyntax—a syntax or not a syntax? It depends on your syntactic theory. And indeed, the outcome of the 2000 (un)election hinged on whether those dimpled, chad-hung unvotes were technically votes or (as it turns out) not.¹¹

Having distinguished class A and class B *un*-nouns, I should note that these labels are not mere alphabet-initial placeholders. An *un*-noun *unX* of class A is ALMOST an X, while an *un*-noun *unY* of class B is BARELY a Y. As argued in Horn 2002b, *almost* and *barely* both entail their polar and proximal components; yet in each case only the proximal component is asserted.

- (16) a. Gore almost won.
Proximal component: Gore approximated winning.
Polar component: Gore did not win.

- b. Bush barely won.
Proximal component: Bush approximated not-winning.
Polar component: Bush won.

This explains why *barely* but not *almost* is a trigger for negative polarity items.

- (17) a. #She almost {budgeted/slept a wink/touched a drop/spoke to anyone}.
 b. She barely {budgeted/slept a wink/touched a drop/spoke to anyone}.

Assertorically inert material (like the positive component of *barely VP* or *only NP*) is irrelevant to NPI (negative polarity item) licensing. While *almost* doing something is akin to *not quite* doing it, so that *almost* and *not quite* are equivalent at the level of what is entailed, they differ at the level of what is asserted: it is the negative polar (and not the positive proximal) component of meaning that the *not quite* version asserts, whence the rhetorical opposition in (18a–b) and the contrast in NPI licensing in (18c).

- (18) a. It's too bad you almost died in there. [now you'll need therapy]
 b. It's too bad you didn't quite die in there. [now I'll have to finish you off, heh heh]
 c. I {didn't quite make it/*almost made it} to any of your papers.

In a number of approximative constructions crosslinguistically, the proximal component is retained but the polar component effectively flip-flops, depending on the context of utterance and interpretation. Thus, consider the Mandarin particle vari-ously transliterated as *cha-yidiar/chadianr* and literally glossed as 'miss-a-little' (Li 1976; Big 1989). While its ordinary interpretation is 'almost', when it has scope over a negative predicate it can be rendered either as 'almost not' (= 'barely') or as 'almost', with the negation essentially pleonastic.

- (19) Wo chadianr mei chi.
 I almost not eat
 a. 'I almost didn't eat.' 'I barely ate.'
 b. 'I almost ate.' [= Wo chadianr chi le.]

When the verb shifts from 'eat' to 'bump into' or 'die', the 'almost' reading predominates. Similarly, as Li (1976) notes (citing Bolinger), for Spanish *por poco no*.

- (20) a. Por poco me ahogo.
 by a little I-drown
 'I almost drowned.'

- b. Por poco no me ahogo.
by a little not I-drown
'I almost/'barely drowned.'

Even more dramatic is the evidence Schwenter (2002) presents on "inverted" *casi* in Spanish. Normally *casi* has the same analysis as English *almost*, as illustrated in (21).

- (21) María casi terminó la cena.
María almost finished the dinner
'María almost finished dinner.'

Proximal component [entailed and asserted]: She approximated finishing it.
Polar component [entailed, not asserted]: She did not finish it.

In this respect, the relation between *casi* and *apenas* is essentially akin to that between *almost* and *barely*. But consider the emergence of an "inverted" use of *casi* in the Valencian dialect. A man impatiently awaiting his friend at the auditorium door sees her arrive a minute before the session starts and exclaims /*Casi llegas!* 'You just barely made it!' (lit. 'You almost arrive!'). In such a context, restricted to simple present tense and utterance-initial occurrence, *casi p* clearly does not entail $\sim p$, since the truth of *p* is obvious in the context. Instead, *casi p* = canonical *casi* + *no* (*p*) or *apenas* (*p*).

Other crosslinguistic analogues can be found in Swiss German *fasch* (normally similar to standard German *fast* 'almost' but allowing an inverted 'barely' sense), or English *near miss*, which for airplanes implies a bare miss but elsewhere suggests an almost miss.

(22) **near miss**

Martin's Near Miss

A stomach problem nearly ruled Martin out... Great Britain curling skip Rhona Martin almost missed the Winter Olympics because of a stomach problem. The gold medalist, who delivered the stone of destiny, spent time in hospital a week before the Salt Lake City Games began.
(http://news.bbc.co.uk/winterolympics2002/hi/english/curling/newsid_1836000/1836528.stm)

It is thus not too surprising that affixal morphology also allows the crossing of the same boundary, in which proximity is held constant but the polar component (being almost an *X* vs. barely an *X*) can be relaxed, leading to the permeability of the circumferential membrane in figure 15.2.

One feature that does distinguish the class A *un*-noun is the fact that against all expectation, an *unX* of this stripe is for better or worse simply not an *X*. This exclu-

sion may often be used as a means of irony, subtle or not. In this respect, consider the role of *propositional denial* (*A genius he's not*) and *epitomization* (*Einstein he's not*), which are, in the words of Birner and Ward (1998, 65ff.) "used to deny a salient proposition in the discourse for ironic effect," an effect associated with the preposing. Thus, try adding the proposition-denial coda *an X it's not* to each of the citations for the relevant class A *un*-noun in (23).

(23) a. **unmartini**

UNMARTINI: A Ginger Citrus Snap, with pomegranate seeds, at Tabla.
—*A martini it's not*

b. **unpotato**

THE UNPOTATO: Jerusalem artichokes are roasted with thyme at Craft.
—*A potato it's not*

c. **unturkey (and umbird)**

The Great UnTurkey. Let One of Now & Zen's featherless friends be the centerpiece of Your Holiday table!... Made of delicately flavored tender seitan, dressed in a delectable "skin" made from yuba (beancurd skin),... this innovative creation will delight vegetarians and non-vegetarians alike.
—*A turkey/bird it's not*

As listeners and readers have pointed out to me, these italicized codas do not necessarily, as ordinary scalar nouns generally do, convey that it is unfortunate that the *unX* in question is outside the realm of the *X*s; in this respect, the evaluative dimension of propositional denial with *un*-nouns is contextually flexible: ... *an X it's not, {much as it pains me to admit it}and a good thing too!*

But what of epitomization for proper names? The *un*-nouns we have considered to this point, whether class A or class B, are common nouns, so let us expand our database to the proper names in (24), labeling categories denoting individuals rather than kinds.

(24) **The un-proper name**

a. **un-Agassi**

Normally, Agassi's reflexes are quick, his instincts have an edge and the crafty angles of his shots appear choreographed by a pool shark.... Normally, he wouldn't go down like this. But this was the un-Agassi yesterday. In the end, Clement, who is ranked 37th in the world, seized upon Agassi's distracted performance on his way to a straight-set upset of the Open's top-seeded player.

(Selena Roberts, "U.S. Open: Agassi Is Unable to Defend against Clement," *NYT*, 1 September 2000, D1)

b. **un-Clinton**

Mr. Dole provides such a contrast to the talkatively gifted President that Republicans insist their man will finally prevail as “the un-Clinton,” the reassuring politician of oak-solid yeps and nopes. They are hoping for a voters’ verdict first prescribed by Cicero: “I prefer tongue-tied knowledge to ignorant loquacity.”

(Francis X. Clines, “It’s a War of Words (Say What?),” *NYT*, 30 June 1996, *Week in Review*, 16; later candidates for the un-Clinton role include John McCain, Bill Bradley, Al Gore, and George W. Bush)

c. **un-Hampton**s

We had bought a second home on this picturesque island two hours from the city because it was a “real place”—the avowed “UnHamptons”—where the Catholic Church hosts a Blessing of the Pets parade and year-rounders keep livestock pens with children’s-book farm critters. (Diane McWhorter, “Raising a Stink,” *NYT Magazine*, 19 August 2001, 68)

d. **un-Hong Kong**

The Un-Hong Kong: This Colony Can’t Wait for the Chinese (Headline of article on how Macao, with its triads and turf battles, looked forward to takeover by China, *NYT*, 7 August 1998, *Week in Review*, 14)

e. **un-Oscars**

Once, the Golden Globes were the *un-Oscars*. Now they’re becoming respectable.

(*NYT*, 16 January 1994, *Arts*, 11)

f. **un-Provence**

Friends are envious when they hear that my wife, Rynn, and I have built a family retreat in the Ecuadorian Andes, with two mature orange trees in the yard and flocks of parrots flying by. The house is located in an “un-Provence” called Zona de Intag, a rural county that tends more toward fried yucca than white truffle omelets.

(Stephen P. Williams, “Family Retreat in the Andes,” *NYT*, 10 August 2000, *Home*, 1)

g. **un-Titanic**

Hideous Krnky is the *un-Titanic*.

(Gael Greene in *New York*, 26 April 1999, 74, reviewing Kate Winslet’s post-*Titanic* release, in which she portrays an English mother who flees London with her two young daughters to wander through the zonked-out “all-spice exotica” of 1972 Marrakech)

h. **un-Zermatt**

The Un-Zermatt: Saas-Fee Lacks the Flash of Grandet Resorts, and Its Village Air Is Real

(Headline and subhead from *NYT*, 20 January 2002, *Travel*)

Since there can be only one (relevant) person or place named Bill Clinton or Hong Kong, *un-Clinton* or *un-Hong Kong* will naturally enough be taken as a class *A un-* noun, referring to an *unX* that shares features with *X* but not its identity, and in each case inducing a supercategory that encompasses both of them. Both Hong Kong and Macao (the *un-Hong Kong*) are former European colonies that were or are to be absorbed into China, Clinton and the various *un-Clintons* are (un)candidates, the Oscars and *un-Oscars* (the Golden Globes) are annual film awards. The lone class *B* coinage in this group is *un-Agassi*, representing not a rival player but an incarnation of Andre himself that lacked the prototypical features of the normally resolute and focused tennis star—the man simply wasn’t himself that day. The *un-* names exemplified in this group appear to be gradually encroaching on the territory of the previously well established *anti-* in this frame:

(25) **un-Clinton and un-Yeltsin**

George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin have this in common: They got where they are by promising to be unlike their larger-than-life predecessors. Both say Russian-American relations will also be different, based on hard-boiled scrutiny of national interests, not on personal ties dressed up as grand strategy. So when the un-Clinton meets the un-Yeltsin tomorrow, post-cold-war diplomacy officially enters its post-heroic phase.

(Op-ed column by Stephen Sestanovich, *NYT*, 15 June 2001, A39)

Similarly, we have the *un-Arafat* (for Salam Fayyad, the Palestinian finance minister, a “starched-shirt economist” with a Ph.D. from the University of Texas, *Newsweek*, 12 August 2002, 38) and the *un-Samaranch* (for Dr. Jacques Rogge, the successor to the ethically suspect Samaranch as the head of the International Olympic Committee, *NYT*, 1 August 2002, D1). We anxiously await the first coming of the *un-Christ*.

As with proposition denial for the common nouns, epitomization reigns for the proper noun examples.

(26) a. Macao: the colony that can’t wait for the Chinese—*Hong Kong it’s not*

b. those funky Golden Globes—*the Oscars they’re not*

c. the down-to-earth Zona de Intag—*Provence it’s not*

As with proposition denial *per se*, the target of epitomization may constitute either a positive or a negative exemplar, depending on the context.¹² And again, the expectation established by the common ground is crucial. Given our shared knowledge

about Provence or Zermatt, it is possible to situate the Zona de Intag or Saas-Fee as their respective Aristotelian privative, but not vice versa.

- (27) a. #Provence: the un-Zona de Intag!
- b. #Zermatt: Saas-Fee it's not!

If proposition denial and epitomization mark class A *un-*nouns, is there a comparable diagnostic for the class B *un-*noun? At the center of the circle in figure 15.2 is a small circle containing an iterated *x*. This represents not only the core membership of category *X* (perhaps Bill Clinton for political candidates, a clear-punched machine-readable ballot for votes, Coke for colas) but also what appears literally as *XX*—that is, the construction variously labeled the double (Dray 1987; Horn 1993), contrastive focus reduplication (Ghomeshi et al. 2004), or (as I shall refer to it here) the *lexical clone*. In a neutral context, clones pick out the prototype members of a category: a *SALAD salad* is (in our culture) a green salad with lettuce and perhaps tomatoes, not a chicken or potato salad; a *DOG dog* may be a golden retriever or German shepherd but hardly a chihuahua or Peke (much less a hot dog); a *DOCTOR doctor* has an M.D., not a Ph.D. in linguistics; and so on.¹³ With this in view, we can predict that the peripheral members of a category picked out by a class B *un-*noun will be at the opposite extreme from the core members picked out by the lexical clone: the *uncollege* as opposed to the *COLLEGE college* of leafy lawns, fraternities, a high-powered football team, and binge drinking, the *unpolitician* versus the *POLITICIAN politician* (Bill Clinton?). Notice in particular that in (28), the trend toward *undesign* is explicitly contrasted with the aggressive “signature” style of rooms that are, according to (un)designer Nancy Agrest’s lexical clone, “DESIGN designed.”

- (28) Undesign: Moving Away from Aggressive Décor
(Headline, *NYT*, 2 June 1988, C6)
“Nothing is ‘design designed.’ Nothing has a signature.”
(New York architect Diana Agrest)

Similarly, compare the *MOVIE movie* in (29) (a classic Hollywood production) with the *unmovie* in (30).

- (29) a. It’s almost certainly the best movie-movie Hollywood has produced since *Saving Private Ryan* and maybe since *Titanic*.
(Stephen Holden’s review of *Cast Away*, *NYT*, 5 January 2001, E1)
- b. This is what they used to call a real *MOVIE-MOVIE*.
(Rex Reed’s review of *Charlotte Gray*, *The New York Observer*, blurb quoted in January 2002 ads)

- (30) **unmovie**
UNEARTHLYING, THE (1984). Really bad E.T. imitation, of the it-came-from-outer-space school. A meteor crashlands on Earth in a forest that just

happens to be full of (1) dumb teenagers, (2) some nightingale egg poachers and (3) a young boy who has seen the crash. Out of the crash hulks a plastic-suited creature with the nose of an ant eater. This is the father alien, who goes around killing everyone. Meanwhile, the insufferable kid finds an alien egg and hatches it. Out pops a cute version of the father, who goes “Coo” to tug at your heartstrings. The script by J. Piquer Simon (who also directed) and Jack Gray goes nowhere. **THE UNEARTHLYING** is the unmovie of the decade. (<http://tilt.largo.fl.us/critic/mst3k/ss3303f.html>)

The ambivalent cases of (15) are similar in this respect: whatever an *unhotel* is, it’s in a different league from the four-star Sheraton or Hilton *HOTEL hotel*, and an *unbreakfast* is explicitly designed to provide a change of pace from the cornflakes or scrambled eggs of the all-American *BREAKFAST breakfast*.

15.6 Humpty Dumpty and the *Un-*attributive

Another class of apparent *un-*names, sampled in (31), turns out on closer inspection not to involve *un-*nouns at all, but zero-derived adjectives that have undergone conventional affixal negativization.

- (31) *The pseudo un-noun: adjectives in nominal clothing*

- a. **undesert**

The estate had a lush green lawn in front, flowers blooming in neatly tended beds, huge weeping willows trailing ferny branches onto the grass, a pebbled circular drive with an offshoot that led to a three-car garage in front of which a Mercedes was parked. The house featured white stucco and ornate grillwork balconies. It was so beautiful. And so undesert. (Nancy Herndon, *Time Bombs*, 1997, 202)

- b. **un-Disney**

For a show that is attracting family audiences, this one [*The Producers*] is about as un-Disney as you can get. It’s multicultural only in the sense that it makes fun of blacks and the Irish as well as Jews.

(“Springtime for Adolf and Tony,” op-ed by Frank Rich, *NYT*, 12 May 2001, A15)

- c. **un-Florida**

So what does one wear to a place that looks like home? Your best. No T-shirts (which may seem un-Florida to some), sneakers, jerseys, shorts or baseball hats allowed.

(Babita Persaud, “Get Comfortable in the Living Room,” *St. Petersburg Times*, 12 October 2000, 38W)

d. **un-Garcia**

Why a Star Is Spinning in the Grave.
Very Un-Garcia: Bitter Estate Fight
(Headline, *NYT*, 3 January 1997)

e. **un-Porsche**

Porsche blew everyone out of the water with its 558-horsepower Carrera GT—with a shape as dramatically un-Porsche as could possibly be—leaving Ferrari to ponder about the timing of the launch of its beautiful 550 Barchetta.

(Adrian Low, "BMW's New Mini Cooper Steals the Paris Show," *Business Times (Singapore)*, 5 October 2000, 30)

f. **un-rock'n'roll**

One problem is that so many bona fide rock stars are beyond parody. How, for example, could you hope to better the magisterial buffoonery of Primal Scream, who failed to show up for a booking on Top of the Pops because it would have meant passing through Luton Airport, a prospect which the band's leader Bobby Gillespie declared was simply too un-rock'n'roll to contemplate?

(David Sinclair, "You Couldn't Make It Up," *The Times (London)*, 13 October 2000, Features)

g. **un-VH1**

Two of the former Shaggs [sisters who were forced into becoming a rock band in the late 1960s by their father after the girls' grandmother read his palm and predicted that the girls would play in a band] meet Orlean at a Dunkin' Donuts in New Hampshire for a look behind the music that is very un-VH1. One sister cleans houses for a living, the other works in a kitchen goods warehouse. The former Shagg who didn't show up suffers from depression.

(Blaine Harden, review of Susan Orlean's *The Bullfighter Checks Her Makeup*, *NYT Book Review*, 28 January 2001, 11)

Apparently they even give props to MC5 and Sonic Youth . . . how very un-VH1.

(Web site)

This is shown by the standard adjectival diagnostics: *so (undesert)*, *very (un-Garcia, un-VH1)*, *dramatically (un-Porsche)*, *too (un-rock'n'roll)*, *seem (un-Florida)*. In each case, the same construction is equally possible with the positive base of the un-adjective (*so desert*, *very VH1*). While lacking an overt suffix, these un-adjectives are otherwise quite close to the plebeian instances of word formation resulting in *un-Dickensian*, *un-Chomskyan*, *un-chocolaty*, or, for some un-adjective-worthy eponyms, [_{Adj} un [_{Adj}[N X] *like*]], as in

(32) **un-Queen Amidala-like**

Novalee (Natalie Portman, looking radiant but very un-Queen Amidala-like)

...

(*NYT*, 23 April 2000, Arts, 11, on actress Portman's role in *Where the Heart Is*, after playing female lead in the Star Wars epic *The Phantom Menace*)

A more significant category of apparent *un-*nouns traces back to the famous Looking Glass exchange (Carroll 1872, chap. 6).

(33) **unbirthday present**

Humpty Dumpty [on his cravat/belt, a gift from the White

King and Queen]: "They gave it me—for an un-birthday present" . . .

Alice: "What is an un-birthday present?"

Humpty Dumpty: "A present given when it isn't your birthday, of course."

If the seed of today's *un-*noun was donated (for a fee) by the copywriter of *Uncola* fame, the egg was undoubtedly contributed a century earlier by Humpty Dumpty. But Messrs. Carroll and Dumpty did not hatch the unbirthday present *ab ovo*. The *OED* files several other examples of this usage under *un-* 12b, remarking that "the prefixing of *un-* to nouns used attributively is rare and usually not intended seriously." The cited examples are largely nonce forms.

(34) a. **unquality Ladys**

The reason of the discontent of the unquality Ladys is that they were laugh'd at by the great Ladys.

(1771 Lady Mary Coke *Jrnl.* 13 Aug.)

b. **uncountry gentlemen**

Alas, the country! how shall tongue or pen Bewail her now uncountry gentlemen?

(1823 Byron *Age of Bronze* xiv)

c. **uncompany costume**

It was a whim of the artist to sketch his subject in that occasional, uncompany costume.

(1852 S. R. Maitland *Eight Ess.* 236)

d. **unbusiness men**

Single women, widows, and unbusiness men, are those on whom the blow chiefly fell.

(1880 *Spectator* 3 Jan. 9/2)

In these cases and others (*uncurrency-style* (1852), *undining-room* (1845), *unhousehold-name* (1894), *unsociety-people* (1898)), the negation affixes to the first noun of a nominal compound. What is *structurally* an *un-*nominal is *functionally* a prefixed quasi-adjectival modifier; these are *un-*nouns in name only.

The Age of Uncola is also the age of the *un*-attributive nominal, as seen in the progeny of Mr. Dumpty on display in (35).

(35) *The un-attributives*

a. **un-Brooklyn crime**

An Un-Brooklyn Crime; Army Officer Charged in Killings in Land Fraud ... In Brooklyn, where many killings stem from drug dealing and domestic disputes, investigators said that murders that arise from white-collar crime are uncommon. A suspect who is a decorated Army officer accused of committing the crime during a short furlough from foreign soil is unheard of.

(Headline of article about unusual murder case for Brooklyn, NY; Kevin Flynn, *NYT*, 17 May 2000, B1)

b. **un-Christmas turkey**

"Thank you. An un-Christmas turkey is a great treat," he said.

(Elizabeth Taylor, *In a Summer Season*, 1961, 98)

c. **undate movie**

Of things already in town do not miss the blackly comic, spiritually desolate undate movie *In the Company of Men*.

(Article on current films in *The (Montreal) Gazette*, 19 September 1997)

d. **un-dressing room**

It was an un-dressing room, Thérèse thought.

(Michèle Roberts, *Daughters of the House*, 1992, 60)

e. **unengagement hand**

"And I don't think I'm old enough to be engaged to anyone really, so I am going to wear his ring on my unengagement hand."

(Angela Thirkell, *Miss Bunting*, 1996, 322)

f. **unguy sentiment**

Layne sympathized with Black and the Super Smokers about the whole hog contest. (This sympathy is a very un-guy sentiment. After the disastrous news, Black said he would be razed unmercifully by some friends. Sure enough, as he took his ribs to the judging area, someone called out: "Hey, Terry, leave those ribs with us. The judges don't want them—just like they didn't want that skanky pig of yours.")

(Joe Holleman, "Where There's Smoke ... There's a Man Firing Up the Grill," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 8 October 2000, E1)

g. **unhealth food**

"I'm into un-health food," Miss Stockbridge said. "I love Ben & Jerry's vanilla-and-Oreo chunk ice cream. I have it with Diet Coke so I can feel good about myself."

(*NYT*, 3 August 1988, C3)

h. **un-Miss Manners stack**

"Done with your dimmah?" asks the waitress. A rhetorical question since she is slapping dishes together in a very un-Miss Manners stack. (Mameve Medwed, *Host Family*, 2000, 44–45)

i. **un-Mister Rogers tone of voice**

The more he was called Mister Rogers, the more his face grew red. One day last month, in a very un-Mister Rogers tone of voice, Fassel turned and said, "You know, I hate that."

(Bill Pennington on character makeover of New York Giants' mild-mannered football coach Jim Fassel, *NYT*, 10 January 2001, D1)

j. **unmother mother**

"After I've gotten him as prepared as I can for his un-mother mother, I'll try to hammer a few pounds of sense into his head about taking on Henri Forquet."

(J. M. Redmann, *Lost Daughters*, 1999, 258; narrator is a detective who is about to reunite someone with the birth mother who gave him up for adoption and is not a prototypical mother figure)

k. **unpetroleum lip jelly**

Un-Petroleum™ Lip Jelly™

Un-Chap® your lips

(Label on product manufactured by Autumn Harp, Bristol, VT)

l. **"unpotato" latkes**

(Heading for recipe at http://www.oz.net/~csrh/new_page_1.htm in which the usual potato latkes are made with pureed cauliflower instead)

m. **unreal estate**

Unreal Estate: Internet Stocks May No Longer Be Soaring, but the Market for Web Addresses Is Getting Tighter All the Time

(Headline and subhead of "The New Economy," column in *NYT Magazine*, 22 August 1999)

n. **unrealpolitik**

On Russia's Far East Fringe, Unrealpolitik

(Headline of article on Vladivostok, *NYT*, 14 February 1999, 1; several other instances of *Unrealpolitik* attested)

o. **unvalley idea**

A [Silicon] Valley Enterprise with an Un-valley Idea: There Is Life outside the Office

(Headline, *NYT*, 28 May 2000, Business, 9)

p. **unwelcome mat**

New York's Public Areas Roll Out Unwelcome Mat for Homeless

(Headline, *NYT*, 18 November 1989, 32)

Closer examination, however, indicates that the *un*-compounds in this list are structurally heterogeneous, depending on whether the prefixed nominal is a true *un*-noun or an *un*-adjective in nominal garb. While an unbirthday present is indeed a gift for one's unbirthday, an *undate movie* is not a movie that one sees on an *undate* but a movie that is not a date movie. Similarly, an *un-dressing room* is not a room where one does not dress (much less a room where one undresses, that being a hyphenless *undressing room*) but a room other than a dressing room. In these cases, the innovation of the *unA B* presupposes the prior establishment of the *A B* in the common ground. Such *un*-attributives may well introduce antonymy, but do not simply yield the antonym of the attributive noun itself. Rather, the entire nominal compound is effectively *un*-ned, in the manner of the class *A un*-noun. To posit an *unguy sentiment* is to evoke a superset encompassing two kinds of sentiments: the guy kind and the un-guy kind. (The *very* modification here suggests that *unguy* is in fact functioning adjectivally here, and that thus we're dealing in this case with a pseudonoun.) Notice also the anticline: we have the *unmother* mother above and elsewhere the *undiet diet*, which promises untold gustatory delights that don't weigh against one's waistline.

Similarly for the examples in which the attributive noun is a proper name: while an *un-Christmas turkey* is, Humpty-Dumpty-style, a turkey to be enjoyed on a day other than Christmas, an *un-Brooklyn crime* is not a crime that takes place out of Brooklyn but an atypical Brooklyn crime, an *un-Miss Manners stack* of dishes is one of which the eponymous etiquette guide would not approve, and an *un-Mister Rogers tone of voice* one that the children's television show host would not have been caught dead using. In each of these three cases, a *very* intensifier would again be eminently plausible.

Like their simplex *un*-noun cousins, these compounds are novel lexical items, constructed online, which are not destined for the permanent lexicon. In fact, it is this very feature that bears out the robust productivity of the process of *un*-noun formation in contemporary English (see Clark and Clark 1979 for a similar observation about denominal verbs).

15.7 Lexical Pragmatics and the *Un*-noun: Toward an Unconclusion

Uniting the *un*-attributive heirs of Humpty Dumpty's unbirthday present with the class *A* and class *B un*-nouns (and *un*-proper names) and the pseudo-*un*-nouns reviewed earlier is the Aristotelian semantics of privation and markedness, the same asymmetric conceptual structure invoked in section 15.3 to describe the distribution of semiproductive adjectival *un*-formation.¹⁴ It is only when the speaker can assume (or pretend to assume) an expected or "natural" property associated with a given referent or with the set to which that referent aspires to belong that she can felicitously invoke the corresponding *un*-form. Antonymy is generally defined as a symmetric

lexical relation; if *hot* is the antonym of *cold*, *cold* is equally the antonym of *hot*. But the antonymy reflected in the *un*-word—whether adjective, noun, or even verb (see Horn 2002a)—is a conceptually asymmetric relation, just as is Aristotle's opposition between the positive and the privative.

While pragmatics was defined by its founders Charles Morris, Rudolf Carnap, and C. S. Peirce as "the science of the relation of signs to their interpreters" in opposition to the pure domains of syntactics and semantics (Morris 1938), the relatively simple trichotomy envisioned in the *Encyclopedia of Unified Science* has gradually given way to a more complex picture in which syntax, semantics, and pragmatics are applicable to both sentential and lexical domains, as schematized roughly in figure 15.3. The field of lexical pragmatics originated with McCawley 1978, a memorable study of the penetration of Gricean implicature into word formation and word use; it was largely an attempt to extend this work (along with related morphological studies by Aronoff (1976) and Kiparsky (1983) that bypass pragmatic modes of explanation)

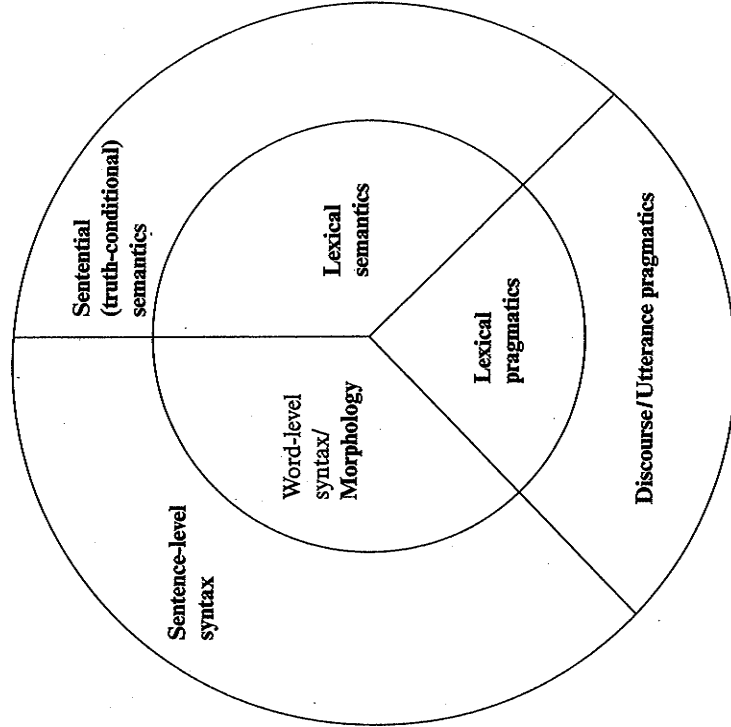


Figure 15.3
Lexical pragmatics in the expanded trichotomy

that inspired my own dialectic model of language (Horn 1984) in which an R-based principle of least effort squares off against a Q-based principle of sufficiency of information. The application of this model to the analysis of redundant *un*-verbs is explored in Horn 1988, 1993. (For a lucid introduction to current trends in lexical pragmatics, see Blutner 1998, 2004; and for some applications to lexical change, see Traugott 2004.)

In this study in lexical pragmatics focusing on the behavior of the partially productive prefix *un*-, I have drawn from a wide variety of sources, beginning with the notions of opposition developed by Aristotle and schematized in the logical square of Apuleius and Boethius. I reviewed the widespread tendency for contradictory negation to develop (pragmatically and/or conventionally) strengthened contrary interpretations as recognized by Sapir and others (see Horn 1989; chap. 5), and more specifically for affixal negation—as represented canonically in English *un*-adjectives on simplex bases—to lexicalize a contrary and evaluatively negative meaning, as detailed by Jespersen and Zimmer. This, in turn, can be linked to the more general phenomenon of R-based strengthening as realized in euphemism and related politeness strategies surveyed in Brown and Levinson 1987 (see also Shuman and Hutchings 1960 for related historical background and Horn 2000 for additional applications). Finally, the lexical pragmatics of *un*-adjectives and especially of *un*-nouns can only be understood against a general background of the markedness of negation (see Horn 1989, sec. 1.2 and chap. 3, for various formulations by philosophers, psychologists, and linguists from Parmenides and Kant to Wason and Givón) and, in particular, of the recognition of the role played by the Aristotelian concept of privation.

Descending from these shoulders on which I stand, a methodological hand should be waved in the direction of the technological resources that make it feasible to undertake a study of this kind. Without the services provided by Lexis/Nexis, Google, and the online *OED*, the observations offered here could not have been carried out with any systematicity, and without the human resources provided by Beth Levin, my co-principal *un*-vestigator, this study would be an unalive shadow of its current self.

Notes

1. McCawley explains (1980, 168) that this admittedly “disposable title” was intended to suggest that “much of what has been thought of as syntax is largely a reflection of other things, such as morphology, logic, production strategies, and principles of cooperation.”
2. In the free translation of Apostle (1966, 167), “Privation has as many senses as there are negations of terms which are prefixed by ‘un’ or ‘in’ ... or suffixed by ‘less.’”
3. See Winter 1994 for an impressive collection of invented (back-formed) positives of just this sort, in his tale of a *maculate* and *flappable* but relatively *spid* gentleman with a *wieldy un*-

brella but *peccable* manners, who strenuously avoids any *toward* and *heard-of* behavior to win the heart of a *descript* and *gainly* young woman with *kempt* hair and a *sheveled* appearance.

4. The more lexicalized and less productive *in*-forms always have the potential to “restrict the domain of *un*”: hence, we have no **unpossible*, **unactive*, and so on (Zimmer 1964, 30). (See *OED*, *un*¹, 7; Jespersen 1942, sec. 26.1; Marchand 1969; and—on the general phenomenon of blocking or preemption by synonymy—Bréal 1900, 27; Aronoff 1976, 43ff.; McCawley 1978; Clark and Clark 1979, sec. 4.4; Horn 1984, 25ff.)
5. The situation is actually somewhat more complex; see Horn 1989, sec. 5.1, for more on the structural and semantic distinctions among *in*-, *un*-, and *non*-prefixation.
6. For reasons of space, I restrict discussion here to the adjectival- and nominal-deriving *un*-prefix. The reversative and denominal *un*- of *unzip*, *unskin*, *unthaw* may be assimilable to the general account of Aristotelian privation as well, although its etymological source is different. For discussion, see Horn 1988, 2002a.
7. As a reviewer points out, *un*circumcision and *un*verification may also be back-formed from the corresponding participle.
8. See Horn 2002a, 46–64, for a comprehensive inventory of attested *un*-nouns culled from newspapers, magazines, and observation of life over the last several years, constructed jointly with Beth Levin (now of Stanford University). In these and subsequent citations, *NYT* = *The New York Times*.
9. Class A uncomestibles in the *un*turnkey mold are legion. Thus, we have *unbologna* (for the suspected filling of a child’s sandwich in *The Nanny Diaries*), *unbutter* (for margarine), *uncheese* (for the nondairy substitute: 1,930 Google hits, including Uncheese Cookbooks), *unBLTs* (with faux bacon), and the *unusushi* (for a Japanese restaurant’s serving of katsu don, pork on a stick with egg and onion over rice), all washed down with either *uncoffee* (either tea or Postum) or some nonalcoholic *unbeer*. In each case, the context of presentation of the *unX* is one in which *X* would be normal or anticipated.
10. As Aristotle would no doubt have predicted, what counts as the default will vary with context. Thus, in an article “The Un-Beats: Lawrence Ferlinghetti and His Pals Aren’t the Only Bay Area Poets, Just the Noisiest” (*San Francisco Magazine*, July 2002, 91), the Stanford School of Poets is described as follows: “Their work is restrained, elegant, classical, and insistently metrical, everything that Beat poetry is not.” In the context of San Francisco and poetry, *beat* represents the unmarked or “expected” category.
11. When other polysemies are factored in, the explosion of possible meanings for a given *un*-prefixed noun can be daunting indeed. As demonstrated by a roundup of Google sites, the lexical item *unmarriage*—if we do consider it a single lexical item—has been variously evoked as a class A *un*-noun (= a committed same- or mixed-sex relationship that does not attain legal wedlock), as a class B *un*-noun (= a marriage in name only, whether one deteriorated into that status or one designed to obtain one partner a green card), as a deverbal reversative (= a divorce or annulment), or for the (un)ceremony resulting in any of the above (as in the dream recounted at http://whither.blogspot.com/2002_08_01_whither_archive.html).
12. In his discussion of ironic preposing, Ward (1985, 289–90) notes that the height of a value on the relevant scale—and hence its eligibility as a target of epitomization—is determined by the context, thus yielding the difference in acceptability between (i) and (ii), where Hitler counts as a low and high scalar value, respectively.

- (i) A: Do you think Bill is a nice guy?
 B: #Hitler he's not.
 (ii) He's a powerful demagogue, but Hitler he's not.
 Similarly, consider the role of Patrick Ewing as an epitome of failure in the following text:
 (iii) Coach Fassel tried to tell us this, but we were weak and disbelieving and forgot that when it came to playoff guarantees, Patrick Ewing he isn't. We should have known better. The next time the deacon of December says that his seemingly mediocre 6-6 team is capable of running the table and making the playoffs, we will fold our hands and say, "Amen!"
 (Harvey Araton column, *NYT*, 24 December 2002, D1)
 The key here is the assumption of a common ground for the New York sports fan, who will immediately recognize that unlike Joe Namath, Mark Messier, or Coach Jim Fassel, who were each locally celebrated for fulfilling their guarantees of victory for the 1969 Jets, 1994 Rangers, and 1999 Giants, respectively, Ewing is remembered for his many unfulfilled guarantees as the team leader of the Knicks in the 1990s. "Patrick Ewing he isn't" thus plays off Ewing's status as the standard bearer for the disappointed and unrequited.
 13. The clones here are of the *prototype* variety; see the cited references for the role of context in distinguishing among the other possible variants. These additional examples of prototype clones were provided by Yale University undergraduates:

- (i) A: Did you *hook UP* hook up? (value-added clone)
 B: No, we just *hooked up* hooked up. (prototype clone)
 (ii) *SEX* sex: "refers to regular intercourse, not variations or imitations such as oral or vaginal [*sic*] sex"
 14. This extends to novel *un*-phrase generation, as in (i).
 (i) a. **unfooled around with**
 Simply Orange—unfooled around with
 (In TV commercials)
 b. **un-what-I-expected**
 She was very un-what-I-expected.
 (A reference to women's studies scholar Mary Cathryn Cain)
 c. **un-up your alley**
 This is not un-up your alley.
 (Don DeLillo, *Underworld*, 1997, 202)
 In a sense, every novel *un*-word is very un-what-one-expected.

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