I was always taught that the double negative not only was gram­
metrically incorrect but that it didn't have any class. Only ignorant
clods said, "It don't got no class!"

It was carefully explained to me that two negatives reversed
each other in arithmetic and so therefore they logically did so
in grammar. So, if your mother asked if you wanted some castor
oil 'you'd better not say, "I don't want none," or you'd end up
getting it. (Probably "getting it" in more than one way if you
used language like that!)

O.K. But there are certain writers, notably the English, who
seem to think that the double negative has loads of class, is truly
snooty and might even be called the elegant double negative. True,
when they use it they mean it to be an affirmative. It is as though
coming right out and saying it directly would be too shocking—
a kind of linguistic frontal nudity.

"I was not unwilling to make some money..." says B.F. Skinner
in an article for Psychology Today. Then there was the news item
about how the English are considering "de-illegalising" certain
acts. And, in an introduction to a story anthology, Rust Hill writes
about a "not uncommon metaphor...that life is a journey."

Apparently Mr. Skinner feels it more delicate to beat around
the bush than to say that he was willing to make some bread.
I think it an uncommon nuisance to go through mental flip-flops
in order to understand him and Mr. Hill.

Actually, I am not unable to say that I am without irritation
at this needlessly convoluted style which occurs to no inconsider­
able degree in "literary" writing. Unfortunately, it is not a totally
unattractive style; not without a sort of snobby style to which
I am not totally insensitive and even, on occasion, do not find
totally unappealing. I am also not unaware that it would probably
not take no incalculable degree of effort to uproot it, but perhaps
not incomparably more than to understand it.

As you see, I oppose the form on the grounds that it tangles
the skein of thought until it looks like a kitten has been playing
with it. In answer to the anticipated response that these writers
are consenting adults who are using a double negative in the full
knowledge that it makes a finely-shaded affirmative, I say, pish
tosh! I still say it is a needlessly affected form which, no matter
how thin it is sliced, is not unlike baloney.