

---

## PRINCIPLE OF INCERTITUDE

*By* GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

They don't wear robes, so you can't tell them from ordinary  
men;  
Yet, like inquisitors, they deal with potencies which though  
everywhere are invisible  
And which though different from us are subject to knowledge of  
some sort and to limited, visible orderings.  
About those quanta which are not even things but of which all  
things are made, about those most small they can never  
know for the knowing;  
Yet they created a sphere of fire which burned for three seconds  
bright as a little sun.  
I shall never be the same again.  
They know what they mean when they sign to one another the  
principles of incertitude;  
But when they deal with us their word-hobbled believers, they  
talk about, for example,  
The trouble a man has when he tries to wave from a fast train  
to a friend in a plane flying at nearly the speed of light.  
The parable proves the point: I believe I must doubt.  
Certitude, like one of the infra-reds which to bees' eyes are hues  
but which to ours are black,  
Is the color of things known when one sees with the eyes of faith.  
The physicists' way of knowing discovers the ultimate quantum  
itself, but obliges it to do that which it would not otherwise  
have done  
So that no one can be certain what is has done, is doing, or ever  
shall do, world without end.  
A thing so blackly known is a thing unknown.  
I shall never be the same again.  
It is possible that those whose belief is that they cannot know  
shall be, visibly, burned to death.  
If they are, I shall be there.