

dows and i bought it for \$200 and it was a very lovable elderly car that was like driving an armored car it was very high and you looked down on the road it was a very strange car to drive and i loved it it was a big black car and we drove there and suddenly i saw dick he was there and he hailed us and we parked the car and we got out to talk to him and i said "well dick what did you want?" he said "i gotta borrow your car" and i guess i should have said no i guess i should have said no but it was an odd situation and i had a kind of feeling of intense pleasure at seeing him out of a sanatorium it was a kind of amazing feeling that he was alive and i remembered many occasions in the 50's which was like 10 years before that when on summer nights wed driven in his car out to jones beach or something and gone somewhere or another to grants for clams or something and i remembered he had a kind of intense pleasure in handling a car it calmed him and he loved driving the way some people like to play tennis or some people like to do something physical some physical activity in which you take some kind of profound pleasure from both the skill that you display and the casualness with which you display it and i said "yeah okay i have to get somewhere i have to get somewhere why dont you let me off when can you bring it back?" and at this point elly was looking at me like i was crazy and now i dont remember that she did but i think she did and she said "youll never see it again" and i said "well he drives very well nothing will happen" and i told him "all right drop us off uptown where are you taking the car?" id been sitting there getting nervous "where are you taking it?" he said "i have to see someone" i said "well all right" and he said "i gotta see someone i gotta help them move" this was beginning to get me nervous because i didnt believe it and i said "okay you drive then" he drove and he drove very madly that is he drove very peculiarly now i remember im not sure whether he really did drive now at this point in the story i cant tell you whether i let him sit behind the wheel before i was going where i was going or i didnt and finally i said "dick where do you have to go?" and somehow i was driving i think he had driven i think he had driven to his mother's house which is where he had lived for a long time and having driven there he had to go upstairs and come down again and while he went upstairs and was out of the car i had a frantic conversation with elly who was much more reasonable about this i suppose and said "youre crazy he's going to do something insane with the car youll never see the car again but something else is going to happen and youre not insured" and well it went on we went through this serious and reasonable but paranoid conversation in which we worried about the car and about things unspoken like what could conceivably happen that had nothing to do with losing a \$200 car which was in a certain sense not the meaning of the fear entirely it couldnt have been be-

cause the anxiety about the mystery of what he was doing was all so strange finally he came back down and i said "look dick wherever you have to go why dont i drive you if you just have to move someone why dont i drive the car and you sit there and ill take you where you want to go" and he started getting very angry and he didnt say anything you know having no claims on the car except my previous decision impulsively to lend him the car he said "oh i have to go south" I said "south where?" you know youre in manhattan you cant go very south in manhattan youve got the battery on one end and i said "south where?" he said "right near the museum of modern art" i think we were in the 80's or 90's on the east side we drove down to the museum of modern art and all this time he's getting crazier and crazier and i said "where do you want me to take you what do you want me to do with the car?" he said "all right i have to get out here i have to get out right here" and traffic is very slow we turned up 53rd street up past the museum of modern art going west which is on a street thats one way westerly and he got out of the car very quickly and he suddenly moved off down the street and the museum of modern art at that time had an empty lot next to it with a parking lot and he ran into the lot traffic was very slow at that point it was a kind of traffic jam that new york often has and the car wasnt moving and we were waiting then all of a sudden i saw dick coming back walking in what looked like an unconcerned sprint that is he was coming down the street as if he was walking but really running very fast toward us and i said "dick!" he didnt pay attention he didnt say a word he went sailing down past my car and i couldnt figure out what was happening and then i saw two other people on the street and one saying "thats him! thats him!" and a policeman running down the street with a revolver in his hand coming up and saying "they're with him!" suddenly this cop came up to the car with his hand on the revolver he said "lemme see your license!" im looking and i say "what?" and the other two say "who's he?" i said "what are you talking about?" the cop said "come on!" i said "all right" and i started to get out of the car he said "no stay right where you are" i said "stay right where i am?" i said "okay okay he's a friend of mine" he was gone and he had been a friend of mine and he had tried to steal a car from the lot the policeman said and he had needed a car very badly for some reason he'd walked into the parking lot and he'd turned the ignition on and tried to drive out but apparently the owner of the car had walked in about the time he was coming out and this coincidence had occurred and he ran and he ran down the street and there we are weve got a memory and a story and im talking about it and there are some elements in this that are true because that i can remember it at all i imagine to have in it a core of truth and i remember it this way now i ask myself i said to myself that i did this

for this reason that elly did this for that reason that dick wanted the car for this reason and i cant remember whether he was driving the car whether i was driving the car all the time whether i was really more worried about the car or i was worried about him now i know that any time i start to concentrate on this story with any strong sense of conviction i lose every bit of doubt that is as soon as i begin to say that i was driving the car it came out of my mouth very nicely i was driving the car well then i was driving the car but i can very easily stop driving the car and say "no *he* was driving the car" now he was driving the car now he was sitting next to me and he was driving the car doing very odd things in fact now that i say so in fact im sure that i can remember him nearly hitting another car but im not really sure that happened and im not really sure he ever hit anything and i never knew him to drive in such a way as to ever hit anything even stone drunk so im not sure he was driving the car in which case i was sitting on the left and he was sitting on the right and now i can remember he was sitting on the right and now i cant remember really what the order of these events was at all but i know that this happened this story is a straightforward story and i dont know whether i was guilty of putting a friend in a desperate position into a worse position or whether i was behaving reasonably because he had nearly killed all of us sure i can have a great justification for this story he was driving so badly he nearly drove into a truck when i saw the way he was driving i said "my god i cant trust the car to this man! he'll kill himself he'll kill somebody else its only a sensible social act to prevent him from driving a car" clearly a straightforward example of reasonable ethical concern for the rest of the society or my \$200 car with the wire wheels it was a great car with wire wheels and electrical windows that you could play with all day they went up and down each window had its own little button you could make the glass go up and the glass go down i have nobody to consult on this story except elly who was also there but elly as ive said on many occasions in other situations that have been published has a very bad memory and she has a memory thats so bad i would really hesitate to ask her what happened because it would merely make two stories and in fact if i insisted on my story if i cared more my story would probably be her story and her story would then give ground to my story before it got entirely off the ground or we'd merge stories at some point if she really cared we'd probably find a merger story unless she cared and i didnt because then it would be her story but since i cared we'd probably find a merger story that was somewhere between the two stories and come out with what one would call a group myth right? a group story now this story would lie between us that is we could get dick if we could get hold of dick but i dont know where we could get hold of dick if we could get hold of dick im sure we couldnt get that story very easily together again because we

would have dicks image of the story and he may have forgotten the story by now entirely now you may think this is trivial it is and it isnt it is as trivial as the nature of establishing my self is to me or as the nature of establishing your self would be to you if you have to define who you are and what youve done if you feel it necessary to be able to stand behind yourself at any point you feel it necessary to decide who you are and if you know who you are you know who you are because of who you remember it is because of a kind of continuity that i can say what i did and what reasons i did it for now im afflicted by what one might call a doubt a kind of scientific doubt about myself thats not the only kind of doubt that comes up to me in this mythical system in candys story i knew what candy was saying and i was quite happy that by the time candy had finished her story i knew exactly what she meant regardless i knew what she meant that is to say i didnt know what she did but i knew what she meant that is i knew what she did regularly in this case i dont know what i mean i dont know what i meant and if i dont know what i meant now i only want to know what i meant but supposing i want to find out something that lies between me and someone else in a matter of doubt even in the area that should be in the public domain supposing we want to talk about history is there a privileged science of history that has any other recourse? lets imagine a situation it doesnt take long one day i dont know it may have been a very close period in time george and mary oppen were living in brooklyn near me and it was a very bad time during the vietnamese war and johnson had escalated the war to an inordinate degree and the bombs were dropping at a great rate and i believe at this point the talk was of bombing hanoi at that point they were considering the awful possibility that hanoi might be bombed and elly was pregnant at that time and i remember she looked sort of round and one evening we went over there to talk and george looked very black dark really quite appalled by it we were all appalled by it and we had this conversation about what it meant and george said to me in what i take to be very concerned sombre and intelligent tones that theyre trying to get china that is the united states was seriously attempting to apply piecemeal pressure on china and that we would escalate point by point until china is provoked into war so that we could drop the atomic bomb on them and bomb them out of existence before they could become an industrial power now i remember george as having thought this at the time and as having argued a convincing case now its after the event china has not been bombed china has not been attacked and if george and i were to ask ourselves the question of was that the strategy do we really have a clear-cut answer? that is if i were to say to george "george you were wrong" lets say i say that to george "george you were wrong" i think george

could reasonably answer me "its not certain that i was wrong" and i think we would have to ask ourselves how could we find out whether he was wrong? what system would we use to find out whether or not a strategy had changed its course supposing in fact the united states had had among its people some who might have been called its "intellectual leaders" its drivers if it were a car at its controls someone with a hand on it who was directing it toward a war with china and that someone said "get china into the war" now the question that would first come up is "why not attack china?" george knew why they shouldnt attack china and it was perfectly understandable if they attacked china without a consensus in america it was conceivable at least then now weve had consensus for everything but in those days it seemed as though it might be impossible to drop an atomic bomb on another country before the other country was brought into such a state as to seemingly attack us so george felt that it was impossible for the united states for anyone malevolent or intelligent or violent enough to want to bomb china to bomb china just like that that is he could give an order and say "bomb china!" but if he were to bomb china he could worry that is to say now we're hypothesizing what happened the leader might worry that some large group of people standing up in congress would also talk and say "arrest that man!" we may now feel differently about the possibility of such a thing that may never happen it may now happen that anybody at the controls of the american government can do anything in the world and nobody will stand up and say "arrest that man!" or very few people will try to arrest that man but in 1965 or so it seemed possible that congress might not have allowed it or that the country might have protested that is imagine going out on protest marches we had half a million people walking on a protest march once one might imagine millions of people on a protest march people laying barricades across communication systems tearing out their television sets you could imagine terrible things happening to the culture if china had been bombed i was a party to this belief george convinced me i didnt take much convincing we assumed that if china had been bombed just like that it was out of the question well if china could have been bombed physically but couldnt have been bombed because of the anxiety of the president we are now speculating about the presidents beliefs and the presidents hopes and aspirations and fears however realizable they are and weve got his mind to contend with now let us say that he took on a strategy of tactical escalation bomb hanoi bomb this bomb that and let us say that when he bombed in an escalating fashion what happened is the country's protest reached such a level that he felt perhaps it was not yet auspicious to attack china and that the lack of auspiciousness caused him at that moment not to attack china and that for a long period of time the intent to attack china remained in abeyance until gradually

it had eroded for reasons of political reorganization or whatever the issue is serious but im not dealing with the issue seriously im dealing with the question seriously the question of how could we tell if it didnt happen how could we tell it was intended to happen finally other than by our theory and our theory would have been that a sensible government sensible pathologically sensible with an intention to destroy another country sought about to find ways to apply pressure on the other country so that the other country would assault us in some trivial manner by dropping bombs on us say or doing something appalling that was in this sense trivial because it only took half a million lives or something like that and then we blew them off the face of the earth now this was a sensible but pathological strategy and we could imagine it and we did imagine it but if it didnt happen that is if this strategy doesnt succeed the difficulty is how do you decide whether there was in fact such a strategy? and the answer is not forthcoming i still dont know i still dont know whether george was right or whether i was right because i didnt believe this was the strategy i really didnt believe it that is i didnt believe the american government was less pathological i believed it was less sensible it seemed to me that the american government was not one hand on the driving wheel but lots of hands and hands that were intermittently reaching for that drivers wheel and they had lots of other things they were doing like playing poker in the back and that various people with variously strong motivations were driving the car and somebody would slow it down and somebody would randomly turn a signal but that on the whole there was a relative pattern to the insanity some of the people took the wheel more commonly than other people now that was my theory now how could i validate that im really not certain how we could have validated that one either and there we are again we come back again to "what am i doing here?" what is it that im doing here? im trying to find out how i could find out and what im trying to find out is by essentially doing what i think talking does that is talking and thinking may not be the same thing but i see thinking as talking i see it as talking to a question which may give rise to another question and it may open up some terrain and lose some terrain and answers come up but theyre not the same answers ive learned something by talking about georges opinion and my opinion but i didnt learn which opinion was right now it doesnt seem to me that thats terribly different from the career of science which has consistently interrogated hypothetical entities and has not validated their existence what it has done is to amass more difficult facts that are more or less appropriate to the type of theory theyve advanced for example not long ago there was a great achievement in science and this great achievement consisted essentially of entering a new candidate for entityhood into physics and this was an entity that is to be imag-

ined as having no mass and having the capacity for absorbing electrons that is really what science a scientist mr wilson imagined was something that got to be called the electron hole now you can imagine something as absurd as an electron hole imagining something as absurd as an electron hole is as absurd as imagining the shekhina the electron hole and the shekhina have a lot in common the electron hole is the answer to a question about why it is that when you know all about resistances in certain kinds of substances these substances refuse to provide the resistances that you consider appropriate to them in the domain of electrical science you imagine flows and from this point of view you consider substances with respect to their responsiveness to the pressures which create these flows and you name them so to speak by their ability to transmit or resist these flows fairly casually as conductors or insulators and in the course of the history of electrical science youve spent a fair amount of time classifying these materials and ranking them and by now you see these flows the current as a flow of entities with a negative charge and you call these electrons now youve come to know an awful lot about the arrangement of these substances that you subject to these flows or you consider that you know a lot about them and you are all very happy with what you know about them and when you apply two wires to the sides of this substance and create what you like to call a difference of potential a difference of pressure electrical pressure that is you apply more electrical pressure to one side of the substance than the other thats what you like to say that youre doing because you know all about the resistances to this pressure of the various substances and when you apply these two wires to this piece of that substance you really know all about what is going to happen at least in the case of your favorite substances certain metals or crystalline compounds and you ordinarily only measure the results of this differential pressure that you apply to take the legitimate satisfaction in what you already know now you take your two wires and you go to your substance which is a crystal you know or you feel you should know because you know all about the ways and habits of these crystals and how they work and youre very pleased with your knowledge as you should be and you turn on the pressure and it doesnt work now all this time and all this money all of these electrical scientists have been working out all that they know and they put the two wires together and it doesnt work? all this time and all of this money and they said "it doesnt work?" they said "we have too much invested in it working" and so entered mr wilson and said "the electron hole" the electron hole as you will see made it work because if you suppose that the structure of this disappointing substance was augmented or one might say depleted by a hole where there had no reason to be a hole and that this hole would be capable of absorbing electrons then the answer

that you had could be made equivalent to the answer that you wanted namely by the addition of an electron hole now this was a difficult task to convince the rest of science because yet science doesn't just say "electron hole" you have to do this with an apparatus of appropriate discourse so what you say is you can't merely say there is an electron hole and it sits there everyone knows that electrons are relatively randomly distributed in this space in accordance with certain laws of probability so that if you want to trap electrons to facilitate their passage through the jungle of the semiconductor you have to provide correspondingly randomly distributed electron holes and you give them a more or less probable distribution and density and then you say they flow through the semiconductor in such a manner that the outcome you get is the outcome you want now this is the form of interrogation of discourse that science a highly valued a sacred art has in fact conducted to establish the existence of an entity science is a sacred art it is a hieratic art conducted with a high class technology like benin bronze making that is it is essential to the society the society worships it is mystified by it and rewards its practitioners immensely what else can i say to reemphasize its sacredness the sacred society sat down and came up with this answer to an interrogation and while the answer is laughable it is not uncharacteristic that is it is no different which is why i have always said there is a very close relation between poetry or talking and science the difference is great too that is the kind of talking we conduct is different they conduct a sacred talking in science a specially sacred talking a hierophantic a hieratic talking a talking that one might call a fascist talk they conduct a kind of oligarchic conversation with constrained materials and constrained people and after that they should come out with what we come out with anyway? the finagle variable? the finagle variable is any magnitude any constant any number any equation anything that you can associate by any means whatsoever to the number that you have in hand that will give you the number that you want provided only that it is proposed with the right manners or in the right dialect that is the finagle variable and it is the profound mode of interrogation but they have different purposes and different ways of being conducted in our separate arts and even though poetry or talking talking poetry poetry and talking are not precisely the same i'll admit that i'll admit that not all talking is poetry and that not all poetry is talking i'll admit the poetry of the cry i'll admit the mammalian poetry of michael mcclure roaring that goes along with lorcas "*aieeee ignacio!*" i'll admit that and it's not my kind of poetry today and i will admit that there is a kind of talking that is responsory directly responsory and in general i'll say that it is not the habit of poetry to be open to interruption to be entirely vulnerable to interruption that's a modest state-

ment i once told somebody he said "what's poetry?" i said "uninterruptable discourse" now i dont know there are other kinds of
uninterruptable discourse we have among us here many great conversationalists who dont have interruptable discourse or theyre interruptable with great difficulty i confess myself to sharing some of these characteristics and i would say that this is a special kind of talking now science is not such a kind of talking always science will let you talk until you contradict the council of elders when the council of elders feels that your contradiction appropriately phrased and pronounced from the appropriate pulpit is of such an order that they must meet they say "shut up and we'll consider it" and then they consider it that is to say you publish then they experiment then they publish that is there is a form of dialogue i could imagine a poetry that would go like this and perhaps today we'll go on that way with the other kind of poetry which will for the time end uninterruptable discourse and open interruptible discourse so that you can interrupt what im saying or what jerrys saying and we can find out what it is that you would have liked to say that we have shut you out from for so long

ARCHIPELAGO DI
SAN LAZARO.

La Jarjana

Restinga de ladrones
Zamal

Ans de los corales

Los jardines

Ans de los reys

IDENS.

martyres
y de creyos

Da rimo
de mala gente
y dos hombres
blancos

210

La barbada

220

