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(...)

A thought crossed my mind: every night, when most of us go to sleep, astronomers start their work collecting the light of the shining and distant stars with their telescopes. Their study of these light beacons gives us information about the universe, how it formed and evolved. And Einstein would add:

"All knowledge of reality starts from experience and ends with it.³ Physics arises through speculation which is constantly tested through comparison with phenomena observed in Nature.⁴ When we say that we understand a group of natural phenomena, we mean that we have found a constructive theory which embraces them.⁵"

“But then, how sure can we be of the truth of our interpretation,” I wondered.

"A scientific person [...] will never believe that the results of his own attempts are final.⁶ There is no single scientific idea that I can for sure say that it would survive for ever.⁷ The theory finds the justification for its existence in the fact that it correlates a large number of single observations, and it is just here that the ‘truth’ of a theory lies.⁸"

I remembered what I had learned in school: “A theory is a representation of reality, not the reality.” Our scientific models are nothing else than a way to understand Nature with mind’s sight.

“How can I be sure that, say, a particular star is truly out there?”

"This could all be a dream. You may not be seeing it at all."⁹

“Let me assume that I can see it, then how could I know for sure that this particular star is part of the reality?”

"You have to assume something."¹⁰

And thus, my conversation with Einstein began.

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