

"All Models Are Wrong, But Some Are Useful"

Post by "Cassius" of January 21, 2024 at 11:21 AM

In past discussions here on the forum we have used the analogy that "the map is not the territory."

A few minutes ago I just happened to come across this saying, attributed at least in its present form to statistician George Box, that seems to make a very similar point.

I suspect I will find this a useful saying in the future so wanted to post about it:

All models are wrong is a common [aphorism](#) and [anapodoton](#) in [statistics](#); it is often expanded as "All models are wrong, but some are useful". The aphorism acknowledges that [statistical models](#) always fall short of the complexities of reality but can still be useful nonetheless. The aphorism originally referred just to statistical models, but it is now sometimes used for [scientific models](#) in general.^[1]

The aphorism is generally attributed to the [statistician George Box](#). The underlying concept, though, predates Box's writings.

[All models are wrong - Wikipedia](#)