

# Natural Wealth and Natural Goods in Epicureanism

Post by “Pacatus” of July 22, 2022 at 1:33 AM

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This really may go at the heart of (neoclassical) microeconomics, where economic agents are assumed to continually strive to maximize (personal) utility (at the margin - i.e. in the immediate present) in the face of income/resource constraints (scarcity) - and to try to expand the current bounds of those constraints (even at the expense, say, of future environmental costs). Traditional (neoclassical) economics recognizes no natural constraints on utility (pleasure/satisfaction) or potential wealth.

Any suggestion of natural bounds on utility maximization - which would mean a rational frugality in the face of the bounds of “natural wealth” (based on a hedonic calculus) - would be anathema to mainstream economics\* (at least as I learned it). And that, it seems to me, might be the nub of an Epicurean alternative.

I haven't finished reading the essay on Philodemus yet, but it might also be related to his criticisms of Xenophon and Theophrastus?

EDIT: I like your translation of "natural treasures" -- which I would take to be a better understanding of natural resources than the word "wealth." Modifications to what I just wrote might thereby be warranted, but I am too tired to make them just now. 😞

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\* For a scholarly debunking of that economics, anyone interested should read Steve Keen's *Debunking Economics* (by which he means that neoclassical mainstream). It can be a tough read for those unfamiliar with the nitty-gritty of marginal analysis (or even for those who, like me, once were). Keen is an economist from Australia, who is one of those behind a blog-journal called Real-World Economics - which I still get and peruse from time to time.