

Thinking Outside the Box: A Reinterpretation and Reconstruction of Edgeworth's Figure 1

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Abstract: Many eminent historians of economics have pointed out that the 'original version' of the Edgeworth box diagram is Figure 1 from F. Y. Edgeworth's *Mathematical Psychics*. We demonstrate that that proposition not only reflects a misinterpretation of Edgeworth's diagram, it also conceals the importance of the contribution of that diagram to the efficiency dimensions to the relationship between contracted labour, production by contracted labour and remuneration of contracted labour. This study builds on the largely ignored work of Vincent Tarascio and William Jaffé, undertaken in the early 1970s, to provide a reinterpretation of Edgeworth's Figure 1. A reconstruction is also provided to clarify a problematic definition that underlies Edgeworth's diagram and, in the process, clarify an overlooked aspect of Edgeworth's contribution to the study of efficiency through his Figure 1.

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