

Marriage & children seem less pleasurable today: financial worry, relational problems, high rates of divorce. Is it worth the pain, the *tarakhē* (τάρραχή) it entails?

Post by “Raphael Raul” of July 1, 2026 at 3:57 PM

Marriage and children seem less and less pleasurable today, burdened by financial worry, relational problems, and high rates of divorce. Is it worth the pain, given the *tarakhē* (τάρραχή) it entails for young men and women?

We as humans are drawn to pleasure, to what is pleasing and enjoyable, and having children in today's modern society is becoming too expensive, bringing monetary pressure and acute anxiety. As a result, in Europe, Japan, Korea, and other industrialized countries, many young people are shying away from it. Raising a child costs a middle-class couple somewhere between \$300,000 and \$900,000, covering everything from birth to college graduation. If you double that, for replacement purposes, to stabilize population numbers, the figure jumps to \$600,000 to \$1,800,000.

So, then, what do we do? We humans, like all animals, instinctively move away from pain and toward pleasure or comfort. It is obvious that a high percentage of the last and present generations have chosen pleasure, as is consistent with human nature, but not in marriage or in raising children.

Italy, Spain, the UK, and most European countries are facing a replacement problem, which, say the globalists and the World Economic Forum, necessitates mass immigration. Japan and Korea face this problem more seriously, and robots are now being manufactured to do the jobs that human workers once did, due to a shortage of native workers.

Some of the stated reasons for this are that, once countries reach a certain level of industrialization, modernization, and technology, children are no longer needed as they were in pre-industrialized and agricultural societies, where children were important for farm work.

Another factor could be that there seems to be a rupture, a gulf between men and women today, between two opposing forces: the feminist movement and the recent “Men Go Their Own Way” (MGTOW) movement. So we have women seeking independence, empowerment, and pleasure through corporate & business success and financial independence. Preferring not to be housewives and mothers. Also, today's women are putting marriage and children off so late that by the time they are 35, they are not fertile or not eligible for men their age who are

looking for younger women in their 20s to have children.

The men of the "MGTOW" movement also emphasize enjoying their own lives without marriage or children. Focused on their health and on building wealth through their careers or intellectual or artistic pursuits, as many women also pursue. Some would say their philosophical hero of the MGTOW movement is the German 19th century Philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, who wrote that romantic love is nature's ruse to entrap men into marriage for the sake of species reproduction, diverting men from realizing their full potential and turning them into a tool, a function for providing, and imprisoning them in obligations and expectations that leave them little, if any, time to relax, recharge, think and create. They call this realization "unveiling nature's romantic illusion" or "getting red-pilled". So, could this be considered life-denying or life-affirming? Each group is going to its own pleasure, not to nature's or society's demands.

So, men and women are seeking the same goal, "pleasure," just no longer the pleasure of forming a couple in marriage for having children. Marriage and children thus seem less and less pleasurable and not worth the worry, stress, and sacrifice it entails...So, what to do, if anything?

Well, Augustus Caesar faced the same problem with the descendants of the Patrician class, who were not having children, and by the time of Augustus, the Patrician class had too few descendants to fulfill their political obligations. Did they stop having children because they saw them as a burden to their pleasurable life, even though they had all the wealth and slaves to care for them? Some women of that class would take potent herbal potions to abort, possibly to avoid the altering effects of birthing on their body, their beauty, and their pleasure. Ultimately, Augustus Caesar enacted legislation to encourage them to resume reproduction. There were many regulations to this legislation, but below are the two main laws:

Lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus (18 BCE): regulated marriage and aimed to make it compulsory for citizens of certain ages and orders.

Lex Papia Poppaea (9 CE): supplemented and tightened the earlier law, again focusing on discouraging celibacy and childlessness. (Historical Encyclopedia)

In our own day, should we do the same, making marriage and having children more affordable, and, as a result, more pleasurable by not taxing married couples with two or more children and by giving them benefits and opportunities, as Augustus did in his legislation?

Many, of course, will oppose such laws as discrimination, which penalizes those who choose to live unmarried and childless. Others would argue that this kind of social legislation is life-affirming, while the other path is life-denying. There are great historical figures who did not marry or have children and made significant contributions to humanity in art and philosophy, such as Leonardo Da Vinci, Plato, Johannes Vermeer, Baruch Spinoza, Giorgione, Immanuel Kant, Raphael (Il Divino), our sage Epicurus, and many, many more.

If nothing is done, will we simply give over our civilization and humanity to robots run by AI? Or be replaced by a mass migration that may not embrace our values and our Western heritage?

So, what is at stake? Many would say their country's sovereignty and way of life, as the Japanese have vehemently stated in their electoral campaign and successfully voted for in their 2025 election.

What do you think? What do we do as a society? How can too much pleasure, such as that of the descendants of the Patrician class derisively called by some the "Otiosi," lead to decadence...a kind of pleasurable nihilism?

Nietzsche warned of the decline of the West, anticipating a world of relativistic values that would replace the religious moral system that had unified Western civilization for a millennium and a half. Maybe, as one member of the Epicurean Friends and a semi-master chess player himself stated: "All civilizations in history have come and gone....It's just our turn now."

Yes, that is true; civilizations do come and go! ...But, I am not yet so sure that it is, now, our turn.

In response to the great political upheavals and wars following the death of Alexander the Great, Epicurus created a community with a walled garden, a refuge, a sanctuary, to escape the chaos, where peace, freedom from anxiety, ἀταραξία (ataraxia), and a philosophy of simple pleasures were taught and shared with all who came. ...And which, circa 2,300 years later, is still being taught and shared.

...So, yes, indeed, Epicurus, our sage, was an unmarried and childless man.

Post by "Cassius" of July 1, 2026 at 4:35 PM

Thanks for that detailed post Raphael. I think you've raised some important questions that are well within our forum rules to discuss. No doubt there are some aspects of what you have brought up that will get close to our forum no-politics rule. I would appreciate as this thread unfolds that participants be sure to focus on the larger pleasure vs. pain calculation issues that Raphael has mentioned as opposed to the "political" implications of overall social policy. The issues you mention have major impact on "us" and are not hypothetical, so I think we can discuss this productively.

I would suggest that one of the most important aspects to discuss is in fact how the article starts out - weighing the practical costs and practical benefits and discussing what factors - physical and mental - we should be considering in our own situations. We are not in a position to dictate social policy to anyone, but we are in a position to discuss how we ourselves should employ Epicurean ideas to respond in our own situations.

For many of us the questions only start with "what happens when we get old and we don't have the support network of younger family that was the norm (even if it wasn't *always* present) for

thousands of years previously."