

Philosophy of Overpopulation: Antinatalism and Childfreeness



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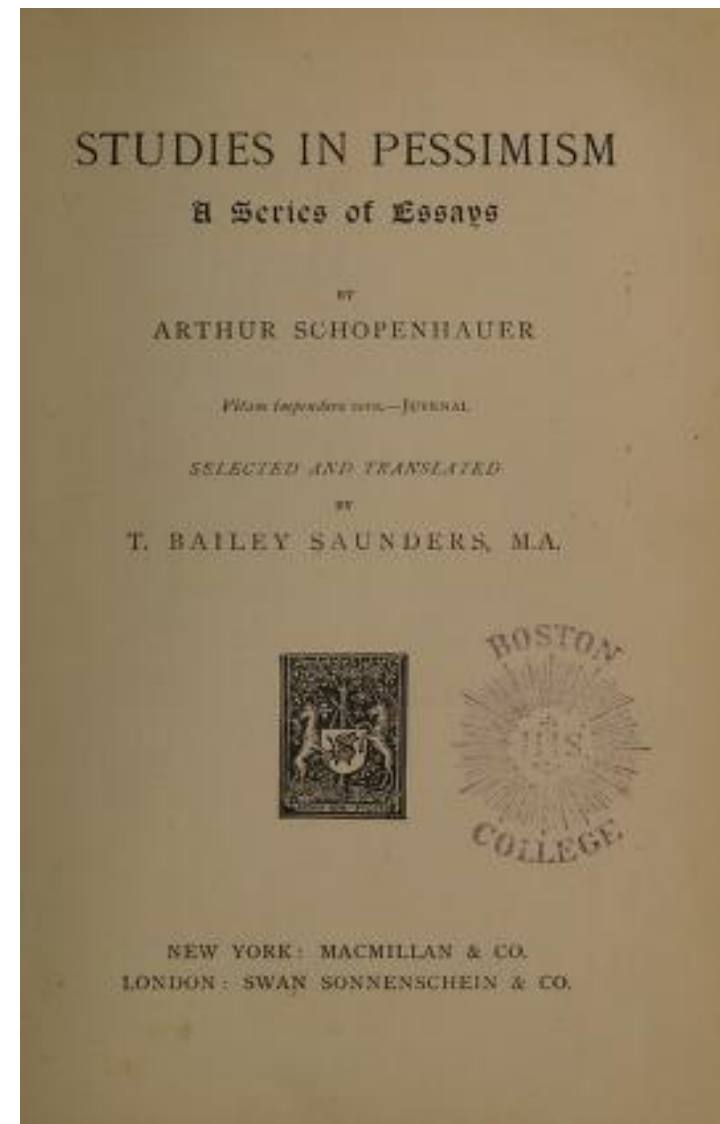
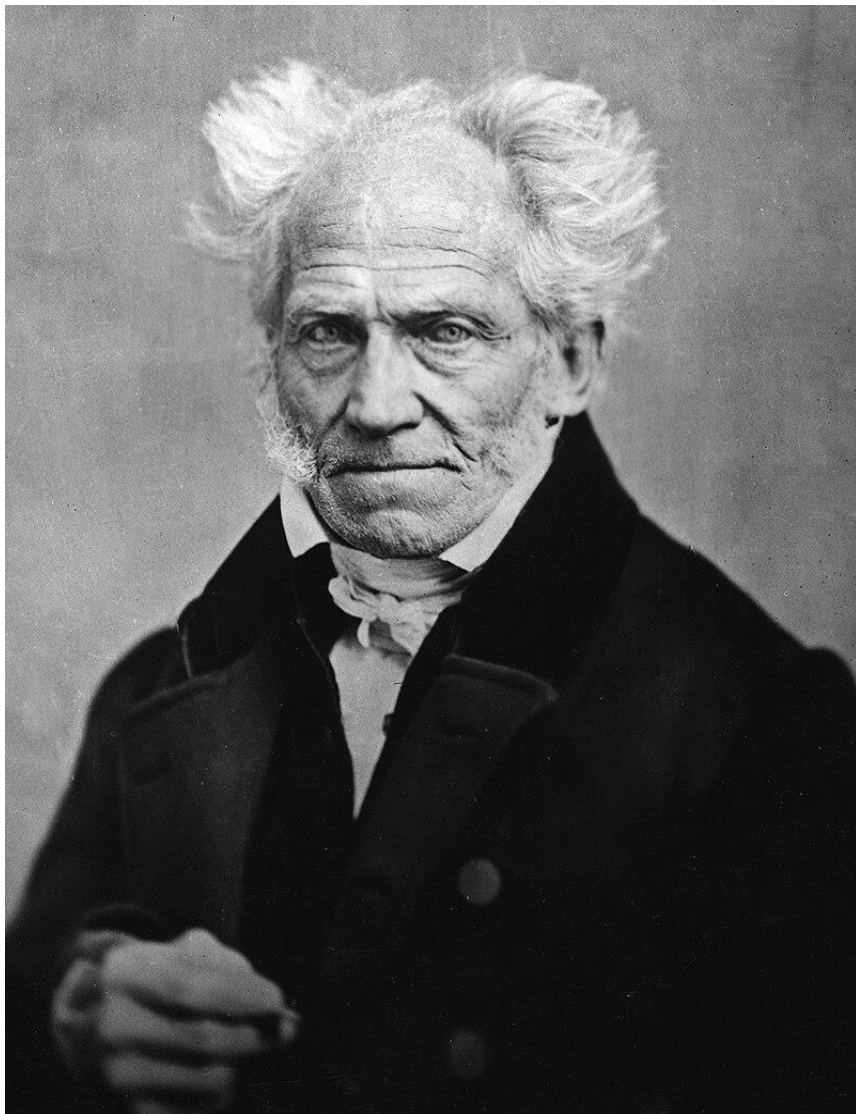
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Antinatalism

- philosophical view (Schopenhauer, Zapffe, Benatar)
- procreation viewed as wrong / unethical (in opposition to natalism)
- critical towards (human) reproduction, humans should not reproduce (predominance of pain over joy in life, child did not consent his birth)

Schopenhauer



Schopenhauer

„ Anyone who wants to test immediately the claim that pleasure in the world outweighs pain, or that in any case the two balance each other, should compare the feelings of an animal that devours another with the feelings of one that devours another.“

*„If children were brought into the world only as an act of pure reason, would the human race still exist? **Would not man rather have more compassion for succeeding generations, to spare them the burden of existence,** or to take upon himself the fate of cold-bloodedly imposing this burden?“*

– Arthur Schopenhauer, *Studies in Pessimism* (1890)

Childfreeness

- nowadays more and more women / couples wish to be *childfree*
- *childless* versus *childfree*
- life without children is / can be as valuable as with children
- authors (Trump, Lafayette), organizations (NON, No Kidding!)

Reasons

- 1) absence of parental desires and need
- 2) personal self-development and space
- 3) health reasons
- 4) economic reasons
- 5) environmental / **population reasons**
- 6) philosophical reasons
- 7) ...

Stigma

- the reasons are valid
- despite it, frequent stigma, refusal, misunderstanding, blame (you are weird, you are selfish, it is NORMAL to have children)
- this approach families, friends, public, but also **health providers**

Autonomy

- having a child is a human right, not a duty
- women are not stupid, nor children (refusal of sterilizations)
- deserved respect for each person's decision
(to have children, even if the fourth, or not to have children)

Take Home Message

- supporting our patients in their decisions and autonomy
- no stigmatizing and coercing into unwanted parenthood

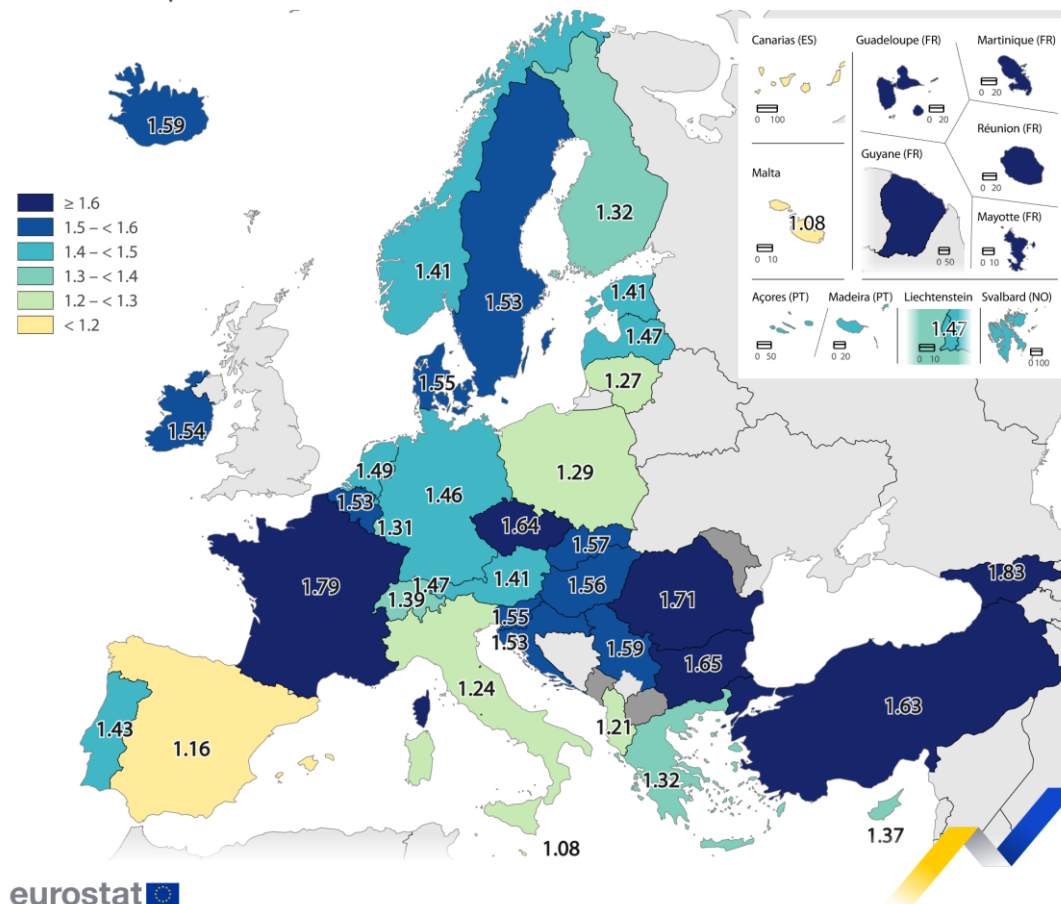
Good and Bad Philosopher

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Civilization

Total fertility rate, 2022
(live births per woman)



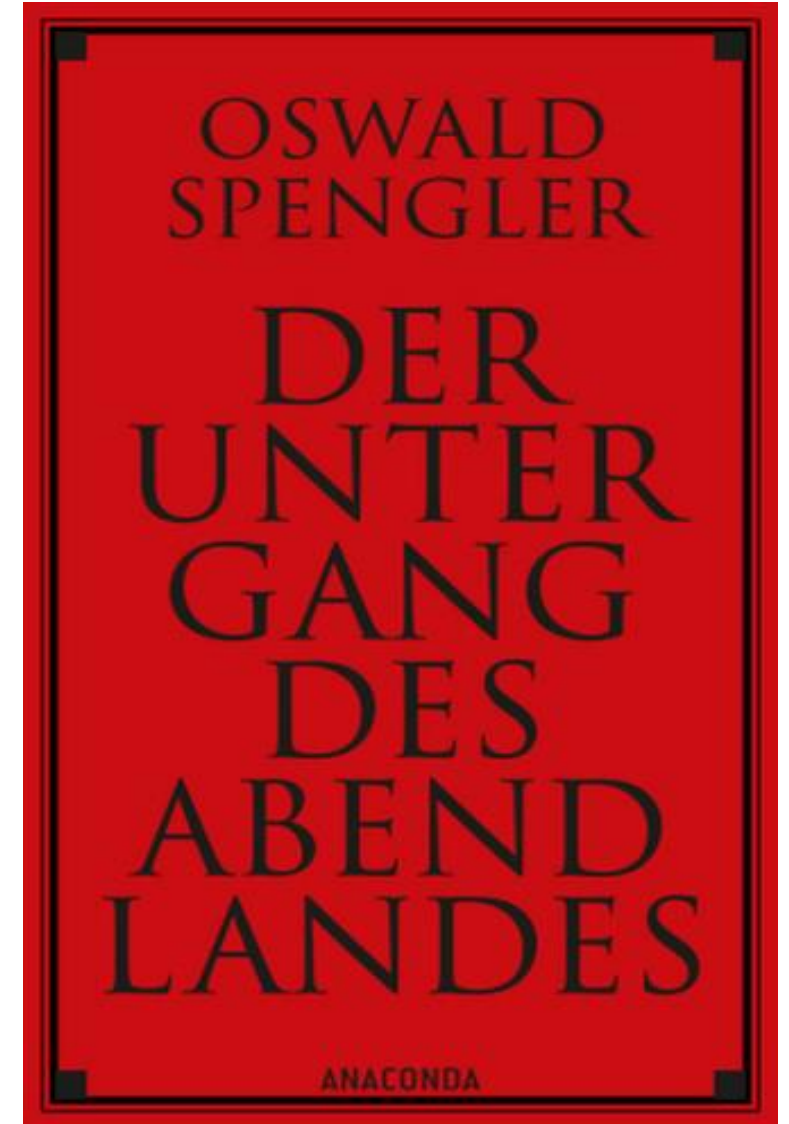
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Spengler



Spengler

„Decay can be indicated by a tendency to decrease in population. Decay is associated not only with sterility, which is physical, but also spiritual. Physical sterility is due to the fact that the population of a world city does not want to live as a type. Intelligence does not find reasons for the existence of children. The depopulation of first large cities, but also smaller towns and the countryside occurs primarily because intelligence has prevailed over instinct. Nature does not ask for reasons. Intelligence seeks reasons and the result is the depopulation of the entire pyramid of civilization. Moreover, the elements that resist depopulation the most are the most primitive elements with no future.“

– Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (1918)

Dilemma

- freedom, autonomy	x	responsibility, higher goal
- autonomy, wise decision		autonomy, future regrets

Way out?