

Brief Thoughts on Innocence

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I was thinking about innocence on a flight recently, observing the excitement of a little girl enjoying takeoff and flight (perhaps for the first time). I was mourning the loss of my own innocence in enjoying these simple experiences. I'm inclined to associate innocence with a sort of moral simplicity. It also seems like it ought to have something like an absence of numbness to the simple joys and experiences of life. Innocence seems to be defeated by: experience, familiarity, too much technical knowledge, and too much analysis. Each of these lead to cynicism and disillusionment, I think. There's an element of amazement at new experiences, and that can't be helped, outside of pursuing a lifestyle of new experiences. However, I think a purposeful attitude of maintaining enjoyment and wonder at the amazing small experiences of life is a sort of innocence that we can control. I have thought about this in the context of flying (like in an airplane). I remember, having not flown often until college, being enamored with taking off and watching the ground shrink and disappear below. I made a sort of commitment to try to maintain that sense of wonder, watching takeoff through the window rather than just read or be on my phone or computer as I see people do so often. I think innocence, at least in the sense of an active property, which can be subject to choice, is an attitude of state of mind (an one worth pursuing). I think innocence can lead to a happier and more pleasant life.