Faculti Summary

https://staging.faculti.net/enchanted-animism-a-matter-of-care/

The speaker conducts research on children's relationships with their environment amid climate change and ecological collapse, focusing on their connections with places, materials, and other species. They advocate for a strength-based approach rather than the typical deficit-focused narrative common in educational research, aiming to value children's skills and perspectives.

The concept of animism emerged in their research, where children frequently expressed that elements of nature (like rocks and clouds) were alive and had agency. Initially hesitant to document this tendency for fear it would reinforce negative stereotypes about children's thinking, they later recognized the ethical necessity of inclusively representing children's views. This video video led to an exploration of animism through the works of scholars such as Jean Piaget, who considered it indicative of primitive thought, and produced a framework recognizing the interconnectedness of beings.

The speaker critiques Piaget's Eurocentric view of animism, suggesting it devalues non-Western perspectives. They draw from contemporary thinkers, especially in indigenous studies, to reconceptualize animism as a form of care that encompasses all beings, not just humans. They emphasize the need for critical reflection on care, recognizing that it can be both beneficial for some and harmful to others.

The concept of "enchanted animism" is introduced, highlighting the playfulness inherent in children's engagement with the world, which fosters curiosity and innovation. The speaker employs multimodal research methodologies that allow for collaborative interactions with children, framing their findings as "murmurs" rather than fixed data. This video video research approach seeks to challenge anthropocentric views, encouraging an understanding of the mutual relationships among all beings.

Ultimately, the speaker argues for rethinking animism and care through a relational lens that respects the complexity of interactions within ecosystems, urging for a broader understanding of how children relate to their world. They conclude by suggesting that while this perspective won't solve planetary crises, it opens avenues for deeper engagement and responsibility towards ecological and social issues.