



Ecocide/Speciesism: Revisiting Hierarchy in the Anthropocene

Dr. Rimona Afana in conversation with Em. Prof. Richard Falk, Prof. Ragnhild Sollund, and Prof. Rob White

Speciesism, as a form of discrimination, manifests as violence against “inferior” non-humans. Our speciesist beliefs and communal structures are currently driving ecocides around the world. The justifications used by racism, sexism, or colonialism to render certain lives inferior (thus suited for subjugation) appear strikingly similar to how speciesism operates: discrimination, strategic invisibilities, and denial legitimate physical, structural, epistemic violence. Sustainability, as well as our now unsustainable habits, thus cannot be divorced from speciesism. Jurisprudence is crucial to the environmental crisis: law is shaped by what we consider normal and it determines what we normalize. The norm now remains the massive killing, torture, exploitation of non-humans for the benefit of humans. The myth of independence and autonomy pervasive in especially Western liberal democracies has supplanted the awareness of inevitable (inter)dependence. Our ideal unity as co-guardians of our common home collides with the hierarchization of needs, rights and bodies, driven by speciesist logics. The life of some rests on the suffering and death of many, and law condones it. In a conversation with Em. Prof. Richard Falk (Princeton University, USA), Prof. Ragnhild Sollund (University of Oslo, Norway), and Prof. Rob White (University of Tasmania, Australia), I seek to unearth the ramifications of violence, interdependence, and hierarchy.

22 April 2021: Indianapolis 7 am — Oslo 1 pm — Istanbul 2 pm — Hobart 9 pm

This online panel is part of Earth Day Art Model, a telematic science & arts festival convened by the Donald Tavel Arts and Technology Research Center at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). Program and video link: <https://earthdayartmodel.org/> & <https://edam2021.deck10.media/stages/main?> An edited transcript of the discussion, with additional insights from panelists, will be available in May 2021.

Ragnhild Sollund is Professor of Criminology at the University of Oslo. Her main research fields have been migration, racial profiling, violence and the last decade green criminology, with a focus on wildlife crimes and species justice. She is currently conducting the research project Criminal Justice, Wildlife Conservation and Animal Rights in the Anthropocene (CRIMEANTHROP). She has published many books in Norwegian and English, as sole author, editor and coeditor, including: *Global Harms. Ecological Crime and Speciesism* (2008), *Transnational Migration, Gender and Rights* (2012), *Eco-global Crimes: Contemporary Problems and Future Challenges* (2012), *Green Harms and Crimes* (2015), *Fighting Environmental Crimes in Europe and Beyond* (2016) and *The Crimes of Wildlife Trafficking. Issues of Justice, Legality and Morality* (2019).

Rob White is Distinguished Professor of Criminology at the University of Tasmania, Australia. He has written extensively in the areas of criminology, youth studies and eco-justice. Notable publications include *Crimes Against Nature: Environmental Criminology and Ecological Justice* (2008), *Transnational Environmental Crime* (2013), *Environmental Harm: An Eco-Justice Perspective* (2013), *Green Criminology: An Introduction to the Study of Environmental Harm* (2014), *Climate Change Criminology* (2018), *The Extinction Curve: Growth and Globalisation in the Climate Endgame* (2021), and (forthcoming) *Theorising Green Criminology*.

Richard Falk is Albert G. Milbank Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton University, currently Chair of Global Law, Queen Mary University London, and Research Fellow, Orfalea Center of Global Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara. Falk served as UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Occupied Palestine (2008–2014). He has written several books. *(Re)Imagining Humane Global Governance* (2014), proposes a value-oriented assessment of world order and future trends. Among his earlier writings are *Legal Order in a Violent World* (1968) and *This Endangered Planet: Prospects and Proposals for Human Survival* (1971). His most recent publications are *Power Shift* (2017); *Revisiting the Vietnam War* (2017); *On Nuclear Weapons: Denuclearization, Demilitarization and Disarmament* (2019). Since 2009 Falk has been annually nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. He has published a book of poems, *Waiting for Rainbows* (2017). His political memoir, *Public Intellectual: Life of a Citizen Pilgrim* was published by Clarity Press in February 2021.

Rimona Afana is a Visiting Scholar with the Vulnerability Initiative at Emory University School of Law in Atlanta. Her work tracks how meaning is institutionalized and contested on pressing global matters such as violent conflicts, state crimes, colonial legacies, and environmental harms. Her PhD, completed at the Transitional Justice Institute in Northern Ireland, examined the synergies, tensions, tradeoffs between justice and reconciliation in Israel/Palestine. Rimona is now working on two book projects: one revisits through vulnerability theory her findings on the justice–reconciliation nexus in the (com)promised lands, the other looks at the ties between ecocide and speciesism. For nearly fifteen years she has been active civically on human rights, international justice, corporate accountability, development, culture and arts. Aside from research and activism, she encrypts rootlessness–transience–dissonance in words and visuals: poems, flash fiction, photography, drawing, painting, collage, and audio–video collaborations.

Cover photo by Rimona Afana (Miculești/Romania, 2017)