Opinion

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Should we be cavemen again?

by Tamara Segal
STAFF WRITER
SHE/HER/HERS
tamara.segal@uconn.edu



Mesolithic and Neolithic artifacts from excavations in the Sergiev Posad district of the Moscow region. A spear, a bow and arrow, and a three-headed harpoon are replicas.
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The other day, I came across a series of articles published by the World Wildlife Fund celebrating animals whose roles are instrumental to Earth's self-regulating cycle of life. Bees, for one, have long teamed up with hundreds of thousands of different flowering plants to promote exceptionally biodiverse and thriving ecosystems, while bison's grazing habits allow grasslands to flourish. It can surely seem exceptional, especially when compared with contemporary human lifestyles which are so removed from nature, that these species have such symbiosis with the world around them. Yet humans did not always live the way we do now; there was a time when our roles were not so different from other animals. In the face of our rapidly shifting planet, it is worth examining exactly what has changed from then to now.

We should first acknowledge that it is no miracle that animals' actions are so compatible with the world around them. It is very much because they obey the Earth's system of nature which has developed incidental, yet ingenious, intricacies over the course of the past few billion years. Each species has come to settle in a role which complements the roles of their neighbors and the greater character of their ecosystem. We must also reflect that, contrarily, we as a human race have moved beyond our primitive role in favor of a rather developed lifestyle.

Now, of course, nothing in the nature of the system dictates that we must continue to fill that primitive role simply because we used to; in fact, this planet has only gotten where it is today because every role has been inherently everchanging. No, it is not necessary that we accept lives of animalistic scavenging, nor was it wrong to build tools or light fires or forge shelters when our distant ancestors did so long ago. In other words, exercising our free will is not wrong. Yet we must also hold that, since humans previously fulfilled a peaceful role upon this Earth, we have no business choosing another if doing so would entail stealing the lives and livelihoods of others that inhabit this planet. We are free to attempt to change our station within the natural order of things (as we have so majorly), but when we do so, we carry the responsibility of forging an equally coexistent one, for our own good as much as anyone else's.

However, it goes without saying that we have not done that. Far from the stone tools and cave drawings of the prehistoric age, our way of life now entails widespread domestication of our once-wild planet. We traded trees for buildings, declared sovereignty over the other animals, which were once our kin, and created mechanical systems which act like wrenches to our underlying ecological ones.

Surely there is a line somewhere between innovation and transgression, but where does it lie, and how far can we stray from our evolutionary role? One way to answer this question is to entertain a case study, namely the case of the pesticide DDT. In 1939, the compound's insecticidal properties were realized, and soon its potential to wipe out pest populations, and with it the diseases they carry, was extrapolated. At the time, this seemed like a paradigm-shifting feat of science with the power to deliver humans from the beast that was nature, and in a manner of speaking it was. In the late 1940s, Sardinia, Italy, a region previously plagued by malaria, was used as a testing ground, and the application of DDT effectively annihilated the disease on the island. With only this limited knowledge, it was deployed boundlessly. But some decades later, due in part to Rachel Carson's book "Silent Spring," the scientific community came to recognize the devastating and bioaccumulating effects of the chemical on environmental health, and it has been banned entirely in many countries since the 1970s. Of course, we cannot retroactively assume that advocates for DDT could have known what we do now, and surely many were motivated honorably, in pursuit of promoting public health. Yet, simultaneously, we can recognize that this attempt to dominate nature without thought of the wider ecological repercussions was reckless. More importantly, it signaled a growing shift away from simply changing our role within nature and instead toward suppression of nature itself. That shift is where humans cross the line.

Thus, there is little question why every animal's lifestyle seems so coexistent and symbiotic with their ecosystems while ours is so enormously parasitic; we have chosen it to be.

This experiment of human domination over the natural world has garnered results that overwhelmingly suggest one conclusion: our efforts have been unsuccessful. If we have tried to make a better life for ourselves, we have done the opposite. The damage we have done to our ecosystems and climate alike is indisputable. And in the face of this failure, is it so strange to ask whether we were meant to master our planet in the first place?

PATRICK'S POLITICS:
TRANS PEOPLE AREN'T WELCOME IN KANSAS ANYMORE, TOTO

by Patrick Minnerly
ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITOR
HE/HIM/HIS
patrick.minnerly@uconn.edu

What would you do if your government identification suddenly ceased to exist? In the state of Kansas last month, hundreds of residents received a notice that their driver's licenses had been revoked. They hadn't done anything wrong to warrant this action – except change their gender identity. Under a new state law that was passed on Feb. 26, Kansans are now forced to have their documentation reflect their biological sex at birth. As a result, the trans community in Kansas has been left reeling. Forcing trans individuals to renounce their own gender identity is deeply wrong, and it reflects a wider assault on trans rights in the U.S. that serves to dehumanize and minimize their existence.

To understand the law's harmful impact, we must dig deeper into the details. Known as S.B. 244, it orders that gender markers on a driver's license or birth certificate must reflect someone's assigned sex at birth. Previously, Kansas allowed people to change their gender on government IDs. S.B. 244, however, instantly changed that rule as soon as it became law, affecting about 1700 people in the state. It's also worth mentioning that Kansas bills usually become law on July 1, in the year that they are passed, but this one was specifically ordered to take effect just a few days after it was signed. The application of the law was so sudden that those affected had to have friends or family drive them to the DMV so that they could get new licenses. If they had tried to drive themselves, they would have already risked getting pulled over.

The law also prohibits trans people from using bathrooms in public places according to their preferred gender identity and allows citizens to sue for up to $1000 in damages if they believe someone has violated these rules. According to the Movement Advancement Project (MAP), 20 states currently have laws that prohibit in some form the ability of trans people to enter the bathroom of their choice. With this law, Kansas has put itself near the top of these states in discriminatory severity, since it applies to all public spaces and violations represent a criminal offense. When you add in the amount people can ask for in so-called "damages," S.B. 244 represents a particularly draconian and disgusting law. It weaponizes the government and the state's own citizens to discriminate against trans individuals.

These restrictions on trans rights have already spurred many members of the trans community to think about leaving Kansas. Those who stay are now essentially considered nonexistent until they comply, since their current gender identity has been invalidated. To Kansas, there is no such thing as transitioning anymore – only your initial biology matters. It is especially notable that the law defines gender as a person's "biological sex at birth," even though gender is a social construct and not biological. At the same time, while genetics cannot be altered, some aspects of one's biological sex can change. The law's language therefore fundamentally misunderstands the actual science and social aspects in favor of catering to anti-trans sentiment.

Kansas' law follows the growing efforts of the American right to restrict the rights of trans people and LGBTQ+ individuals in general. In the past few years, especially after Trump was elected to a second term, Republicans have honed in on attacking trans rights. Several Republican states, including Florida and Texas, have already passed laws prohibiting trans individuals from officially changing their gender identity in the future. Kansas is simply the first state to take a drastic step and revoke documents that were already on file.

Trans people have had to deal with an increasing amount of discriminatory legislation. According to Trans Legislation Tracker, 2025 saw the highest number of anti-trans bills both considered and passed. Just through the first couple of months in 2026, 15 bills restricting trans rights have already been passed. In addition, the ACLU has tracked 489 anti-LGBTQ+ bills that are currently waiting on votes. This surge in restrictive legislation is in line with the Trump administration, which prevented transgender, intersex and nonbinary people from updating their gender designation on his first day in office.

The onslaught on trans rights, both at the state and federal level, represents a concerted effort from Republicans to eliminate their legal standing. Kansas' law should serve as a fresh reminder that the right will not stop in its attempt to roll back the protections trans individuals had just started to enjoy. By forcing trans people to go against their own identity, Kansas is throwing the weight of the state against their ability to simply live their lives comfortably. Policing bathroom use while revoking driver's licenses and birth certificates is a clear sign that trans people are no longer welcome in the state of Kansas. If the law is allowed to stand, anti-trans discrimination and dehumanization will continue to get worse.



LOGO BY SAMANTHA HASS/ARTIST EDITOR