

Being a man has always been dangerous. ②There are about 105 males born for every 100 females, but this ratio drops to near balance at the age of maturity, and among 70-year-olds there are twice as many women as men. ③But the great universal of male mortality is being changed. ④Now, boy babies survive almost as well as girls do. ⑤This means that, for the first time, there will be an excess of boys in those crucial years when they are searching for a mate. ⑥More important, another chance for natural selection has been removed. ⑦Fifty years ago, the chance of a baby (particularly a boy baby) surviving depended on its weight. A kilogram too light or too heavy meant almost certain death. ⑧Today it makes almost no difference. Since much of the variation is due to genes, one more agent of evolution has gone.

①There is another way to commit evolutionary suicide: stay alive, but have fewer children. ②Few people are as fertile as in the past. ③Except in some religious communities, very few women have 15 children. ④Nowadays the number of births, like the age of death, has become average. ⑤Most of us have roughly the same number of offspring. ⑥⁽¹⁶⁾ Again, differences between people and the opportunity for natural selection to take advantage of it have diminished. ⑦India shows what is happening. The country offers wealth for a few in the great cities and poverty for the remaining tribal peoples. ⑧The grand mediocrity of today—everyone being the same in survival and number of offspring—means that natural selection has lost 80% of its power in upper-middle-class India compared to the tribes.

For us, this means that evolution is over; the biological Utopia has arrived. ②Strangely, it has involved little physical change. ③No other species fills so many places in nature. ④But in the past 100, 000 years—even the past 100 years—our lives have been transformed but our bodies have not. ⑤⁽¹⁷⁾ We did not evolve, because machines and society did it for us. ⑥Darwin had a phrase to describe those ignorant of evolution: they “look at an organic being as a savage looks at a ship, as at something wholly beyond his comprehension.” ⑦No doubt we will remember a 20th century way of life beyond comprehension for its ugliness. But however amazed our descendants may be at how far from Utopia we were, they will look just like us. [406 words]

15. What used to be the danger in being a man according to the first paragraph?

- [A] A lack of mates.
- [B] A fierce competition.
- [C] A lower survival rate.
- [D] A defective gene.

16. What does the example of India illustrate?

- [A] Wealthy people tend to have fewer children than poor people.
- [B] Natural selection hardly works among the rich and the poor.
- [C] The middle class population is 80% smaller than that of the tribes.
- [D] India is one of the countries with a very high birth rate.

17. The author argues that our bodies have stopped evolving because.

- [A] life has been improved by technological advance
- [B] the number of female babies has been declining
- [C] our species has reached the highest stage of evolution
- [D] the difference between wealth and poverty is disappearing

18. Which of the following would be the best title for the passage?

- [A] Sex Ratio Changes in Human Evolution.
- [B] Ways of Continuing Man's Evolution.
- [C] The Evolutionary Future of Nature.
- [D] Human Evolution Going Nowhere.