

PERSPECTIVE

# Developmental Twists: A Fateful Tour

Tsuku Mogami

I'd done my best to prepare for the event.

I'd distributed the contents as fairly as I could. The only remaining issue was who would get to keep the place. I'd grown attached to the neighbourhood with its support network. The idea of leaving filled me with dread. Where would I go? What would I do? My thoughts were interrupted by a visitor.

"It's not unusual to be apprehensive," he said.

"But how did you know...?"

"You've been giving off enough anxiety to fill a universe. The best remedy is to speak with others who've gone through the same thing. I've arranged a tour."

The first stop was an arena packed with muscular types performing synchronised exercises. We approached one. "I'll be with you in a minute," she answered between contractions. After everyone took a timeout, she turned to us again. "Sorry about that. So, you want to know what it was like to leave. Let me see... I found it a little disorientating at first, but the change was good for me – forced me to find out what I really wanted to be. I'd still be sitting around in that niche if I hadn't left. Here I am now, pulling my weight, making a difference. Leaving was the best thing that could have happened. Of course, I've the benefit of coming from a fine lineage. You can't overstate the importance of ancestry, my friends." The exercises resumed. "Sorry, She's on the go again."

We moved to the next location: a networking complex with nervous types firing off each other. The spikey individual we approached took a while to emerge from his trance. "Don't you just love the vibe?" he said. My guide explained our mission. "Sure, I remember the dark ages, penned up in that hole. The trip wasn't easy, always having to make sure you had enough drugs to keep you going. Many brothers took their lives because they couldn't get their fix. Sacrificed themselves for the greater good. Location is

everything: right place, right time. Did you know She's doing a PhD in what they call 'stem cell biology'? I get to swim in her cool thoughts all day. OK, a few are not so cool, like 'I hate having to repeat this experiment'. And she frets too much about growing old. But most of her ideas are amazing. She's got fascinating notions about us – some are quite near the mark. And her dreams are something else. Wouldn't change it for the world."

Our third stop was a construction site. We went over to a tight group producing fibres and minerals. "Gosh, so much has happened since then," one of them answered. "I suppose I was a little anxious when I left, but I have no regrets. I mean, there I was, going through a mindless cycle, and now I contribute to a masterpiece of engineering – an awesome backbone. I'll admit it's depressing when you see the demolition team coming along. But then again, that's part of the sculpting, all for the good in the end."

"So, what do you think?" asked my guide when we returned from our travels.

"They sound happy, but they're so set in their ways. Each seems to have convinced themselves their own way is best. How can they all be right? I could be anything now. If I leave I'll have to narrow down my options, end up as blinkered and self-satisfied as them. I'm not ready for that."

"But you're set in your ways too, never wanting to step out from your safe niche. One of you will have to go – it's 50:50."

"I've been through seven of these separations and always been the one to stay. Do you know the chance of that happening? Less than one in a hundred. I'm blessed with youth and want to keep it that way. The very idea of growing..."

I was thrown into a convulsion as my insides tore apart. All over in a few minutes.

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## Read other 'Developmental Twists' articles by Tsuku Mogami

Mogami, T. (2021). Developmental Twists: A Colourful Character. *Development* **148**, dev200360. doi:10.1242/dev.200360

Mogami, T. (2021). Developmental Twists: The Scan. *Development* **148**, dev200108. doi:10.1242/dev.200108

Mogami, T. (2021). Developmental Twists: Only Human. *Development* **148**, dev200204. doi:10.1242/dev.200204

Mogami, T. (2021). Developmental Twists: Back to Back. *Development* **148**, dev200268. doi:10.1242/dev.200268