

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AND THE AESTHETICS OF CARE: “NESTED CARE” AS A FRAMEWORK FOR URBAN TRANSFORMATION

Mami Aota

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the concept of urban redevelopment through the lens of the aesthetics of care, emphasizing the dynamic, interconnected nature of cities and the role of residents in their transformation. It found that urban redevelopment should prioritize “nested care,” where various agents, including residents, developers, and local governments, collaborate to care for the city in a way that sustains both the urban environment and its inhabitants. I believe that my study makes a significant contribution to the literature by offering a new conceptual framework that combines aesthetics, care ethics, and urban redevelopment, providing a more holistic approach to city planning. The study suggests that urban redevelopment policies should prioritize the inclusion of residents in the decision-making process and consider the long-term, collaborative care required to sustain vibrant, livable cities.

Keywords

Urban Aesthetics, Aesthetics of Care, Urban Redevelopment, Philosophy of Cities

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore an aesthetically ideal approach to urban redevelopment, using the “aesthetics of care” as a key framework. Urban redevelopment refers to the process of revitalizing or transforming areas within a city to address issues such as urban decay, overcrowding, or outdated infrastructure. This often involves redesigning, repurposing, or reconstructing buildings, public spaces, and transportation systems to meet the social, economic, and environmental needs of communities.

However, we often wonder whether urban redevelopment projects are social necessities. In such cases, development itself sometimes becomes a goal driven by commercial interests or other motives. These instances frequently result in the unnecessary construction of large-scale facilities. In the worst cases, the unique context of the place is being overlooked. Currently, in Tokyo, large-scale redevelopment projects are ongoing at an alarming rate. There are some undesirable examples among these.

First, Meiji Jingu Gaien (Hereafter referred to simply as “Gaien”) is a public park within walking distance of Shibuya’s famous downtown area. It is an essential place for visitors to feel connected to nature in the city’s artificial environment. Last year, an internationally well-known Japanese musician, Ryuichi Sakamoto, passed away because of illness. Before his demise, he sent a letter to the Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike. In this letter, Sakamoto opposed the redevelopment of Gaien, which would result in felling many old trees. According to the plan, the number of trees in Gaien will increase; however, the plan will essentially rewrite the site’s history by replacing the old trees with young ones. Another issue is that many office, commercial, and hotel buildings have been planned in the area. This redevelopment may transform Gaien from a place where one can move away from the city’s hustle and bustle to a place of commercialism.

Another example is Harumi Flag, a large-scale residential and commercial development project located in the Harumi district of Chūō, Tokyo, Japan. This area was initially used as the house of athletes participating in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. After the games, it was repurposed by a property developer. However, in 2024, the report shows that more than 30% of the 2,690 condominium units in Harumi Flag do not have registered residents and are not occupied. The large number of vacancies in the popular Harumi Flag Complex is probably caused by many units being

purchased for investment purposes, leading to an oversupply of units available for rent or resale.

Unlike preservation and restoration, redevelopment is primarily intended to pass on the city to the next generation while actively transforming its appearance. This often drastically changes urban landscapes and people's lives. Moreover, as redevelopment frequently begins with commercial motives, such efforts are usually unsustainable. This paper explores how we can develop an ideal urban redevelopment project, from an aesthetic perspective. According to Sanna Lehtinen, urban aesthetics entail two approaches: the "macro perspective," relying on large-scale urban planning ideas, and the "micro perspective," focusing on the everyday aesthetic experiences of inhabitants based on environmental aesthetics and everyday aesthetics.¹ The macro perspective primarily examines the aesthetic aspects of an entire city's image based on the visual characteristics of urban landscapes. It pertains to individuals involved in large-scale urban planning and the construction of iconic buildings. Conversely, the micro perspective considers the everyday aesthetic experiences of urban residents. Although incorporating the micro perspective into macro urban planning endeavors can be challenging, it will enhance residents' quality of life.

When considering ideal urban redevelopment, I will first examine Yuriko Saito's "aesthetics of care."² In her book, Saito addresses "the structural similarities between care ethics and aesthetic experience."³ Care ethics was proposed within the context of feminism as an alternative belief that weaves our actions through the mesh of individual situations and relationships rather than emphasizing principles. Advocated by Nel Noddings and referenced by Saito, care ethics extend beyond human relations to include care for non-human entities, particularly animals and plants. In her work on the aesthetics of care, Saito expands the realm of care more broadly and discusses caring for the material world. Among these, Saito's discussion on repair is particularly relevant when considering urban redevelopment.

Initially, I present the notion of city and redevelopment in this paper (Section 1). After that, I examine two concepts of repair within Saito's aesthetics of care (Section 2) and, then, summarize the similarities between repair and redevelopment (Section 3). However, differences exist between the two activities. I will highlight that interaction and self-care are two significant concepts used to capture

these distinctions (Section 4). Following these discussions, I will offer “nested care” as an ideal for aesthetically positive urban redevelopment (Section 5).

1. CITY AND REDEVELOPMENT

Before beginning the discussion, I would like to define the key terms used in this paper. Since this paper addresses the issue of urban redevelopment, it does not aim to present arguments applicable to all cities. While a city is generally considered an economic hub where a large population gathers, the specific population size or economic scale required to be classified as a city varies depending on national contexts and other factors. Additionally, whether a city is newly emerging or historically established can influence its atmosphere, even if it has a similar population and economic scale. This paper focuses on cities that have already reached a certain level of development and, therefore, possess a defined structure. The term “structure” here refers to the presence of city blocks and buildings that give the city its physical outline. Through this structure, a city acquires its identity as that particular city.

The issue of scale is not a concern; however, since Tokyo is the primary case study in this paper, one might automatically assume that the discussion applies only to cities with a large population and economic scale. However, the focus is not on Tokyo as a whole (if such a definition were even possible) but rather on individual areas within Tokyo. Therefore, I expect that the framework presented here will be applicable, to some extent, to cities of varying scales.

However, it is important to consider the historical context when analyzing Tokyo as a case study, especially in relation to the meaning of the term “redevelopment.” As is well known, due to issues related to construction techniques, natural disasters such as earthquakes, and the damage caused by World War II, Tokyo’s buildings and city blocks have undergone significant changes compared to those in Europe. It has been 100 years since the Great Kanto Earthquake and 80 years since the end of World War II, yet even after these events, Tokyo has changed its appearance frequently. In a sense, Tokyo has been subjected to constant development, making it difficult to distinguish between mere “development” and “redevelopment.”

Does this mean that the discussion in this paper applies only to the unique case of Tokyo and that focusing on redevelopment in Tokyo is misplaced? I do not believe so. It is true that, unlike many

European cities, Tokyo does not frequently preserve the same buildings over long periods. Therefore, it is relatively challenging in Tokyo to identify architectural ensembles that function as sites of collective memory in the way Aldo Rossi conceptualized *fatti urbani*.⁴ Even if the physical form of the buildings that make up Tokyo changes over time, people can still talk about the “identity of Tokyo,” just as they can for any other city. The Japanese intellectual historian Jun Tanaka argues that the painter Settai Komura’s (1887-1940) perspective on Tokyo, which the Great Kantō Earthquake radically transformed, aligns with what Rossi calls the “eye of the archaeologist.” The “eye of the archaeologist” refers to a viewpoint that sees past urban landscapes within the present city. Komura describes the old buildings as being “buried” by the new stone structures. In other words, as Tanaka points out, for Komura, the former city has not disappeared but is instead preserved within the new one.⁵

In this way, even if the physical appearance of a city changes, we tend to regard the city as a continuous entity that has existed across different eras. This is not a matter of whether the city actually exists continuously as a fact. Rather, it is a matter of recognition: humans attempt to interpret the history of a city because they need the continuity of its existence. As Christian Norberg-Shulz points out “we understand that human identity is to a high extent a function of places and things” and “human identity presupposes the identity of place.”⁶ This point is crucial when considering urban redevelopment. Indeed, a city does not maintain the same form forever. Any city undergoes physical transformations over time. Such changes often influence our monotonous daily lives and can even bring us enjoyment. However, despite these changes, people still need assurance that the city will remain the same.

Ideally, redevelopment must preserve the identity of the city. This is what distinguishes redevelopment from mere development. Redevelopment is a means to address the new challenges faced by an already inhabited city. However, if it compromises the historicity and identity of the city, residents are likely to resist. In other words, truly successful redevelopment is one that transforms the city’s landscape with new buildings while still preserving its identity in some form. As I will illustrate below, Yuriko Saito’s aesthetics of care, particularly her discussion on repairing, provides valuable insight into what constitutes an ideal form of redevelopment that preserves a city’s identity. Repairing is an act of maintaining an object’s identity through human intervention. In the next section, I

will first examine the details of Saito's theory of repair. Then, in the following section, I will explore its similarities and differences with urban redevelopment.

To anticipate the discussion, the main argument of this paper is as follows: Repairing ordinary objects does not necessarily restore them merely to their pre-damaged or pre-deteriorated state (Saito refers to this type of repair as *visible repair*). In such cases, repair is not only about maintaining the physical existence of an object but also about caring for its temporality or narrative. This approach to repair can be applied to urban redevelopment as well. We seek a model of redevelopment that can still preserve its diachronic identity even if the city's appearance changes.

2. REPAIRING IN AESTHETICS OF CARE

As with the well-known 19th-century renewal of Paris led by Georges-Eugène Haussmann, there are cases of urban development that involve transforming most foundations of a city. In such cases, cities are occasionally compared to works of art. However, in the contemporary world, urban redevelopment is less about constructing an environment from the ground-up, and more about adding to and modifying established cities. It differs from the creation of art. Therefore, a different theory is required to explain the aesthetic aspects of urban redevelopment.

It may be useful to refer to the concept of repair in Yuriko Saito's aesthetics of care. One might think that repairing and urban redevelopment are different activities, not only in terms of scale but also of purpose; while repairing aims to recover the original states of things, new construction occurs in cities under the name of urban redevelopment. However, after understanding Saito's distinction between "visible repair" and "invisible repair," we can find an entry point into the discussion of the aesthetic experience of urban redevelopment.

Before scrutinizing her argument for repairing, we should first examine the idea of the aesthetics of care. More specifically, I focus on the perception of time in Saito's argument because it is one of the most important factors in creating better urban redevelopment. Two perspectives on time in her aesthetics of care are presented below.

The first concerns the history of the cared objects. Care ethics in which Saito finds some aesthetic elements "requires attending to the particularities of the other person and the situation and tailoring our

response accordingly.”⁷ To do so, we need to have “a holistic grasp” of someone we would like to care for and “having some understanding of her life story” is a part of the caring process. Saito refers to Martin Buber’s notion of the I-You and I-it relationships. Based on the I-it relationship, we treat people like objects; we consider them useful. By contrast, when we consider the I-You relationship with others, we start to see their wholeness and respect their particularity. Saito states that the I-You relationship can be applied to ordinary things. She further claims that when we care about something old, applying the I-You relationship to it means focusing on its temporality.

[M]y relationship with an object is situated both in its past and in its ongoing story. I may not have shared its history because I did not take part in its making, or I have not lived with it in the past, although I can take part in its past through imaginative engagement. Now that it is in my possession, I expect to share my life with it by going through various stages of vicissitude together through use, breakage, and repair, and at some point I may delegate its future life to my family, friend, or stranger, unless I put it to rest. Thus, my care relationship with this particular object is both past- and future-oriented, as well as present-engaged.⁸

The method of caring for old objects is discussed here. Such items often “live” longer than the person caring for them, or they may be inherited after being used by others. We imaginatively engage with the “story” that extends from their past into the present, even if it is a past we do not share. Furthermore, we consider the role of connecting this story to the future. Even if I will no longer be present, the object’s story will continue. Thus, although the act of caring for an object is currently being performed in the present moment, it is executed with a view of both the past and the future. In this sense, it includes a perspective on the future, raising the question of responsibility toward future generations. This is a particularly important perspective when considering cities.⁹

The second point related to time in the aesthetics of care is that acts of care inherently involve dedicated time. Saito argues “the temporal dimension of care ethics and aesthetic experience” as follows:

The care relationship needs to be nurtured and developed through the interaction of the parties involved, even if the roles

of carer and the cared for are immediately given, as in a parent and a child or a teacher and a student. As such, it takes time[...] Similarly, aesthetic experience takes time; it is not a kneejerk reaction. We may be struck by the beauty of an object but that marks a starting point of the development of an experience that goes through various stages[...] Experience by its own nature unfolds in time through our interaction with the world.¹⁰

The act of care is not possible without the caregiver taking time to understand the receiver. Care is not automatically based on principles, but on reciprocal collaboration in the situation. Similarly, aesthetic experiences are time-consuming.¹¹ Thus, aesthetic experience is essentially “careful” if it succeeds. Aesthetic experiences cannot end immediately. These persist and develop over time. In this process, we not only appreciate the object but also obtain pleasure from the developing experience.

Now we start examining the argument for repairing in Saito’s aesthetics of care. Generally, in the process of repair, we accept antiquity and damage to objects and fix them, avoiding discarding and acquiring something entirely new. Thus, understanding and continuing the story of objects is at the core of the act of repair. Accordingly, repairing is a form of care.

However, according to Saito, there are two forms of repair, each with a completely different meaning in the aesthetics of care. She calls the first form “invisible repair.” It “privileges the unblemished and undamaged appearance.”¹² For example, “we use same-colored thread and fabric to patch up a rip and a yarn to darn socks.”¹³ Saito sees a normal aesthetic preference for this type of repair.

There is an implicit aesthetic judgment that the original appearance of an object is superior to its later changed appearance, which is almost always characterized negatively as damage, dilapidation, defect, or degradation.¹⁴

However, in the process of implicit repair, we often misunderstand the nature of objects: they are not static, but “ever-changing active matters.”¹⁵ Saito indicates that the existence of all materials is in the process of changing.¹⁶ In this sense, taking care of something is similar to gardening. Gardening is an unfinished act because plants grow. We should consider the “in-time-ness” of objects, in the words of Cameron Tonkwise.¹⁷

“Visible repair” can be a challenge to the paradigm of invisible repair. She cites the Japanese repair practice called kintsugi (gold joinery) as one of its examples. Kintsugi is a traditional Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending areas of breakage with lacquer mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum.

The aesthetic paradigm of visible repair [...] shuns uniformity and accentuates the individuality of a particular object and its singular history by presenting a tangible record of repair, as well as the care and affection for the object. The owner, the user, or the repairer cared enough about the object to take the time and effort to give it a renewed life. For the spectator, the visible mark of repair stimulates the imagination to speculate on its unique (hi)story and its prior condition, the cause of breakage, and its future life, while at the same time encouraging the appreciation of the skill and care involved in the repair.¹⁸

Visible repair is different from invisible repair because it accepts the changeable nature of this world and cares about the stories of the objects. In other words, in the case of *visible repair*, we do not aim to restore the object to its original state. Instead, we acknowledge that it has once been damaged and seek to reveal its history, including that event. It is also important that, in the case of visible repair, the aspect of “doing things by ourselves” comes to the forefront. It requires us to respect and respond to the singularity of the objects, not by following the instructions in a manual, but by a combination of embodied knowledge and techniques.¹⁹ As Saito says, visible repair can be an aesthetic engagement because the whole process is led by affection for the objects: “[...] such active and care-full engagement with the object cannot but nurture one’s affection for the object, rendering it not only an object of aesthetic appreciation but also a cherished object destined for longevity.”²⁰

In brief, repair is more “careful” in the case of visible repair. Visible repair reflects the two features of time-in-care more directly than invisible repair; it requires us to respect the story of objects and spend time on them. Considering the current trend which often disregards the history of the place and follows a stereotypical pattern of high-rise building construction, visible repair offers thought-provoking insights into a more desirable approach to urban redevelopment. The next section examines the similarities between repairing ordinary small objects and urban redevelopment.

3. SIMILARITIES BETWEEN REPAIRING AND URBAN REDEVELOPMENT

What insights can be drawn from the above discussions on repair practices to inform our understanding about urban redevelopment? First, we need to consider the story of the objects for careful repair. Although it does not use care as a keyword, a similar concept can be found in the field of environmental aesthetics. Emily Brady has offered the principle of “aesthetic integrity” for environmental conservation.

This principle provides a guide for deciding how to protect the aesthetic character of a landscape. It treats aesthetic features as parts of an integrated whole which constitute the aesthetic character of an environment. It requires that we be true to that character, which means maintaining its soundness while being faithful to its narrative.²¹

Although Brady discusses the protection of landscapes, this principle is also useful for urban redevelopment. During the process of urban redevelopment, we intervene and change landscapes, but it is important to preserve them. Valuing the context of a place is regarded as a basic element in the realm of city planning. For example, Naoto Nakazima, a Japanese urbanist, writes that “urban design is the act of respecting existing contexts while planning interventions for the future [and] weaving them together to create new contexts.”²²

However, this principle has often been ignored. Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa highlights that modern cities often attempt to conceal the passage of time in their pursuit of being “finished products.” Pallasmaa observes that natural materials such as stone, brick, and wood reflect the passage of time experienced by buildings, noting that “all matter exists in the continuum of time; the patina of wear adds the enriching experience of time to the materials of construction. But the machine-made materials of today—scaleless sheets of glass, enameled metals and synthetic plastics—tend to present their unyielding surfaces to the eye without conveying their material essence or age.”²³

Disregarding the past in an urban setting is not limited to architecture. For example, in the recent controversial redevelopment of the Jingu Gaien area in Tokyo, it was argued that felling old trees and planting new ones would increase the total number of trees. However,

this reflects a troubling phenomenon in which urban nature is being replaced with something brand new, devoid of history or connections to the past.

In such circumstances, it seems crucial to emphasize the importance of adopting an attitude toward urban redevelopment that attentively listens to the stories of the city grounded in the aesthetics of care. Therefore, we should focus on visible repair methods. During urban redevelopment, historical traces of a place are occasionally erased. However, by adopting this approach, we risk losing the history of the places built by our ancestors. This significantly alters the urban landscape, diminishes the residents' sense of connection and familiarity with a place, and affects their quality of life. Therefore, we must focus on the same practices in urban redevelopment as those in the repair of objects. We need to intervene while respecting the stories embedded in objects—in other words, their temporal essences.

However, cities clearly and significantly differ from smaller objects. First, they are vast in scale (depending on the size of the city and the extent of the redevelopment). Furthermore, unlike ordinary objects, which are “objects” of repair, cities are the environments in which we live. Unlike a broken vessel, which can be clearly identified as the object, with ourselves as the agents of repair, such a simple subject-object relationship is difficult to apply to cities. This complexity highlights the unique challenges inherent in urban redevelopment.

4 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CITIES

In this section, we explore the meaning of care in urban redevelopment by examining the unique characteristics of cities in contrast to ordinary objects. Two significant characteristics are highlighted here: the reinforcement of interaction with other entities and care for cities as a form of self-care. Let us consider these individually.

4.1 INTERACTION

Considering the first characteristic, the reinforcement of interactions with other entities must begin by focusing on how cities are ever-changing. In her argument on repair, Saito emphasized the importance of accepting the changes inherent in objects. However, when considering cities, the scale of change far exceeds the objects typically envisioned in Saito's argument. A city does not appear to be a stable entity that can simply be referred to as an “object.”

A considerable debate has risen over how to conceptualize the nature of a city, and it is often described in terms that surpass the notion of an “object.” Tony Fry offers us the perspective of a city as an “event”;²⁴

Cities have always existed between what they were and what they are becoming. By degree this means they are situated in the betweenness of construction and destruction, care and neglect, preservation and transformation, futuring and defuturing.²⁵

Moreover, Arata Isozaki, a Japanese architect, refers to disorderly expanded cities like Tokyo and Los Angeles as “invisible cities.”²⁶ Based on a bird’s-eye view, these cities do not have grid structures like Paris and New York. The “invisibility” of invisible cities has two meanings. First, it is difficult to grasp the entire area from a bird’s-eye view. Second, owing to the development of high-speed transportation and communication networks, cities themselves have become a process of movement and communication—everything in motion. Consequently, a stable image of cities cannot be formed in the minds of the people living there.

Only a few examples are mentioned here, but these concepts like “event” and “process” indicate that cities are constantly in motion. Buildings, roads, trees along streets, and humans are the elements of cities that continue to change. Regardless of intentional interventions like urban redevelopment, cities have changed in nature. Moreover, unlike ordinary small objects, a city never remains still, even for a moment.

In this regard, how can care for a constantly changing city be understood? We should note that we are not the only agents who promote change in cities. These changes are induced by interactions between humans and other entities. In addition, cities are shaped by natural forces, such as the weather, fauna, and flora. Moreover, humans are not monolithic entities. Various groups, from governments and developers to local individuals, play distinct roles in the transformation of cities. Kevin Lynch places the role of agencies responsible for city planning, such as developers, as people who seek to initiate and regulate.

Instances of environmental transformation are common. On the one hand, people must endure them, and we see their efforts to preserve, create, or destroy the past, to make sense out of a rapid

transition, or to build a secure sense of the future. On the other hand, the initiators and regulators of change—the developers, princes, planners, entrepreneurs, housebuilders, managers, public officials—struggle with these transformations in another way, straining to comprehend and control them.²⁷

Occasionally, in response to “natural” changes in cities, we resist and attempt to preserve historic urban landscapes. However, in other cases, we seek to “initiate” and “regulate” changes that would voluntarily occur if left alone. Redevelopment can be seen as part of the latter approach. Ideally, those driving redevelopment play a leadership role as just one of the many factors contributing to change. Therefore, as suggested by Lynch’s perspective, urban redevelopment cannot be accomplished solely by developers. It can also be a shared endeavor involving other individuals or non-human agents.

Urban redevelopment can be described as highly collaborative. It is one form of transformation that cities undergo. In most cases, cities have been exposed to unexpected changes; urban redevelopment is a response to these changes. However, because urban redevelopment is executed through deliberate planning, unlike the sudden destruction caused by disasters, it represents an action capable of demonstrating care for the city. In this context, redevelopment differs from repair because it requires careful consideration of the potential changes that other actors may bring to the area in the future.

In Section 1, I stated that we require a city’s identity to be established as a foundation for our own identity. However, by introducing the perspective of interaction, it becomes clear that a city’s identity is important not only to us but also to other entities, particularly living organisms. If humans excessively pursue their interests and drastically alter the form of a city, it will also impact the plants and animals that share the same urban space. We must intervene in cities while remembering that, even in our living environments, we coexist with nature.

Urban redevelopment is a collaborative and interactive act; thus, finding a way in which it can be used as a form of care is important. Saito mentions John Dewey’s argument regarding aesthetic experience. He observes that aesthetic experience is not passive but is constituted by “doing” and “undergoing.” In other words, an aesthetic experience is an interactive act with objects. Furthermore, interaction is an important aspect of the act of care, which is the reason

Saito claims that there are significant similarities between care ethics and aesthetic experiences. If we are aware of the interactive aspects of urban redevelopment, we may be able to perform aesthetic and careful redevelopment.

4.2 SELF-CARE

The second characteristic of urban redevelopment, compared to repair, is that it has an aspect of self-care.²⁸ In most cases, we live in cities that are already developed.²⁹ The existence of a city precedes that of each person in terms of time. Cities existed long before any of us living today were born and our birth and survival are intertwined with their condition. Therefore, we cannot rely on a simple framework that presupposes that cities are the care “takers,” and that we (and other entities) are the care “givers.” Lisa Giombini claims that care could be a core idea in the conservation of historical heritage. Giombini argues that we rely on those heritage sites that we care for because, as human beings, we live in an interdependent relationship with other entities, including heritage sites.³⁰ This is also true for cities. In this way, the boundary between the carer and the cared becomes ambiguous when we discuss the care of something on a large scale.

The complexity of care structures embedded in cities is further illustrated, given that they serve as conditions for survival. If a city provides the essential elements for people to live in a particular place, then caring for that city is not merely an external act of caring but can also be viewed as an act of self-caring.³¹ As the urban environment deteriorates, it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain life over the long term. This is what we perceive in our bodies. In a cityscape filled with buildings that disregard the human scale and fail to provide relief from summer heat, the human body cries in distress. As Juhani Pallasmaa states, “I experience myself in the city, and the city exists through my embodied experience. The city and my body supplement and define each other. I dwell in the city and the city dwells in me.”³² When we consider that not only do we inhabit the city, but the city also inhabits us, it becomes evident that we can merge with the city at the human level. An urban environment that actively facilitates such experiences is not only well cared for by us but also cares for us.

This can be concluded based on the discussion presented in this section. If urban redevelopment can be a form of interaction and self-care, all city dwellers should have the right to participate in the

act because they are agents woven into the interaction and have cities as their survival conditions. Saito discusses “the right to repair,” mentioning the activism in US and the Netherlands to let people repair their own possessions.³³ Also, in the case of cities, as seen in this section, we must assert our rights. We can enrich our aesthetic connection with the city by participating in its care, rather than leaving everything to developers or the government.

5. NESTED CARE

To summarize the discussion thus far, from the perspective of the aesthetics of care, it is desirable for urban redevelopment to meet the following conditions. As confirmed in Section 2, urban redevelopment should consider the stories of the cities. We should not disregard the past and be responsible for passing stories to the future generation. Taking care of cities temporarily, following the principle of aesthetic integrity, is already recognized as a necessary condition in practice. However, this is sometimes neglected; therefore, we should pay attention to it.

If focusing on the story of the city is the only requirement for urban redevelopment from the perspective of aesthetics of care, it might be possible, in principle, for major authorities such as governments and developers to conduct redevelopment while sufficiently addressing this condition. However, as discussed in Section 3, unlike caring for ordinary objects, caring for a city involves interactions with various elements and serves as a form of self-care that sustains the foundation of our existence. Inherently, we possess the right to take responsibility for our lives. Therefore, in an ideal redevelopment based on the aesthetics of care, it is essential to incorporate mechanisms that enable urban residents to actively practice caring for their cities.

To articulate this, I introduce the concept of “nested care.” Nested care refers to a state in which multiple agents are interconnected through acts of care. First, the subjects leading the redevelopment, such as developers and governments, care for the city, and then, the residents of the redeveloped city continue to care for it. Redevelopment does not end with the construction of an iconic building to attract people’s attention. Once redevelopment is formally “completed,” people continue to live on-site. The success or failure of a redevelopment project is determined by whether the people are satisfied with their daily lives.

Considering the ideal of nested care, the significance of failures and concerns surrounding redevelopment in Tokyo become clear, as discussed at the outset. In the case of Jingu Gaien, people seek the park as a place of respite from their daily lives; they do not require another commercial facility because Tokyo already has an overabundance. We desire to experience a connection with nature as a companion in shaping the city and nurturing our minds and bodies through contact. In other words, the current Jingu Gaien provides people with aesthetic experiences that are rooted in care, and further redevelopment is unnecessary.

In the case of Harumi Flag, redevelopment has resulted in condominiums becoming instruments of financial speculation; fewer residents than anticipated have moved in. Consequently, revitalizing the neighborhood, or cultivating a sense of care for the community has not occurred. This suggests, at least partially, a failure to foster agents of care in the redeveloped urban environment, making it far removed from the realization of nested care.

Realizing nested care is challenging, especially in megalopolises such as Tokyo. Cities have various scales and functions. However, as Tokyo faces population decline and potential shrinking in the future, it is necessary to reconsider the current urban redevelopment approach, which often prioritizes a cycle of “scrap and build” as an end. Furthermore, we can identify, albeit in limited numbers, examples of redevelopment in Tokyo that have successfully embodied the principles of nested care. In this context, I would like to discuss the following example.

WATERRAS is a complex of offices, residences, commercial facilities, halls, galleries, and student apartments in Kanda-awazi, Tokyo; it is a 10-minute ride by train from Tokyo Station. In this area, land prices soared at the end of the 20th century owing to a real estate bubble, causing a sharp decline in the local population. Yasuda Real Estate, the company leading the redevelopment project, organized a committee to plan the future of the neighborhood. Through discussions, they developed a vision for transforming the area into a student-friendly community. Although the area comprises many universities, high land prices have made it unaffordable for students, and the resident population has been aging. To address this issue, the redevelopment project included the construction of high-rise buildings that incorporated student apartments. Students can live in these buildings while paying an affordable rent; in return, they are

required to participate in local activities such as festivals and emergency drills. This approach aims to preserve the traditions of the area for future generations. The initiative serves as a potential model for urban redevelopment projects by involving not only the original residents, but also incoming students.

WATTERAS embodies the concept of nested care. As a pioneer in urban redevelopment, the company did not simply construct high-rise buildings but utilized them as tools to bridge and preserve local traditions. People who have since settled in the area actively care for the city as the foundation of their lives while recognizing their interconnectedness with various individuals and entities. Although this case still faces numerous challenges to involve people in more various sorts of community activities, there is much to learn from its approach.³⁴

Finally, I will conclude this section by examining what kind of urban design is required for nested care. In other words, what type of redevelopment should we pursue at the material level? For example, in the case of WATERASS, the redevelopment project ultimately involved the construction of a 41-story and a 15-story building. The appearance of these buildings does not go beyond the standard high-rise structures commonly seen in contemporary Tokyo. From the perspective of material form, at first glance, WATERASS appears to be a typical example of redevelopment. However, as mentioned earlier, WATERASS is characterized by its unique approach to community management, which plays a crucial role in guiding residents' behavior. In other words, in the case of WATERASS, it is not the material form but rather the method of community management that preserves the continuity of their behavioral patterns from past eras. So, does this mean that the material design of a city does not need to be considered at all in the practice of nested care?

That is not the case. What is noteworthy in the WATERASS is not the two landmark high-rise buildings but how the project incorporates the original topography. Rather than leveling the area's original terraced topography, WATERASS intentionally incorporates a terraced park within its site. When visiting the area, one can physically experience the elevation differences in the terrain, as the design allows the natural topography to be felt.

This suggests that WATERASS integrates the fundamental characteristic of urban redevelopment discussed in the previous section—

namely, interaction with non-human elements. At the most basic level of topography, WATERRAS preserves the materiality of the city. This materiality is likely something that people can physically experience through local events such as festivals.

People perceive the preservation of a city's materiality through their daily activities. Through this, they come to recognize the importance of caring for their own lives by caring for the city's identity. In this sense, *nested care* can be understood as a process in which the materiality of a city affords and shapes people's behaviors.

CONCLUSION

This study presents an ideal model for urban redevelopment based on the aesthetics of care. In redevelopment, it is not sufficient to merely understand and preserve the narratives embedded in the land; it is also essential to recognize the following details. First, cities are in a state of constant change driven by various agents. Second, urban care can be considered a form of self-care. Based on these considerations, I argue that urban redevelopment should aim for the realization of "nested care." Through *nested care*, we can preserve the identity of the city and, in doing so, secure the foundation of our own identity as well.

The concept of aesthetics is often understood as pertaining only to discussions of visual beauty in urban landscapes. However, aesthetics is fundamentally related to a more essential perspective of how we live within cities. Mateusz Salwa even claims that urban studies is "implicit aesthetics."³⁵ Examining urban redevelopment through the lens of the aesthetics of care offers a path to enrich our understanding of the relationship between aesthetic approaches and cities.

- 1 Sanna Lehtinen, "Editorial Introduction to the Special Volume on Urban Aesthetics," *Contemporary Aesthetics*, Special Vol. 8 (2020): Article 1.
- 2 Yuriko Saito, *Aesthetics of Care: Practice in Everyday Life* (Bloomsbury, 2022).
- 3 Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 46.
- 4 Aldo Rossi, *L'architettura della Città* (Marsilio, 1970).
- 5 Jun Tanaka, *Toshi-no-shigaku: Basho-no-kioku-to-choukou* (*The Poetics of Cities: The Memory and Symptom of Place*) (The University of Tokyo Press, 2007), 82-83.
- 6 Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture* (Rizzoli, 1980), 21-22.
- 7 Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 29.
- 8 Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 142-143.
- 9 Moreover, Saito points out that not only old things but also things having a relatively short history deserve our respect. She says: "Although it may be more natural for us to treat old objects with care and respect, I believe that it is particularly important today to include the object's narrative to include its future, as we are responsible for creating the right kind of narrative for the material world because of the future generation." See Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 143.
- 10 Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 45.
- 11 Saito mentions John Dewey regarding the time of aesthetic experience. Dewey argues that aesthetic experience unfolds sequentially over time, progressing through a beginning, middle, and end with a pervasive quality (See John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1934/1987).
- 12 Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 151.
- 13 Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 151.
- 14 Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 151.
- 15 Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 151.
- 16 Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 152.
- 17 Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 152.
- 18 Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 155.
- 19 Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 158.
- 20 Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 158.
- 21 Emily Brady, *Aesthetics of the Natural Environment* (The University of Alabama Press, 2003), 243-244.
- 22 Naoto Nakazima et al., *Toshi-Keikakugaku: Henka-ni-Taio-suru-Planning* (*City Planning: Planning Dealing with the Changes*) (Gakugei Publishing, 2018), 98.
- 23 Juhani Palasmaa, *The Eyes of Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (John Wiley & Sons. Ltd, 2005), 31-32.
- 24 Tony Fry refers to "metabolism," the urban planning concept introduced in mid-20th-century Japan. This approach was based on the premise that the form of a city is constantly changing, and it sought to build units that could be expanded or modified. How we engage with the changes in cities shapes the development of different urban planning ideologies.
- 25 Tony Fry, "Urban Time and the City as Event," in *Philosophy and the City: Interdisciplinary and Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. Keith Jacobs and Jeff Malpas (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 61.
- 26 Arata Isozaki, *Kigo-no-Umi-ni-Ukabu*-(Shima): *Mienai-Toshi* (*The Island Floating in the Sea of Symbols: Invisible City*) (Iwanami Shoten, 2013), 167-187.
- 27 Kevin Lynch, *What Time Is This Place?* (The MIT Press Cambridge, 1972), 3.
- 28 Saito also references the concept of self-care. However, her discussion does not directly overlap with mine here. She argues that the caregiver must first care for themselves as a prerequisite for finding joy in caring for others (Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 69-75).
- 29 This paper does not discuss cities that are truly built from scratch, such as the prototypical example of "new towns." New towns are suburban residential developments constructed to address urban overcrowding; they feature not only housing but also essential infrastructure like schools and commercial facilities. New towns are cities created abruptly at a specific point in history. In this sense, while they certainly exist as physical spaces, they lack the temporality that emerges from the accumulation of lived histories.
- 30 Lisa Giombini, "Care in Conservation Ethics," in *Applying Aesthetics to Everyday Life: Methodologies, History and New Directions*, ed. Lisa Giombini and Adrián Kvokačka (Bloomsbury, 2023), 186.
- 31 In this sense, care can be an act that preserves the survival conditions not only for those of us living in the present but also for future generations. However, I will not delve further into this topic here. For more details, see Sanna Lehtinen, "Buildings as Objects of Care in the Urban Environment," in *Aesthetics in Dialogue: Applying Philosophy of Art in a Global World*, ed. Zoltán Somhegyi and Max Rynänen (Peter Lang, 2020), 223-236.
- 32 Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of Skin*, 40.
- 33 Saito, *Aesthetics of Care*, 147.
- 34 Aya Hagishita, "Chiiki-ni-nesashita Saikaihatu-to-gakuseisankagata-no-area-management-katsudo: Kanda-awazi-cho-wo-jirei-ni" (The Redevelopment Rooted in a Local Community and the Area Management with Students Participation : A Case Study of Kanda-Awajicho, Tokyo), *Ochanomizu-Chiri* 60 (2021): 31-40.
- 35 Mateusz Salwa, "Aesthetics and Urban Studies," in *Aesthetic Theory across the Disciplines*, ed. Max Rynänen and Zoltán Somhegyi (Rowman and Littlefield, 2023), 57.