

## Techne and Poiesis of Urban Life-Forms

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### Abstract

Technology extends human perception and it intervenes in relations to the environment. Life in cities is particularly affected by newest technological developments, and city dwellers are most shielded and disconnected from the natural world by these very same technologies. The term technology stems from the Greek *techne*, and it refers to the process of manipulation and adaptation of the world. However, by intervening in everyday life and modifying relations to the environment, technology also produces new forms of life, which did not exist before, and is therefore also poetic in the sense of the Greek term *poiesis*. This production is distinct from literary works because it opens worlds of possibilities that are not fictional. This makes a reflection on the poeticity of technology all the more urgent, because the large-scale advent of new technologies such as the industrialization or the digitization radically changes the modes of perception and relations to urban environments. Art works like literature absorb and articulate these changes and are therefore useful “strange tools” for putting on display (Noë 2015) the changing modes of experiencing cities. For instance, industrialization, explosive urban growth and the rapid modernization of cities overwhelmed the senses. In its very form and rhythm, modernist literature performs the fragmented and brisk-paced experience of modernity. The digital age ostensibly promises intelligibility and order, for digital technologies can survey and manage vast amounts of information. Smart cities are designed for this purpose and for offering tailored solutions to the inhabitants’ individual needs. However, data analytics cannot capture the phenomenological quality of *lived* experience. Art works can, and contemporary literary works put on display urban life-forms characterized by disembodiment and by exhaustive information on any subject that on its own does not translate into any sense of meaning or belonging.