

Scars, Cars, and Bodies without Organs: Techno-colonialism in J.G. Ballard's *Crash*

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Showcasing bodies mangled in car crashes, numerous accounts of sexual intercourse in different vehicles, and characters with a strange attraction to technology, J.G. Ballard's *Crash* stands on the margins of what one might consider a valuable text. In the novel a mysterious 'T.V. scientist,' Vaughn, leads a group of car-crash fetishists who follow car accidents and mythologize their interaction with the vast expanse of freeway humankind has created. Though the attraction to car accidents seems self-destructive, for Ballard's characters it is a way of *life* in a very visceral sense. The characters find themselves in a world almost parallel to our own, but a world with a deep and sexual appreciation for the car culture generations of automobiles have established. In this paper I use Ballard's novel *Crash* as an example to show how, what I will call, minor communities surrounding particular technologies work to strip the body of previous functions and replace them with others. I argue that in this exchange technology acts as a surreptitious colonial force, working through coercion and our willing participation in order to make a place for itself in society – and that Ballard's novel provides a valuable exploration of these communities that release this potential of technology.

The proliferation of technology combined with a synthesis between the artificial and the organic in Ballard's novel, *Crash*, creates an unpredictable environment where the epiphenomenon is no longer phenomenal. Prompted by human interaction, discrete elements begin to interact and enter into experimental relations which have never seen classification – such as vehicles and parts of the human body fusing psychophysically for the characters of Ballard's novel. One can never tell what the result of new amalgamations will be. In issue #55 of *Science Fiction Studies* Jean Baudrillard and a slew of other writers responding to him, including N. Katherine Hayles and Vivian Sobchak, discuss the emerging psychologies that present themselves in Ballard's novel. The response to Baudrillard's essay on Ballard's *Crash* is surprisingly uniform: Baudrillard makes the mistake of suggesting that the body is a playground of possibilities and, in a sense, does not matter. Sobchak's response, detailing her battle with cancer, provides a powerful example: "The man is really dangerous. Indeed, as I sit here with a throbbing, vivid "inscription" on my left distal thigh, I might wish Baudrillard a car crash or two" [10]. Since this debate an even greater number of authors have taken up this connection between Ballard and Baudrillard – most of them examining the issue in light of alternative theories such as Brian Baker's "The Resurrection of Desire: J.G. Ballard's *Crash* as a Transgressive Text," [1] which examines *Crash* in terms of Georges Bataille's writing on taboo; and Darrell Varga's "The Deleuzean Experience of Cronenberg's *Crash* and Wender's *The End of Violence*, [11] which looks at *Crash* in terms of the Body without Organs and lines of flight. These new conversations differ from those which took place in *Science Fiction Studies* in the sense that they are no longer concerned with the goal of moralizing Ballard's novel or critiquing Baudrillard's non-moral stance. And while the critiques of Baudrillard shadow any further discussion of the connection between Ballard and Baudrillard, we must briefly suspend the critiques in order to consider further the significance of Baudrillard's writing.

Writing of Ballard's *Crash*, Jean Baudrillard proposes a mode of production vastly different from traditional

assembly when he notes that in Ballard's novel:

All is inverted. Here it is the Accident which gives life its very form; it is the Accident, the irrational, which is the sex of life. And the automobile itself—this magnetized sphere which ends up creating an entire universe of tunnels, expressways, overpasses, on and off ramps by treating its mobile cockpit as a universal prototype—is only an immense metaphor of the same. [3]

For Baudrillard, the instantiation of the Accident in Ballard's novel acts as a metaphor for the creation of possibilities. The Accident becomes "a strategic reorganization of life beyond the perspective of death," [3] which engenders unthinkable possibilities from a humanist perspective because of the way agency is dispersed among assemblages and given over to their desire. Baudrillard repeatedly speaks of a 'going beyond' the fundamental human concern with death, not in the sense of transcendence, but in terms of forgetting death's significance. Death is no longer a risk or fear, but an element that the body enters into relationship with—in fact, it is important to note, Baudrillard repeatedly characterizes these events in terms of life. The Accident "gives life to its very form," it is "the sex of life." Elena Lamberti argues that this new *environment* results in "psychopathologies that are perceived as more or less conscious effects of an environment in progress," and

"As a consequence, individuals tend to modify their way of being, their way of perceiving themselves, their inner and outer selves, their bodies and their minds, and end by reconfiguring both the environment (if by environment we mean the dynamic interaction between individuals, social factors, and technology) and their perception of that very environment" [9]

Lamberti astutely recognizes the double movement the characters of *Crash* are engaged in: their psychopathology results in the modified perspective Baudrillard highlights, but also results in a different way of organizing their relation to technology, which reflects their perspectives in a physical, social, and technological sense. This psychopathology, as Ballard establishes it, is not simply a synthesis between organic and artificial, flesh and steel, but a *relation* between synthesis and expression, psychopathology and orgasm, which acts as evidence of significant psychological, social, and functional change.

Baudrillard goes on further to explain that the bodies are not "puritanical, repressive," not the "'signifying machine' as Deleuze would say," but instead "glistening and seductive, or unpolished and innocent. Seductive because it has been stripped of meaning, a simple mirror of torn bodies," [3] echoing what Deleuze would call a 'plane of immanence.' Baudrillard makes an important point when he comments on the fact that the bodies in Ballard's novel do not represent signifying machines, but bodies stripped of meaning. Baudrillard doesn't emphasize enough, however, that the bodies of *Crash* are seductive because in the act of being stripped of meaning, they are no longer simple signifying machines: they do not 'make meaning' through signification, but *expression*. To borrow the arguments of Deleuze concerning the plane of immanence: at this point signification is no longer important, because transcendence, or recourse to a transcendental idea or image, is not an option – only the here-and-now *action* and *becoming* in the plane of immanence. I argue, beyond what Baudrillard briefly notes, that Ballard presents a psychopathology as an assemblage of 'expressing machines' rather than 'signifying machines.' This is more than what Bradley Butterfield calls an exploration "as a symbol among symbols" [4] in his article discussing the 'Ballard-Baudrillard connection.' If we look at Ballard's characters in terms of what they *express*, we see that the bodies physically perform an orgasm, and through this act they express far more than 'signs' could allow for; if there is signification, it comes *through* such expression. I believe that it is important, however, to look at

the significance of such expression, at what such expression can communicate to a reader. Exploring Ballard's psychopathology in relation to the orgasms it engenders allows the reader to begin to denaturalize Vaughn's community, which comes together to wreck bodies for pleasure. In the marks on their bodies, traces are left which lead to the languages that communicate the expression of these bodies. In these languages, we find that the bodies of *Crash* are not revolutionary epiphenomena, but a people that have been colonized by technology: a techno-colonized people whose bodies have been stripped of their previous operation and forced into a new set of functions. I will return to the colonial effects of technology later, after illustrating the particular methodology I take towards the relationship among the body, sexuality, and technology.

Accidental Desire or: How I learned to Love the Car

In order to examine the way technology affects 'traditional' – or the previously held – human functions, it is necessary to take into consideration what functions are being altered and under what circumstances these alterations are taking place, because functions are dictated by situations. Furthermore, I would argue that these function/situation combinations are infinite and complex. Much significance has been generated about these 'social combinations' by the work of discourse and genre theorists, including the importance of *ways of acting* in *certain* situations. With this in mind, one must seek out the function/situation combination where the effects under question are taking place to perform a clear analysis. In order to handle this complexity I take the tetralinguistic approach of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, which involves an analysis of the various languages at work within a given socio-historical context. Deleuze and Guattari work from the research of Henri Gobard who breaks the theory down into four languages that constitute informational exchange: the vernacular, vehicular, referential, and mythic. Giving these 'spatiotemporal categories,' Deleuze and Guattari assign the following meanings: the "vernacular language is *here*"; vehicular language is *everywhere*; referential language is *over there*; mythic language is *beyond*" [5]. I find these categories useful because they allow a wide range of applicability in regards to the 'languages' under consideration, whether they be linguistic, physical, or sexual. Each of these languages serves a purpose, creating a set of languages which make up the experience of an individual participating within a particular context. Deleuze and Guattari call this "A blur of languages, and not at all a system of languages" [5] that creates the experience of the individual. A *blur* works as a more appropriate term, because the interaction between these languages becomes quite complex, the distinct qualities of each blurring into another and influencing each other in the process. In fact, considering that there are a multiplicity of languages goes far in explaining how the *blur* becomes *naturalized* as a result of interpenetrations amongst the languages – the actual forces and results of the interpenetrations becoming difficult to trace. Invoking endless combinations, Deleuze and Guattari explain, "What can be said in one language cannot be said in another, and the totality of what can and can't be said varies necessarily with each language and with the connection between these languages" [5]. Even as the authors set up the complexity of this theory, however, they look at the specific languages that play a role in Kafka's texts: Kafka's vernacular is that of the "Jews who have come from a rural milieu [and speak] Czech," but he writes in "German... the vehicular language" [5]. As I mentioned earlier, I believe these languages may also be applied to many forms of informational exchange, including languages that are linguistic, sexual, and most importantly the techno-sexual languages of Ballard's text, where the characters take part in a system of body-signifiers. As Baudrillard notes: "the entire body becomes a sign which offers itself in the exchange of body language. Bodies and technology each diffracting through the other their own frantic symbols. Carnal abstractions and designs" [3]. Although Baudrillard uses the term 'sign' here, he does so to illustrate a field where the body is full of possibilities, not necessarily that the body becomes a *signifier*. As I argued earlier, in this *exchange* the 'body language' of *Crash* turns from a language of signification to *expression* in a performative transformation – into *ways of functioning* in the

world rather than a system of meaning-making. As a result, the characters constitute what Deleuze and Guattari would call a Body without Organs – their term for the rearrangement of one's senses and concepts – under the influence of technology.

Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the Body without Organs provides a useful metaphor for talking about the bodies of *Crash* in relation to technology because of the way it takes into account relationships between 'organs' and the inherent experimentality engendered in such reorganization of the senses. For Deleuze and Guattari, there is a dimension of the body that is virtual in addition to the physical dimension of the body where potential reconfigurations of the senses are realized. This 'virtual' body need not remain virtual, however, Deleuze and Guattari's purpose being to draw out these virtual dimensions into reality, to experiment and create rather than simply theorize. Using William Burroughs to describe one such virtual body, Deleuze and Guattari explain, "No organ is constant as regards either function or position...sex organs sprout anywhere" [6], which works as an appropriate analogy for the bodies of the characters in *Crash* where the instantiation of the car crash leads to eruptions of sexual desire under the gleam of technology. For example, James describes a scene where the emergent scars and deformities become sexually titillating, "I explored the scars on her thighs and arms, feeling for the wound areas under her left breast, as she in turn explored mine, deciphering together these codes of a sexuality made possible by our two car-crashes" [2]. But the interaction with the scars does not end at arousal; as James recounts again, they become sexual *organs* as well: "My first orgasm, within the deep wound on her thigh, jolted my semen along this channel, irrigating its corrugated ditch" [2]. In other words, the characters of Ballard's novel construct Bodies without Organs as they allow themselves to find pleasure in new relationships. Sexual pleasure is no longer found in the relation between penis and vagina, but penis and scar, or flesh and steel; in fact, in an interaction between James and Gabriella, James finds he requires more than a connection between his penis and her vagina, he needs the technology he now finds sexually stimulating as well [2]. James's new requirement for sexual pleasure marks a site where the body has been reterritorialized by Vaughn's community of fetishists. In terms of the Body without Organs: "pleasures, even the most artificial, are reterritorializations" [6], and thus require a reflection on what makes desire operate. Applying Deleuze and Guattari's theory/metaphor of the Body without Organs to the bodies of *Crash* is useful, because it highlights the reconstructive, or reterritorializing, aspect of the novel. The characters do not graft new sexual organs onto their bodies, but rather rewrite the map on which their pleasures flow – closer to the reorganized perspective of Lamberti's psychopathology than something of a cyborg nature. This metaphor demonstrates how redefinitions of sexuality are integral to the way one approaches and functions in the world, citing as a prime example James's inability to orgasm without the presence of technology in the form of Gabriella's scars.

Though the Bodies without Organs constructed in *Crash* seem to be radically new, it is important to consider from where these new identities come. Similar to Jacques Derrida's concept of the trace, a fitting example if we consider the reterritorializations in *Crash* as the modification of a particular language, each alteration marks an event or establishes a history. The Bodies without Organs constructed in *Crash* may seem revolutionary, but there remains, in the words of N. Katherine Hayles, a "social or psychological necessity for innovation to be tempered by replication" [8]. As with Hayles's anthropological discussion of the advance of technology, the bodies of *Crash* begin to develop skeuomorphs, a "design feature that is no longer functional in itself but that refers back to a feature that was functional at an earlier time" [8]. Using the example of intercourse with scars between James and Gabriella, the vagina has become a skeuomorph, an orifice that is no longer functional in itself, which shows the techno-colonization by Vaughn's micro-community of crash victims. While attempting to engage in non-deviant intercourse, "keeping up the small pretence of [a] nominal sexual link" James finds that he is only sexually stimulated once Gabriella moves her

attention to his scars: “As she began to explore this circular crevice with her lips I for the first time felt my penis thickening” [2]. Through the construction of this particular Body without Organs, previous sexual practices become outmoded as the new techno-sexuality of Vaughn’s community takes their place. It is important to keep in mind the skeuomorph, however, because it is evidence of the path technological progression has taken; it comprises a history. In Ballard’s ‘vagina as skeuomorph,’ there exists proof of techno-colonization in the transition from ‘vagina as sex organ’ to ‘vagina as skeuomorph.’ The transition between these functions works as evidence for revealing the results of the various reterritorializations that have taken place within the bodies of *Crash* .

Lost in Translation: Discovering the Roots of a Techno-Sexuality

Each individual tetralinguistic language impacting the bodies of *Crash* plays a different role in regards to the *expression* produced – each acting as a territorializing or deterritorializing force – which allows one to, by exploring the individual impact of each language, denaturalize the relationship between the organic and the artificial. By looking at the different singular effects of each language or combination of languages one can see how a situation is composed of a number of influences, rather than being an untraceable ‘natural’ process. I would like to highlight their importance in terms of territorializations, because this directly describes the process by which Vaughn’s techno-community operates as a force that strips the characters in Ballard’s novel of meaning and replaces older schemata with new. When speaking of territorialization, vernacular language, which is *here* in Deleuze and Guattari’s spatio-temporal terms, describes the territory we are working with, the utterance. Vehicular language is “the first sort of deterritorialization,” as Deleuze and Guattari note, while referential language entails “a cultural reterritorialization.” Finally, mythic language invokes a “spiritual or religious reterritorialization” [5], a strange sort of idealism. Taking into consideration the relationship between subject and expression, these languages can be used to examine the relationship between Ballard’s techno-body, or the combination of penis, scars, and steel, and what it produces: an orgasm, or material evidence of a psychological reorganization of the senses.

When applying an analysis of isolated languages to *Crash* it is important to note that determining the function of a specific language always depends on historical context and location. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, “for a long time in Europe, Latin was a vehicular language before becoming referential, then mythic; English has become the worldwide vehicular language for today’s world” [5]. Thus, we can apply this theory across cultural and historical shifts. Additionally, we can apply this theory to fictional cultures, and even more specifically to Vaughn’s micro-community in regards to the broader context Ballard establishes in his novel. Speaking in terms of Vaughn’s community and the territorializations it engenders in Ballard’s novel: the instantiation of a sex act or biological production of an orgasm functions as the vernacular language – the *here* language through which the bodies of *Crash* communicate to each other. Non-deviant, male to female, penis to vagina sex acts constitute the vehicular language, or the transactional language of the larger continental culture. Generally, colonization occurs with the vehicular language, as it becomes the imposed language of business and transaction in a society. However, because Vaughn’s micro-culture indicates a burgeoning techno-colonization in the beginning stages of epiphenomenalism, a community arising out of humankind’s dependence on technology, the actual colonial effects are best seen with regard to the referential language. The infancy of Vaughn’s community establishes a sort of reverse-colonialism, where the spread of technology under Vaughn’s banner is imposing its values and customs as a micro-culture *on* the larger culture rather than as a politically powerful social organization, such as an invading nation. Because the colonial force in Ballard’s novel comes from a minor community, with a referential relationship to the majority of the greater population, it derives its colonial power from its separateness and reference to the major community. The referential language thus becomes a deterritorializing *and* reterritorializing agent,

divorcing the characters drawn into Vaughn's community from traditional sex acts and reconstituting them under Vaughn's techno-sexual perversity. Again, this means from its minority position Vaughn's community is able to draw members out of the larger community, a deterritorialization, and indoctrinate them into its own, a reterritorialization. In fact, much of Vaughn's power to influence members of the larger population, as we will see later with minor literatures, comes from this minor position. It is important to note that the technology *itself* is not the agent in Ballard's novel, but rather this *minor-community* that operates according to the principles of Deleuze and Guattari's minor literatures. Finally, Vaughn's obsession with the Elizabeth Taylor crash becomes a mythic language, engendering, as Deleuze and Guattari would define, 'a spiritual or religious reterritorialization' under the sign of celebrity and Hollywood action. As he stalks Elizabeth Taylor and imagines the ways he could become an element in a vehicular collision with her, Vaughn sets up an ideal experience from which all other collisions flow. It drives him to continue to run this community and takes the place of a religious doctrine or manifesto. Indeed, it seems to be the *ultimate* reterritorialization or removal from the standard sexuality of the novel from which all other colonial effects derive – a sort of imagined transcendentalism that none the less drives Vaughn's religious zeal.

Distinguishing these languages from one another is important because it allows one to calculate the effects of the techno-colonization on the characters in Ballard's novel. While the minor community that rallies around Vaughn showcases remapped bodies with a particular lust for technology, it also exemplifies bodies that have been colonized by a particular participation with technology: the bodies have been stripped of their native languages and reworked by an alternative that expresses a techno-sexuality, which requires a certain amount of technology to participate in biological functions. Because the Ballard-psychopathology *expresses* its functional nature, requiring technology to actually function as opposed to representing a mere series of signs, one can see the traces which lead back to a traditional sexuality in the way Ballard's characters participate in both old, evidenced by its skeuomorphs, and new functions. It would be useful to take a look at the writing of the critic Roy Grundmann who addresses the issue of the non-conventional sexuality in Ballard's work. Grundmann makes some important points about representations of sexuality in *Crash*, but as readers we must be careful about the portions of his argument where technology intrudes. First Grundmann argues that "neither the book nor the film are about the political vindication of traditional sexual identities. The narrow meaning of such terms as 'straight' and 'gay' seem to get eradicated in techno-porn's larger attack on conventional sex" [7]. While this argument seems logical, and even progressive, Grundmann goes too far in claiming that "*Crash's* fetishism proposes an inherent bisexuality that would strictly revolve around sex acts instead of proclaiming sexual identities" [7]. Regardless of progressive political motivations, the bodies of *Crash* do not engage in *discrete sex acts* divorced from 'such terms as straight and gay.' Far from being discrete, the sex acts of *Crash* involve far more factors and qualifications than 'traditional sexual identities' require – technology, vehicles, bodies, scars, mythologies – showing that quite the opposite is true, and this is an extremely important point with regards to what *Crash* offers in the way of exemplifying a techno-colonization. As I have shown above, a close look at the sex acts of *Crash* reveals that the bodies, while perhaps engaged in activities far beyond conventional sex acts, are still the bodies that formerly engaged in 'traditional sex acts,' but with a reworked or remapped sexuality. The organic or biological skeuomorphs left with the body are evidence of this. Thus the bodies and sex acts of *Crash* do not *depoliticize* sexual identities as Grundmann would have it, instead they *hyperpoliticize* the characters afflicted by a technologized sexuality.

The Politics of Group Sex

As I have shown earlier, the characters in *Crash* participate in a major language, sexuality, but make a minor use of it, performing acts of techno-sexuality. In doing so, they create a minor community, similar to what

Deleuze and Guattari call a 'minor literature.' In the words of Deleuze and Guattari: "A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language" [5]. Vaughn's small community of crash victims constitutes a minority with their dangerous acts of sex, but intercourse itself, as a practice of the wider continental culture, is a major language. In order to explore the relevance of this minor interaction it is important to apply to Vaughn's minor community the three aspects of minor literatures that Deleuze and Guattari have developed. Although my application differs in the sense that I am applying it to communities rather than 'literatures,' the method of analyzing the 'minor' product, as well as its theoretical implications, are close enough to use Deleuze and Guattari's original text. Deleuze and Guattari explain: "The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation" [5]. In locating the languages with which the bodies of *Crash* work I have shown the deterritorializations from major sexualities to eventual reterritorializations prompted by their participation with Vaughn's community, but such territorializations engender the consequences of *political immediacy* and *assemblages of enunciation* that minor literatures develop as well.

Minor literatures are political: Deleuze and Guattari maintain that their "cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole *other* story is vibrating within it" (my emphasis) [5]. As opposed to Grundmann's argument that the bodies of *Crash* engage in discrete sex acts, rather than proclaiming sexual identity, I propose the bodies engage in *hyperpolitical* acts because they do not have the *room* to engage in discrete sex acts. To do so would be to communicate through a channel divorced from the vernacular, vehicular, referential, and mythic languages I have described. A discrete sex act as described by Grundmann would require one to invent an 'entirely new sex,' otherwise sex acts link immediately back to body-politics through their histories or what Hayles calls a "skeuomorph." And the bodies of *Crash* *do* link back to body-politics – questions of hetero-normativity, technology, and perversity – as the reader is required to question why James is not sexually stimulated by a sex act of the larger culture, but instead must rely on technology to perform organic functions. Indeed, why must James touch a vehicle and experience scars in order to experience an orgasm? Ballard's text becomes an "immense metaphor" as Jean Baudrillard put it, but a perplexing one that leads its reader down the path to a techno-sexuality; it asks the reader to question the significance of perverse technologies as they are hyperpoliticized by Ballard's interplay of languages. The reader is forced to recognize the techno-colonization taking progress, as native languages are rendered unimportant, and replaced with the words of the colonizers – in this case Vaughn's community, the freeways, and a burgeoning techno-sexuality.

Furthermore, in minor literatures "everything takes on a collective value" [5]: an author may construct an enunciation but it becomes the voice of many as it articulates unspoken values or beliefs. Because a minor literature is a construction of the minority participating in a major discourse it creates spaces of expression that were previously unaddressed, or possibly even suppressed. We may read Vaughn's community as a minor literature because of the way it takes on collective values and creates a coherent community around a radical sexuality, which separates it from conventional sexualities and creates a space within conventional sexuality for technology and acts of sex to come together. For Deleuze and Guattari, "The literary machine [as a minor literature] thus becomes the relay for a revolutionary machine-to-come, not at all for ideological reasons but because the literary machine alone is determined to fill the conditions of a collective enunciation that is lacking elsewhere" [5]. Vaughn, the author of this minor community initiates a movement from "the individuated animal to the pack or to a collective multiplicity" [3], and invites others to contemplate the radical sexuality of the highway. But, because minor communities allow participants "to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility" [5], they promote the

possibilities and reconceptions, marked by readers like Sobchack as dangerous. Through the vastly reconceptualized ways of experiencing freeway technology Baudrillard claims that Ballard constructs a world free of moral consideration, and asks “is it good or bad? We can’t say” [3]. Though perhaps we cannot label the psychopathologies of *Crash* as ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ Lamberti suggests an alternative that does not rely upon a binary. She positions *Crash* according to Ballard’s idea that the book presents ‘an extreme metaphor for an extreme situation,’ but a metaphor up for consideration rather than a metaphor for its own sake. For example, Lamberti notes that Cronenberg’s adaptation had a sort of timeliness, because of the way the film was released in Italy when teenage car crashes were at an all time high – creating *Crash* as a sort of catalyst for moral consideration. Her end-stance, however, engages *Crash* for its exploratory nature as she suggests that “It is our task as readers and as audiences to consciously acknowledge and establish new borders” [9], which suggests engaging the ideas within *Crash* without laying claim to a morality of *Crash* .

While I agree that Ballard’s novel allows readers to “forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility,” I believe Baudrillard’s erasure of moral judgment is a dangerous move as Sobchack suggests: instead, I would follow Lamberti in promoting a discussion of potential consequences. Consequences are sites of awareness as to the particular effects of a social or psychological construction, and as such I believe it important to examine the results of new constructions such as what Ballard builds in his novel, or what Baudrillard theorizes in his commentary on *Crash* . Furthermore, contrary to Baudrillard’s claim, applying the theory of minor literatures to the bodies of *Crash* shows “the critical judgementalism that is still a part of the old world’s functionality” [3] is still a part of today’s functionality as well. Following the languages at play within Ballard’s novel reveals the skeuomorphs or places where transhuman sexuality engages traditional sexuality, marking *traces* of political and moral concern. The emerging ‘possible communities,’ such as the one comprised of Baudrillard and his readers, should be read as Bodies without Organs in themselves, communities that are developing vastly reconfigured ideas and finding *expression* for them. But the Body without Organs as a reorganization of conceptual possibilities includes the same experimentality, and thus dangers, as the synthetic Bodies without Organs in *Crash* . “Inevitably, there will be monstrous crossbreeds,” [6] Deleuze and Guattari explain, and “it can be terrifying, and lead you to your death” [6]. Is this where Baudrillard is headed with his forgetting the danger of death and valorizing the simulacra? Ballard’s novel highlights the possibility of minor communities to develop around the fetishism of particular technologies, but the positive nature of new communities lies in the direction of their function. At two extremes we can see a community developed in order to push a dogma, creating a techno-colonialism such as Vaughn’s, or a community constructed around the investigation and reflection on possibilities that have yet to be thought. At stake we have the minor community’s power to liberate, but also its power to become a colonial force imposing itself upon us. Because of the duplicitous nature of these communities, I do not believe Baudrillard to be at fault here and I do not consider him my target. I find much value in his argument, but in order to make use of minor communities, we must be wary of approaches which lead to lines of abolition and remember that these communities must be “constructed piece by piece, and the places conditions, and techniques are irreducible to one another. The question, rather, is whether the pieces can fit together, and at what price” [6].

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