

LANDSLIP

journals from
an imagined
re-enactment
of a
communal
possibility

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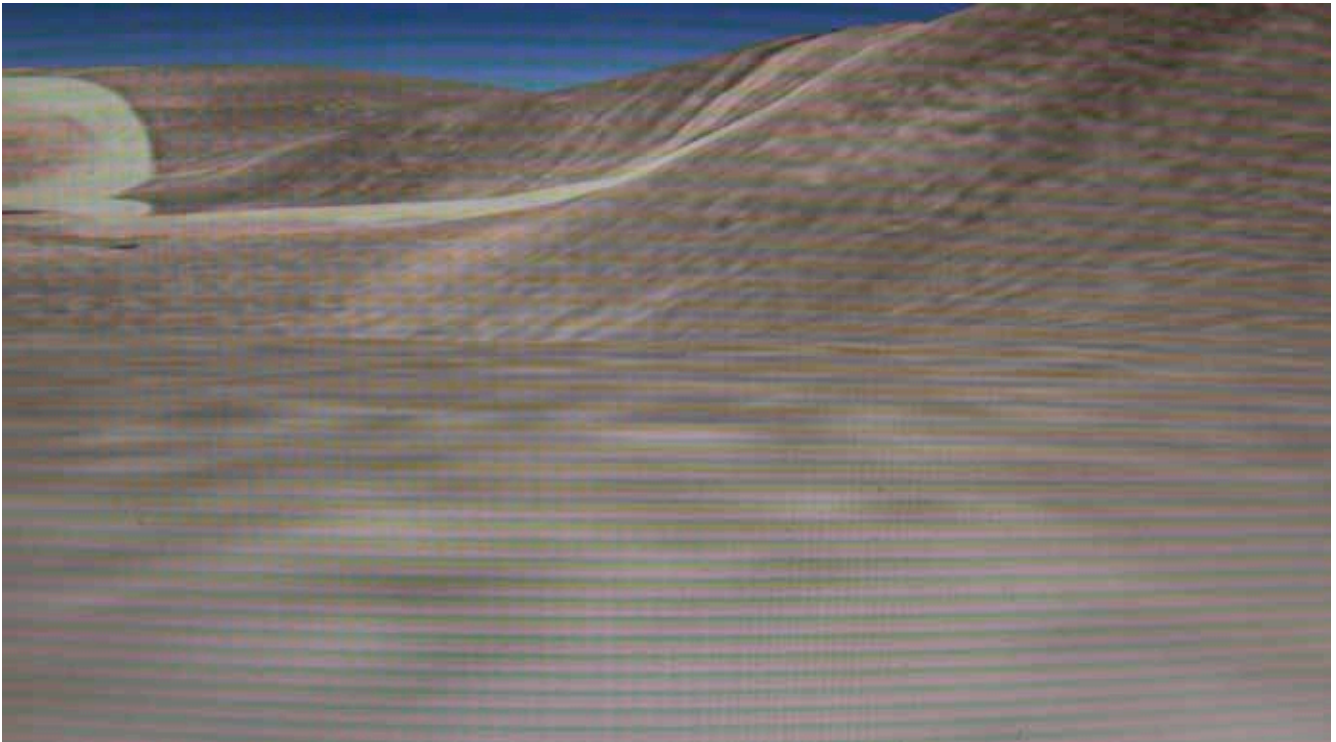
Day 1, somewhere in time

Today was the day that we were going to leave. We had planned to go and live in the dunes. There used to be this utopian village in Oceano. It was called Moy Mell. That's where we would go....to practice being together just like the people that used to live there were together. we were kind of going on this secret memory quest .- remembering them to learn about us.

But then we didn't go to the dunes together actually. We decided that actually going was not necessary - because we weren't sure if running off to the wilderness would reveal anything too honest about us now anyway -- maybe it would be sort of touristy or like a performance of togetherness. We also talked about how maybe we were too young to be so nostalgic about the idea of dropping-out.

I really like going on Missed Connections every day to see if any of the connections could have been about me or someone else that I might know.

So, we never left from wherever we were.



Day 2, somewhere in time

When we arrive at Moy Mell we learn that the landscape moves by itself. The hills don't stop moving, ever really. They accumulate more and more and everything is expanding outward all the time. The place has a mind of its own, but it's mind is actually our minds together. Our minds make the landscape, and we feel overwhelmed by what we are making, but we don't stop.

We are swallowed by landslides, loose track of our bodies – dizzy – but we are mesmerized and so we cannot stop. We want to see more of this place even if it means we make too much space, and all of our memories get lost.

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Day 3, somewhere in time

There are some patterns in the way that we move when we are here :
we contract and we expand - all the time in a loop.

1. the group is together, walking close
2. someone runs away wordlessly and soon others follow
because it was such a playful impulse
suddenly we are running in so many different directions
the solitude is exciting, everything is expanding, us and also
the hills, nothing gets closer. there is always more and more.
3. we made a system of signals to each other from the top of our own
separate hills. sometimes we roll down the steepest ones. our
bodies fall away because they are not being used very much
4. we converge and we reassemble eventually because we feel weird -
floaty - disoriented.

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Day 4, somewhere in time

Today we were reading a book about the Dunites - which is the name for the people who lived in Moy Mell.

It went like this....

A man named Gavin Arthur moved out to the sand dunes near Oceano, California during the Great depression. He was tired of money causing so much dreariness - so he was dropping out, but with style and enthusiasm. He decided to build a village in the sand - this was Moy Mell. Many joined him here and together they built a community that was difficult to define - because sometimes it seemed like a utopia and because other times it seemed to be a bunch of hermits co-existing in a place that no one else wanted. Maybe that's just what utopia is actually. Their landscape was unruly and unstable and at first they thought this meant freedom and possibility. They were ecstatic to be away from all the dreariness even if it meant constant upkeep and reinvention. They had a motto: "Change as Flexibility Demands." Even the landscape that they lived in made them practice this -- because houses and gardens for food were taken over by sandy drifts if not dug out daily. Visitors were often lost for hours without landmarks or even their own footprints to retrace. Warm fires were sustained only when the pacific ocean brought them enough driftwood. They didn't have money and everything was scavenged in one way or another. All this flux was no surprise and they were prepared, at least for awhile, with strategies for adapting to their happy hardships, because they thought that this was freedom and that this would make it possible for them to be happy together.

Moy Mell didn't last very long because these kinds of things usually don't for one reason or another. Maybe these sorts of communities are not made for lasting though. We started thinking that maybe their whole lifestyle was a performance for them too -- A bunch of people together, performing a possibility in a real but also metaphorical place. They even made a publication called the *Dune Forum*, so people outside the dunes could witness the ideas that they had about how to live a life. It was very political and very idealistic too.

I emailed the author of the book to see what he thought about our interpretation of their lifestyle as a performative gesture. He did not agree...he thought their community was a really practical solution for idealistic hermits. He thought that Moy Mell was a wholehearted effort at making a lasting community by simply leaving enough space for people's individuality. He did not understand the question and wondered about its cynical nature. Maybe the dunites were leery of a full on utopian approach to their village, but they were not yet thinking of all the meta performance data.

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Day 5, somewhere in time

I wrote all of this down so that I would be sure to remember, and also so that I would tell you, because I don't remember this happening really at all, but since I wrote it down I know that it must have actually occurred.

1. a man passes on the street wearing google glass and I look away

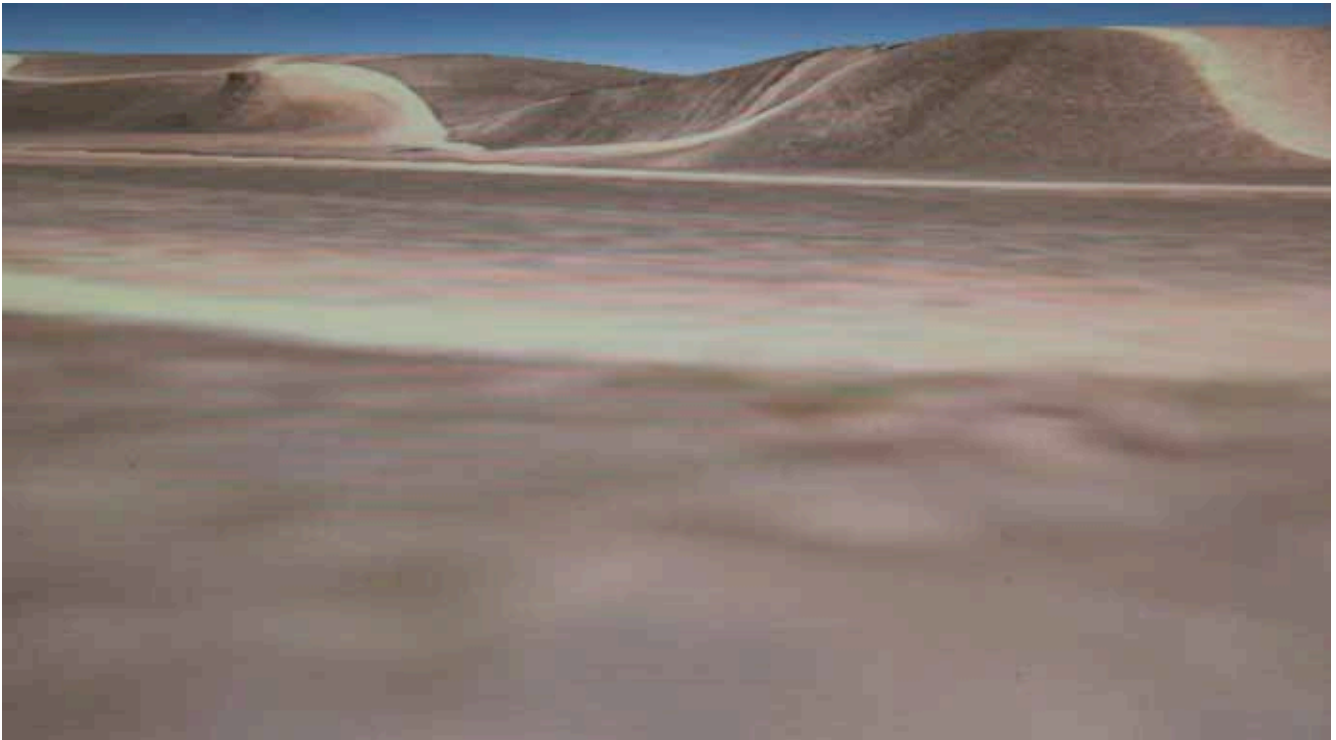
2. on twitter, I read that if facebook were a society it would be a technocracy

I thought that idea supposedly lost steam during the great depression - because so much technological efficiency was not a very good system for the people it was supposed to work for. Now maybe its different, because we are so busy we prefer for our friendships to be very efficient. Or, is it that we are very efficient, so now we feel quite busy?

3. today is the last day that we can rehearse at this studio. we are getting evicted because the rent is going up, because San Francisco is doing the whole tech

boom-town thing again. even though this studio has been here for 23 years we have to go now. We started making a square dance while the studio was being disassembled around us. we call it square dance for technocracy. this is a joke because this square dance is formless and inefficient. but also it is serious because rituals might help us to remember that this happened to us here.

4. another man passes on the street wearing google glass and I look away



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Day 6, somewhere in time

Now we are back at Moy Mell, not actually, but you don't have to go somewhere actually in order to be there.

For a few days now, during the dune hikes, the contract-expand pattern between us is being thought of as part of this huge, acres-large square dance. The space in between us expands all the time and it is so much that it makes for a really slow and abstract dance because we can't understand our relations to one another really, and always there is something new to wonder about..... in a way there is a sort of freedom in this space and the way it puts us in relation to one another.

But then lately we find ourselves trying to get more organized and to make the dance have all these patterns and forms. We are trying to make our spontaneous group movements meaningful and efficient and with geometry, and this makes us nervous because we thought we were trying to learn about how to be together and to create a new place for ourselves (even though at first we said that we didn't believe in that sort of myth ... but i guess still we were secretly hopeful)

Anyway, maybe we can use this organizing tendency for the technocracy square dance somehow and at least remember that this is what happened to us.

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Day 7, somewhere in time

At night the fire is on a hill and everything is black except for that spot of warmth where everyone is congregated -- everyone outlined and gathered together. We meet here for a fire every night and we think about new ideas for mash-up folk dances.....

like for example if the Dunites met modern communities - what would we make together? Perhaps it would be like making some rituals for people that don't meet together in physical space very often

so far we've got 13 folk dances:

- * landslide dance
- * rolling down the mountain together
- * running directions divergent
- * daily dune drift house digging party
- * contract-expand/boom-collapse group dance
- * change as flexibility demands! riot score
- * square dance for technocracy
- * twitter-feed utopia(?) dance
- * everyone signaling from their own separate mountains
- * google earth dérive map dances
- * muscle map memory dances
- * looking right into your eyes
- * alone-together waltz for Missed Connections

