to power, bringing an end to the Republic of Florence, which had the active sympathies of Michelangelo, and inaugurating 200 years of hereditary Medici rule. That was the end of the Renaissance dream of human liberty in Florence. Although Michelangelo depended on commissions from the Medicis and the Pope for his work, he was often in conflict with them.

Among Michelangelo's late works figure the mysterious 'slaves' sculptures, considered by many art historians to be 'unfinished'. Molyneux believes that the artist, in conscious or unconscious ways, created four gigantic figures struggling for freedom from the stone, but still held captive by it: a powerful statement about human history and the struggle for human emancipation as a whole. Are we not today, five hundred years later, still fighting for freedom, still gripped by the rock of class society?

Michael Löwy

Throwing rocks

In discussing with Avery F. Gordon his video installation, *The Beginning. Living Figures Dying* (2013), a project focused 'on the relationship between actors and sculpture in film', the German artist Clemens von Wedemeyer tells of the myth of Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha and their survival from the wrath of Zeus. Upon hearing the myth Avery F. Gordon concludes: 'at the end, we return to the beginning, to a story about the origin of human life from stone, and to what, at this point in our history, we are capable of believing in.' In order to understand why Gordon reaches such a conclusion upon hearing this myth it is pertinent to turn to the myth itself.

Deucalion and Pyrrha were the only survivors of the flood that the capricious Zeus instigated for no reason other than his wish to punish humanity. The myth originally narrated by Ovid in Book I of the *Metamorphoses* talks of these two survivors' loneliness, their desire to renew humanity and their unique interpretation of the Oracle of Themis, which advised them 'to veil their heads and cast their great mother's bones behind them if they wanted to renew humanity'. Deucalion and Pyrrha decided it would be hubristic to throw their mother's bones backwards so instead they cast stones, thereby creatively interpreting the reference to their mother's bones as corresponding to mother earth and stones respectively. Deucalion's stones gave birth to men, Pyrrha's to women. The myth reminds us, as Gordon points out, that humanity is inextricably linked to earth, and that it is in our hands to acknowledge this connection, to ensure that we don't drive ourselves to extinction by encouraging ecological catastrophe.

This archive is just one example of the myriad materials – letters, photographs, art, recipes – that Gordon interpretively gives us in *The Hawthorn Archive*, and it epitomises its contents. As Gordon informs us, *The Hawthorn Archive* borrows its name 'from the forest tree' Hawthorn which is 'known for its longevity' and 'favoured by witches and those internationalists who celebrate the first of May'. The rationale for having the name of a tree heading the book is not made explicit by Gordon. We can only speculate that the longevity of the tree, and its being favoured by radicals, gives rise to hope for an enduring and radical archive.

Whilst Gordon is a sociologist by training, this book diverts from standard sociological writings about utopia, which often either study *existing* utopian communities or offer methodological advice on how to engage with the concept of utopia. Instead, Gordon offers an innovative practice-based approach, to *create* a utopian archive out of the unrealised dreams of those who struggled and are still struggling for freedom and equality. Indeed, like Deucalion and Pyrrha who recreated the world by throwing a stone backwards, Gordon (re)creates a new way of seeing utopia. She throws a stone at traditional understandings of utopia received from Thomas More, Ernst Bloch, Ursula Le Guin and others, not as an act of violence but as an act of creation, creating anew a vision of utopia as 'a collective life without misery, deadly inequalities,

mutating racisms, social abandonment, endless war, police power, authoritarian governance, heteronormative impositions, patriarchical rule, cultural conformity and ecological destruction'.

Utopia, from the Greek, was introduced into English by Thomas More in 1516, and, as is well-known, literally means non-place. Utopia, More tells us, is an island located in the New World, which was discovered by Raphael Nonsenso, a companion of Americo Vespucci. The island features an egalitarian political system, where its inhabitants benefit from the lack of private property, universal health care and free education. Since More, utopia has been painted in leftist colours and imagined as a desirable radical project with a future orientation. More's island utopia is made up of 'fifty four splendid big towns … all with the same language, laws, customs, and institutions', designed the same and adorned with indistinguishable buildings. More's *Utopia* features what may initially seem like desirable characteristics. But the more we reflect on the novel, the more we notice that the island of utopia does not involve such an egalitarian society after all. In *Utopia*, slaves and women are not equal to free men. This good place is revealed to be, as Le Guin perceived, Euclidean, Eurocentric, masculinist and imperialist. Gordon notes that our utopian imaginings, primarily influenced by More and other European writers, are exclusionary and sets out on a journey to unearth and build an inclusive archive, bringing to the surface the creativity, thinking, practices and sacrifices made by people such as the Black American worker Harry Haywood (counterposed to William Morris), the philosophy of happiness of C.L.R. James (counterposed to Ernst Bloch) and the Combahee River Collective (counterposed to the separatist middle-class community Brooke Farm).

The Hawthorn Archive is divided into four parts 'promoting and keeping safe the subjugated knowledges of the nobodies'. Section I explains how the archive is being produced – that it existed prior to Gordon and her collaborators bringing it together – its collaborative character (it uses extensive correspondences, art work and any other materials that her collaborators deposited) and offers a critique of Eurocentric understandings of utopia that draw on the work of Toni Cade Bandara. The means and methods (running away, deserting) used to create a better life are introduced through the writings of Cederic J. Robinson. Eliza Winston the Black American slave who

earned her freedom by running away, deserting soldiers and others are presented in Section II. Section III offers rich insights into the labour, trauma and stress that it takes to build freer and more egalitarian societies. In this section Gordon considers the subjectivity of utopians and what it takes to challenge, attack and dismantle institutions of power and domination. In Section IV the thoughts of curator Anslem Franke regarding the nature of time haunt Gordon. Time, he tells us is not linear – past, present, future – but rather scrambled. As he explains, '[t]he future is now behind us, and the past approaches us from the front.' Haunted by his observations Gordon goes on to search for those dreams, writings, and thoughts that have *not yet* been realised. In doing so, she presents us with an archive of unrealised dreams drawn from the reflections of those that engaged or had been with prisoners (i.e., Emma Goldman, Rosa Luxemburg), archive and films about workhouses (i.e., Breitenau) or files regarding prison war camps (i.e., Halfmoon Prison war camp).

The textual (i.e., letters, writings, recipes) and visual (i.e., photographs, drawings, film stills) archive deposited and curated by Gordon and collaborators brings to life the subjugated knowledges of 'slaves, indentured servants

and maids, prisoners, conscripts, pirates, sailors, religious heretics, woodcutters, water carriers, prostitutes, indigenous peoples, commoners, runaways, deserters and vagabonds', and so creates an alternative utopian imaginary, one that does not paint the road to freedom and equality (economic, political, social) with rosy colours. Her protagonists paved the way to our freer world (albeit one that still needs major structural transformations) by sacrificing or endangering themselves. Utopian worlds, Gordon concludes, are not worlds located in the future. On the contrary, they exist in the very crux of our present and are made by those who we fail to notice, acknowledge or recognise as utopian. Utopia is not built overnight, nor is it build in isolation, without the collaboration of others. Individualism and no possible exit from the alienating current conditions is the myth propagated by utopia's not-so-friendly sibling, dystopia, a myth that Gordon elegantly undoes, showing that a better world is possible.

The rich content of *The Hawthorn Archive* enables us to see the truth about utopia, its exclusions, the effort that it takes to build a fairer society. Nevertheless, whilst the content of Gordon's archive may displace More's definition of utopia, its form does not differ dramatically from the props and dramaturgy used in *Utopia*. Like More, Gordon uses epistolography to transmit the development of her and her collaborators' idea of utopia; like More she uses dialogue to convey ideas; and, like More, she uses images to convey location or different languages. *The Hawthorn Archive*, despite the radicality of its content, is rather conventional in form.

Additionally, whilst the book invokes numerous utopian voices, it leaves unresolved the tension between those utopians who think that the structure of the state (radical left legalists) can be the vehicle for a free and egalitarian society and those who see the state (i.e., anarchists) as the obstacle to a better life. The book may include a recipe for celery soup, but there is of course no simple recipe for resolving such a tension. The tension nevertheless holds the promise of utopia not being totalised or closed, a potential danger of utopia that Jorge Luis Borges warns about in 'A Weary Man's Utopia'. This tension is an invitation to continue the work of utopia, bring our own subjugated knowledges to *The Hawthorn Archive*, collaborate with it in perpetuity so as to keep dystopia at bay.

Elena Loizidou

Race after information-value

As our tech overlords flee a blighted planet, a scholarly consensus is taking shape around the fallout of unchecked innovation and the subsequent need for 'algorithmic justice'. This consensus is perhaps distilled by Shalini Kantayya's award-winning 2020 documentary *Coded Bias*, which tells the story of Joy Buolamwini, a researcher who, in the course of her work at the MIT Media Lab, uncovered a design flaw embedded in facial recognition systems: certain of these AI-driven technologies fail to accurately register dark-skinned faces. To supplement its retracing of Buolamwini's journey from this discovery to the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, the film includes interviews with Cathy O'Neil, Virginia Eubanks, Zeynep Tüfekçi, Safiya Umoja Noble, Meredith Broussard and Shoshana Zuboff, thinkers who are among the torchbearers of a growing body of research on information technologies' role in entrenching and perpetuating inequalities of race, gender and class. Exploring how historical modes of subjugation live on in algorithms, surveillance technologies and other mobilisations of big data, such studies often conclude – much as *Coded Bias* does – with overtures to transparency, fairness and ethics, proposals for socially conscious approaches to technological design and use, and calls for increased governmental regulation of the industry.

But what if Buolamwini's discovery were no glitch at all? What if instead it were an index of an inherently *informatic* logic – not simply one underpinning contempor-