The Weight Weight

All bodies in the universe are attracted toward one another with a force that is directly proportional to the product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the

über Berlin (1987), an angel appears who wants to become human, in 4 Himmel över Göteborg which was performed at contrast to the refugees who are dehumanized in the performance by Angereds Teater in the the prevailing bureaucratic system. The angel wants to be mortal, i.e., autumn of 2015, was alive: "I don't want to hover in eternity; I want to feel my own weight."4 written by Nicolas Kolovos and directed by Eletheria Gerofoka.

On pottery from 630 BC found in an Etruscan grave in Cerveteri

outside Rome, there are two mythical figures portrayed, both of them possessing attributes coveted by humanity from time immemorial. One is the sorceress Medea, who was said to be able to restore youth to the elderly. The other is a man who is depicted on the pottery with wings and called Taitale. To all appearances, he is the same figure known to posterity as Daedalus, thanks to Roman authors.

Daedalus, whom the Greeks called Daidalos, was an ingenious inventor from Athens. It was he who discovered the wedge, the axe, the windlass, the lever and the sail. He constructed statues that moved and looked completely alive, a kind of ancient robot. King Minos on Crete assigned Daidalos the task of building a labyrinth in his palace. Because Minos neglected to sacrifice to the gods a splendid white bull they had given him, the gods caused his wife Pasiphaë to fall in love with the bull. She charged Daidalos with building her a cattle enclosure in which she could receive her beloved. The fruit of this intercourse was the Minotaur, half man, half bull, a horrendous, man-eating monster that Minos locked into the labyrinth with Daidalos and his son, lcaros. The only way out of the labyrinth was through the air. Using bird feathers and wax, Daidalos fashioned wings for himself and Icaros. Icaros became so enraptured about being able to fly that he defied his father's admonitions and flew so close to the sun that the wax melted and he crashed into the sea near the island of Icaria, which was named after him. Daidalos continued his flight to Sicily, where he put aside his wings and built a temple in honor of Apollo. Romanticism made Daidalos a symbol for the classical artist, the skilled craftsman, whereas Icaros became a symbol for the romantic artist: ingenious, passionate, rebellious, someone who ignores all rules and laws.

Elevation

Above the lakes, above the vales, The mountains and the woods, the clouds, the seas, Beyond the sun, beyond the ether, Beyond the confines of the starry spheres, My soul, you move with ease, And like a strong swimmer in rapture in the wave You wing your way blithely through boundless space With virile joy unspeakable. Fly far, far away from this baneful miasma And purify yourself in the celestial air, Drink the ethereal fire of those limpid regions As you would the purest of heavenly nectars. Beyond the vast sorrows and all the vexations That weigh upon our lives and obscure our vision, Happy is he who can with his vigorous wing Soar up toward those fields luminous and serene, He whose thoughts, like skylarks, Toward the morning sky take flight - Who hovers over life and understands with ease The language of flowers and silent things! **Charles Baudelaire**⁵

Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Fleurs du Ma*l by William Iemy Library Guild, 1954).

⁵ Charles from Les CA: Acac

One of the earliest sensations to which a small child is subjected is being hoisted or thrown up in the air: the tickling sensation in the stomach when the force of gravity

Nowadays people distinguish between vertigo or acrophobia on one hand and dizziness on the other. The latter can arise from low blood pressure, fatigue, lack of fluids or irritation of the inner ear. The cause of vertigo, on the other hand, is shrouded in mystery. Doctors cannot explain why certain people who have climbed up on a ladder or a roof or just gone out on a balcony suddenly feel their legs begin to tremble and a sinking feeling in their stomachs. Strangely enough, these physical feelings of discomfort often are accompanied by a compulsive and simultaneously euphoric thought: imagine if I were to jump and free fall to the ground! The thought dissects the person who experiences it and causes her to hang more tightly onto something solid. She fears for herself. Am I capable of doing something that I don't want to do? Why do I want to throw myself down when it is sure to lead to my destruction? Can't I control myself? Don't I know who I am? One hypothesis asserts that the eye requires time to adjust to heights-when stepping out on a high balcony, for example. If the eye is allowed time to adjust, the person can then enjoy the beautiful view. If the person instead is gripped by discomfort at the great height and hurries inside, the discomfort remains, is stored up and can in the worst case grow into a phobia.

As a remedy, doctors suggest taking the bull by the horns: that is, subjecting yourself bit by bit to heights together with a therapist and training yourself to cope with them.

Incidentally, speaking of bulls, in our latitudes the ox is a heavy animal, one of the heaviest. Whether weight is incompatible with quickness and humor is an old controversial question. Johan Henric Kellgren concurred with the Roman poet Horatius, who contended that usefulness can very well be combined with enjoyment, a position he elaborated on in Filosofen på landsvägen ("Philosopher on the Highway") (1792):

"There is, namely, a common and equally inaccurate belief among my dear countrymen that a work's profundity should be demonstrated through its tediousness, and that an author who smiles necessarily is wrong. On the contrary, I dare to assert that rationality and truth are the natural friends of joy, that enjoyable usefulness is double usefulness and that gravity in writing as well as in countenance, in gait and in gesture is more often a mask for an empty head. The gravest animal on earth is, as everyone knows, the ox: but what do you think about his profundity?"

Light and heavy are fundamental distinctions of existence along with light and darkness, life and death, movable and fixed. They seem to be needed to bring order to diversity. Certain epochs are lighter than others. Rococo is light, baroque heavy. The Middle Ages heavy, the Renaissance light. The literary 1950s were light, at least in Sweden, while the painterly 1980s were heavy in the same country. Different countries have different weights. Germany is heavy, while France is light. Of art forms, music without a doubt is the lightest and the lightest of all is Mozart, but what is heaviest? Being a heavyweight is to really count for something while lightweights are relegated to the margins. While the history of art forms seems to alternate between lighter and heavier periods, the evolution of media seems to be moving toward ever more light and transitory forms: rune stones, handwritten folios, printed books, brochures and calendars, magazines, newspapers, radio, TV, the Web, social media...

"The predominant movement in the world of ideas in the West has an aspirational nature and places positive values and

har-

'/>Bedlam was an institution for the mentally ill in London in those days. A "dun steed" is gray with a black mane and tail and a dark dorsal stripe. In the King Charles XII Swedish translation of the Bible, such a horse is described in the book of Revelations' description of the cian⁸ riders of the Apocalypse. See The Chymistry of Isaac Newton: http://we

(read Oct 27, 2015).

ate homage.

16, 2015)

⁸ Keynes, J.M., "Newton, The Man"; roceedings of the Royal Society Newton Tercentenary Celebrations 15–19 July 1946; Cambridge University Press (1947). The commemorative words are available on several sites, including this one: http://phys.columbia.edu/~millis/3003Spring2014/Supplementarv/John%20Mavnard%20Kevnes %20% 2Newton %20the%20Man%22.pdf Read Oct 25, 2015). In the original the uote reads: "Newton was not the first o gicians, the last of the Babylonians and Sumerians, the last great mind which vorld with the same eyes as those who began to build our intellectual nheritance rather less than 10,000 years after World War I. ago. Isaac Newton, a posthumous child orn with no father on Christmas Day. 1642, was the last wonderchild to whom the Magi could do sincere and appropri-

⁹ See the fascinating documentary about

http://anhonestliar.com/wp/ (Read Oct

ames Randi, An Honest Liar (2014):

The economist John Maynard Keynes was even more severe in his judgment after having studied Newton's writings on alchemy. Rather than as the first Enlightenment man Keynes wrote in 1942, Newton stands out as the last magi-

bapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/newton/index.jsp Just as researchers can fall victim to foolish ideas, so can magicians put their abilities at the disposal of enlightenment. Harry Potter is not the only demonstration of this.

Two of the biggest names in magic during the past century were Harry Houdini (1874-1926) and James Randi (born 1928). Houdini, son of a Jewish rabbi, became well-known as an escape artist par excellence. Early in his career he worked as a medium himself, conducting séances to earn money. During a trip to war-ravaged Europe in 1919, he witnessed how relatives of soldiers killed in action were the age of reason. He was the last of the cynically exploited by unscrupulous mediums. He began then to visit their performances and reveal their tricks. looked out on the visible and intellectual More than anyone else, Houdini is regarded as having contributed to the public's reduced faith in spiritualists James Randi first became famous as Houdini's successor

as an escape artist under the professional name "The Amazing Randi." He holds the Guinness World Record for

lying in a sealed casket: one hour and 44 minutes. Randi is an avowed atheist and has exposed both magic and religious charlatans since the 1970s. Among other things, he has exposed several of illusionist Uri Geller's alleged "supernat-

ural" tricks and established a prize of one million dollars for anyone who can carry out a study proving a paranormal, occult or supernatural phenomenon.

For Houdini and Randi, magic is not pseudoscience but rather an art that is enacted in the eyes of the beholder.9

A Werner Herzog documentary, The Great Ecstasy of the Woodcarver Steiner (1974), is about Walter Steiner, Switzerland's foremost ski jumper of his day and also a woodcarver. As is the case with several of the film director's heroes—Aguirre, Kaspar Hauser, Nosferatu, Fitzcarraldo, Grizzly Man-the film depicts an eccentric, an exceptional person, someone who puts himself above social rules and the laws of nature. The almost hour-long TV documentary tells its story with few words, accompanied only by synthesizer-based music by the krautrock band Popol Vuh. In one scene Steiner talks about his work as a woodcarver; in another scene about how he had taken care of a young raven. The film provides very little background and context for Steiner's achievements on the ski jump, which reinforces the impression of a person who transcends nature's laws and human capability. A ski jump consists of various parts: the in-run, where the skier picks up speed; the take-off, from which the flight begins; the landing slope, where the jumper lands; and the transition and outrun, where speed slows down. The starting point is a dramatic, unsuccessful jump in the Austrian town of Oberstdorf in 1973. Steiner flew too far and fell upon impact, a scene that recurs in the film. If he had jumped ten meters farther, he would have landed on the outrun and probably killed himself. Such a jump would have corresponded to a free fall from a height of 110 meters.

The following year Steiner executed the perfect jump in Planica in what was then Yugoslavia. Despite the fact that he had started from a lower level than his competitors, he outclassed them and broke a fantastic world record. In Herzog's film Steiner soars, seemingly weightless, through the air. Exceptional athletic performance often is described as defying the law of gravity: long jumper Bob Beamon's incomparable 8.9-meter jump during the Olympic Games in Mexico City (high elevation = little air resistance), basketball's Michael "Air" Jordan's improbable passages through the air toward the basket, soccer goalkeeper Thomas Ravelli's ability to fling himself in one direction-and then change course in the air!

> The title of Don DeLillo's novel Falling Man (2007) alludes to a performance artist who without notice does his thing all around New York: hanging upside down from some building in the city wearing an irreproachable suit, tie and well-shined shoes. His act is a reminder of the people who were forced to jump to certain death when the Twin Towers in Manhattan were subjected to terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. **Richard Drew immortalized one** of these fatal falls with a now iconic photograph that is simply titled "Falling Man." It is an incredibly beautiful image, making it doubly uncanny. It was published the day after the attacks in the New York Times, resulting in severe criticism Ever since the portrayal in the book of Genesis of the Fall of Man and expulsion from Paradise, the fall has had profound psychological, social, and political implications of social degradation, expulsion. Fruit also plays a key role in the bibli cal tale.

distance between them.

From time immemorial people have understood the meaning of this sentence. The apple falls downward, not upward or sideways. The moon does not vanish into outer space, nor does it crash down into the earth. No one can fly, not under his or her own power in any case. Nobody, nothing tumbles off the earth. We know all of this from experience. Only imaginative children and the world of fairy tales defy the laws of nature. Only characters from children's books bound off from the roof, believing that an umbrella will suffice as a parachute. Levitation is reserved for magicians and gods. As modern enlightened people we know that we are subject to something called gravity, but do we understand the full import of F = Gm1m2/r2?1 Of course, as everyone knows, there are other forces attraction than those emanating from the ¹Where F stands for

mass of gravitational force, G bodies. For for gravitational nstant, m for mass example, and 1 and 2 and r for the distance between the **gravitation is** center of the masses. not the main force that causes lovers to come together.

The title of the science fiction film Gravity

"fallen woman is some one who is forced into prostitution. The fallen man can take dreadful revenge, as in Falling Down (1993), a film with Michael Douglas in the leading role as an average man who for seeming trivial reasons is transformed into a one-man war against society.

But the opposite, elevation, also can be traced back to the Bible, and in particular the Ascension of **Christ in the New Testament. For** the individual the exemplary social ladder is onward-upward, as it is for those collectively organized in a popular, labor or women's movement: "From darkness, we walk toward the light, from nothing everything we want to be" (The Internationale); "Out of the tomb of degrading servitude, up to honorable, noble achievement" (Arbetets söner) ("Sons of Labor"). "Is a girl supposed to sit quietly/ and only hope/ that some guy/ will say what she thought/ or should she rise up/ take a deep breath/ and cry:/ IF YOU JUST SHUT UP/ AND LISTEN/ then you will hear what I want to say" (Vi måste höja våra röster) ("We must raise our voices").

(2013), which in 3D depicts a space walk that goes awry, makes use of the double etymology of the English word. The word's Latin root is gravis, which means heavy, weighty. Another root comes from the German and Proto-Indo-European words for dig, grave, engrave. The heroine, who is played by Sandra Bullock, winds up in a situation that is simultaneously weightless and gravely serious.

"After dinner, the weather being warm, we went into the garden and drank tea under the shade of some apple trees, only he and myself. He told me he was just in the same situation when the notion of gravitation came into his mind. 'Why should that apple always descend perpendicularly to the ground,' thought he to himself, occasioned by the fall of an apple as he sat in a contemplative mood. 'Why should it not go sideways or upwards, but constantly to the earth's centre?"

The legend of how Isaac Newton discovered gravitational force has been widely disseminated. The quote is taken from one of the sources of the legend: Memoirs of Sir Isaac Newton, which friend and archeologist William Stukeley penned in 1752. In connection with its 350th anniversary in 2010, the Royal Society made a digital version of Stukeley's manuscript available.

Source critics have pointed out that the meeting between Stukeley and Newton took place a guarter of a century before it was written down in 1725, when the latter was 80 years old and had only one more year to live. The apple revelation itself would have occurred as far back as the late summer of 1665, when the University of Cambridge had been closed because of ravages of the plague and the 22-year-old science student had traveled home to his parents in Lincolnshire.

Like many academics, during his long career Newton became embroiled in prestige conflicts with colleagues in his own country and abroad, which could have led him to contribute to the formation of myths about himself. Consequently, there are good reasons to take the apple legend with a grain of salt.

In one version Isaac sits dozing under the apple tree when he suddenly is awakened by a fruit falling on his head. In popular culture it often happens that flashes of genius are triggered by a blow to the head, a causal connection that in reality probably is difficult to verify empirically. Sudden insight into the nature of things has many names in many

saw fall is not insignificant. Ever since the third chapter of Genesis, entitled "The Fall of Man" in the 1917 Swedish translation of the Bible, the apple has played a central role in the cultural history of the West. Although "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" in the Bible never was identified as an app tree, it traditionally often has been depi as such. According to one hypothesis, this can be due to the fact that the Latin word malus means both "evil" and "apple," and the tradition dates back to the first Latin translation of the Bible in 400 AD. (https://newtonbloggen.wordpress.com/2012/02/07/at-adam-och-eva-ett-apple/. Read Oct. 11, 2015.) At about the same time, the Byzantine emperors began to use an orb (orbis terrarum in Latin and riksäpple in Swedish signify their world dominion, a custom that was adopted by Christian rulers. Sweden's regalia includes King Erik XIV's riksäpple as a symbol of his God-given power over the kingdom. New York got its nickname Big Apple from a sportswriter. The prize awarded at horse races was called the "Apple." The largest and most prestigious of these races took place in New York, which is why the city acquired the nickname Big Apple at the beginning of the 1920s. In the 1970s the nickname was brought to the for in a major marketing campaign. In 1968 the Beatles called their newly established record company Apple Records. In 1976 Steve Jobs and two colleagues started a home electronics company called Apple The company's first logotype shows Nev sitting under a tree reading, with an apple dangling over his head, along with some li by William Wordsworth: "a mind forever Voyaging through strange seas of Thought alone" (The Prelude, Book Third, Resider at Cambridge; 1799-1850). Both Apple companies have fought out several disput in court over the right to the name, especially after the computer company entered the music industry. In 2011 Apple Inc. became the world's most costly and highly valued

² The fact that it was an apple that Newton languages. Greek has Eureka (ε ρηκα), "I've found it!", which Archimedes (287-212 BC) is said to have cried out when he came upon his displacement principle in the bathtub. Swedish has "Lidner's knäpp," an expression poet Bengt Lidner (1757-1793) used to describe how one morning in bed he suddenly and loudly was transformed from a stupid student to a smart one.

What Newton saw was not really the falling apple, but rather the possibility that it had to do with something else. That caused him to ask questions. Why does the apple behave as it does? Why doesn't the moon do the same thing? Why does the moon neither fall down to earth nor vanish into outer space?

The power of the legend about Newton and the apple is about seeing, and about perceiving.²

Albert Einstein saw, or rather foresaw, something else. On September 14, 2015, two observatories in Washington and Louisiana detected for the first time the minute ripples in space called gravitational waves. The signal has been determined to originate from two black holes that merged 1.2 billion light-years away. Einstein predicted the existence of gravitational waves in 1916. They are a consequence of his general theory of relativity from the year before. According to this theory, a falling apple's movement, for example, is represented by a straight line in a warped space-time. If you hold an apple in your hand, the gravitational force is balanced, according to Newton, by the force of your hand. According to Einstein, the force from your hand holding the apple bends the space-time line outward. When your hand releases the apple, the space-time line straightens out. The shape of space-time

means that the straight line soon (after 25 minutes) reaches the centre of the Earth and then continues.³

to be nullified by the parent's strong arms. Fright and pleasure play tag with one another. It is this tingling sensation that entices children to seek out the playground on their own and

seems

draws both children and adults to the amusement park, this establishment that uses mechanical means to enable people of all ages and social classes for a few giddy moments to shed their masks, lose their footing, throw caution to the winds-and immediately afterwards, with their feet back on solid ground, to be able to laugh at all of it.

Next to the merry-go-round, the roller coaster is the most classic attraction. It has a long history. As far back as the 16th century, Russians built 20-meter-high wooden hills that they coated with ice and then rode down in wooden sleds or on blocks of ice. A visiting French businessman took the idea home with him, but given the shortage of ice in Paris and its environs, the runners on the sled were waxed instead. At the time of Napoleon's fall, someone came up with the idea of attaching wheels to the sleds, and the track immediately became more daring and exciting. In 1817 Les Montagnes Russes à Belleville, the first roller coaster that had cars with wheels on tracks, was introduced. The attraction had two sets of tracks that ran alongside one another, which made it possible for the riders to compete and for spectators with a yen for gambling to put money on the car they thought would win.

American mineworkers discovered another prototype some years later. Mauch Chunk Switchback Gravity Railroad was the name given to the first roller coaster in the U.S. It was a railway in Pennsylvania that initially was used to transport coal from a mine to the nearby Lehigh River. Mineworkers filled the cars with coal, pushed them out to the hillside and then let gravity do the rest. Mules pulled the cars back up the hill to be refilled. Toward the end of the 1830s, people began stealing rides in the cars, which led operators to open the track to the public in the afternoons. As time went by, mules were replaced by a steam engine. When the cars rushed down the hill, they reached speeds of close to 100 mph (160 km/h).

During the 20th and 21st centuries, the roller coaster has continued its triumphal march around the world. Thanks to increasingly higher and faster roller coasters, riders can enjoy the giddy experience of escaping the clutches of gravity. In November 2010 the Formula Rossa roller coaster at Ferrari World in Abu Dhabi was inaugurated. Those who dare to ride it can attain a top speed of 150 mph (240 km/h).

Woman 45+ (nervously): "Where does one come down?"

bia. It is reasonable to ask why.

Attraction operator (indifferently): "Under all of the seats, there are rockets that will propel you far up in the air. Then when the fuel runs out, you will fall head over heel to the ground. Hopefully, you will land on a large air cushion near Slussen, and from there you just take the boat back. Good luck!"

The above exchange was posted on the Tjuvlyssnat.se site on Sept. 21, 2006, under the heading "Thanks, that did the trick for my acrophobia!" after a visit to the Free Fall attraction at the Gröna Lund amusement park in Stockholm.

According to Freud, female acrophobia is a manifestation of fear of succumbing to sexual temptation. Sadly, he had no suggestion for what is behind male acrophobia. I could have needed a diagnosis and effective therapy. My acrophobia is almost as severe as my grandmother's seasickness. She could not see a watercolor without feeling the ground begin to sway. On some days all it took was for her to catch sight of a map with some of the ocean. Alfred Hitchcock, whose works are inspired in no small measure by Freud's mapping of the psychopathologies of everyday life, made the intrigue in Vertigo (1958) revolve around dizziness associated with great heights. In High Anxiety (1977) Mel Brooks created a

monic unity on a higher cosmic

plane. The Platonic world of ideas exists on an upper plane. The heaven of Christianity appears in the same way as a cosmic upper story. In the mystical tradition, an incremental upward movement or a cosmic

vertiginous experience almost invariably play a major role. In literature during Romanticism and onward, the icarist and ascensionist movements upward... play a similar role; the literary experience itself, the experience behind the creative process, is represented as a mystical elevation."6

⁶ Ingemar Algulin, Den The vertical structure of Western culture is associated with names orfiska reträtten. like Icaros, Jesus, Leonardo da Vinci, Emanuel Swedenborg, Jules Verne, Studies in Swedish lyrics from the '40s and Charles Lindbergh, Superman, Yuri Gagarin-but also with popular their literary conceptions of the hereafter such as those expressed in Dan Andersbackground. Kristiansson's poetry: "Det är något bortom bergen..." ("There is something tad 1977, p 14. beyond the mountains") or parodies of Joe Hill: "You'll get pie in the sky when you die!" It is mostly fellows who with their more or less fantastic machines and ideas are pursuing upward-higher-faster. An exception is the organist and composer Lydia Lithell (1909-1957), who among other things wrote Jag har hört om en stad ovan molnen ("I have heard about a city above the clouds"). On this side of the clouds, she lived in Kumla and was married to a sausage maker who founded the Sibylla fast food chain.

Of all the magic tricks, there is nothing as fascinating as the Indian rope trick. According to the legend, it has been performed for a thousands years and maybe longer. Briefly, it goes like this: a master lays out a rope on the ground. With a few magical gestures, he causes it to wind itself straight up into the air like a snake. His assistant, a small boy who turns out to be his son, climbs up the rope until he disappears among the clouds. The master climbs after him with a sabre in his belt, and he also disappears. After a while the boy's body parts fall down on the ground, one after the other. Then the master comes climbing down. He throws the body parts in a basket, mumbles an almost inaudible incantation-and presto! The boy hops out of the basket alive and kicking. To all appearances the legend is a canard. According to reliable reports, the trick was a fabrication by the Chicago Tribune, which at the beginning of the 1890s tried to do something to boost its flagging circulation. When the editors refuted the newspaper's own story after a few months, it was too late. The legend had acquired a life of its own and wended its way out in the world, where it has been retold ever since in every possible language.

The legend's staying power proved to be the real trick.

Just as every age of enlightenment per se has a romantic undercurrent that sooner or later sees the light of day, scientific advances seem to attract pseudoscientific explanations and popular cultural fantasies. The enormous scientific discoveries of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries were accompanied by an upswing in parapsychology, spiritualism and more or less quasi-religious speculations. It's as if people of today cannot be satisfied with rational explanations for why they are here and why everything is the way it is. Newton himself pursued alchemy and eschatology. After careful Bible studies of the book of Daniels and Revelations, he arrived at the conclusion that the earth would come to an end-but not before 2060. In a satire entitled "Man äger ej snille för det man är galen" ("One does not possess genius because one is crazy"), published in Stockholms-Posten (4-11/10 1787), Johan Henric Kellgren poked fun at the admired scientist's occult interests

Is the giddy feeling you can experience on a roller coaster related to the giddiness of a transformative art experience? In any case, I was not surprised when I became aware that gravitational aesthetician Julijonas Urbonas has worked in amusement parks from childhood.¹¹ Does contemporary interest in the connection between gravitation and aesthetics have anything to do with that fact that the late capitalist middle class perceives natural laws like gravitational pull as an affront? Research shows that people in luxury cars to a greater degree than others disregard traffic rules and consideration for fellow drivers. For such a person, it feels old-fashioned to be weighed down on earth and not be able to levitate when and how he wants. When the entire world is accessible on a screen and you can fly wherever you want, shouldn't you indeed be able to escape gravity?

That aversion to the body's weight and sluggishness and the friction of movement goes back a long way. It was not just because they were lazy that kings and high-ranking people

of antiquity had themselves carried around. It was also a statement ¹ http://julijonasur about social rank and political importance. For similar reasons, bonas.lt/about-me/ (Read Oct 16, 2015) upper-class Chinese girls had their feet deformed into so-called "lotus feet" so they wouldn't be able to work. In Svenska Fattigdo-² Regarding the dialectics mens Betydelse ("The Significance of Swedish Poverty") (1838), Carl between wimp and teflon. see Mikael Löfgren, Jonas Love Almqvist writes about the gentry's aversion to having Svenska tönteriets betydelse och andra their surroundings rub off on them, a thought that the neo-liberals samtidsdiagnoser ("Th adopted, inspired by Ronald Reagan. Only wimps allow themselves to significance of Swedish wimpishness and other be limited by laws and rules. Nothing fastens on the real Teflon

diagnoses of contemp people. They can levitate whenever they wish. If not with a machine rary life"). Bonnier Alba. of their own, then with the aid of one they have bought.¹²

What's remarkable about Newton's story and the apple isn't really that he asked why the apple fell when the moon didn't, but why (almost) nobody else asked themselves that question. Even today, 350 years after Newton is said to have had his eureka moment, most of us do not ask why natural laws operate as they do. We're blind and ignorant, not only about how things operate in nature, but also in society and daily life. Who comprehends how the Internet works? Or the cell phone? Or the LED light? Or globalization? Or the suicide bomber?

The question is, how does that blindness to everyday life affect us? Maybe it's healthy to content ourselves with knowing that things work rather than how they work. Or is it detrimental? Hungarian author Arthur Koestler (1905-1983) commented ironically in his day about modern man's lack of knowledge about how a telephone or radio works. That did not prevent him, toward the end of his life, from becoming interested in, as Wikipedia puts it, "a number of paranormal phenomena, such as extrasensory perception, psychokinesis and telepathy." Modern art and literature often agitate against being inured to our surroundings and inattentional blindness; they are modern in that respect. Russian formalists coined the term ostranenie (остранение), or defamiliarization, to point out what it is that makes a poem a poem. Bertolt Brecht introduced a theory about Verfremdung, or estrangement, as an expression for his aspiration to make the theater audience clear-eyed. In the first performance of The Threepenny Opera (1928), he put up signs instructing the audience "not to stare!" It became a success anyhow.

In the introduction to Andrej Tarkovskij's film Mirror (1975), a woman sits smoking on a fence at the edge of a forest and looks out over a meadow. A man comes walking along, asks for a cigarette and settles down next to the woman on the fence—which breaks under their weight. The scene is typical of Tarkovskij, who often plays with nature's forces and laws in his films: a strong wind suddenly passes through the meadow before it just as suddenly stops, rain falls indoors, a carafe falls down from the table without any external force touching it.

As if in a mirror, we see what Newton saw, only just the opposite. The apple stops for a moment on its way to the ground.

Mikael Löfgren

Falun 1995.

Free fall and levitation are aspects of the same force: without gravitation, no body can either fall or rise, just hover. Like angels? In Himmel över Göteborg ("Heaven above Gothenburg") (2015), a theater performance inspired by Wim Wender's film Der Himmel

³ http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/12/science/ligo-gravitational-waves-black-holes-einstein.html?_r=0

playful parody of Vertigo and other Hitchcock films, reportedly much to the amusement "You, who from the apple's fall found the laws of the Star,

of the old wizard. However, none of the Swedish titles for the films (Studie i brott and Det

Who probed the depth of Calculus and split the beam of Light! -

våras för galningarna, respectively) indicate that they have anything to do with acropho-

You also once rode to Bedlam, great man!

From the Apocalypse upon a dun steed."7 "/>