Hawk Roosting

By Ted Hughes

Pre-reading


a) Fill in the missing word classes and translate the noun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Danish translation of noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>convenient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>remorse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ferocious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brutal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>destructive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arrogant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>megalomaniac</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEARNING CHECK

In pairs: student A gives student B the Danish noun and student B, without looking at the task, has to come up with the equivalent English noun. Then student B gives student A the English noun and student A, without looking at the task, has to come up with the corresponding English adjective.

b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Danish translation of noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hesitate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>celebrate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>argue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>create</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satisfy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assert</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inspect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>admire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEARNING CHECK

In pairs: student B gives student A the Danish noun and student B, without looking at the task, has to come up with the equivalent English noun. Then student A gives student B the English verb and student A, without looking at the task, has to come up with the corresponding English noun.
Post-reading

LEARNING CHECK

1. Written assignment: translation. No study aids.


WIDER CONTEXTS

1. Critical context:
Critical comment on the poem. In his book *Poetry 1900 to 1975* (Faber and Faber 1979), the editor George Macbeth writes the following about Ted Hughes’ poem “Hawk Roosting”:

“HAWK ROOSTING. This is the monologue of a hawk sitting in the top of a wood. Hughes has said, however, that he had in mind the personality of someone like Hitler and the poem is best interpreted as a remarkable insight into the nature of Fascist psychology. At the same time it never gets away from the essential nature of the bird which is the outward subject of the poem. The headlong violence and the tensed arrogance of the poem is enormously exciting and something quite new in English poetry. One has to turn back towards Jacobean drama for this kind of uninhibited expression of villainy.”

Does this critical comment enhance your understanding of the poem? Discuss.

2. Literary context.
Comparison of other text by a different author: Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “The Eagle”.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) was educated at Cambridge University. He was considered the greatest poet of Victorian England, and he was made Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom in 1850 after Wordsworth died. Among his best known poems today are *In Memoriam* (1850), a collection of poems mourning the death of his friend Arthur Hallam, and “The Charge of the Light Brigade” (1854) about the Crimean War.

a) Look at a picture of an eagle and read the following poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

*The Eagle: A Fragment*

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring’d with the azure world he stands

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.
b What is the poet’s attitude to the eagle?
c What, if anything, does the eagle represent to you?
d Write an essay where you compare “Hawk Roosting” and “The Eagle”. You must include the following points in your essay:
1 the tenses used in the two poems
2 the use of pronouns
3 the use of rhyme
4 the attitude to the birds expressed in the two poems
5 the use of words not normally associated with birds.

3 Compare “Hawk Roosting” and William Blake’s poem “The Tyger”.

**The Tyger**
By William Blake

**Pre-reading**
1. What words do you associate with:
   a) tiger
   b) “burning bright”
   c) “the forests of the night”

2. Find the odd one out:
   - horror
   - fear
   - strength
   - dread
   - terror
   - awe
3. Compare and contrast the front-page illustrations of *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*.

### The Tyger

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies,
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art.
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water’d heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

(1794)

### Gloser

| tyger = tiger | i’mmortal = uødelig |
| frame = lave, konstruere |
| fearful = skrækindjagende, uhyggelig |
| ’symmetry = symmetrisk form, (her) evt. skønhed |
| deeps = dybder; underjordiske steder |
| thine = your |
| he = he who created the tyger |
| aspire = flyve højt op ligesom Ikaros. Icarus (Greek myth.) escaped from the labyrinth of Crete with wings attached by wax, but flew too near the sun. The wax melted and he drowned in the Aegean. |
| what the hand = what hand was it that dared gribe fat om evt. stjæle ilden ligesom Prometheus. Prometheus (Greek myth.) was the brother of Atlas. He stole fire from the gods and gave it to man. In punishment Zeus chained him to a rock and sent an eagle or vulture by day to eat out his liver, which was restored by night. |
| what shoulder = perhaps a reference to Atlas, who as punishment for leading a battle against the gods was ordered to carry the sky on his shoulders |
| art = snilde |
| twist = sno |
| sinew = sene |
| dread = skræmmende, frygtelig |
| what dread hand ? & what dread feet = what dread hand formed your dread feet |
| ’furnace = smelteovn |
| anvil = ambolt; an iron block on which a blacksmith puts pieces of metal before shaping them with a hammer |
| grasp = greb |
| clasp = gribe om, holde fast om |
| stars = the good angels who threw down their spears and wept when they were defeated by Satan in their defense of heaven. |
While-reading

Comprehension and analysis
1 In groups: translate the poem.
   2 In groups: take turns to read the poem. One student reads one stanza, one student paraphrases the stanza, and two students comment on what strikes them concerning rhyme, rhythm, punctuation, alliteration, repetition and sentence structure.
3 What do you call a stanza that has four lines?
4 The first stanza:
   a Learn it by heart.
   b Who is speaking? To whom? What is the question?
   c Which aspect/s of the tiger is/are emphasized? Beauty – danger – power – strength – size
   d What does the expression “the forests of the night” suggest?
   e Why do you think the speaker finds the tiger’s symmetry fearful?
5 What is the link between stanza 1 and the following stanzas?
6 Stanza 2:
   a What is the effect of the repetition of questions?
   b How are stanza 1 and stanza 2 linked?
   c Why the repetition of “dare”?
7 Stanza 3:
   a How is the creator of the tiger characterized?
   b Comment on the effect of repetition and alliteration.
   c What is the effect of the unfinished sentences in stanzas 3 and 4?
8 Stanza 4:
   a Where was the tiger’s brain created?
   b Does the word “furnace” make you think of other things than a blacksmith’s furnace? Look also at “distant deeps” in stanza 2.
   c Which word from stanza 3 is repeated? Why?
9 Stanza 5:
   a How did the stars react to the creation of the tiger?
   b What is the function of the personification?
   c Why does the speaker ask if it is the same person who created the lamb and the tiger?
   d Why do you think Blake uses capital letters in Tyger and Lamb?
10 Stanza 6:
   a In an earlier draft Blake wrote “dare” both in stanza 1 and stanza 6. Why do you think Blake changed the word in stanza 1?
   b Are the questions answered?
   c What is the predominant metre? iambic or trochaic. Does it matter?

Overall questions
1 How would you characterize the speaker’s reaction to the tiger?
   fascination dread awe fear admiration wonder reverence terror
2 Is the description of the tiger realistic?
3 Which aspect of the tiger is emphasized? beauty power danger majesty vitality strength
4 What does the tiger symbolize?
5 What is the theme of the poem? – evil – how to reconcile the existence of good and evil – power – creation – the human soul – the French Revolution
6 Try to answer the basic question asked.
7 Look at Blake’s engraving. Does the engraving add to your understanding of the poem?

LEARNING CHECK

Individually or in groups. No study aids.
1a You learned stanza 1 by heart. Now write it down.
   Tyger ________________________
   ______________________________
   In the ________________________
   ______________________________
   What immortal __________________
   ______________________________
   Could frame ________________________
   ______________________________
   ______________________________

b What is the rhyme pattern of the poem?
   c Which is the other animal that is (near) synonyms to “fear”
   d What is the difference between the first stanza and the last stanza?
   e What do you call stanzas that have four lines?
     2 Mention four nouns that are (near) synonyms to “fear”

Compare the view of nature expressed in “Hawk Roosting” and Wordsworth’s view of nature as, for example, expressed in “The Tables Turned” on page 204 or “My Heart Leaps Up”.

3 In Shakespeare’s play Macbeth, Act IV, scene 1, lines 146 -152, Macbeth says
   “From this moment
   The very firstlings of my heart shall be
   The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
   To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:
   The castle of Macduff I will surprise,
   Seize upon Fife; give to th’ edge o’ th’ sword
   His wife, his babies, and all unfortunate souls
   That trace him in his line.

Gloser

firstlings første indfald
seize upon indtage
give to the edge of the sword kill
trace him in his line der er i familie med ham
Do the Hawk and Macbeth speak the same language? Support your point of view by referring to the text.