**Lecture Script for "The Lamb" by William Blake**

PPT 1-2: Opening & Agenda

Good evening, everyone. Welcome to our poetry appreciation session. I’m Zhang Manman, and I’ll be your presenter tonight. First, let me introduce my team members: Chen Yibing, Lian Shiman, Shi Yuxuan, and Huang Yanqin. (1)

Before we dive in, let’s take a quick look at our agenda.The introduction,analysis,translate and compare and comment.(2)

Let’s get started!(2→3)

PPT 3-7: Introduction to the Poem & Poet

First, let’s look at the poem itself. On the screen, you can see the full text of The Lamb. At first glance, it seems simple—even childlike. But as we explore deeper, we’ll find layers of meaning tied to William Blake’s unique worldview.(4)

William Blake's "The Lamb" is a disarmingly simple poem, radiating an aura of innocence and childlike wonder. The poem begins as a gentle question posed to a lamb, inquiring about its creator, and evolves into a tender affirmation of God's presence in both the natural world and humanity. (5)

Blake's "Songs of Innocence," where "The Lamb" appears, reflects a world seen through the eyes of a child, before the corrupting influence of experience. (6)

One primary theme explored in "The Lamb" is the inherent divinity of creation.

Another central theme is innocence itself.

Finally, the poem touches upon the theme of divine incarnation, linking the lamb to Jesus Christ, who is also referred to as the Lamb of God, and who took on the form of a child. (7)

PPT 8-12: Analysis of Form, Speaker, & Tone

Now, let’s break down the poem’s craft—how its form, speaker, and tone work together to convey that message.(8)

First, the form. The poem has two 10-line stanzas (we call these “decets”) with short lines—only 6-8 syllables each. This symmetry gives it a gentle, rhythmic flow, like a nursery rhyme or lullaby.

Then there’s the rhyme scheme: AABB. For example, in the first stanza, “thee” rhymes with “thee,” “feed” with “mead,” “delight” with “bright.” The meter is trochaic tetrameter: lines start with a stressed syllable, then an unstressed one. Like “LIT-tle LAMB, who MADE thee?” This beat mimics a parent’s soft voice when talking to a child.(9)

Next, the speaker. Who is asking the lamb these questions? We believe it’s a young child—or a voice with childlike innocence. Why? Look at the language: simple phrases like “little lamb” and “softest clothing wooly bright,” and direct questions like “Dost thou know who made thee?” These aren’t the complex thoughts of an adult—they’re the pure curiosity of a child.

Also, the speaker sees the lamb as an equal—talking to it like a friend, not a “lower” animal. That lack of hierarchy is classic for a child’s worldview, where nature feels personal. Most importantly, the child acts as a “bridge” between the lamb (innocence) and the divine (the creator). By asking about the lamb’s maker, the speaker guides us to link nature’s innocence to spiritual purity.(10)

Then, the tone—the “feeling” of the poem. It’s warm, reverent, and innocent. Let’s see why: “Softest clothing” and “tender voice” make us feel cozy, like we’re admiring the lamb too. When the speaker says “I’ll tell thee” about the creator, there’s a sense of care. When they mention “He” (God) and link Him to the lamb, the tone shifts to quiet awe—respect for something greater. And there’s no cynicism here—no dark themes like in Blake’s later Songs of Experience. The tone matches the lamb’s innocence perfectly.(11)

Putting this all together, the core meaning becomes clear: Innocence in nature is a reflection of divine goodness. Every choice Blake made—from the nursery-rhyme form to the child speaker—serves that message.(12)

PPT 13-14: Our Translation

Now, let’s move to translation. (13)

Translating Blake is tricky—we need to balance three things: sound , sense , and spirit. Our team chose a mix of literal and free translation—staying true to the original, but making it flow naturally in Chinese.(14)

On the screen, you can see our version. For example, we translated “By the stream & o'er the mead” as “在溪流边，在草地上” to keep the simple, natural setting. For “clothing of delight,” we used “喜上眉梢” plus “衣裳柔软，毛茸光亮”—this keeps the “joy” of the original while describing the lamb’s wool clearly. And for the final lines about God, we kept the repetition of “小羔羊，愿上帝保佑你” to preserve the poem’s gentle blessing.(14)

PPT 15-20: Comparison with Previous Translations

Now, let’s compare our work with two well-known translations to see how different choices shape the poem.(15)

First, Yang Yi’s translation. Yang’s style is “domestication”—making the poem feel like a Chinese nursery rhyme.(16) For example, she translated “Gave thee life & bid thee feed” as “给你生命，哺育着你”—adding a “nurturing” action that’s not in the original, but makes the scene more intimate. For “I a child & thou a lamb,” she used “我是个小孩你是羔羊，咱俩的名字跟他一样”—the word “咱俩” is super colloquial, like a child talking to a friend. It weakens the original’s old-fashioned tone and religious terms, but it’s perfect for conveying innocence. Yang’s version is pure, playful, and easy for kids (or anyone) to love.(17)

Second, Jessica’s translation . Jessica focuses on “poetic innovation”—she adds imagery to make the poem more vivid.(18) For example, “By the stream & o'er the mead” becomes “赐生命，赐青草，还赐甘露甜如蜜”—she turned “feed” into “green grass” and added “nectar sweet as honey,” which makes the creator’s gifts feel more sensory. For “Making all the vales rejoice,” she used “山谷都惊喜”—“surprise” is a clever choice, capturing the valley’s lively reaction. She also uses stronger religious language: “We are called by his name” becomes “我们都因他被召”—“被召” (called by God) is a precise theological term, making the divine link clearer. Jessica’s version is lyrical, imaginative, and more explicit about the poem’s spiritual side.(19)

So, which one is “better”? None—because there’s no perfect translation. Each version reflects the translator’s style and purpose: Yang gives us a nursery rhyme, Jessica a lyrical song, and our version tries to balance faithfulness and readability. The enduring power of "The Lamb" lies in its ability to inspire this beautiful multiplicity of voices, all singing of the same wonder, creation, and love.(20)

That’s all for our presentation.Thank you for listening! (21)