



# Sample essay 2

## Grade C answer

Write an analysis of the Shepherd's speech, III.3.58–73, beginning 'I would there were no age between ten and three-and-twenty', including a consideration of its wider significance within the play.

The Shepherd enters immediately after Antigonus has been killed by the bear. He has apparently been searching for his sheep and is worried that they have been scared away by a group of young people who have been out hunting. The Shepherd seems to have a low opinion of these young men 'these boiled brains' and 'I wish there were no age between ten and three-and-twenty'. Young people are not always viewed as harmful, however. In the play as a whole they are a positive influence and towards the end of the play it is the young people who help to bring rebirth and new life back to Sicilia: 'Welcome hither/As is the spring to th'earth'. The young people in the sheep-shearing scene are sometimes fairly ridiculous, however. We find it hard to take Mopsa and Dorcas seriously as they compete for the attention of the Clown.

The Shepherd makes a reference to the wolf. This reminds us of another fierce animal, the bear who has killed Antigonus. This might remind us that the countryside is at times a dangerous place. The Shepherd comes across as an ordinary, working class character. He uses dialect words like 'barne' and 'scape'. This shows his lack of education and means that the audience would probably see him as a comic character. Shakespeare often made his comic characters speak in dialect. The Shepherd also speaks in prose which is the language used by Shakespeare's comic characters. We do, however, take him seriously at times. It would be important to a shepherd that he did not lose his sheep. This tells us how hard a shepherd's life would be in Elizabethan England, although the sheep shearing scene is mostly one of fun and jollity.

The Shepherd also makes comments on court life 'I can read waiting-gentlewoman



in the scape'. He makes jokes about the two lovers who created the baby being warmer than the baby is at this moment in its life. This could be seen as a comment on the adultery that often happened at court. Leontes believed that his own wife, Hermione had committed adultery. The Shepherd uses repetition to make his point clearer 'some stair-work, some trunk-work, some behind-door-work'. All these refer to places where the sexual act might have taken place. Sex is an important factor in the play, but in the sheep shearing scene that follows it is usually innocent. The Shepherd says he will take the child 'for pity'. Perdita has not been shown very much pity in Sicilia so this suggests that the Shepherd is a positive character, not only comic, therefore another way of seeing him. Overall this is an important moment in the play. The Shepherd's speech helps to turn the play from tragedy to comedy and introduces us to the world of Bohemia.

### Examiner's comments

#### AO1

Shows some knowledge of the play, and generally relevant, but much is paraphrased. Quotations are not well integrated. There is some appropriate use of literary terminology. The structure of the argument is generally clear.

#### AO2

Some consideration of aspects of form, structure and language as directly required by the question.

#### AO3

Some limited consideration of connections between texts. Some sense that the Shepherd can be viewed in different ways.

#### AO4

Some consideration of the significance of social contexts and those in which texts are received.