Learner Resource 6 Comparison exercise: drama and poetry pre-1900 (Component 1)

Text A

CORDELIA Good my lord, 1
You have begot me, bred me, loved me. I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
Why have my sisters husbands if they say 5
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty.
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all. 10

(Extract from Act 1, Scene 1, King Lear)

Text B

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday’s
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with a passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood’s faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints, --- I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! --- and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Elizabeth Barratt Browning, ‘How Do I Love Thee?’ (Sonnet 43)

Begin by considering:

Cordelia will not follow her sisters in declaring boundless love for her father as she suspects the motivation behind their extravagant professions of ‘love.’ However, in refusing to flatter Lear, does Cordelia reveal a fundamental misunderstanding of the true nature of love? She seems to think of love in terms of (finite) ‘parcels’ to be distributed and redistributed amongst those who come to have new claims on her affection. Does Elizabeth Barratt Browning seem to see love as a finite resource? Does she seem to set limits on the distribution of love? Quote from and analyse the extracts to support your views.

Now complete the following grid.
Learner Resource 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Shakespeare</th>
<th>Browning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the genre of the extract?</td>
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<td>What is the subject of the extract?</td>
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<td>Whose point of view does the extract present?</td>
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<td>Who listens to what is said?</td>
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<td>What relationship is presented and what might be the power relations?</td>
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<td>What do you notice about the use of rhyme and rhythm?</td>
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<td>What literary/poetic devices can you identify?</td>
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<td>What ideas or misapprehensions about the nature of love is revealed?</td>
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<td>How would this extract affect a reader/an audience?</td>
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<td>Having considered the questions above, summarise the similarities/differences between the poem and drama extract</td>
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