

customs of particular places and unpractised by the rest of the world. His persons act and speak by general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated and the whole system of life is continued in motion."

Johnson almost denies individuality to Shakespeare's characters:

"The writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species."

In both characters and events, Shakespeare maintains the middle way; in his play there are no hyperbolic or aggravated characters.

Other merits:

Shakespeare is the original writer. He does not commit the mistake of making love the only motive force in his plays.

Johnson praises Shakespeare for his success in accommodating his sentiments to real life, on the basis of his comparison with other poets.

"The dialogues of this author is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it and is pursued with so much vigour and simplicity."

General wisdoms comes from dialogues associated with him.

His plays are universal as they are filled with general sayings and common wisdom.

Conclusion:

It seems that Johnson's liking for Shakespeare was not only genuine and passionate but instinctive, though as a neoclassical critic he was naturally obliged to recommend Shakespeare to his contemporaries in the critical idiom to which they were used.